

“Pastors Standing and Speaking Together for Righteousness and Justice”

THIS CHURCH ✓OTES!

Christian Citizenship 101: Making Biblically-grounded citizenship a regular ministry of your church

“First, it is their judgment, and that from Scripture taught them, that those who are chosen to a place in government, must be men truly fearing God, wise and learned in the truths of Christ....”

(Rev. Jonathan Edwards, 1654)

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NOTE: We also urge Pastors and citizens of faith to contact USPC and request an “[Institute for American Christian Citizenship](#)” workshop for pastoral staff and church leadership!

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Guidelines for Grassroots Leaders (Incl. Party Precinct Chairs) on facilitating voter registration and voter mobilization in your church.

Overview: Non-partisan voter registration (VR) as well as voter education (VE) and mobilization (GOTV) activities are indisputably within 501 c 3 IRS parameters and since the inception of related IRS standards in 1954, NOT A SINGLE CHURCH has lost its non-profit status for conducting these steps. Legality is simply not a question. Your greatest challenge is appealing to the Senior Pastor, Priest, Rector or Rabbi (will refer to as SP) that conducting these three steps is a necessary and important ministry – which is true.*

STEP ONE: Contact your SP directly and set up a time to visit in person or by phone. You will be most effective by making it clear that your purpose is to seek your SP’s approval and blessing to plan and carry out NON-PARTISAN VR, VE and GOTV ministry for your church. Your purpose is to serve your SP and serve your congregation, not access them to achieve political goals. **It is ideal to – BEFORE meeting with your SP - well familiarize yourself with the scriptures and narrative as described in “It’s Ministry, Not Politics!” and “Biblical Basis of Governing and Voting” at www.faithvotes.org.**

IMPORTANT: You may be an elected Republican Precinct Chair or party officer and as such still MAY conduct these activities, however you must assure your pastor and be faithful to adhering to the “non-partisan” standard of all materials and messaging. Provide SP a copy of “Churches and Elections_First Liberty” available free at www.faithvotes.org.

STEP TWO: Once you receive your SP’s approval** and blessing, you should enlist as many others as you believe needed to set up the FaithVotes team whose primary purpose is to equip and empower your church for maximum informed voter turnout.

IMPORTANT: You should ideally have from one certified Deputy Voter Registrar to as many as is necessary to cover every church service and event at which you plan to conduct VR activities.

STEP THREE: Work with the pastoral and/or church administrative staff to secure and place dates in the church calendar for VR dates and deadline, VE window and GOTV key dates well in advance. (VR can run perpetually, however there should be clear worship service dates designated at least three weeks prior to the county’s VR submission deadline.

IMPORTANT: For detailed suggested steps for comprehensive VR, VE and GOTV activities please download “**Christian Citizenship 101**” and “**Maximizing Church Vote**” at www.faithvotes.org.

STEP FOUR: Request SP approval to place announcements on all VR, VE and GOTV activities on church website, FaceBook, Announcement Screen Slides, email communications, etc. to maximize exposure to the full congregation so each family unit is reached multiple times. (NOTE: Party Platform Issues Comparisons ARE legally permissible!)

*“It’s Not Politics, It’s Ministry: Loving Our Neighbor By Being a Good Citizen” and the other resources are available at www.faithvotes.org to order is an excellent resource for Pastors, Precinct Chairs, ministry leaders and all citizens to properly frame the individual believer’s role as a U.S. Citizen as well as the Pastor and church’s role in doing it God’s way!

** - If SP does not respond or approve, you will need to carry this out as informally and without disruption as you can within church relationships, or decide to find a church with a pastor who is leading biblically.

