



The Episcopal Church in Vermont

Having Conversations about *Being a Missional Church...*

Here are a few suggestions on how you might engage with people about being more missional. Pick one or more that is a good match for your group's size, how you like to have conversations, or what might stretch you a bit.

1. Show the video *Missional Church—Simple* by Jeff McGuire as a conversation starter: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arxfLK_sd68
2. Use any of the following methods that might work for your group. Try more than one at different times!

Brainstorming Session to begin a conversation

At a coffee hour, during the liturgy (yes, really!), or another type of gathering, you might ask the question “What does *missional* mean to you?”

Hand out index cards and ask folks to write a few words—short phrase, one word, or key words—on what this means to them.

Collect the cards and read them aloud, post them on a board or easel paper.

Note similarities, groupings by theme. There is no “wrong” (or “right” answer in brainstorming.)

Round Robin small group conversation

Divide up into small groups of 4-6, no more. This is a rapid exchange of ideas and works well simply to get info out on the table.

Round one: each person gets 1 min. to respond to a question (“What does *missional* mean to you?”) without interruption. Go around the circle to each person.

Round two: go around the circle again with a slightly different question (perhaps “What does *missional* mean to you about our congregation?”). Again, 1 minute.

Round three: final question, maybe “How might our congregation begin (or do more) to be missional?” One minute each person.

Share with the all the groups the ideas/ major points.

Buzz Group *small group conversations*

Divide into groups of 3. Each group needs a recorder. Frame a very clear question: “When you hear the word *missional* what comes to mind?”

Each group’s recorder reports to large group some results—single words, phrases, highlights that came up in the small group.

Watch (again) the video on Missional Church at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arxfLK_sd68

In the small groups (buzz groups), discuss what you just saw... “How does what we just watched match—or not—your thoughts about *missional*?” Record some responses.

Share the responses with the large group.

World Café *method for conversations*

This method is great for “going deeper” into a topic and cross-fertilizing ideas, capitalizing on peoples’ creativity and experiences. This method takes at least an hour, often more. Planning in advance is needed.

Create hospitable space (tables seating 4-5 works well). Provide paper tablecloths/pens, crayons, markers, etc. Folks can draw, write words, etc.—whatever-- to help record, remember, make connections between ideas.

Explore questions that matter: create two or three questions, in this case centered on *missional*. A powerful question is simple and clear, thought provoking , opens new possibilities, invites deeper reflection

Encourage everyone’s contribution; ask one question, offer 20 minutes to respond in the table groups/small groups.

Now, exchange tables (yes, people move around the room, mixing up the table groups), but keep a “host” at each table; go deeper with the second question. Another 20 minutes. Have a third round if you crafted another question.

As a large group, now connect diverse perspectives from each of the tables; listen together and notice patterns; share collective discoveries; if there was a single voice in the room, what would it be saying?

What do you now see and know as a result of these conversations?

3. Share the results from any of these conversations and activities (flip chart paper on walls, typed notes, article in the e-newsletter, a sermon time, etc.) and mull them over for a couple of weeks (not too long!) before other actions are taken.

Refer to the information on the Episcopal Church in Vermont's webpage about Missional Church <http://diovermont.org/en-GB/Mission-and-Ministries/Missional/> and decide on some next step to keep conversation going and then take action.

Remember you will need to “try on” some things, take risks, and see what works. Not everything you will do or try will work. Learn from these experiences, too.

*Susan Ohlidal
Canon for Ministry Development
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