

# SAMPLE CONTENT FOR BROCHURE: PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND VITALITY WEEKEND WORKSHOP FOR THE SMALLER MID-SIZE CONGREGATION

## LOCATION, DATE, AND CONTACT INFORMATION

### WHAT'S THIS WORKSHOP ABOUT?

This is an opportunity to learn some specific turnaround and growth strategies for smaller mid-size congregations. We use a team approach throughout the workshop. Each team develops an action plan for growth and vitality based on its insights from the workshop and directly building on the strengths of its congregation.

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Smaller mid-size congregations (150 to 350 members) in \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert district/area/cluster*) \_\_\_\_\_ are invited to attend. To determine if this workshop is right for your congregation, consider a few common characteristics of smaller mid-size congregations:

- They have 150 to 350 members.
- It is common for one or more of the following characteristics to be present:
  - There is a full-time minister with one or two other professional staff members.
  - The minister cares for most members in times of need and attends most activities, but this demand may be too great because of the size of membership.
  - Clergy members, religious educators, and some key lay leaders conduct most of the worship and lead small group and adult religious education programs.
  - The system for training lay leaders is informal or nonexistent.
  - A governing board or council of committee chairs directs much of the day-to-day life of the congregation.
  - Members think they know most people's names, but in fact they might not, and may not notice if someone new is present at worship services.
  - Congregants are giving mixed messages about the role they want the clergy to play--such as, "Be pastoral, yet lead us into growth."
  - Communication is either informal or too structured according to a hierarchy.
  - A policy and procedures manual exists, or few procedures or policies are written down because "everyone knows."

If this sounds like your congregation, we hope you'll consider attending. Ideally, participating congregations will agree to send a team of four leaders to the workshop (teams should be no smaller than three members). We have room for a maximum of ten teams; priority will be given to those who register first.

Choose your team with care! Include key lay leaders who represent significant segments of the congregation (for example, the board, religious education, membership, social responsibility, worship, and so on). It is highly recommended that the religious educator and parish minister attend as part of the team. At least a couple of your team members should have good communication skills, as much important work happens when your team returns home to share what it has learned with your congregation.

### HOW WILL YOU BENEFIT?

This program uses a multifaceted approach to help congregations identify current strengths and determine some strategic directions for further growth and vitality. Using a planning method that

will help you guide your work with your congregation after the workshop, we focus on the following three growth strategies:

**1) Building a Mission and Ministry Focus:**

- Placing one's mission and vision (outward focus) at the core of all congregational activities.
- Connecting one's personal ministry with the shared ministry of the congregation.
- Developing dynamic, responsive programming that meets the needs of members and helps the congregation reach out to the community.

**2) Ensuring Adequate Resources and Ministry Infrastructure:**

- Creating a strong ministry for membership.
- Supporting personal and shared ministry.
- Knowing when to add another worship service and determining its format.
- Examining the best practices for governance.
- Staffing for growth and vitality.
- Using a comprehensive plan and mission-based budgeting.

**3) Knowing What It Takes to Make the Change:**

- Learning how congregations grow and change.
- Developing strategies to lead healthy change through adaptive work.
- Developing the leader's role as facilitator, advocate and change agent.

**TIMING AND EXPECTATIONS**

Registration, a warm welcome, and a light meal will be provided at 6:00 p.m. on Friday \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert exact date*). The program starts promptly at 7:00 p.m.

The weekend requires a significant commitment of time and energy. Participants are expected to attend the workshop from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. (On Saturday evening there may be a dinner and cabaret, which forms a fun and useful part of the program. If the event is held at a host church, there may be an optional all-fellowship event.) **If you can't attend the entire weekend, please consider not registering.** All team members with e-mail addresses will receive preworkshop materials and exercises a month before the workshop. Please copy the materials for those on your team without e-mail and complete the exercises before you arrive.

**WORKSHOP FACILITATORS**

This workshop will be led by \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert information provided by the UUA's New Congregation and Growth Resources Office*).

**WORKSHOP SPONSORS**

The \_\_\_\_\_ District, in collaboration with the UUA's New Congregation and Growth Resources Office, is sponsoring this weekend. We thank \_\_\_\_\_ for graciously hosting us in their conference site/congregation for the weekend and coordinating the on-site requirements.

**COSTS**

There is a single registration fee of \$\_\_\_\_ for teams of four or \$\_\_\_\_/person for teams of three. This fee covers the costs of food, accommodation (if not at a church), and materials for participants. Please make checks out to \_\_\_\_\_. The District and UUA's New Congregation and Growth Resources Office share expenses related to the facilitator.

**Register by** \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert date six weeks before the event*).

Please send registration (form on back) to: \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert name and address of registrar*).

It's fine to send in your registration by e-mail and then follow it up with the check.

#### **QUESTIONS?**

For registration questions, please contact the registrar, \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert name and contact information*).

For specific questions about the workshop, please contact the facilitators, \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **GETTING THERE**

The \_\_\_\_\_ Conference Center/ UU Church is located at \_\_\_\_\_ (*offer written directions and a map*).

#### **WHERE TO STAY?**

(*If held at a church*) Home hospitality is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be sure to check off "home hospitality" on the registration form if required, and be sure to register by \_\_\_\_\_ at the very latest!

You may wish to stay at a local hotel or B&B (paying for your own costs). If this is your preference, please book your accommodations well in advance to ensure availability. Some possibilities include: \_\_\_\_\_ (*list hotels & B&Bs*).