Forming a Christian Citizenship Ministry

A. Senior Pastor

Since you have been called to serve as the shepherd of your congregational "flock" and in most cases are the proper authority to approve ministry activities, **it is important that a prospective Citizenship Ministry (CMD) Director be appointed and approved by you personally.** We suggest the following criteria in choosing a leader for this ministry:

1. A leader who is highly respected in the congregation (could be a staff member, deacon, elder or other lay leader) and whom you personally respect and trust to be accountable to you.
2. He or she should be **Called** (*has a conviction and passion that we must be godly citizens*), **Capable** (*has leadership skills, people skills and experience in the “battle”*) and **Committed** (*will make this a priority ministry to assure its effectiveness*).
3. He or she will communicate with you regularly as you direct to serve as your “eyes and ears” for what is happening in the community, culture and government that is relevant to the mission of the ministry.
4. He or she will agree to participate in training and educational workshops sponsored by the area Pastor Council for Citizenship Ministry leaders.

PLEASE NOTE: *Pastor, this ministry will only be as effective as its visible, regular support by you from the pulpit. If it operates as an “unwanted stepchild” ministry it will flounder and become a frustration to you and to those serving in it.*

B. Recruit a Team – (Facilitated by Ministry Director)

Regardless of the size of your church, enlisting help from a team of believers who share interest in this ministry will accomplish many things faster and more efficiently, **however one committed person can accomplish much of this.** Delegating elements of the plan to others (with follow up of course!) spreads the load of the various tasks to minimize the problem of overload and burnout by a dedicated volunteer! We recommend you proceed as follows:

1. Make a list of men and women who you believe would be interested in being involved with this ministry. Request that an announcement be made from the pulpit and in the weekly bulletin to enlist volunteers.
2. Form a nucleus of people who are also called, capable and committed to serve as your ministry team leadership.
3. Establish a date for a formational meeting at the church (preferable) or a home to launch the ministry.
4. See **Appendix A** for sample agenda for the formational meeting.

C. Establish Mission and Goals

1. A sample mission statement could be as follows:

"The (Church) Citizenship Ministry is an extension of the mission of this church to impact our city, state and nation for Jesus Christ, bringing Biblical hope and redemption to individuals, families, and every institution of influence including education, media, arts, community benevolence and all levels of government."

2. Establish goals for AMERICA Plan (Appendix B) activities including:

- a. Voter registration (i.e. percentage of church registered by target date)
- b. Voter turnout (i.e. percentage that vote in each election)
- c. Issues and voter awareness (i.e. methods to keep church informed)
- d. Education and training (See **Appendix C**, Citizenship Education Outline)
- e. Community Service Projects (i.e. adoption, foster care, etc.)

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Maximizing Voter Turnout In Your Church

OVERVIEW: Every American Christian who is eligible to vote does so either:

- a) **By Absence** (failing to vote and allowing elected officials to be chosen by those who do not share the same values),
- b) **Carelessly** by voting out of ignorance or selfishness choosing ungodly or unrighteous leaders, or
- c) **Becoming informed** about candidates' positions on key issues, praying and **casting the vote** in a way consistent with Biblical principles.

We believe that it is a legitimate ministry of the local church to assure that our congregants are educated and active citizens, beginning with casting informed votes in EVERY election. The following plan can effectively be implemented in every church and we are asking that Senior Pastors commit to leading this effort and overseeing its completion prior to the next General Election. ***The righteous gain authority in this nation by God working through the choices of the people.***

VOTE 100 Plan – Sample

The basic objective of the VOTE 100 plan is for every church to achieve as close to 100 percent voter registration and voter turnout as possible in every election. Given that most elections are won in the fractional margins, if even ten percent more pastors and congregations with a Biblical worldview performed these steps each election, victories would resound in cities all across America.

Conducting A Voter Registration Drive

OVERVIEW

Changes in the laws regulating the process of voter registration have made it easier than ever to get registered. In addition, many churches conduct regular voter registration activities regularly to assure maximum participation. Their right to do so is clearly established in the Internal Revenue Code governing 501 (c) (3) non profit corporations.

“The IRS has ruled that even private foundations may support non-partisan voter registration drives. T.D. Release K-87, May 11, 1969”¹

The question, then, is how to conduct the drive in the most efficient and effective manner possible given the available manpower of the church. We suggest the three following methods of conducting voter registration, and we will propose them in the order of their efficiency.

NOTE: *Again, we recommend that the church Citizenship Ministry Director recruit a team to help. As we will discuss later, the Director and at least one other person should become certified Deputy Voter Registrars.*

I. In the Pews

Many pastors use the following method of actively promoting basic voter registration in their churches.

