ezra *Solutions*

A SELF-AUDIT FOR CHURCHES & MINISTRIES

The First-Visit *Website Audit*

See your church website the way a first-time guest does. Thirty checks, thirty minutes, and the fixes that matter most, in order.

BEFORE YOU START

Your Website Is *the First Visit*

Almost nobody walks into a church cold anymore. They look you up first, usually on a phone, often late at night, and decide from that whether Sunday feels possible.

The trouble is that you cannot see your own website the way they do. You already know the service time, where to park and that the kids' rooms are safe. A guest knows none of it, and most will not ask.

This audit puts you back in their shoes. There are thirty checks in six short sections. Tick a box only when the answer is a clear yes. If you had to hunt for it, it does not count.

> **Three rules for an honest score**
>
> **Use your phone, not a computer.** That is what guests use. **Open a private browser window** so you see the site fresh. **Pretend you have never been**, and if that is hard, hand the phone to someone who hasn't. Page 13 shows you how.

SECTION ONE

The First *Five Seconds*

Open your homepage on your phone. Do not scroll yet.

- [ ] **1. Service times and address show without scrolling**

  It is the first thing nearly every guest looks for.

  Fix: put day, time and address at the top, as text, not an image.

- [ ] **2. There is an obvious "I'm New" or "Plan a Visit" button**

  Menus labeled "Connect" or "Next Steps" mean nothing to a guest yet.

  Fix: one clear button near the top, linking to a page written only for first-timers.

- [ ] **3. The page loads in about three seconds on mobile data**

  On a slow page, people leave before they read a word.

  Fix: test it free at pagespeed.web.dev. The usual culprits are oversized photos and a video background.

- [ ] **4. The main photo shows your actual people**

  Stock photos tell a guest nothing about who they will meet.

  Fix: use a real Sunday photo of your people, taken with permission.

- [ ] **5. A stranger understands every word on the screen**

  Names like "The Well" warm members and mean nothing to guests.

  Fix: add a plain description beside each one, such as "Rooted (our small groups)".

SECTION TWO

What Guests *Won't Ask*

Open your "Plan a Visit" page. Does it answer each of these?

- [ ] **6. Where do I park, and which door do I use?**

  > Arriving lost and late is the most common first-visit fear.

  Fix: name the lot, the entrance and what a greeter looks like.

- [ ] **7. What will happen with my kids?**

  > For parents this decides the visit more than anything else.

  Fix: a two-line summary here, linking to the full kids page.

- [ ] **8. What should I wear, and how long is it?**

  > Small questions, but they keep people at home.

  Fix: say it plainly: "Most people wear jeans. The service runs about 75 minutes."

- [ ] **9. What actually happens during the service?**

  > Communion and the offering feel awkward if nobody explains them.

  Fix: walk through it in order, and say "guests are never expected to give."

- [ ] **10. Can I get in, sit and hear comfortably?**

  > Guests with a wheelchair, a walker or hearing loss will check before they come.

  Fix: list step-free entry, accessible restrooms, reserved seating and any hearing support.

SECTION THREE

Kids *and Families*

A parent is deciding whether to trust you with their child.

- [ ] **11. Check-in is explained step by step**

> Nobody wants to work out a check-in desk with a toddler on their hip.

> **Fix:** say where to go, how early to arrive and what details you will ask for.

- [ ] **12. Safety is stated plainly**

> Parents assume nothing. If it is not written down, they wonder.

> **Fix:** if it is true, say volunteers are background-checked and pickup needs a matching tag.

- [ ] **13. Age groups and what each one does are listed**

> "Kids church" could mean a nursery or a classroom.

> **Fix:** list each age range with one sentence on what they actually do that morning.

- [ ] **14. Parents know they can keep children with them**

> Some parents will not leave a child with strangers on a first visit.

> **Fix:** say kids are welcome in the service, and mention a parents' room if you have one.

- [ ] **15. There is a named person for allergies and additional needs**

> These families have usually been let down somewhere before.

> **Fix:** give a first name and a way to reach them before Sunday.

SECTION FOUR

Finding You *on Google*

Many guests decide from your Google listing alone.

- [ ] **16. Your Google Business Profile is claimed**

  Unclaimed listings often show wrong details.

  Fix: search your church's name. If you see "Own this business?", claim it at business.google.com.

- [ ] **17. Google's opening hours match your service times**

  Some churches show as "Closed" at the exact hour their service starts.

  Fix: set hours to service times, and add special hours for Christmas and Easter.

- [ ] **18. Recent photos show the building and the entrance**

  Guests want to recognize the place when they pull up.

  Fix: add a street view of the building, the main door and a full Sunday room.

- [ ] **19. Every review has a kind reply**

  Guests read your replies as closely as the reviews.

  Fix: thank every reviewer by name, and answer critical ones gently, without arguing.

- [ ] **20. Name, address and phone match everywhere**

  Mismatches confuse both people and search engines.

  Fix: pick one exact version and use it on every listing.

SECTION FIVE

Saying Hello *Before Sunday*

Some guests want a conversation before they will come. Make that easy.

- [ ] **21. A guest can ask a question without visiting**

  A long form feels like paperwork, so most people give up halfway.

  Fix: a short form with four fields or fewer, or a number they can text.

- [ ] **22. Someone replies within one working day**

  Silence after reaching out is worse than having no form at all.

  Test it: send a question from a personal email today and time the reply.

