



BEYOND *the*
WELCOME:

Churches Responding to
the Immigrant Reality in Canada

**CONGREGATIONAL
ASSESSMENT**

THE INTRODUCTION

New immigrants to Canada join the ranks of those living in poverty faster than any other group. Many of these families live in situations where safe, affordable housing, nutritious meals and the ability to earn a sustainable livelihood are at risk. For the purposes of this tool, we define 'new immigrants' as people who have arrived in Canada within the last 5-7 years, irrespective of the process by which they arrive (e.g. refugee, immigrant).

As you think about sharing Jesus Christ's transformative power in the world, consider those people who live in your neighbourhood. *What difference does your congregation make in their lives? Would new immigrants living in the neighbourhood look to your congregation for support as they make their way in this new country?*

THE INTENTION

The intent of this assessment is to encourage your congregation to discuss how to love your neighbours who are new to Canada in practical ways. We hope this will spark helpful conversations within your Church, such as: *How can we proactively welcome and support new immigrants in our congregation and in the community as they integrate into Canadian society?*

THE STRUCTURE

This tool is intended to help you examine your congregational life through the eyes of new immigrants in three key areas: Corporate Worship, Congregational Programs and Leadership & Governance. Within the rich diversity of traditions in the Christian Church, please do adapt the language and processes so that they resonate with your own context.

THE STAGES

The *Beyond the Welcome* Congregational Assessment, as demonstrated below, is built around three basic stages of response to the situations facing new immigrants.

Congregational Assessment			
Stage	REFLECT	PLAN	DEMONSTRATE
Definition	<i>We are aware of the new immigrant realities in our church and community</i>	<i>We plan opportunities for new immigrants within our church and community</i>	<i>We demonstrate integration of new immigrants within our church and community</i>
Snapshot of this Stage	Leaders and congregational members are aware of new immigrant communities in their neighbourhood. People from our church graciously respond to the needs of new immigrants as requests arise.	Leadership recognizes that serving and welcoming newcomers from the community is vital toward fulfilling Christ's mission. The congregation has assessed the needs and aspirations of new immigrants in the church and community and developed a plan in response.	Our congregation can point to specific examples of how our church welcomes newcomers in the congregation and community through the implementation of our plan. The perspectives, concerns and involvement of new immigrants are reflected in all facets of our church life.

THE NEXT STEPS

Once your congregation has completed the assessment, please e-mail canadianprograms@worldvision.ca for the *Beyond the Welcome* Action Plan and the *Beyond the Welcome* Toolkit, at no charge to you.



THE INSTRUCTIONS

With a group of 8-12 representatives from your congregation, meet to assess your congregation’s current stage of ministry with new immigrants using the *Beyond the Welcome* Congregational Assessment. This representative group should include members from the board, pastoral, staff, and key volunteers. Please be sure to include in this group those who themselves are new immigrants.

Reading each element from left to right, discuss and seek to come to a consensus on the stage that best represents your congregation as it is today. For example, in the Corporate Worship table, read each statement in the “Worshipping Community” row and circle the statement that best describes your congregation.

Note: The tool insists that plans, reports and strategies be **written** in order to satisfy the “Plan” and “Demonstrate” descriptions. This tool also assumes that in order to achieve the “demonstrate” stage, the “plan” and “reflect” stages have already been reached.

Agree to meet for 60-90 minutes to allow for good discussion and consensus building.

Corporate Worship			
Stage	REFLECT	PLAN	DEMONSTRATE
Elements	<i>We are aware of the new immigrant realities in our church and community</i>	<i>We plan opportunities for new immigrants within our church and community</i>	<i>We demonstrate integration of new immigrants within our church and community</i>
Worshipping Community	Our worship, music and liturgies occasionally reflect expressions of cultural diversity.	We have a written plan to incorporate expressions of cultural diversity into our worship, music and liturgies for the next year.	New immigrants are active in planning and implementing our culturally diverse worship services.
Preaching and Teaching	We have heard a sermon on the theme of welcoming the stranger, new immigrant or refugee into our community in the past 6 months.	We have a written sermon/teaching schedule incorporating themes of welcoming the stranger, new immigrant or refugee into our community for the coming year.	We see evidence that a majority of the congregation applies Biblical teaching on welcoming the stranger, new immigrant or refugee into their lives and in our community.
Prayer	We have corporately prayed for the needs and concerns of new immigrant families connected to our congregation in the past 6 months	We formally solicit prayer requests and updates from immigrant families and local newcomer ministries.	Local and global developments impacting immigrant communities inform our weekly corporate prayer.

Congregational Programs			
Stage	REFLECT	PLAN	DEMONSTRATE
Elements	<i>We are aware of the new immigrant realities in our church and community</i>	<i>We plan opportunities for new immigrants within our church and community</i>	<i>We demonstrate integration of new immigrants within our church and community</i>
Program Planning	Our church has discussed the presence of new immigrants in our neighbourhood and how we might respond to their needs and aspirations.	Our neighbourhood assessment identifies the needs and aspirations of new immigrants. We have developed a plan in response.	We have implemented our plan for integrating new immigrants.
Church Programs (Primarily serving our congregation)	New immigrants have participated in our church's programs for children, adults, or families over the past 12 months.	We have a current, written plan that seeks to clarify the challenges and solutions for integrating new immigrants into our church.	We see evidence in our church's programs of new immigrant and Canadian-born people serving together.
Community Programs (Primarily reaching the community)	In the past 6 months, we have sponsored a special event (e.g. dinner, Christmas event, community picnic) that attracted new immigrants from our neighbourhood.	We have a current, written plan that seeks to clarify the challenges and solutions for integrating new immigrants into our community.	We offer ourselves, or partner with others, in programming that supports the integration of new immigrants into the community.

Leadership & Governance			
Stage	REFLECT	PLAN	DEMONSTRATE
Elements	<i>We are aware of the new immigrant realities in our church and community</i>	<i>We plan opportunities for new immigrants within our church and community</i>	<i>We demonstrate integration of new immigrants within our church and community</i>
Mandate (Values, Mission and Vision)	Our congregation has assessed how our church's current mandate reflects an emphasis on welcoming new immigrants.	Our values, mission and vision statements reflect our intention to be welcoming to new immigrants in our neighbourhood.	Our church's materials (e.g. annual report, website, newsletter) demonstrate our commitment to welcoming new immigrants.
Budget	We can point to examples of how church financial resources (e.g. benevolent fund) have been used to support the immediate needs of new immigrants in the past year.	Our church budget specifically allocates resources in support of new immigrants.	Our budget intentionally supports our new immigrant church and community programming plan.
Leadership Development	We have discussed the leadership barriers facing new immigrants in our church and have developed a plan in response.	We have a written leadership development plan for mentoring new leaders, including those who have newly immigrated.	New immigrants are represented within our pastoral staff, church board, and/or congregational leadership.

The Beyond the Welcome Congregational Assessment was developed by W. Clayton Rowe from World Vision Canada and Bill van Geest of Touchstone Consulting in 2011.