- One.** Qualify several members of the church leadership as deputy voter registrars to oversee the project. *(Contact local Pastor Council for assistance)*
- Two.** Acquire voter registration forms from the local (tax assessor/collector) or state (Secretary of State) election office in sufficient quantity based on church roster size or attendance.
- Three.** Schedule and promote several Citizenship Sundays prior to the voter registration deadline before each election
 - We encourage the church to promote CS opportunities in four ways:
 - (1) The church newsletter
 - (2) The Sunday church bulletin – use inserts if possible

¹ Political Activity by Clergymen, Alan Dye, Esq., Webster, Chamberlain & Bean.

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(3) Discussion by the Pastor from the pulpit

(4) The use of posters and a special booth – placed visibly

Four. On Citizenship Sunday:

1. Prepare ushers with a sufficient quantity of voter registration and mail-in ballot request forms.
 - a. The suggested amount would cover one-half of the adult attendance for each service.
2. Set up a table in each major traffic area of the church with one or more of the ministry team members in attendance to address any questions after the service.
3. At the appropriate time during the service, the Senior Pastor would address the issue of voting, and ask the ushers to distribute voter registration and mail-in ballot request forms to those who request them.
 - a. Ideally, time should be given for people to complete the forms and pass them back to be collected by the ushers. (An alternative would be to ask people to leave them with ushers at the end of the service.)
 - b. Ushers take all completed registration forms to the voter registration table where they are given to the Citizenship Coordinator.
 - c. All forms should be viewed for completion, and forms that are filled out properly are then mailed or delivered to the tax assessor/collector's office.

The Community Impact Chairman should contact any person within 24 hours whose form is filled out incorrectly or incompletely to assure accuracy.

II. In the Foyer

Another common method of voter registration is to simply set up a table or booth in the main foyer of the church where people can stop by before or after the service. Because most people have several different points in the church to attend, including Sunday School, taking children to their classes, pre-service responsibilities and other necessary demands on their attention, many people who are not registered will bypass a table – planning to “come back by later”. This method is less effective than “In the Pews”, but can accomplish the task if given the necessary promotion by the Pastor.

One. On Citizenship Sundays

1. Include bulletin inserts in order to alert people to the availability of voter registration.
2. Set up a table or booth in a highly visible location in the foyer and/or other high traffic areas with signage provided or prepared by the ministry team and approved by the Pastor.

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- a. Ideally, the table should be set up and staffed at least one-half hour prior to and after each morning and evening service.
 - b. CCM team set up materials, and at least two prepared volunteers serve to assist people who stop by prior to the service.
3. Mention the availability of voter registration during at least two points of the service, in order to maximize effectiveness.
 - a. First, draw attention to the registration table and the bulletin insert during announcements.
 - b. Second, and most importantly, the Senior Pastor should mention at the close of service that voter registration is available, and should strongly encourage that people who are not registered or are unsure of their voter status make the effort to go to the registration table before leaving.
 4. If a certified Deputy Voter Registrar, The CCM Chairman should personally collect all completed voter registration forms, and assure that each name is listed on the tally sheet for follow-up purposes.
 5. ***If Internet access is available*** near the table, set up a laptop computer to directly access the registered voter file of the county elections office for verifying voter information.

III. Through the church list or roster

This method is potentially the most accurate way of determining which members and regular attendees of the church are registered to vote. It can also be the most time-consuming unless using computer matching with the official registered voter list, and is best used after a Christian Citizenship ministry team has been more fully developed. We still encourage Method 2 (In the Foyer) to be used in conjunction with this process to make it more convenient for those individuals identified as unregistered to do so.

- One.** Acquire pastoral authorization for the CCM team to plan and implement this project.
- Two.** Acquire the most current church list for use (specifically with this project) within the guidelines of church policy regarding the active mailing list.
- Three.** Request a password for the voter management section of the HACP website. The passwords will be assigned for specific blocks of time to allow for rotation. Several people on the ministry team can use the password during that period, however they cannot log on at the same time.
- Four.** Divide the church roster or list into sections based on the number of individuals assisting.

