

SAMPLE LETTER: PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND VITALITY WEEKEND WORKSHOP—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 Workshop: _____ *insert date* _____ at the _____ *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 printout this information and pass it on to them. Thank you.

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

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 to return to your congregation to nurture change. This workshop is just the beginning -- we hope that 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.-Noon Program
12:15-1:15 P.M. Lunch Discussions
1:30-1:45 P.M. District Presentation (optional)
1:45-5:00 P.M. Program
6:30 P.M.-?? Dinner and cabaret OR
all-congregation coffeehouse

SUNDAY, _____, 200_

8:00-9:00 A.M. Breakfast
9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. 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, let our registrar _____ 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 on line at <http://www.uua.org/cde/education/preworkshop.pdf>. Please read them before you arrive. Please contact the district office for a copy if you are unable to download this.

- 1 Four Types of Growth
- 2 Keys to a Vital Congregation
- 3 Characteristics of Churches by Size
- 4 Preparing for the Workshop – Items to Bring
- 5 Telling Your Congregation’s Story—Congregational Profile Team Exercise

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 it 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 12 copies (*one copy for each congregation attending + 1*) of congregational pamphlets, orders of service, great ideas* to share with the other teams. Also bring copies of your congregation’s vision/mission statements (if you have them). We’ll exchange them with one another. Also bring books/resources your congregation is finding most useful -- we’ll have a display table to inspire one another. For a full list of what to bring please refer to section 4 “Items to Bring for the Workshop” in the *Pre-Workshop Assignments: Planning for Growth and Vitality for the Small Congregation*.

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

We hope that there will be either:

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, some kind of all-congregation event on Saturday night. Please consider sharing a story, song, poem, dance, performance piece, WHATEVER! with other people during the coffee house.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN _____!

*Great ideas such as the following:

- Innovative programming for adults, youth, and/or children.
- Creative solutions to problems.
- Social justice efforts.
- Other successes in your church’s life.