

Developing Your Ministry Plan Webinars



Part 1: Congregational DNA

Part 2: Discovering your Congregation's Niche

Part 3: Discovering your Discipleship Process

Part 4: The Next 12 Months

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Developing Your Ministry Plan Webinars

Make copies of this material for each person on your team. This provides you with the material that will be used in the four-part series. You also can download the presentation slides for each webinar to use with your church. Go to www.scdnetwork.ning.com and click on Ministry Plan Webinars to download presentation slides and other support materials.

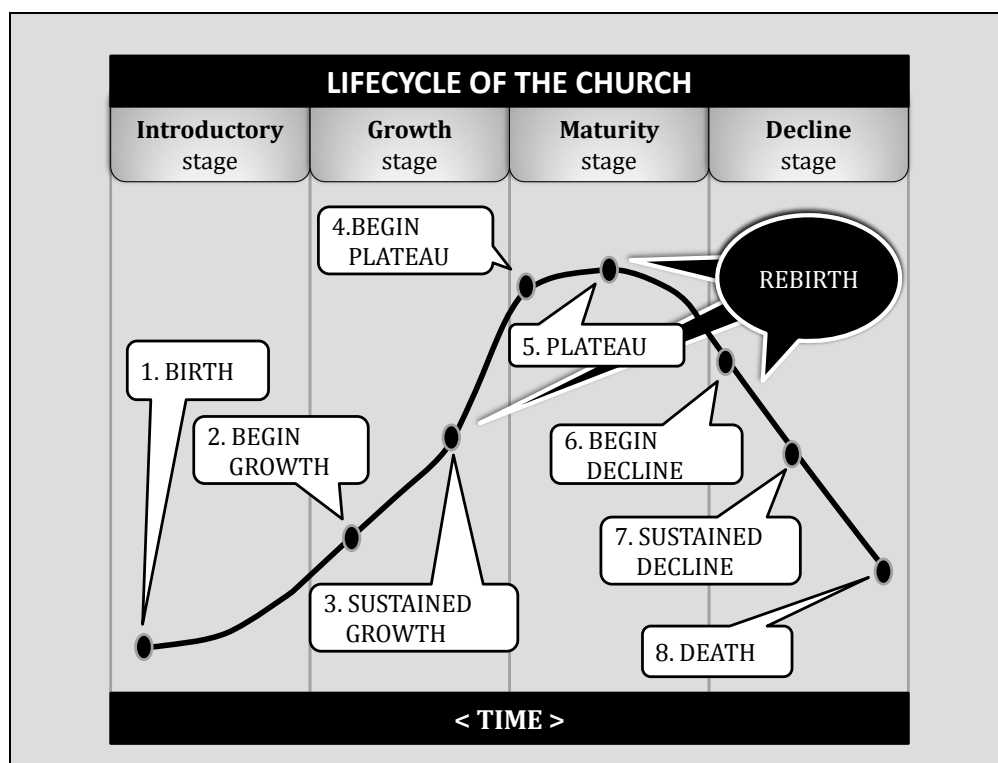
Ministry Plan 1: Congregational DNA

Lifecycle of the Church

The Lifecycle of the Church is a tool that has been used for many years in the field of congregational development as a way to understand the different stages congregations move through as they age and grow. There are many variations of this that have been used over the years. The basic premise is that once a congregation understands where it is in its lifecycle it can then make the decisions necessary to bring about renewed vision and life. There are two kinds of improvements congregations can make to bring about change that gives new vitality to the ministry:

Incremental improvement builds on current strengths to move forward. For example, if someone is in good health, incremental improvement may be to lose five pounds and walk five times a week instead of three.

Radical improvement needs to happen when the whole system is in danger. For example, a person who discovers he or she is a diabetic will have to radically change his or her diet and develop a whole new exercise program. The same is true for ministry. If a ministry is in the Introductory and Growth Stages of the lifecycle and it is doing well, chances are Incremental Improvement is needed. If it has reached the Decline Stage, it probably needs Radical Improvement. During the Maturity Stage as the ministry moves towards plateau, either one of these types of improvement may be needed.



