



TEAM VITAL

The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

Participant Workbook

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TEAM VITAL

**The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey**

Step 1: Preparation Work

To be completed before Team Vital Session 1

Goals

1. Assess your congregation's context for ministry.
2. Assess your congregation's assets for ministry.
3. Develop an initial vision for your congregation's ministry

Section 1 Understanding your Context for Ministry

As you prepare to begin your Team Vital journey we invite you prepare for the process, explore who you are as a congregation, and gain a deeper understanding of your context for ministry. This work should be done both individually and together as a part of your local Team Vital.

Bible Study

Read *Acts 2: 41-47* and use the questions below for reflection and conversation.

Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized. God brought about three thousand people into the community on that day. The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved. Acts 2:41-47 (CEB)

Questions for Conversation:

1. This passage provides one of the earliest descriptions of the church. As you read these verses, what was the church doing so that God would be adding to their number day by day?
2. In what ways do you see your congregation living as an "Acts 2" church?
3. Name one or two areas where you believe your congregation could grow its ministry to more closely resemble the early church as described in Acts 2.

MissionInsite

Register for MissionInsite* and create two reports:

- QuickInsite Report
- Quad Report.

Read and review the Quad and QuickInsite Reports, and discuss together the questions below to get a quick snap-shot of your community and church.

QuickInsite Report:

Use the information from the QuickInsite Report to complete the following chart on your community's population, diversity and income:

*If you have not previously registered for MissionInsite, you will find the instructions at www.gnjumc.org/team-vital/missioninsite. Register and create two reports: the QuickInsite and Quad Reports. Instruction are on the MissionInsite web-site: www.missioninsite.com. If you need assistance how to use the site, contact your district office.

	Community	Church
Population		
What is the projected population change (percentage) for your community for the next five years?		
In what age groups will you find the greatest shift (either up or down)?		
Diversity Indicate the breakdown by age group by percentages (note the four categories should equal 100%)		
What is the current average age of your community and church?		
Children and youth ages 0-17		
Young adults ages 18-34		
Adults ages 35 to 64		
Senior adults ages 65 and over		
Ethnicity Indicate the breakdown of the ethnic groups in your community and church by percentages (note the five categories should equal 100%)		
Asian (Non-Hispanic)		
Black/African American (Non-Hispanic)		
White		
Hispanic or Latino		
Pacific Island/American Indian/Other (Non-Hispanic)		
Income		
Average per capita income		
Average household income		
Anticipated change in the next five years indicated by percentage.		

Question for Conversation:

As you review the religiosity theme page, how does this inform the challenge that you face as a congregation in doing ministry in the next 2 – 5 years?

Quad Report:

Review the Quad Report together and discuss the following questions as a team.

Local Church Landscape (pages 7-9)

1. What do the statistics on Faith and Religious Involvement tell you about your community?
2. What does this tell you about the challenges for reaching new people for Jesus Christ?

Program or Ministry Preferences (p. 11).

1. Where are you doing significant ministry that you need to celebrate?
2. What interests and assets are already available to meet new areas of ministry in your congregation?

4x4 Neighborhood Walking/Windshield Survey

This activity will generate a fresh, first-hand impression of the neighborhood surrounding the church.

1. Select a day when all the members of your Team Vital are available.
2. Organize the team in pairs and assign each pair a small section of the neighborhood that they will observe for one hour while they walk, drive or sit.
3. Ask each pair to consider:
 - a. What has changed over the last five-ten years?
 - b. Are they seeing anything that surprises them?
 - c. Were they able to notice anything while walking or sitting that they might have missed if they were driving?
4. Have the pairs return to the church to debrief, record and discuss what they learned and what it tells them about the future ministry of the church.

Complete the following chart based on your 4x4 Neighborhood Walking experience:

Housing	
What is the age and condition of housing in the neighborhoods you're surveying?	
Are yards neat or overgrown?	
Parks and public spaces	
Are there public spaces where people can gather?	
Are public spaces well kept?	
Who uses these spaces?	
Is there diversity?	
Street use	
Are there people on the streets at most times of day?	
In the evening? How late?	
Do they interact with one another?	
Are streets and sidewalks well lit at night?	
Commercial activity	
What kinds of businesses are there?	
Are there boarded-up or vacant storefronts?	
Are there grocery stores, pharmacies, and other stores that provide necessities in all parts of the community?	
Traffic	
How heavy is traffic in the community?	
Is it mostly commercial and industrial – vans, trucks, etc. – or mostly private cars?	
Race/ethnicity	
Who lives in the community?	
Are there identifiable racial and ethnic groups?	
Do particular groups seem to live in particular areas?	

Faith communities	
What kinds of religious institutions are there?	
Health services	
How many hospitals and clinics are there in the community?	
Community and public services	
Are there identifiable community service providers and organizations in the community – mental health centers, food banks, homeless shelters, welfare offices, etc.?	
Overall impressions	
What is your overall impression of the community?	
What are the community's outstanding assets?	
What seem to be the community's biggest challenges?	
What is the most striking thing about the community?	
What is the most unexpected?	

What Are You Learning?

Discuss with you Team Vital the following questions:

1. What have you learned about your mission field?
 - a. What surprised you?
 - b. What was confirmed?
2. How are your current mission ministries reaching the people and places you discovered through MissionInsite and the 4x4 Neighborhood Walking/Windshield Survey?
3. What mission ministries are not translating and why?
4. Who is moving into your community?
5. What are the interests, beats and rhythms of the people in your community?
6. Is it reflected in your worship and ministries?
7. What are the people in your community looking for from the church

Congregational Assessment Worksheets

As a team, complete the following four worksheets:

Worksheet 1: Assets for Ministry

List the assets and the strengths that God has given your congregation that can be used to grow vitality in your church. Be specific and include the people, places, resources, programs, space and other strengths of your congregation and community.

Worksheet 2: Community Connection

How well does your ministry connect with the people in your community? Do the people in the pews look like the people in your community? Please provide examples.

Worksheet 3: Challenges for Ministry

What challenges does your congregation face to make new disciples and grow worship, small groups, community mission and giving?

Worksheet 4: Reality

What will happen to the congregation if you do not grow in the five markers of vitality in the next 3, 5 and 10 years?

Section 2 Claiming Our Purpose and Envisioning a New Future

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NSRV)

Questions for Conversation:

1. How has your congregation been living out Jesus' commission as recorded in Acts?
2. Where is your Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth?
3. How could you more fully embrace Jesus' commission to make disciples of all nations, and not just those who are near to us or comfortable to embrace?

Vision:

The vision of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey:

We see a church like Jesus Christ, radical spirit and humble, teaching and healing, soul saving and soul tending, leader and servant, unbound and outbound. We also see a Wesleyan Church, personal holiness and social holiness, connectional and risk taking, thoughtful and inspirational, small groups and large vision, welcoming all and respect for diversity of thought, practicing the means of grace.

Vision defines a preferred outcome for a congregation.

A preferred outcome means:

- resources and energy for fruitful ministry are aligned behind the same purpose,
- congregations give themselves permission to let go of activities and ministries that no longer meet the needs of the congregation or community, and
- leadership energy is focused and clear.