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1. The size of the church list and the voter file will determine the number of volunteers needed. We suggest approximately one person per 100 names on church list
- Five.** Match individuals on the church list against the voter file to identify those who are not currently registered.
1. Each “no” should be marked for follow up
- Six.** Assign one or two team members to call those identified and let them know that a voter registration form will be mailed to them, and will also be available on Citizenship Sunday.
- Seven.** Project coordinator or CCM Chairman assures that forms are mailed within 48 hours.
- Eight.** Plan a follow up call night for two weeks later (or sooner if close to the deadline) to contact form recipients and determine if they received and returned the forms.

OPTIONAL: Report numbers of new voters and track activity

It is vital to maintain a database that contains a record for each church member in the categories listed below. A simple spreadsheet can be used or a more sophisticated program, but several individuals with good computer skills should be recruited and assigned to develop and maintain this file.

1. Voter registration number
2. Voting history
3. Issues interests
4. Activism (campaigns, political party, issues advocacy, etc.)
5. Citizenship Ministry involvement

NOTE: It is important to report the numbers of newly registered voters and the percentage of the church list registered (before vs. after the drive) to the HACP office. We are looking for documented increases in the number registered - generalities and guessing do not get us across the finish line!

Conducting Effective Voter Awareness and Turnout Activities

Registering to vote is like getting your driver's license – it's great to have, but you must get in the car and turn the key in order to put it to use. One great dilemma of the church has been how many Christians are not registered to vote, but an equal issue is how many “have their license” but rarely if ever use it. Failure to vote responsibly is a de facto stamp of approval on immoral, unjust and corrupt government. Just these basic steps taken in any church will increase the number of Christian citizens voting regularly and will help elect more godly leaders and promote righteous laws.

Objective

To maximize the number of citizens in each church who are verified to have voted in each election.

1. Suggested Plan (also see “Maximizing Church Vote”)

- One.** Senior Pastor designate a full or partial sermon on the “Biblical Foundations of Civil Government – Why We Vote!” on a Sunday prior to Early Voting.
- Two.** Place “This Church Votes!” or similar inserts into the bulletins to be distributed for the services as well as non-partisan voter guides on the Sunday before Early Voting begins and through the election.
- Three.** Set up an information table in the foyer staffed by the CCM team to answer questions about voting locations and other related issues.
 - i. Prepare workstation with iPads or laptops for church voters to find their Early Voting or Precinct Voting locations.*
 - ii. Have a sign up sheet for those interested in staying informed on important moral and policy issues.*
- Four.** At an appropriate time during the worship service, the Senior Pastor should discuss the importance of voting responsibly. He could then ask each person to rise who is an eligible voter and who is willing to make a commitment to vote, and “Stand for Righteousness” to illustrate their commitment.
 - i. Alternatives to this "optimum" approach would be for the pastor to urge the congregation to vote and mention the information table as well as identify the CCM Chairman as the contact for further information.*
- Five.** Distribute non-partisan voter guides or other voter education materials:
 - i. As church bulletin inserts, or*
 - ii. At the doors as people leave the service, or*
 - iii. By mailing directly to the church list*

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Recommended follow up on Monday and Tuesday, Election Day –

One. The Senior Pastor authorizes the CMD and/or Ministry team to schedule and coordinate a phone bank to call through the church list and remind people to vote.

1. *Scripting may be prepared and acquired from the Pastor Council*

Two. The calls should be made during the several days before and day of each election. (automated calls with a recorded message from the pastor are very effective.)

1. Please also use social media platforms and text broadcast to remind people to take the time on Election Day to cast a vote, regardless of the effort required!

Three. Have list of polling locations and extra voter guides available at the church on Election Day.

Four. Citizenship Ministry team could also coordinate childcare and transportation for those with such needs.

Summary

The task of increasing the informed voter turnout in your church is one of the most essential responsibilities of the Christian Citizenship Ministry. Remember that elections are won and lost in the margins - very often by 1 or 2 percentage points or even a few votes. **Every vote makes a difference,** and it may be **the** difference as seen in the "Just One Vote!" available at www.faithvotes.org.