Introductory Stage: All ministries have a start. A person or a team of individuals discovered an unmet need in the community and designed a ministry to meet that need. Before budgets, buildings, or the first public gatherings, a vision to meet this need was articulated. As this vision spread, a strategy was designed, a team was put together, and the first baby steps were taken. This stage is filled with excitement. It is during this stage that **Step One: Birth** takes place.



Growth Stage: As people gather around the vision, the ministry moves into a growth stage. As people are enlisted, systems for growth are put in place. The Growth Stage starts with **Step Two: Begin Growth** and moves into **Step Three: Sustained Growth**. As the ministry grows, more people connect to the vision. A church will see growth in worship attendance and growth in spiritual maturity as people participate in small groups, Christian formation, and ministry to those outside the church. A youth ministry will see a growth in participants and spiritual maturity. An outreach ministry will see a growth in people served. A regional ministry, with the goal to equip and build up local churches, will see sustained growth among the churches served.

Maturity Stage: As ministries grow, they move into a stage that is marked by higher levels of activity, but lower levels of excitement. In many cases, ministries lose sight of the original vision. The original vision casters may no longer be part of the ministry. While their systems may be efficient, those in ministry do not remember why they are doing them. During Maturity, two steps take place. **Step Four: Begin Plateau** starts when ministry results begin to level off. For example, if a church has moved from a 7% growth in worship attendance to 2%, it is moving into plateau. At **Step Five: Plateau**, worship attendance levels off with no growth. During Maturity, a ministry still has the resources and energy to move back into the growth stage if it is willing to revisit its vision and develop new strategies to move it into a positive future.

Decline Stage: The decline stage is marked by little action and a lack of enthusiasm. The further into decline a ministry goes, the harder it is to turn around. **Step Eight: Begin Decline** is experienced as numbers in worship, small group participation, and finances decline. By the time a ministry gets to **Step Seven: Sustained Decline**, the ministry is near death.

Rebirth happens when a ministry seeks God with all its heart to recapture its first love of God, and then takes a fresh look at all it does in order to effectively reach the people who now live within the sphere of its influence. Rebirth can happen at any stage of the process and becomes essential during the Maturity Stage.

What about death? In some cases, a ministry has reached such a stage of decline that **Stage Eight: Death** is the best option. Instead of pouring in time, energy, and finances to keep it alive, it is better to let the ministry go and put those resources to better use.

Your Church and The Lifecycle:

Where are you on the lifecycle?

Does your congregation need incremental change or radical change?

Are you ready for Rebirth?

Congregational DNA:

Together your Discipleship process, Niche, and Affection make up the DNA of your congregation. By focusing on these three critical areas you can create a disciple-making faith community: a congregation that effectively creates new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

D – Discipleship Process

N – Niche

A - Affection

For the purpose of this plan we will look first at Affection, Niche, and then the Discipleship Process.



Affection

As a congregation whom do you love? Affection is expressed by the way we love God and neighbor. Both our spiritual life and our witness through service in the church and community tell people how much we love in the name of Jesus. Our affection is most clearly seen in who participates in our church and who is welcomed to join those who are already part of the community of faith. Leaders in the church set the standard of affection for the whole congregation.

Who do you Love?

We invest our time, finances, and focus on the people and purposes we love.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21)

Just like individuals, congregations invest their resources on the people and purposes that are most important to them.

Home & Family	Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Tech • Upgrades • Garden • Education • Music/sports lessons • Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings • Grounds • Children & youth • Music • Community • Staff

Budget Breakdown

MORTAR	MISSION	MINISTRY/ DISCIPLESHIP	LEADERSHIP
Debt Reduction	Apportionments	Worship	Vision Casting
Facilities Upkeep	Local outreach	Discipleship	Administrative
Capital Improvements	Global outreach	Children, youth, young adults, older adults	Support services for all other ministries
Personnel: <i>Custodial, gardening, etc.</i>	Personnel: <i>Staff related to ministry in the community or global initiatives, etc.</i>	Personnel: <i>Choir director, paid musicians, staff related to specific ministries like Children's Director Youth Director, Discipleship, Visitation, etc.</i>	Personnel: <i>Lead Pastor, administrative staff, pastor's assistant, church secretary, treasurer, etc.</i>
Based on <i>Change the World</i> by Mike Slaughter			

How to Use the Budget Breakdown

You will need a copy of your church budget and a whiteboard, blackboard, or newsprint.