Thought for Reflection:

The church continues to move ahead when there are church leaders out in front dreaming dreams and casting a vision of the future for their members. . . A church without a clear vision is one without purpose or direction. Yet many churches don't take the time to articulate a clear vision for their church.

Archie Luper
certified leadership coach

Vision inspires a congregation to dream God-sized dreams.

God-sized dreams can:

- deepen a church's faith,
- be accomplished with the help of God,
- empower a congregation to ministry that might seem out of reach,
- stretch the imagination while providing direction and clarity,
- inform direction and set priorities, and
- challenge people to grow in ways that are exciting.

Guidelines for visioning:

- Project 5 to 10 years in the future.
- Dream big, and focus on success.
- Use the present tense.
- Use clear, concise language.
- Infuse your vision statement with passion and emotion.
- Paint a mental picture of you want.
- Have a plan to communicate your vision . . . to all
- Be prepared to commit time and resources to the vision you establish.”

(adapted from Business New Daily)

Questions for conversation on visioning:

1. What is the purpose of your congregation?
2. What would you like your congregation to become or look like in the future?
3. How do you envision sharing this God-sized vision with the congregation and community?

Action Steps

Please bring the following to Team Vital Session 1 so that you can discuss your findings with your peers:

1. QuickInsite Report
2. Quad Report
3. 4X4 Neighborhood Walking/Windshield Results
4. Congregational Assessment Worksheets
5. An initial draft of page ii of the *Vital Ministry Action Plan*. You will be building the plan throughout the Team Vital process



Step 2: Team Vital Session 1

Goals

1. Assess the congregation's worship ministries
2. Develop initial goals for increasing vital worship ministries in the congregation
3. Learn key characteristics of congregations that are making new disciples
4. Assess the congregation's ministries of welcoming disciples
5. Develop initial goals for disciple making
6. Learn about asset based ministry as a means of engaging in mission in the community
7. Review the assets of the church and community for doing mission
8. Assess the congregation's ministry of engaging in mission
9. Develop initial goals for mission ministry

STEP 2: TEAM VITAL SESSION 1

Schedule

Congregations sit at a table together for each training to facilitate conversation among team members

8:30 a.m.	Gathering
8:50	Opening worship/Bible study
9:15	Orientation and schedule for the day
9:25	Congregational sharing: (5 minutes per congregation)
	Introduce your congregation to the others with the following information:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In two to three sentences, describe your congregation's context for ministry2. What are three things that you learned about your community from your pre-work?3. What phrases have you come up with that describe your church's vision for what it would like to become?
10:05	Break
10:15	Section 3 Vital Worship
10:30	Conversation among teams about setting goals for vital worship
11:15	Congregational sharing: (2 minutes per congregation)
11:30	Section 4 Reaching and Making New Disciples
11:50	Working Lunch – Conversation among teams about setting goals for reaching and making new disciples
1:00 p.m.	Congregational sharing (2 minutes per congregation)
1:15	Section 5 Moving Mission from Deficit to Asset to Transformed Community
1:30	Conversation among teams about setting goals for mission engagement
2:30	Congregational sharing (2 minutes per congregation)
2:50	Review of homework and sending forth
3:00	Adjourn for the day

Bible Study and Worship

*Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You.
To see You high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing, "Holy, holy, holy"¹*

*Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!²*

Spiritual Reflection

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Matthew 22:34-40 (NSRV)

Wesleyan Means of Grace

Courageous and forward-moving congregations practice spiritual disciplines. John Wesley taught that God's grace is unearned and that we were not to be idle . . . but we are to engage in the means of grace. The *means of grace* are ways God works in disciples. They can be divided into *works of piety* and the *works of mercy*.

Works of Piety

Reading
Meditating
Studying the scriptures
Prayer
Fasting
Regularly attending worship
Healthy living
Sharing our faith with others
Sharing in the sacraments

Works of Mercy

Doing good works
Visiting the sick
Visiting those in prison
Feeding the hungry
Giving generously to the needs of others
Seeking justice
Ending oppression and discrimination
Addressing the needs of the poor

¹ Michael W. Smith - Open The Eyes Of My Heart Lyrics | MetroLyrics

² Clara H. Scott, 1841-1897 As

Questions for conversation:

1. What does Jesus' answer to the Pharisees tell you about his vision for faithful living?
2. How are you personally practicing works of piety and mercy?
3. How is your congregation practicing the means of grace together?

Review the work you have done on your *Vital Ministry Action Plan*. As a team, prepare to introduce your congregation to the other gathered teams by responding to the following three questions:

1. In two to three sentences, describe your congregation's context for ministry
2. What are three things that you learned about your community from your pre-work?
3. What phrases have you come up with that describe your church's vision for what it would like to become?

Section 3 Vital Worship



Thought for Reflection

How Christians ritualize their life together shapes how they live and serve in the world. If they do it well, their living and serving will mirror the love and power of the God they have enjoyed in worship. If they do it poorly, their living and serving will reflect the opaqueness of their encounter with God.

Daniel T. Benedict, Jr.
General Board of Discipleship, the United Methodist Church

Worship is the heart of the life and ministry of a congregation.

The United Methodist Book of Worship says that worship is an *encounter* with the living God through the risen Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every time we gather as the people of God in worship we have a unique opportunity to give thanks for all God has done in our lives, proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and join God in mission in the world.

Christian worship nurtures our relationship with God and others. The essence of worship is people glorifying God. It's important that it is *culturally relevant*, so people can truly and *actively participate* with head and heart.

When worship is alive, God's story in Christ is shared, Jesus Christ is proclaimed through passionate singing, inspiring preaching and the sacraments, and lives are transformed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Inspiring and life-transforming worship is:

- Genuine** a true response to God's grace, in Jesus Christ - a time of surrender
- Inclusive** all people are welcomed and included (all cultures, ages, and walks of life)
- Celebratory** everything done, leads people to a new and fresh encounter with Christ
- Inspiring** it speaks to the needs of the people by addressing real life issues contextually and in ways that are relevant to the community
- Indigenous** consistently reflects the best gifts of your particular people gathered in your particular time and place.
- Transformative** hope is awoken, wounds are heal, sins are forgiven, reconciliation is experienced, and people are empowered to witness the love of God in the world.

Use the space below for notes on worship presentation

Churches that display vitality in worship, often implement the following strategies:

- a mix of contemporary and traditional style of service
- more topical sermons, including sermon series in all of their services
- more contemporary music (less blended music that includes traditional tunes)
- more multi-media
- a team approach to worship development

Questions for conversation on vital worship

1. What makes worship vital and life transforming?

2. How is our church's worship life vital?

3. Who are we reaching, and who are we not reaching, in our worship experiences?

List three key learnings for you about vital worship

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Assess your congregation's ministry in worship

In the chart below, rate each of the five statements on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. These statements are based on how you view your congregation's ministry of worship.

The first column rates how important each statement is to you. The second column rates how well you believe your congregation is doing in this area. The third column should be left blank until the group discussion .