THE AMERICA PLAN*

THE SEVEN STEPS OF EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP FOR CHURCHES

ARTICULATE A BIBLICAL POSITION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY

Teach sound doctrine; Address citizenship and current moral issues from the pulpit as appropriate; Speak to the crucial moral issues of the day from a Biblical perspective, and why Christians must be active citizens.

MOTIVATE CONGREGANTS TO BE GODLY, RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS.

Most Christians do not become effectively and Biblically involved in any ministry or take action related to cultural and political change unless inspired by their pastor, led from the pulpit and called to appropriate activity.

EDUCATE BELIEVERS ON THE "WHY" AND "HOW" OF GODLY CITIZENSHIP

Biblical Worldview; American Christian Heritage; Understanding the Biblical role of Government; and Effective Community Involvement.

REGISTER ALL ELIGIBLE ADULTS IN THE CHURCH TO VOTE

If a person is 18 or older and an American citizen, this is not an option! The goal is 100% registered, 100% voting.

INFORM THE CONGREGATION ABOUT IMPORTANT POLICY AND MORAL ISSUES

Pending legislation – local, state and national
Current moral issues – sanctity of life, pornography, gambling, marriage, Biblical justice, etc.
Candidates' character, philosophy and positions on vital issue

COORDINATE WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED PASTORS IN THE COMMUNITY

Establish a permanent, inter-racial, inter-denominational Pastor Council of senior pastors who will stand together, speak together and act together in your area.

ACTIVATE MEMBERS TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER, SERVICE AND CIVIC ACTION IN THE COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE BIBLICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE.

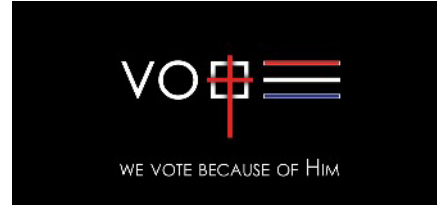
Create or support a **Christian Citizenship Ministry** in the church to facilitate the above activities in an organized manner, and to serve as the church's link to the community team.

FOUR STEPS TO COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION: 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

- 1. Pray, fast and repent- get our spiritual "house" in order *first***
- 2. Serve our neighbor - meet needs, share the Gospel**
- 3. Raise the standard of righteousness - get involved culturally and politically**
- 4. Reap the harvest - transformed lives, transformed culture**

** The AMERICA Plan was created by Dave Welch and is a resource of U.S. Pastor Council*

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2024 Texas General Election Key Dates

1. **Monday, October 7** – Last day to register to Vote in General Election
2. **Monday, October 21** – Early Voting for General Election begins
 - a. All voters can vote at ANY polling place within their county!
 - b. Very Important to Vote for **EVERY** position on the Ballot!
3. **Friday, October 25** - Last day to apply for Ballot by Mail
 - a. Visit harrisvotes.com for ballot request
4. **Friday, November 1** - Last day of early voting
5. **Tuesday, November 5** - General Election
 - a. Very Important to Vote for **EVERY** Position on the Ballot!
6. **Tuesday, November 5** - Last day to receive ballot by mail

“Bad politicians are elected by Christians who don’t vote.” – Rev. Billy Graham

WWW.VOTETEXAS.GOV * WWW.FAITHVOTES.ORG

*P. O. Box 692207, Houston, TX 77269 * (832) 688-9166 * uspastorcouncil.org*

“Maximizing Church Vote” Plan - 2024 Texas General Election

Note: All activities are non-partisan, non-issues specific and fully compliant with all IRS guidelines for churches with 501 (c)(3) non-profit status. For any questions regarding those guidelines you can go to www.uspastorcouncil.org or call **832-688-9166**.

Sunday, September 8 through Sunday, October 6 - set up a VOTER REGISTRATION and INFORMATION table to be staffed by the FaithVotes Citizenship Ministry team to register all voters who are not current, have moved or have never registered; Deputy Voter Registrar’s available. Deadline to submit new voter registrations is Monday, February 5.