1. Make a five-column box on a whiteboard, blackboard, or newsprint as follows:



Categories	Mortar	Mission	Ministry/Discipleship	Leadership
Expenses				
Total Expenses				
Percentage of the total				

- List your budget items in the categories, using the Budget Breakdown categories as a guide. In a church where the pastor is the only ministerial staff, you may divide the salary expenses across the different categories (for example, Leaders 50%, Ministry 25%, and Mission 25%).

Also, remember to place personnel related to specific categories (Mortar, Mission, Ministry/Discipleship, & Leadership).

- Add up the different columns to get your total expenses for each category
- Determine the percentage for each column.
- Questions for reflection:
 - Where is your passion as a church?
(Children? Youth? Older adults? Local community? Ministry outside your community?)
 - How is your paid and unpaid staff & volunteers positioned to support what is most important to your church?
 - What is the most positive aspect of your budget?
 - What needs the most improvement?

Spiritual Life of the Leader

The Spiritual Life Template is a tool to help you share with others your spiritual journey. This can be used in a small group accountability setting or with leadership groups to help people talk about their spirituality.

- In which spiritual discipline(s) do you want to grow?**

One of the foundational aspects of United Methodist Christians is the way they approach the spiritual life as an ongoing process of growth and maturity. The early Methodists talked about Wesley's Means of Grace, that through the practice of spiritual disciplines a believer's life is formed in Christ. In the earliest forms, Methodists met on a regular basis in classes to hold one another accountable for the way they were growing in faith in practice.

- What is your plan for continued spiritual growth and development?**

How do you connect with God? It is easy to get so caught up in the work of the church that we forget that at its most basic level Christianity is about having a relationship with God through our faith in Jesus Christ. Paying attention to our relationship with God is key to our personal vitality.

How are you connecting with others? Like our relationship to Jesus, our relationships with those around us need our attention and focus. Each moment we spend with another person is an opportunity to share the grace of the moment. Just as others need us, we need them to shape us and to form us into mature followers of Jesus Christ.

What arts feed your soul? The Creator has equipped us to be creative. Take time to develop your artistic side – it will both feed you and connect you to others in different ways.

How are you taking care of your body? We are physical beings and as a result the way we take care of our bodies affects every aspect of our relationship to God and to others. When we invest time in exercise and healthy eating we are enhancing our ability to be effective in ministry.



Spiritual Life Template

1. In which spiritual discipline(s) do you want to grow?

- ☐ Weekly worship
- ☐ Daily Bible reading
- ☐ Daily prayer
- ☐ Frequency of communion:
 ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Other
- ☐ Service to others
- ☐ Fasting or abstinence
- ☐ Tithing/Giving
- ☐ Family prayer
- ☐ Other: _____

Tip: How does your church teach & mentor people in these disciplines?

Wesley's Means of Grace

- **The public worship of God**
- **The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded**
- **The Lord's Supper**
- **Family and private prayer**
- **Searching the Scriptures**
- **Fasting or abstinence**
- **Christian conferencing**

(Paragraph 62, p. 70 in the 1996 Book of Discipline)

2. What is your plan for your continued spiritual growth and development?

How do you connect with God?

- ☐ Day apart
- ☐ Worship
- ☐ Meeting with a prayer partner or coach
- ☐ Family prayer
- ☐ Daily devotion
- Other: _____

How are you connecting with others?

- ☐ Time alone with spouse or friend
- ☐ Focused time with your children
- ☐ Regular connection with extended family
- ☐ Prayer or accountability group
- ☐ Time with friends outside of church
- Other: _____

What arts feed your soul?

- ☐ Playing a musical instrument or singing
- ☐ Writing ☐ Drawing ☐ Cooking ☐ Dance
- ☐ Gardening ☐ Acting Other: _____

How are you taking care of your body?