	Importance	How well is the congregation doing?	Group assessment
	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	
People regularly experience God's presence in worship			
Worship gatherings are inclusive and celebratory			
Worship inspires people to a deeper faith			
Worship effectively connects with younger generations			
In our worship, people testify about God's transformation in their lives			

Use this sheet to begin recording your ideas for worship

Fruit/Outcome	Worship								
Gifts/Involvement Resources	Worship								
Ministry/Activity	Worship								



Section 4 Reaching and Making New Disciples

Did you know?

An average church will lose about 10% of their members annually, and make disciples of 15% of visitors? A congregation therefore needs to attract the equivalent of 75% of their church size in different visitors each year just to maintain their current size.

The real issue for most churches isn't the process of joining the church. The challenge is being able to answer the question *why*.

- Why should someone come to your church?
- What does your church offer that is unique and valuable so that people will give their time, their talents, and their treasures to be a part?
- Why would a visitor choose to make a confession of faith and join your congregation?

A vital congregation is reaching and making new disciples by:

- Taking risks** Recognizes failure as a positive indicator of vitality
- Being flexible** Removes rigid policies and rules because they are barriers to growth
- Showing sensitivity** Welcomes people by being sensitive to context, language and culture
- Knowing its value** Understands what makes them unique in the community
- Having a clear vision** Keeps the momentum for and a focus on ministry
- Having visionary leaders** Understands that gifts need to be nourished
- Focusing outwardly** Moves from "come and see" to "go and be"
- Being irresistible** Creates an environment in the church the pew and the parking lot that attracts people
- Self-assessing** Improves and grow by assessing strengths and weaknesses

Key factors for reaching new disciples

- Exploring and talking about faith enables people to be more comfortable with “faith talk”
- Following up with visitors in ways that are appropriate with culture, age and experience
- Recognizing that milestone events in life open up opportunities for people to become involved
- Identifying and cultivating different ways for connecting with people including small groups and community service

Check list for welcoming and engaging people

- Do you have a welcome and warm atmosphere?
- Is your atmosphere authentic?
- Are visitors welcomed as friends and not treated as non-believers?
- Do you pay attention to communication vehicles by maintaining a website, being active on social media, printing well-designed bulletins or worship screens?
- Do you introduce new people to others in the congregation?
- Do you offer mid-week small group meetings to engage people?
- Do you start your worship service on time?
- Is worship thoughtful and prepared?
- Is worship inclusive for all ages?

Thought for Reflection:

Jesus laid the foundation for the church through relationships. His influence was (and is) indelible because he changed people.

David Kinnaman
author of *You Lost Me* and *unChristian*

Use the space below to make notes on the making new disciples presentation

Questions for conversation on reaching and making new disciples

1. What characteristics for reaching and making disciples by vital congregation do your church embody?

2. What are the challenges you face for reaching and making new disciples?

3. What is compelling about your congregation that encourages people to participate and attracts new people?

List three key learnings for you about reaching and making new disciples

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Assess your congregation's ministry in reaching and making new disciples



In the chart below, rate each of the five statements on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. These statements are based on how you view your congregation's work in making new disciples.

The first column rates how important each statement is to you. The second column rates how well you believe your congregation is doing in this area. The third column should be left blank until the group discussion.

	Importance	How well is the congregation doing?	Group assessment
	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	
We train our congregation on how to share their faith with others			
We have ministry designed to invite and reach new people			
We encourage our congregation regularly to invite new people to worship			
We encourage our congregation regularly to invite new people to small group ministry and mission projects			
We have a process for discipling new believers			

Use this sheet to begin recording your ideas for making new disciples.

Fruit/Outcome	Making New Disciples								
Gifts/Involvement Resources	Making New Disciples								
Ministry/Activity	Making New Disciples								

Section 5 Moving Mission from Asset to Answer



Thought for Reflection:

I think indifference to the mainline church results from a failure to connect the Great Commission to the Great Commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” Christians who embody these two directives will more fully embody a discipleship in Christ open to new ways of thinking, seeing and doing.

Understanding Asset-Based Ministry: A Case Study

First UMC has a predominantly African-American congregation and is located in an urban area. Over the years the neighborhood’s demographics have shifted and the community is now comprised mainly of native Spanish-speakers. First UMC finds their mission ministries waning, their worship attendance declining and their congregation no longer representing the people in the neighborhood.

In an effort to reconnect with the community, First UMC began to ask, “Who is my neighbor?” As they rediscovered their community, they also began to inquire, “What assets are present within our congregation?”

As they answered these questions, First UMC identified that they had 12 teachers within the congregation. As quality elementary education was a critical concern of their neighbors, First UMC began to offer an after-school program. Yet, unlike other after-school programs in the area, they also offered adult English as a second language classes concurrently. The mission ministries birthed small groups that eventually led to a second Spanish-speaking service on Sunday mornings.

In the story above, First UMC asked the *next* right questions:

- Who is my neighbor?
- What are our neighbors’ needs?
- What assets are present within our congregation?
- How might these assets be used to address the needs of our neighbors?

Use the space below to make notes on the mission presentation.

Questions for conversation on mission

In your preparation for Team Vital, your team gathered several pieces of data, including the MissionInsite reports, the 4 x 4 Neighborhood Walking exercise, and several congregational assessment sheets. Use the information from this data to help guide your conversation with the following questions:

1. What have you learned about asset-based mission ministry?
2. What assets did you identify within your congregation? Would you add any others?
3. What assets are within your community? How can assets within your congregation and community work in partnership?
4. How can you leverage those assets to fill gaps within your community in a *fresh* way?
5. How can the assets in your congregation and community become the “answers” to your community’s deep questions or needs?

List three key learnings for you about asset-based ministry

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Assess your congregation's mission ministry



In the chart below, rate each of the five statements on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. These statements are based on how you view your congregation's mission ministry.

The first column rates how important each statement is to you. The second column rates how well you believe your congregation is doing in this area. The third column should be left blank until the group discussion.

	Importance	How well is the congregation doing?	Group assessment
	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	
Ten percent of our worshipers lead teams of people and mission projects in the community or the world			
At least four times a year, we introduce hands on mission projects to the congregation			
We have enough outreach projects in the community or world to engage 50% of our worshipers			
Monthly during worship, a testimony is shared by someone who has participated in mission focusing on how mission has changed their life			

Use this sheet to begin recording your ideas for mission

Fruit/Outcome	Mission								
Gifts/Involvement Resources	Mission								
Ministry/Activity	Mission								



TEAM VITAL
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

Step 3: Team Vital Homework

Step 3: Team Vital Homework

Goals

1. Assess the congregations small group ministries
2. Develop initial goals for small group ministries in the congregation
3. Assess the congregation's ministry of generosity
4. Develop initial goals for ministries of generosity particularly for mission
5. Share with the congregation the experiences thus far in the Team Vital process

Section 6 Growing Vitality through Small Groups



Thought for Reflection

John Wesley wasn't persuaded that someone had made a decision for Christ until that person became involved in a small group.

Small groups deepen faith, create community and grow vital congregations.

Small groups are comprised of people who gather together on a regular basis with the goal of becoming more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ through a process of learning, support, accountability and service to the world.