Sunday, October 6 through Sunday, October 27 – Announce from pulpit and through all church communications the availability and convenience of **Early Voting that begins Monday, October 21 and ends Friday, November 1**. Voters in Texas will have important county, legislative and federal contests to vote on, so ALL voters are “on duty”!

Voters can go to <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml> to find their voting location. Harris County voters can go directly to www.harrisvotes.com.

Sunday, November 3 – *Use Pulpit Announcements, Screens, Bulletins, etc.* combined with video or sermon reference by the Senior Pastor urging ALL eligible voters to cast a prayerful, informed vote in the Primary Election AND attend their precinct convention.

Monday, November 4 and Tuesday, November 5 - Send a message via *broadcast e-mail* and/or *text broadcast* as well as on social media to church list with a special Get-Out-The-Vote message by the Senior Pastor and links to non-partisan voter education information. (Sample Text-based and HTML format messages available)

Monday, November 4 and Tuesday, November 5 - Initiate *automated phone calls* with a Get-Out-The-Vote script recorded by the Senior Pastor, calling through the entire church list on Election Day. (Sample script and automated calling support available)

Four Steps of Church Voter Engagement

STEP ONE: Voter PREParation – Year round

Biblical principles and purpose of Civil Government – WHY we vote; American Christian Heritage; Our Constitutional Self-Government; How to Biblically Decide for whom to vote (i.e. political party platform comparisons)

STEP TWO: Voter REGistration – Regularly and before each election

Identify and Train a Faith Votes coordinator and Team; Schedule VR at least once a quarter and designated Sundays before each election; Keep a list of new registrants, provide special encouragement

STEP THREE: Voter INFORMation – Designated Sundays before each election

Election Dates, Deadlines and Locations – EVERY election; Voter Guides – Information about candidates’ positions on crucial issues; Party Platform Comparisons – Candidates choose a party, the principles matter!

STEP FOUR: Voter ACTivation – Designated Sundays before each election

Pulpit Fully Engaged – Calling on EVERY eligible voter to participate in EVERY election; This Church Votes! – Election Sermon prior to start of Early Voting/Election; Election Follow Up - Pray for those elected and stay involved!

10 biblical reasons why eligible Christians must vote without exception in every election

1. All government authority and purpose is authored by and accountable to God. (*Genesis 1:27,28; John 19:10, Matt. 28:18*)
2. The primary purpose of civil government is to restrain sin and protect the lives, property and freedom of the innocent. (*Romans 13:1-7*)
3. In the United States, “We the People” are entrusted with the stewardship of God’s authority to govern ourselves, with which we delegate to others through our vote. (*Exodus 18:21*)
4. Voting is the transfer of authority, which is a tangible act involving an intangible power that includes lethal force. (*Romans 13:1-7*)
5. God’s authority to govern that involves lethal force to conduct justice flows from Him, to every eligible citizen (by birth over 18 or naturalized) to a candidate for every elected office in every election. (*Matthew 8:9*)
6. All governing authority is transferred in every election regardless of how many cast a ballot – EVERY eligible citizen WILL vote by either **a**) complete abdication (not registered), **b**) careless absence (registered not voting), **c**) selfish motives (“What’s in it for me?”) or **d**) active decision based on God’s principles. (go to polls, cast a prayerful, informed and biblical vote).
7. Christian citizens are ultimately most responsible for whether justice or injustice prevails in each city, state and nation. (*Jeremiah 29:5-6; 1 Samuel 8:6,7*)
8. Voting biblically is a simple yet significant way we can do something to preserve freedom in our nation. “All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing”, Sir Edmund Burke. (*Psalms 34:14*)
9. Voting is part of our stewardship to use all the resources we have been given in ways that honor God; to waste a vote is to squander a gift. (*Matthew 25:26-28*)
10. Voting is an irrefutable measurement of how much we love God and love people by assuring we govern God’s way to promote safety, peace and opportunity for all citizens equally. (*Mark 12:29-31*)

These and more resources are available at:

www.uspastorcouncil.org – Faith Votes

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