- ☐ Walking/running ☐ Active in a sport
- ☐ Healthy diet ☐ Yoga/Pilates
- Other: _____

Tips

As a spiritual leader you are creating the normative expectations for spiritual growth in your congregation and for those close to you (friends & family). Your prayer life, physical health, artistic pursuits, and relationships have a direct influence on the spiritual life of your church. Build in the time and experiences that sustains you and connects you to God and others.



Ministry Plan 2: Discovering your Congregation's Niche

Niche

What makes your congregation unique? Each congregation offers a spiritual alternative to its community. The type of people that are attracted to the church is dependent on your niche. Use the following questions to define your niche.

Nexus: What is the center of congregational life? (for some congregations it may be worship, for others small group Bible studies or ministry to children – what is it that drives or holds the congregation together?)

Innovation: What ways do you adapt to the culture of the community in order to share the gospel in a way that connects? (a website that allows people to learn about your church before they come to worship is an example of an innovation that connects with changing culture).

Context: What are the demographics of the community in which your church resides – ethnicity, language, age, income, and marital status? (use a demographic profile from your conference or from the U.S. Census or Zillow to fill out – see www.scdnetwork.ning.com for more information on how to use online resources for this task)

	Community	Congregation
Racial Ethnic Make-up		
Languages spoken		
Age		
Income level		
Marital Status		

Hopes & Dreams: What are the hopes and dreams of the people who live in the community?

Experience: What is unique about what you have to offer in the context of community life (sports, non-profits, business)?

Demographics by Walking Around

In preparation for your next group session, visit at least three businesses you normally do not visit in your community (restaurants, stores, etc.). You can visit more than three if you want to. Fill out the Demographics by Walking Around Worksheet for each visit and bring it to your next session for discussion (you can make a copy on the next page or download from www.scdnetwork.ning.com under the Ministry Plan Webinars).



Demographics by walking around: Business:_____ Assignment: As you go to a business, see whom they are trying to reach.
How are they positioning themselves? (whom are they trying to reach)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atmosphere ▪ Dress code ▪ Type of product (food, clothing, etc.) ▪ Music in the background
Do the customers reflect the target audience?
How well does the staff reflect the customers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dress code ▪ Way they respond to customers ▪ Do they know their product?
Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you feel welcomed? • Did you receive what you requested? • Were you served in a timely fashion?
What implication does this have for your church?
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> www.scdnetwork.ning.com ©2013 Craig Kennet Miller, GBOD Reproducible </div>

Demographics by Walking Around Reflection

Have each team member take out their Demographics by Walking Around surveys so you can share your experiences with one another.

On a white board, chalk board, or an easel, make the following columns. Have each person share their experiences, and make notes as you share.

Businesses	Who are they reaching?	Do customers reflect the target audience?	Does the staff reflect the customers?	Service

After hearing all the reports, ask "What are the implications for our church?" Put the answers up for all to see and share with one another what you have learned.

Discovering your Congregation's NICHE



On a white board, chalk board, or an easel, make the following columns. As a group, discuss each element of the NICHE. For each element, first talk about Your Community and then Your Church. Have one member of your team keep notes for future reference.

NICHE	Your Community	Your Church
<u>Nexus</u>	What brings people together in your community (sports teams, schools, shopping areas, government)?	What is at the center of your life as a congregation?
<u>Informed</u>	Who do people listen to in your community (media, city leaders, resident historians, community leaders, religious leaders)?	How are you actively listening to what is happening in the community?
<u>Context</u>	What are the three most important factors that are shaping the future of your community?	In what ways are the ministries of your congregation influenced by these factors? What three things do you need to be paying attention to?
<u>Hopes & Dreams</u>	What are the hopes and dreams of new people coming to your community?	What are the hopes and dreams of people who are active in your church?
<u>Experience</u>	What experiences gather people together in your community (sports, concerts, community events, movies, etc.)?	What is unique about what you have to offer in the context of community life?