People in small groups:

- experience deeper connection with other disciples
- engage in intimate faith conversations
- learn about the scriptures and faith
- help people to test ideas as they grow in their faith
- give people an opportunity to be supported through prayer and other caring activities

Key components of small groups include:

- Limiting the number of participants to 15
- Rooting the groups in prayer
- Meeting twice a month or more
- Facilitating sharing
- Planning for growing faith, spirituality and engagement in the world.

These components help build relationships among people and grow relationships with God. Groups of people meeting in your church that do not incorporate these components should not be considered a part of your small group ministry.

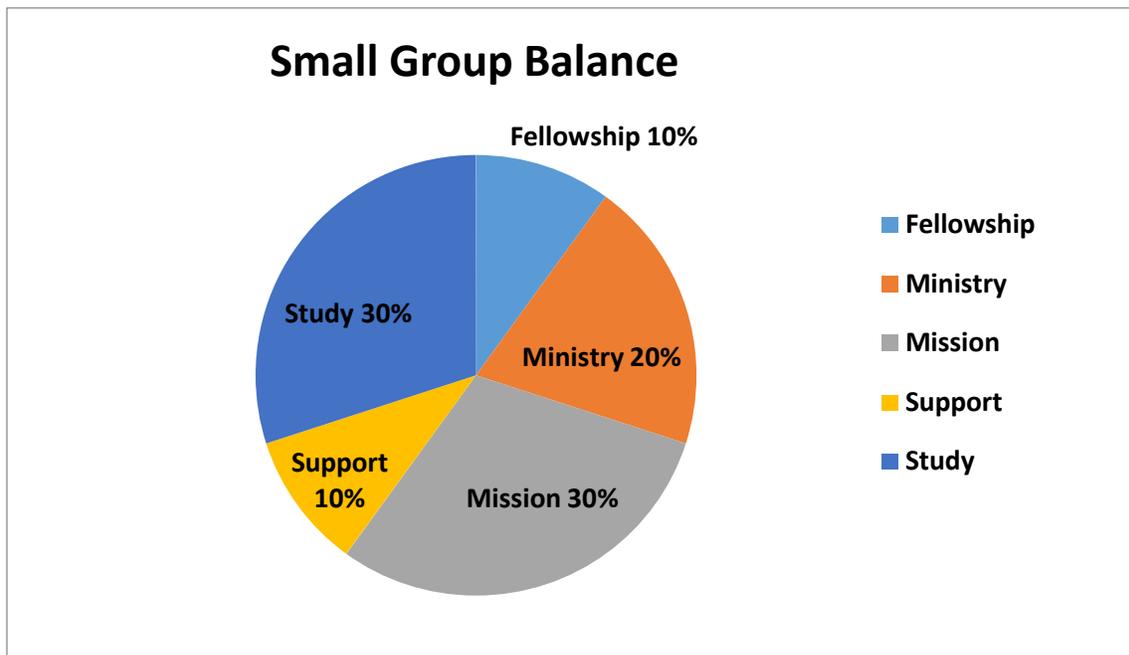
Steps to creating a Small Group Ministry

- Read resources and books about starting and launching small group ministry.
- Recruit and train small group leaders. Well-equipped, well-trained small group leaders improve the experience that leads participants toward discipleship maturity and involvement.
- Plan a one-month emphasis on small groups and encourage every worshipper to participate in a four-week small group experience.
- Keep starting new small groups until more of your worshippers participate regularly in a small group.

A balanced mix of small groups

Each congregation should consider a mix of small groups that appeal to the demographics of their congregation and vision of the congregation. Every congregation should use their own context when creating small groups. For instance, if you are in a community where there are a number of people in recovery, the number of support groups may be higher. If you have a justice-focused congregation, the number of your mission groups may be a little higher. But a healthy mix is critical for shaping and maturing disciples in their faith.

The following chart outlines an example for a healthy mix of small groups to grow depth and spiritual maturity:



Watch the video: Vitality through Small Groups

Use the space below for notes on the small group video presentation

Questions for conversation about small groups

1. As you look at your current ministry of small groups, what are the joys and strengths your congregation experiences?

2. What is one challenge that you face in growing small groups?

3. What would you like to see your small group ministry look like in three to five years?

4. What would need to happen for this vision to be realized?

List three key learnings for you about small group ministries

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Assess your congregation's ministry in small groups



In the chart below, rate each of the five statements on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. These statements are based on how you view your congregation's ministry with small groups.

The first column rates how important each statement is to you. The second column rates how well you believe your congregation is doing in this area. The third column should be left blank until the group discussion.

	Importance	How well is the congregation doing?	Group assessment
	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	
We have one or more small faith development group for every 10 worshipers			
We have small groups that meet the needs of a variety of age levels.			
We have a program to recruit, train and support small group leaders			
We have a sufficient number of committed and effective small group leaders			

Use this sheet to begin recording your ideas about small groups.

Fruit/Outcome	Small Groups								
Gifts/Involvement Resources	Small Groups								
Ministry/Activity	Small Groups								

Section 7 Generosity and Growing Vitality in the Congregation



Thought for Reflection

Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.
From John Wesley's sermon *The Use of Money*

Wesley made note in 1789 that the Methodists of his day were ignoring the third part of his sermon. In fact, Wesley argued that the primary reason for the ineffectiveness of the Methodist movement was due to their failure to give all they could. Wesley concluded that "If Methodists would give all they can, then all would have enough."

Wesley's admonition for Methodists to give all they could was not pious rhetoric designed to increase contributions to the church budget. It was a plea for generosity and a plea for compassion for the poor and needy. For Wesley, "money is an excellent gift of God, answering the noblest ends. In the hands of his children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked."

Ten Ways to Increase Giving

1. **Invite God into the mix:** We are God's people doing God's work. Giving is not about the church budget or paying bills. Giving is about mission, ministry and changing lives in the name of Christ.
2. **Be willing to talk about money:** Jesus talked about money and possessions 95 times in the gospels; more than any other single topic. We need to talk about the spiritual dangers of living a consumer-driven lifestyle and the joy and freedom that comes through generosity.
3. **Set leadership expectations:** The success and vitality of a congregation's ministry depends upon the vitality of leadership. The commitment of your leaders to excellence in their service to God, including giving, will motivate others.
4. **Teach, preach, and model tithing:** Tithing is a spiritual discipline that honors God and instills in the giver a spirit of generosity. Teaching, preaching and modeling help people to either begin or continue their journey toward tithing.
5. **Stop the insanity:** One of the leading reasons people give to an organization is the organization's financial stability and fiscal responsibility. Publishing the giving numbers each

week in the bulletin, which are almost always negative numbers, undermines the financial stability and fiscal responsibility of the church in the minds of our donors.

6. **Thank. Ask. Repeat:** Creating a cycle of thanking and asking is key to increasing giving in your church.
7. **Give a word of witness:** One of the most powerful tools for growing generosity in the church is telling the story of how the church is transforming lives through its ministry.
8. **Ask the right question:** Take a step back and ask the most important money-raising question: “Why would someone want to support our ministry?”
9. **Make stewardship year round:** For hearts to change, connect giving with mission and ministry all year. Preach and teach stewardship the entire year.
10. **Prepare to soar:** Unless we believe each of us was created by God to give, then everything about stewardship is simply manipulation, pressure, or gimmicks designed to separate people from their money. The most powerful stewardship scripture in the entire Bible is, “For God so loved the world that God gave...”

