

Church History Exercise

STEP #1 For up to two weeks prior to this exercise, create a mural style timeline of the church's history on the wall of a room where you will meet later for this conversation. (employ whatever artistic gifts that are available!!). Segment the timeline by decades, pastoral tenures, generations, etc.

STEP # 2 Publicize the event with an attractive title - eg. "Our Church Story"

STEP # 3 Invite people to identify with the timeline by placing markers identifying when they began attending, baptisms, marriages, etc. *For maximum participation, do on a Sunday after worship!!

STEP # 4 Plan a Group Discussion Exercise [with a light meal is optimal]

Have the group assemble in front of the history map around tables. Facilitate table-based conversations. Have ready, two or three different colours (one for each participant) of sticky notes for posting on the timeline.

Using a selection of some of the standard questions or others you believe to be pertinent. Recommend 3 questions as a maximum.

STANDARD QUESTION SET:

1. What was your personal "high point" at TBC? Share with your table. THEN, Place a coloured sticky note on the wall map at the place where this was occurring. Invite Observations from the group.
2. What was your personal "low point" at TBC? Share with your table. THEN, Place a coloured sticky note at the place where this was occurring. Invite Observations.
3. When you look beyond this date, what are the scripture texts you feel are God's word to direct us toward our future? Share with your table group. Write reference on sticky notes and post at far-right end of the timeline.

CONCLUDE THE GATHERING - Invite concluding observations, close with prayer time or other means.

OBSERVE Group Dynamics: Mood shifts in the group, participation/avoidance levels, etc.

PROCESSING: With your transition team, review the map and discern what "next steps" to consider.

Optional Questions:

1. When would you say the presence of Jesus was most evident? When would you say His presence was less evident? [Scriptural Reference: Rev 3 - Jesus is outside. How do you envision the sound of the knock? Soft or loud?
2. Look through the lens of the Great Commission i.e. Baptism & conversions
3. Look through lens of the fruit of the Spirit: love joy peace patience kindness
4. ASK about the reputation of the church in the surrounding community during eras or events of congregational life.
5. What was the decision-making process like to build/add on to this building?
What was the mood of the congregation when you were building and when you completed the building?
6. Pastors:
What happens at Temple when pastors come and when pastors go? (taking note of their respective tenures)? What is the value of a pastor for the ministry and leadership of your church?
7. What historic characteristics of your congregation would you want to carry forward into the future of your congregation?
8. What historic characteristics of your congregation would you want to eliminate or modify if you could?