1. What is the most significant thing you have learned about your community's NICHE?
2. What is the most significant thing you have learned about your congregation's NICHE?
3. Write down three actions your church must do to make a connection between the people who live in your community and the people who are active in your church.

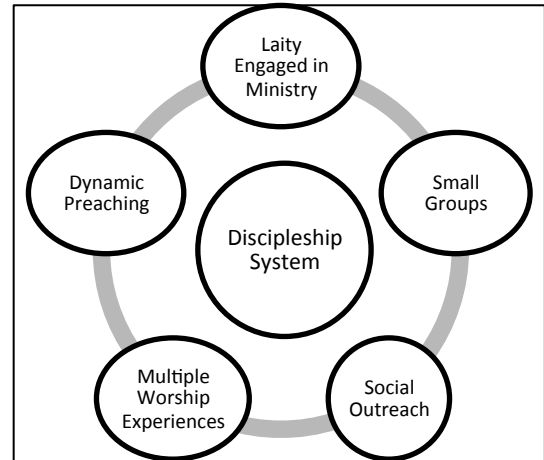


Ministry Plan 3: Discovering your Discipleship Process

Discipleship Process

A study of United Methodist churches identified five key drivers of change that fosters church vitality. Laity Engaged in Ministry, Small Groups, Social Outreach, Multiple Worship Experiences, and Dynamic Preaching are key areas for congregational growth. The discipleship system connects all five of these together and is shaped by the shared values of the congregation.

The discipleship system includes everything you do to connect people to one another and to God. It's what you offer to enable people to mature in their faith in Jesus Christ.



Congregational Values:

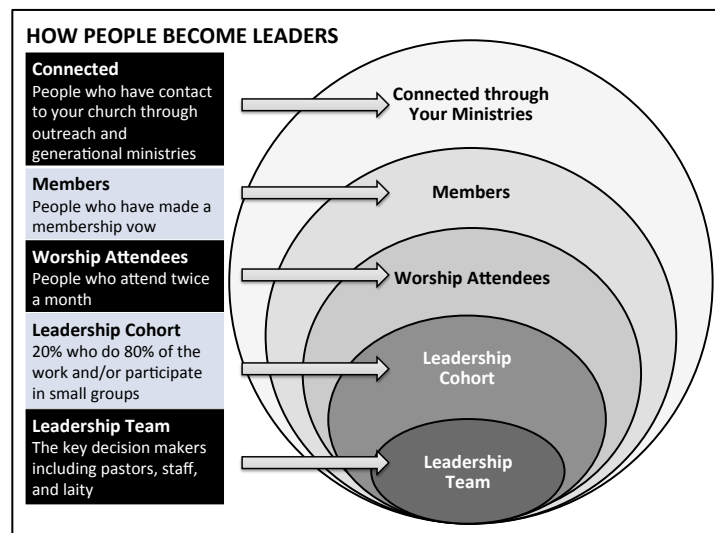
The ministry of a congregation is undergirded by the beliefs and spiritual practices of the leaders and in turn its members. These values inform and shape the discipleship process.

1. What are the essential beliefs of the Christian faith?
2. What spiritual disciplines do leaders of your faith community practice to which they are held accountable? (Wesley's General Rules: Do No Harm, Do Good, Stay in Love with God by practicing the Means of Grace)
3. How do you invite and teach people to live out the United Methodist membership vows to faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness?

Laity Engaged in Ministry:

People become engaged in the ministry of a local church because they believe through working with fellow Christians they can grow in faith and make the world a better place. Those who are the most committed to the church make up the Leadership Cohort. These are the 20% who do most of the work. Vital Congregations focus on equipping and developing leaders who in turn lead others.

4. How do you move people into leadership so they discover their call for ministry?
5. How do you train and equip leaders to create ministries that impact people beyond your local church? That makes a difference in your community?
6. What do you offer for newcomers in the first three years?