Watch the video: Generosity and Growing Vitality in the Congregation

Use the space below for notes on the generosity video presentation

Questions for conversation on generosity

1. In what ways does your congregation encourage generosity and giving through its ministries?

2. How can your congregation grow its ministry of giving, especially in the area of missions?

3. What are the challenges in growing a ministry of giving, and how might you address these challenges?

List three key learnings for you about generosity

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Assess your congregation's stewardship

In the chart below, rate each of the five statements on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. These statements are based on how you view your congregation's stewardship.

The first column rates how important each statement is to you. The second column rates how well you believe your congregation is doing in this area. The third column should be left blank until the group discussion.

	Importance	How well is the congregation doing?	Group assessment
	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	<i>Rate 1 - 5</i>	
Our pastor and key leaders at different times during the year share with the congregation why they give			
Each week prior to the offering, our congregation hears how their giving changed a life and/or makes a difference in a ministry			
Our pastor and key leaders are preaching and/or teaching on stewardship and generosity at least 2-3 times per year			
We conduct every year a stewardship campaign in which the congregation learns about giving and is offered the opportunity to make a financial commitment for the coming year			

Use this sheet to begin recording your ideas about stewardship.

Fruit/Outcome	Stewardship								
Gifts/Involvement Resources	Stewardship								
Ministry/Activity	Stewardship								

Action Steps

Using the ministry/gifts/fruits worksheets on worship, reaching and making new disciples, mission, small groups and giving continue to work on Vital Ministry Action Plan.

An electronic version of this form is located at: www.gnjumc.org/team-vital.



TEAM VITAL
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

Step 4: Team Vital Session 2

Step 4: Team Vital Session 2

Goals

1. Complete Vital Ministry Action Plan for growing vitality
2. Share plans with other Team Vital groups
3. Learn about next steps for moving the plan forward
4. Plan to create buy-in, develop partners, and use resources
5. Develop list of needs for follow-up resourcing including grant funding
6. Make a presentation of the plan that can be also shared with the congregation and church leaders

STEP 4: TEAM VITAL SESSION 2

Schedule

Congregations sit at a table together for each training to facilitate conversation among team members.

- 8:30 Gathering and Bible study
- 9:10 General conversation and report. Share findings from homework on small groups and generous giving.
- 9:25 Congregational discussion. Share within your congregation new information to incorporate in their own plan.
- 9:40 Break
- 9:55 Congregational discussion. Finalize ministry/gifts/fruit worksheets with attention to preferred outcomes. Work on Vital Ministry Action Plan.
- 11:10 Share with other congregations on Vital Ministry Action Plan.
- 11:55 Lunch
- 12:30 Section #8: Finish the Plan = Move into Action
- 12:55 Finalize Vital Ministry Action Plan
- 1:30 Present the plan
- 1:50 Celebrate and send forth

Bible Study

Just then a scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures tried to trap Jesus.

Scholar: *Teacher, what must I do to experience the eternal life?*

Jesus (answering with a question): *What is written in the Hebrew Scriptures? How do you interpret their answer to your question?*

Scholar: *You shall love—“love the Eternal One your God with everything you have: all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind”—and “love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Jesus: *Perfect. Your answer is correct. Follow these commands and you will live. The scholar was frustrated by this response because he was hoping to make himself appear smarter than Jesus.*

Scholar: *Ah, but who is my neighbor?*

Jesus: *This fellow was traveling down from Jerusalem to Jericho when some robbers mugged him. They took his clothes, beat him to a pulp, and left him naked and bleeding and in critical condition. By chance, a priest was going down that same road, and when he saw the wounded man, he crossed over to the other side and passed by. Then a Levite who was on his way to assist in the temple also came and saw the victim lying there, and he too kept his distance. Then a despised Samaritan journeyed by. When he saw the fellow, he felt compassion for him. The Samaritan went over to him, stopped the bleeding, applied some first aid, and put the poor fellow on his donkey. He brought the man to an inn and cared for him through the night. The next day, the Samaritan took out some money—two days’ wages to be exact—and paid the innkeeper, saying, “Please take care of this fellow, and if this isn’t enough, I’ll repay you next time I pass through” Which of these three proved himself a neighbor to the man who had been mugged by the robbers?*

Scholar: *The one who showed mercy to him.*

Jesus: *Well then, go and behave like that Samaritan.*

Luke 10: 25-37, The Voice



Questions for conversation:

1. If you were to rewrite this parable according to your local church's context, who would be the scholar, the traveler, the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan?
2. If you were the traveler beaten up along the road, from whom would it be most difficult to receive help? Who do you think God is calling you and your congregation to reach out to in your community or around the world?

*I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

*I'm gonna work so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

*I'm gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

*I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!*

Thought for Reflection:

The holiest moment of the church service is the moment when Gods people – strengthened by preaching and sacrament – go out of the church door in to the world to be the church. We don't go to church; we are the church.

*Canon Ernest Southcott
founder of the home church movement in England*

Section 8 Finish the Plan – Move into Action

Create buy-in

Over the past few months, your team has been actively involved in developing a Vital Ministry Action Plan for your congregation. The next step is to bring your plan to your full church leadership and then to your whole congregation. This creates buy-in, and with buy-in, the ministry can expand and engage more people.

Hopefully, the plan that you have been developing will suggest some changes that need to be made in your congregation. These kinds of changes may actually be shifting your church's culture.

Significant change requires a shift in culture.

A fatal mistake in culture change processes happens when a small group of people tries to force a new culture on to a larger group of people.

Dan Rockwell, Leadership Freak blog

Examples of culture shift:

- A church becomes more outwardly focused, looking to the mission field to guide its ministry plans.
- A congregation makes significant shifts in how it does ministry to welcome more families with young children.
- A church begins to do ministry with persons whose first language is different from the majority of current participants.
- A shift is made from scarcity to abundance, from fearfulness to generosity.
- Worship becomes an experience where worshippers give themselves to God instead of expecting to receive.
- A church moves from “filling station” to “mission station”.

Buy-in develops among people through:

- Interaction: Talk with leadership, your congregation, your community.
- Illustration: Tell stories that illustrate the changes you seek to make with your plan and why they will make a difference.
- Inclusion: Ask people in leadership and the congregation to be involved in the process of implementing your plans.
 - Listen to their ideas.
 - Be prepared to implement some of the suggestions that will move you toward a greater vision.
- Active participation: Give people in the congregation parts of the plan to work on themselves.

Questions for conversation:

1. What other church leaders (elected or not) do we need to be sharing our plan with?
2. What do we need to be asking others to do to carry out the plan that we have been creating?
3. What plan for accountability needs to be put in place so that the plan can move forward?
4. What stories do we already have to tell about how our renewed ministries are making a difference, and how will we incorporate these stories into the on-going life of the church so that the entire congregation is informed and involved?

Carrying out your plan

Filter your plan:

1. Do all aspects of the plan help you to move toward the vision for your congregation?
2. When your Vital Ministry Action Plan is carried out what do you envision your congregation will be like?
3. Is your preferred outcome something that is measurable?
4. Will the congregation recognize that there is something new and different?
5. Are the fruits and outcomes clearly stated and understood by the team in such a way that they can be interpreted to the entire congregation?

