

SAMPLE LETTER: PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND VITALITY WEEKEND WORKSHOP FOR THE SMALLER MID-SIZE CONGREGATION—IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

1. SO GLAD YOU'LL BE COMING!

We are delighted to hear that you will be attending the upcoming Planning for Growth and Vitality Weekend Workshop for the Smaller Mid-size Congregation on _____ (*insert date*) at _____ (*insert location*).

2. PLEASE FORWARD THIS INFORMATION TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

We do not have e-mail addresses for the following people. If they are on your team, *please* print out this information and pass it on to them. Thank you!

(Insert names of people for whom you don't have e-mail addresses.)

3. PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

This weekend workshop will highlight some of the key areas for growing vital religious communities. We hope to stimulate your passion and equip you with basic tools and resources so that you can return to your congregation to nurture change. This workshop is just the beginning—we hope you will go home to your congregation to educate, motivate, and support people to work together to promote growth and vitality.

4. LAYOUT FOR THE WEEKEND

Below is the draft schedule for the weekend. You will receive a final agenda during the opening session of the workshop.

FRIDAY, _____, 200_

6:00-7:00 p.m. Registration and light supper
7:00-9:30 p.m. Program

SATURDAY, _____, 200_

8:00-8:30 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Program
12:15-1:15 p.m. Lunch discussions
1:15-1:30 p.m. District presentation (optional)
1:30-5:00 p.m. Program
6:30 p.m.-?? Dinner and cabaret OR
all-congregation coffeehouse

SUNDAY, _____, 200_

8:00-8:30 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-Noon Program
12:00-12:30 p.m. Lunch
12:30-2:30 p.m. Program
2:30 p.m. Farewells

5. PARTICIPANTS AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Below is the list of participants identifying special requests (hh = home hospitality; ns = non-smoking; v = vegetarian; a = wheelchair and/or other accessibility needs, please specify these; or other requirements). If this list is inaccurate in any way, please let our registrar, _____ (*insert name*) know ASAP!

(Insert here a list of names with special requests.)

6. BEFORE YOU COME, READ A FEW PAGES

The following “getting started” activities are online at www.uua.org/cde/education/preworkshop_midsize.pdf. Please read them before you arrive. Please contact the district office for a copy if you are unable to download this file.

1. Four Types of Growth
2. Dynamics of Growth
3. Church Characteristics by Size
4. Board and Congregational Governance
5. Items to Bring for the Workshop
6. Telling Your Congregation’s Story—What Is Your Congregation Like?

7. BEFORE YOU COME, COMPLETE THE SURVEY “TELLING YOUR CONGREGATION’S STORY – WHAT IS YOUR CONGREGATION LIKE?”

Please have your team complete the “Telling Your Congregation’s Story” survey (enclosed) before you arrive on Friday night. On Friday night your team will be invited to share some of the highlights of the survey with other teams as a “getting to know you” exercise. We will also display the surveys for other participants to see.

8. PLEASE BRING RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCES EXCHANGE

We invite you to bring twelve copies (*one copy for each congregation attending plus one*) of congregational pamphlets, orders of service, great ideas to share with the other teams. (Great ideas might include innovative programming for adults, youth, and/or children; creative solutions to problems; social justice efforts; and other successes in your church’s life.) Bring copies of your congregation’s vision/mission statements (if you have them); we’ll exchange them with one another. Also, bring books and other resources your congregation finds most useful; we’ll have a display table to inspire one another. For a full list of what to bring please refer to section 5 “Items to Bring for the Workshop” in the *PreWorkshop Assignments for the Planning for Growth and Vitality Weekend Workshop for the Smaller Mid-size Congregation*.

9. SHARE YOUR TALENTS—SATURDAY EVENING CABARET OR COFFEEHOUSE!

We hope that there will be either of the following:

Dinner and cabaret, during which a fun exercise that covers some of the workshop material can be done,

OR

If the workshop is held in a host congregation, an all-congregation coffeehouse on Saturday night. Please consider sharing a story, song, poem, dance, performance piece, or whatever with other people during the coffeehouse.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN _____ (insert location of workshop)!