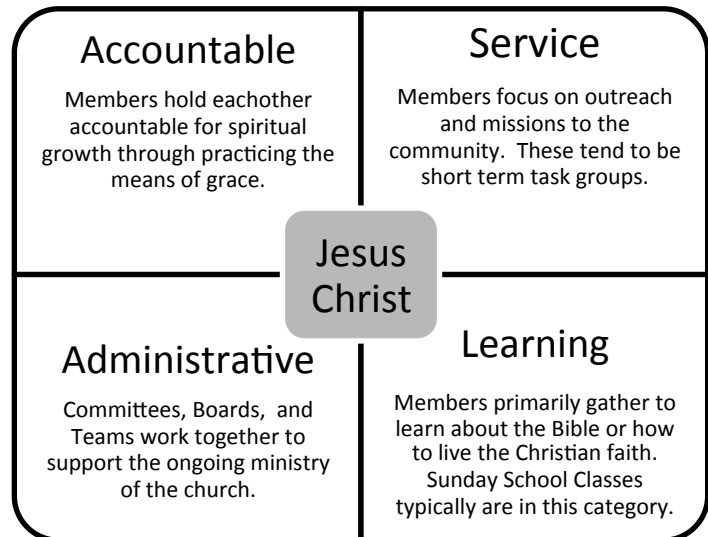
Types of Small Groups

7. What do you offer for spiritual growth and leadership development for long-term members and participants in your faith community? (someone who stays longer than three years)

Small Groups:

In its beginning the Wesleyan movement was based around small groups that lovingly held its members accountable for spiritual growth and Christian living. The Class Meeting was the central place where people talked about their faith and were given opportunities to share their lives in community. In our day, this has largely been lost. While people may get together in small numbers to do ministry together or to learn, accountable small groups are key to church vitality.

Vital congregations vitalize their existing small groups by teaching people about the means of grace and inviting them to hold each other accountable.



8. Is prayer and scripture reading (at least 15 minutes) part of every small group in your church? (Accountable, Service, Learning, Administrative)
9. Do you gather the leaders of your small groups together at least four times a year for teaching, encouragement, and spiritual formation?
10. Do you see your Administrative committees, boards, and teams as Small Groups where spiritual formation is key component of what you do together?
11. Do you regularly create new Small Groups for newcomers so they can find a connection to others?

Social Outreach

12. If your church were closed, what difference would this make to the community where the church is located?
13. What groups of people are you engaged with outside your church on a weekly basis?
14. Which social outreach project is having the most impact on the quality of life of people in your community?
15. How to people who are connected to your church through your social outreach know your values and beliefs?



Ministry Plan 4: The Next 12 Months

Discipleship Process

Multiple Worship Experiences

For most congregations worship is the primary entry point for newcomers into congregational life and the avenue through which long-term members grow in their connection to God. Churches that offer multiple worship experiences are able to give people more opportunities to connect with God and with each other. Before adding a new worship experience it is critical to develop the discipleship process that supports and feeds the worship experience. Many times churches will first focus on developing their small group ministry before they add new worship opportunities.

16. Rather than using the term contemporary or traditional, describe your worship experience(s)?
17. Describe the people who are coming for worship. If you have more than one worship experience what are the differences?
18. If you could start over, what current elements of your worship would you keep? What would you change?
19. How are you creating new faith communities for new people groups? (a people group may be a generational, racial ethnic, and or language/cultural group)
20. How are children and youth included in the shaping of your worship experiences?
21. How does your worship life enhance your small groups, fellowship opportunities, and missional outreach?

Dynamic Preaching

The primary role of preaching is to cast God's vision of where the church is going in the future. This vision is articulated as people are challenged and encouraged to grow in their love of God and of neighbor as the scripture is expounded and as worship calls people to mature in Christ.

22. What resources do you use for the preaching ministry (lectionary, sermon series, etc.)?
23. How does your preaching connect to the context of the congregation and the community?
24. How does the preaching connect to all other elements of the worship experience?



First Year Plan

As you think about the next 12 months, answer these questions:

1. What is the greatest opportunity for growth for your congregation?
2. What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from taking advantage of this opportunity?
3. What strategies can you implement for missional outreach to your community that makes a difference in the lives of people who live near your church?
4. As you think about the future, where do you hope your congregation will be:

Three months from now?

Six months from now?

One year from now?