Reexamine the steps:

1. Does our plan include clear, measurable steps that will get us from where we are to where we want to be?
2. What resources and assistance will be needed to fulfill our plan?
3. What is the time-line for fulfilling our plans? Is this reasonable?
4. Who will be responsible for each part of the plan?
5. How will we hold ourselves accountable for carrying out the plan?
6. How will we know we have fulfilled our goals?

Follow up and resource:

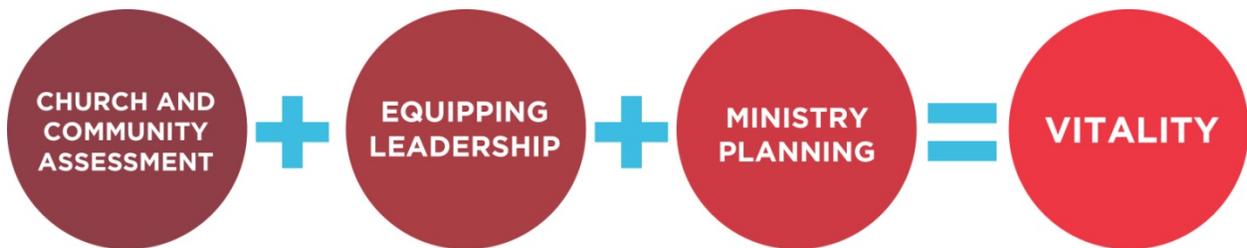
1. What part of our plan could be supported with the seed grant available to our congregation?
2. How would we use this grant money?
3. Who will take responsibility for filling out the grant application and submitting it for approval? By when?
4. What other assistance and resourcing will help us to move our plan forward?

Complete the roll-out and buy-in plans of the Vital Ministry Action Plan.

Presenting your plan

You will be sharing your plan with another team in the Team Vital gathering as a way of practicing and clarifying your presentation. As a team, take a few minutes to outline how you will present your plan and what you will include in your presentation. The feedback and questions you receive will encourage further clarity and focus so that you can have a concise, hope-filled presentation of your Vital Ministry Action Plan for your congregation.

Following your sharing with another team, you will be given several minutes to make a presentation to the entire group as a prelude to your sharing your work with the congregation. It is important to remember that we are all here together to learn from one another, to encourage each other and to support each other in ministry. Your presentation will not be judged or graded. This is a time of celebration that God has brought us this far. There is no telling where God will lead us as we move forward!



As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience . . . Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful . . . And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3: 12, 14-15, 17, NRSV



TEAM VITAL
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

Appendices

VitalSigns Dashboard

<http://vitalsigns.gcfa.org/>

The VitalSigns Dashboard is a tool developed by the General Council on Finance and Administration for the denomination. This tool allows your congregation to measure progress by tracking weekly worship attendance, professions of faith, small group participation, missional participation and financial giving in order to tell the story of vitality. As a part of Team Vital, you will learn how to use these metrics to assist you in measuring, assessing, shifting and reaching your goals.

The dashboard will help your congregation keep track of its effectiveness. Ask someone from the congregation to gather and enter the figures each week for worship attendance, professions of faith, small group participation, mission engagement and mission giving. There are other statistics that might be helpful to gather as well, such as the number of visitors, the number of visitors who return after their first week, and the number of visitors who become members or make their profession of faith. Over a period of months to years, you can assess the effectiveness of programs and ministries that are designed to grow your congregation's vitality.

For example, if your congregation begins a ministry of visitor follow-up. Over time, by monitoring the worship attendance and professions of faith numbers on the dashboard, you will be able to see whether this ministry is getting your preferred results. By linking activities to results, the church can determine what it is doing well and discern if this ministry multiplied or altered. It moves the leadership of the church from anecdotal assessment to factual assessment.

The numbers don't tell the whole story. Quality matters too. But each number is short hand for a person, a child of God who yearns for meaning and purpose in life that the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring provide.

PaCE : Pursuing Clergy Excellence peer learning groups

PaCE groups will provide facilitated peer learning opportunities for clergy in Greater New Jersey. Once the PaCE is launched for Clergy, laity leadership groups will also be formed. These groups can be formed to address a particular need that surfaces from Team Vital. PACE groups generate their own ideas and set their own learning agenda, covenanting together to work with a facilitator who helps to guide the group and maintain their agreed upon agenda.

Coaching

Pastors will have the opportunity to participate in coaching with a trained coach. Coaching is an opportunity for a pastor to have someone journey alongside them as they navigate the Vital Ministry Action Plan developed by the Team Vital participants. Coaching is designed to support and encourage a person to move to a new place, to ask the next best questions or find the next best solutions in the ever-changing work of ministry. Pastors who are participating in Team Vital are given priority for receiving coaching.

Grants

Upon completion of a Vital Ministry Action Plan for ministry, a church is eligible for grants of \$500 - \$2,000 to launch a part of their ministry. Grants are seed money to create opportunities for ministry that are tied to the Vital Ministry Action Plan developed by the Team Vital local team. Applications will be provided for all teams to complete.

MissionInsite Quad Report

The Quad Report provides a projection of likely religious beliefs, preferences and practices for a defined geographical area. It is based upon the Quadrennium Project national survey conducted by MissionInsite.

The Quad Report is divided into three sections, each providing a different approach to the data.

1. [The Story View Report](#) presents 10 indicators of your study area's likely religious beliefs, preferences and practices.
2. [The Theme View Report](#) provides projections for the study area across all of the variables in the Quadrennium Project survey. It is organized into three theme areas, called landscapes.
 - a. The Beliefs Landscape
 - b. Religious Affiliations and Preferences Landscape
 - c. The Local Church Landscape
3. [The Graph View Report](#) provides several graphs that reflect the more significant findings, most comparing the study area to the national average.

The MissionInsite Quad Report moves beyond the demographics of the population to religious attitudes and beliefs for the community at large. This is data that is difficult to find in other places. When viewed with the QuickInsite or FullInsite Report, also available through MissionInsite, your congregation can get a fairly good snapshot of the community and can begin to work on what it will take to reach people beyond your congregation.