- [ ] **23. The phone is answered, or the voicemail is current**

  A full mailbox or last year's greeting quietly says "nobody is here."

  Fix: record a warm greeting that gives the service time and promises a call back.

- [ ] **24. A recent sermon can be watched or heard**

  Many guests visit online first, to hear how your pastor speaks.

  Fix: link last Sunday's message from the homepage, not three menus deep.

- [ ] **25. Social links work and lead to active accounts**

  A Facebook page last updated in 2022 makes a guest wonder if you closed.

  Fix: remove links to dead accounts, and keep the ones you keep posting on.

SECTION SIX

Trust *and Housekeeping*

The small details that tell a guest someone is paying attention.

- [ ] **26. "What We Believe" is written in plain language**

  A full statement of faith is important, but it is not where a guest should start.

  Fix: start with a warm summary and link the full statement below.

- [ ] **27. Leaders appear with names, photos and a human line**

  Guests want to know who will be at the front before they walk in.

  Fix: one friendly sentence each, such as how long they have served and a hobby.

- [ ] **28. Nothing on the site is out of date**

  Past events and departed staff suggest nobody is minding the front door.

  Fix: a fifteen-minute check on the first Monday of each month.

- [ ] **29. Text is readable and buttons are easy to tap**

  If a guest has to zoom or pinch, many of them will just close the page.

  Fix: body text around 16px, and buttons big enough for a thumb, with space between.

- [ ] **30. The site is secure and giving works end to end**

  A "Not secure" warning undermines trust in everything else.

  Fix: check the address starts with https, then give a small gift yourself to test it.

YOUR SCORE

Count Your Ticks, *Then Read This*

This scores your website, not your church. Plenty of wonderful churches have websites that undersell them badly. That is good news, because a website is far easier to fix than a culture.

27 to 30

Welcoming. A guest can plan a visit with confidence. Keep it current and run this audit again each year.

20 to 26

Good bones, a few locked doors. Some guests are stopping at a question you could answer in a sentence.

Under 20

Guests are giving up before Sunday. Start with the next page and you will feel the difference within weeks.

Which boxes you missed matters more than how many

Missing number 1, 7 or 17 costs you far more than missing number 25. The next page puts the checks in order of impact, with an honest guess at how long each one takes.

FIX THESE FIRST

Five Fixes, *In This Order*

If you missed any of these, do them before anything else. Most take less than an afternoon.

1 **Service times and address on the first screen (check 1)**

About ten minutes. It answers the question every single guest arrives with.

2 **Google hours that match your services (check 17)**

About five minutes. It stops your listing telling guests you are closed on Sunday morning.

3 **A real "Plan a Visit" page (checks 2 and 6 to 10)**

One afternoon, using the template on the next two pages. It does more for guests than any redesign.

4 **A named person who replies within a day (check 22)**

One conversation with your team. Decide who owns the inbox, and who covers when they are away.

5 **Clear words for parents about kids (checks 11 to 14)**

An hour with your kids' ministry lead. Write down what you already do. Parents mostly need it said.

TEMPLATE · PART ONE

A Plan a Visit Page *You Can Copy*

Fill in the brackets, read it aloud once, and change anything that does not sound like you.

TOP OF THE PAGE

We'd love to meet you.
Here's everything you need to know before your first Sunday at [Church Name]. No pressure, no spotlight. Just come as you are.

WHEN AND WHERE

Sundays at [time] and [time], at [full street address]. Each service runs about [length] minutes. If you can, arrive ten minutes early so we can help you get settled.

PARKING AND ARRIVING

Park in [lot or street], and come in through [which door]. Look for someone in a [color] lanyard. They'll show you where everything is, and save you a seat if you like.

TEMPLATE · PART TWO

The Rest of *the Page*

Keep each block short. Guests skim on a phone, so a heading and three sentences beats a paragraph.

YOUR KIDS

Kids from [age] to [age] have their own [name] program during the service, run by background-checked volunteers. You'll check them in at [place] and collect them with a matching tag. Kids are always welcome to stay with you, too.

WHAT TO EXPECT

We start with about [number] minutes of songs, then [Pastor Name] teaches for around [number] minutes. There's a time for giving, but please don't feel any need to take part. You're our guest. Most people wear [jeans / whatever is comfortable].

QUESTIONS

Anything we haven't answered? Text or call [number], or email [address]. [Name] reads every message and replies within a day. We'd love to hear from you.

THE HONEST TEST

Ask Someone *Who Has Never Been*

A neighbor, a colleague, a friend from another church. Hand them a phone, give them three tasks, and stay quiet while they try.

THE THREE TASKS

1. Find what time Sunday starts and where to park.

Time taken, and where they hesitated.

2. Find out what would happen with a five-year-old.

Did they find it? Did they trust what they read?

3. Send the church a question.

How long until a real person replied?

AFTERWARDS

What did they say out loud while they looked?

Would they come this Sunday? Why, or why not?

IF YOU WANT A HAND

We Build Websites *That Welcome People*

Ezra Solutions builds church websites, Google listings and guest follow-up for churches and ministries, so the welcome starts before Sunday does.

Everything in this audit can be fixed by a volunteer with an afternoon and the template. If your team can do it, you do not need us, and we would rather say so.

Send us your score, and we'll tell you what we'd fix first

ezrasolutions.net/book-a-call

Or see what we build for churches

ezrasolutions.net/industries/churches-ministries

Ezra means help

That is the order we try to keep. Help first, and if we are the right people to build it, that conversation can happen afterwards.