5. What are the five most important things you need to do that will move your congregation towards becoming a disciple-making faith community?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
6. What do you need to change about yourself in order to help make this happen?



VitalSigns

Take a look at your VitalSigns to look at your history and to plan for the future. You can go to VitalSignsUMC.org to get your data. Use the reflection questions on the next page to develop strategies for improving in these key areas of congregational life.

VITAL SIGNS GOAL SETTING CARD								
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Disciples worship Average worship attendance								
Disciples make new disciples Number of people who joined by profession of faith								
Disciples engage in growing as a disciple Number of small groups, Sunday school classes and Bible studies								
Disciples engage in mission Number of people from the congregation engaged in local, national and international mission/outreach activities								
Disciples give to mission The total amount given by local church to other organizations for support of benevolent and charitable ministries (this amount includes apportionments paid and support for all United Methodist and non-United Methodist organizations active in work such as advocacy, education, health, justice, mercy, outreach, and welfare anywhere in the world)								
VitalSignsUMC.org – sign up on this site and input your data – write down your results								



Reflect on these Questions as you look at your VitalSigns Data	
<u>Disciples worship</u> Average worship attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What trends do you see in worship attendance? • What do you expect will happen within five years?
<u>Disciples make new disciples</u> Number of people who joined by profession of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the ages of people who are joining by profession of faith? • What do you offer to adults who want to discover more about the Christian faith?
<u>Disciples engage in growing as a disciple</u> Number of small groups, Sunday school classes and Bible studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do your Settings for Ministry say about these groups? • What do you offer throughout the week for small groups and Bible studies?
<u>Disciples engage in mission</u> Number of people from the congregation engaged in local, national and international mission/outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do participants who are engaged in mission connect to your worship experience(s)? • How does your small groups and worship invite people to be in mission?
<u>Disciples give to mission</u> The total amount given by local church to other organizations for support of benevolent and charitable ministries (this amount includes apportionments paid and support for all United Methodist and non-United Methodist organizations active in work such as advocacy, education, health, justice, mercy, outreach, and welfare anywhere in the world)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you creating a spirit of generosity? • How do you help people make the connection between what they give financially and how their giving impacts lives beyond their church? • What does your giving say about “who your congregation loves?”
For more tools and resources like this go http://churchleaderUMC.com to learn about the Innovative Leadership Project	



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SCHOOL OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The School of Congregational Development (SCD) is the largest yearly gathering of United Methodist leaders, who join together for equipping clergy and laity to lead vital, dynamic, and life-changing congregations. SCD 2014 Charlotte will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina on August 14 – 17, 2014. For more information go to www.scdumc.org.

INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP PROJECT

The Innovative Leadership Project is a 7-month process for developing a healthy, vibrant team at the center of your congregation's ministry. The ILP revolves around four seminars on Values, VAP -IT (a goal setting tool), Disciple System, and Futurecasting. Between the seminars, team members engage in a combination of weekly personal devotions and ILP team meetings. The ILP concludes with the Innovative Leadership Church Assessment, which gives congregational leaders a tool to discern the effectiveness of 20 different congregational systems.

For more information, go to <http://churchleaderUMC.com> or contact Craig Kennet Miller at cmiller@gbod.org.

WEB TRAINING FOR CHURCH LEADERS - www.gbod.org/webinars

Easy-to-access web format introduces new topics frequently. Past topics are archived. Currently available training for adult formation, church council, S/PPRC, finance leaders, trustees, nominations, children's ministry and more. Contact Betsey Heavner at bheavner@gbod.org

Partnering with Leaders In Conferences and Congregations for Vitality in United Methodist Congregations

At GBOD we believe vital church and faith communities are the best vehicle to produce disciples to change the world.



We believe leaders who are growing spiritually and developing the skills for the ministries they lead are essential for vital church and faith communities.

1. Inspire people to be leaders and to become increasingly aware of God's call in their lives.	2. Equip people as leaders in knowledge and experiences for actions that lead to vital congregations and communities of faith.	3. Partner with people who are capable of inspiring and equipping other leaders.
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Leadership Ministries at GBOD

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