Appendix B Example of Ministry/Gifts/Fruits Worksheets

Ministry/Activity	Gifts/Involvement/Resources	Fruit/Outcome
Worship	Worship	Worship
New worship services or different experiences to be added this year	What are the gifts and resources for worship within the congregation	Describe how your worshipping congregation will better reflect the diversity in your community
Topical worship series to be offered this year that connects with people in the community	Average # of worshipers goal and # of new guests goal for the next year	Describe how your worship will be more inspiring
What type of experimental worship ideas will be implemented this year	# of people in worship leadership that are different from your core worshipers (age, ethnicity, income level, educational attainment, gender)	Describe how your worship life will change
Reach & Make New Disciples	Reach & Make New Disciples	Reach & Make New Disciples
What activities will you start for non-worshipping community residents	What are the gifts and resources for reaching new disciples within the congregation	
How will you make your web page more engaging for the community and how will you attract the community to your page	# of new likes, followers and shares of Facebook posts	Describe the congregation's attitude toward reaching new people in a year
What will you do to invite people to Christian discipleship during worship or other activities	# of people in new members workshop	# of new disciples/professions of faith in the coming year
# of testimonies shared in worship, the newsletter or on the web page	# of non-worshipping community residents who participated with your worshipers on a mission project	What stories will new disciples be telling and how will they be telling these stories
# of updates/new stories added to website, Facebook page, and tweets	# of community children, youth and young adults who are not associated with your church that participated in an activity	
Small Groups and Ministry	Small Groups and Ministry	Small Groups
# of new small groups started	What gifts do you have for small group ministry # of new people in small groups	Describe how disciples will grow through a small group
What type and # of new children, youth or young adult activities	# of guests in small groups and ministry	Describe how the small group ministry will make a difference for people and the congregation

Mission	Mission	Mission
How will you invite and involve people in mission - mission fairs, testimonies, invitation to engage in mission	# of new people participating in a mission project	Describe specific ways your community will be transformed through your ministry (houses repaired, block cleaned, etc.)
What type and how many mission activities/teams will engage in the community	# of worshipers participating in mission teams and projects	Describe specific ways people's lives in the community will be improved because of your mission ministry
Giving	Giving	Giving
# of giving testimonies or witness shared in worship, in the newsletter and on the web page	# of new regular givers	Describe what mission giving will be like in a year
What type of stewardship campaign will you use this year	# of givers who increased their giving by 5% or more	Describe what will be people's attitude toward giving
	# of new tithers (giving 10% of their income)	

Appendix C 50 Ways to Increase Worship Attendance

The following list was prepared by Dr. Robert Crossman, Minister of New Church Starts and Congregational Advancement for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church

Improve the Attendance of Current Members

1. Strive to increase the number of times current members are in worship each year. Start with yourself.
2. At least once or twice each year, perhaps in the New Year's resolution season, teach and preach the importance of faithful worship attendance.
3. Invite church members to make a written commitment to grow one step toward faithful attendance.
4. Include a commitment to faithful worship attendance as part of a holistic annual stewardship commitment.
5. Keep a record of attendance and monitor it.
6. Know that it is important to respond to absentees before they drop out of active attendance. Once a regular attender misses six consecutive weeks, it is hard to return to the habit of consistent Sunday worship.
7. Form a worship membership care team to review attendance within 24 hours of each service.
8. Send a handwritten note (signed by the membership care team, not the pastor) to anyone who has missed three Sundays in a row. Say, *"Looking through the attendance slips, we've missed your name! Hope to see you next Sunday."* In a smaller church, the wording can be more personal.
9. Ask a personal friend (a choir mate, Sunday School class member, or someone who sits in the same pew) to telephone people who have missed four Sundays in a row. *"Hi John. We've noticed that Fred has missed church the last four Sundays. Can you telephone him this evening?"*
10. Maintain a loving, invitational relationship with those who have been absent for five or more Sundays. Never be judgmental.
11. Know that it is often very difficult to return to worship after the death of a loved one. Form a Grief Support Team to send handwritten notes monthly until the family has returned to regular Sunday attendance.
12. Telephone every household in the church and everyone who has ever visited to invite them to some special event four times a year. Say, *"Hi, We are calling everyone related to First Church this week, reminding everyone that this Sunday the choir is singing the Messiah. I hope you will be there."*

Invite New People to Attend Worship

13. Decide today to open your minds, hearts, and doors to new faces, even if it means changing your music, sermon content, Sunday School, and enlarging your personal circle of Christian friends.
14. Pray for the unchurched in your community. Pray for children being raised outside the church, couples in marriages that don't have Christ at their center, etc. But pray also for specific families and individuals -- friends, relatives, associates, neighbors -- by name every day.
15. Know that personal invitations are the most effective method of increasing worship attendance. Invest sixty seconds once a week to invite someone to attend worship with you.
16. Continue to invite a person every two months even if they decline your invitations. Those invited may eventually come to a season of life when they are receptive to attending worship.

Regular invitations are more likely to overlap one of these seasons.

17. Recycle your worship bulletins. Keep Sunday's bulletin in your car or on your desk until you have given it to someone along with your personal invitation for them to join you in worship.
18. At least once a year, perhaps in the pre-Christmas season, preach and teach the importance of becoming an inviting people. Invite the congregation to make a written commitment to grow one step toward faithful inviting and witnessing.
19. Distribute to members simple printed invitations during the Christmas and Easter seasons that they can give to family and friends. Print at the top of the card, *"If you are not active in a church, worship with us this season."*
20. Have a "Bring a Friend Day" or "F.R.A.N." Day -- a church-wide effort to bring a Friend, Relative, Associate or Neighbor. Select a Sunday when something special is happening, such as homecoming, the start of Vacation Bible School, or Christmas Eve. And prepare as you would for company coming.
21. Know that the people who are on the fringe of your church are your future, your prospect list, and your next potential generation of deeply devoted disciples. Avoid the tendency to denigrate or alienate those who are not yet fully committed disciples.
22. Find ways continually to invite these "near the edges" of your church, especially those who already have a positive impression of the church, such as those who have come to the church for a wedding, a funeral, or to vote and those who already worship a couple of times a year. Do not drop them from the newsletter or membership list.
23. Distribute door hangers in target neighborhoods near your church. It is more effective to cover the same 500 doors six times, than to do 3,000 doors one time.
24. Send mass mailers to targeted postal routes near your church 6 to 8 times a year. The back-to school season, pre-Christmas, and pre-Easter times are logical for these mailing.
25. Have a web site. Increasingly, people use the internet and Google the same way our grandparents used the Yellow Pages. The web presence can be very simple, a single page with a map, worship times, simple welcoming invitation, and contact information.

Make Your Church Visible and Attractive

26. Purchase permanent roadside directional signs to point the way to your building. If your building is not on the main highway, install a prominent sign on the highway.
27. Purchase temporary yard signs to put out for a few days and then remove. They catch the eye and are relatively inexpensive. They should be very simple with little wording, such as: "Worship 10 a.m. Sunday. You're Invited." "Easter Sunday 11 a.m. You're Invited"
28. Don't hide your cars. If there is parking in front of the building, use it. Cars in the parking lot lets the community know that something important is happening at your church.
29. Make a good first impression through the appearance of your building and landscaping. A well cared for exterior lets guests know that you are expecting company.
30. Clearly indicate the main entry to your building so that worship guests can find it easily.
31. Reserve the best parking spaces for guests. The pastor, staff, and church officers should park on the edge of the parking lot, leaving the best spaces for others.
32. Make the nursery the nicest room in the church to attract and keep families with young children. It should be clean and well equipped, in an easy-to-find location close to the worship space, and staffed with adults. As your church grows, you will need pagers, check in and check out procedures, and nursery staff wearing uniforms with a photo ID.
33. Have clean, neat Sunday School rooms for children. The Sunday School program should be well-staffed and well-resourced.

Welcome Worship Guests Warmly

34. Greet guests when they first arrive in the parking lot. Give a couple of people orange vests and have them wave and smile as cars pull in. On rainy days, they can escort people to the door under a church umbrella. If the lot is large, they can drive folks to the door in golf carts.
35. Greet guests as they arrive at the door, saying "Good to see you. Glad you are here." Do not ask for their names as many guests are cautious and prefer anonymity. The larger the church, the more this is true.
36. Clearly mark the rest rooms, nursery, and worship rooms. In a large building with a complicated layout, have greeters stand at the intersection of hallways ready to escort guests who are unsure about finding their way.
37. Find a way to acknowledge and welcome guests in worship without singling them out or embarrassing them. In many communities, guests prefer to be anonymous so don't ask them to stand and introduce themselves.
38. Have an easy and readily available method for worship guests who wish to give you their name and contact information.
39. Practice the "Circle of Ten." Encourage church leaders to personally greet everyone -- member or guest -- who may sit within ten feet of them on Sunday.
40. Know that guests typically leave the building within three minutes after the service. Encourage church leaders to follow the "Rule of Three," devoting the first three minutes after the benediction to speaking with they don't know before speaking to family and friends.
41. Have greeters at all the exits, smiling, shaking hands, and simply saying to members and guests as they leave, "*Glad you were here. I hope to see you next Sunday.*"
42. Start a "First Friends" ministry as a way to reach a new age, racial, or cultural group. Train a pool of people, from a variety of ages and stages of life, to watch for first time guests, sit by them, treat them to lunch, and telephone them the next Saturday inviting them to Sunday worship.

Make Worship Accessible to Newcomers

43. Make your worship bulletin or screens visitor friendly. Include the actual words, or at least the page numbers, for any songs or responses commonly known to members but not newcomers.
44. Preach sermons that don't assume familiarity with the inner workings of the church or a high level of previous biblical knowledge.
45. Present all musical offerings well and in a style most likely to appeal to worship guests.
46. Consider adding an additional worship service to reach new people who would prefer a different time; or to reach new people who would prefer a different style of worship and music.
47. Start a new church or a second worship site at a different location as a way of increasing attendance.

Follow Up with Visitors

48. Develop a systematic plan for following up with visitors after their first, second, and third visits.
49. One model some use includes 1) follow up with first-time visitors with a doorstep visit before 3 p.m. that same Sunday, a letter or telephone call from the pastor within 2 days, and placement on the newsletter and email lists; 2) follow up with second-time visitors with telephone call within 36 hours from someone related to the visitor's interests or needs – for example, a Youth Minister, or Sunday School Teacher, or Choir Director; and 3) follow up with persons who visit a third time with a telephone call to request a home visit.
50. Invite newcomers who have visited in recent months to an informal coffee with the pastor or other social gathering that includes fellowship and information.

Appendix D Stewardship

1. Invite God into the mix.

“Stewardship is a journey that is grounded in gratitude, revealed in prayer, and lived in faith.”

Kristine Miller

We must remember and remind people that we are God’s people doing God’s work and giving is not about the church budget or paying bills. Giving is about mission, ministry, and changing lives in the name of Christ.

2. Be willing to talk about money.

“A wise man should have money in his head, but not in his heart.”

Jonathan Swift

Jesus talked about money and possessions 95 times in the gospels; more than any other single topic. We need to talk about the spiritual dangers of living a consumer driven lifestyle and the joy and freedom that comes through generosity.

3. Set leadership expectations.

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

John Quincy Adams

Remember, the success and vitality of your congregation’s ministry depends upon the success and vitality of your leadership. The commitment of your leaders to excellence in their service to God, including giving, should motivate others to become more involved in your ministries.

4. Teach, preach, and model tithing.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:1

Givers tend to fall into one of four categories: tithers, proportional givers, flat-amount contributors, and token contributors. One of the keys is to help people to either begin or continue their journey toward tithing. Tithing is a spiritual discipline that honor’s God and instills in the giver a spirit of generosity that permeates every aspect of their life.

5. Stop the insanity.

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

Albert Einstein

J. Cliff Christopher, in his book, *Not Your Parent’s Offering Plate*, states that one of the leading reasons people give to an organization is the organization’s financial stability and fiscal responsibility. In publishing the giving numbers each week in the bulletin, which are almost always negative numbers, we undermine both the financial stability and fiscal responsibility of the church in the minds of our donors.

6. Thank. Ask. Repeat.

“Saying thank you is more than good manners. It is good spirituality.”

Alfred Painter

Creating a cycle of thanking and asking is key to increasing giving in your church. Saying thank you is a critical component of any stewardship efforts and allows you to model gratitude to the congregation. If you have not said thank you, you have no right to ask for another gift!

7. Give a word of witness.

“You are not in the business to balance budgets or manage money. You are in the business to change lives for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that’s it!”

J. Cliff Christopher

One of the most powerful tools for growing generosity in the church is telling the story of how the church is transforming lives through its ministry. The stories could include personal transformation, spiritual growth, what it means to be part of the church, and what the church has meant in my life.

8. Ask the right question.

“A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Churches are tempted to begin their stewardship work with the question, “How can we raise more money?” I think we should take a step back and ask the most important money-raising question: “Why would someone want to support our ministry?” By focusing on the question *why* instead of *how* the mission and vision of the church will be articulated and fulfilled.

9. Make stewardship year round.

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

In order to experience healthy giving and generosity don’t limit the focus on stewardship to the fall season or the annual campaign. For hearts to change, connect giving with mission and ministry all year long as well as preach and teach stewardship the entire year.

10. Prepare to soar.

“Giving is what we do best. It is the air into which we were born. It is the action that was designed into us before our birth.”

Eugene Peterson

Appendix E Smart Goals

<p>Specific</p>	<p>A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six “W” questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who: Who is involved? 2. What: What do I want to accomplish? 3. Where: Identify a location. 4. When: Establish a time frame. 5. Which: Identify requirements and constraints. 6. Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal. <p>EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, “Get in shape.” But a specific goal would be, “Join a health club and workout 3 days a week.”</p>
<p>Measurable</p>	<p>Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward reaching each goal. When you measure progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.</p> <p>To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much? 2. How many? 3. How will I know when it is accomplished?
<p>Attainable</p>	<p>When you identify goals that are important to you, you find ways to make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills and financial capacity to reach them. You see previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.</p> <p>You can attain most any goal you set when you :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. plan your steps wisely 2. establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps.
<p>Realistic</p>	<p>You must be both <i>willing</i> and <i>able</i> to meet a goal. A goal can be both high and realistic. You are the only one who can decide how high to set a goal. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs seem easy simply because they are a labor of love. To make a realistic goal, ask yourself if you have accomplished anything similar in the past and what conditions were required to accomplish it.</p>
<p>Timely</p>	<p>A goal should be grounded within a time frame to create urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs, when do you want to lose it by? “Someday” won’t work. If you anchor it to a timeframe of May 1, then you’ve set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal. Your goal is probably realistic if you truly <i>believe</i> that it can be accomplished.</p>

Appendix F 6 Month Follow-Up Discussion Questions



1. What are you learning about yourself?
2. What are your greatest assets (resources and strengths) as a congregation?
3. What are you learning about your mission field?
4. What are the needs and issues in the community where you serve?
5. Which of the five areas of vitality do you do really well? Which are growth areas for you?

