

Session 9C: Planning A Course of Action

Learning Objectives:

- To create a plan for an/some event(s) of social action/public witness
- To utilize the information already given to help create the plan

Session Summary:

This session will review the work that has been done, decide on a particular project, and then create an action plan for a successful event.

Background:

Reflections from the community, knowing the community history, understanding about scope and size of the action, and what kinds of action are possible—all of this will be used to enhance the decision-making process of choosing a project. Decision-making may or may not be easy at this point. You also need not necessarily decide on one course of action for everyone. It might be that there are two possible courses of action (or more) and that not everyone in the group will be working on the same project.

Materials:

1. Newsprint
2. Markers
3. Paper
4. Writing materials
5. Tape

Preparation:

- Place the community timeline in a place where all can see.
- On newsprint write and post the following five questions:
 1. What does the community history tell us about what we can do?
 2. What did the community tell us about what is needed and where they would like help?
 3. How much of what we are doing is social action, public witness, or some combination of both?
 4. How many people can we expect to help us do whatever we decide we can do?
 5. How much time and effort will this plan require?

Workshop Plan

Opening Reading/Hymn (5 Minutes)

(You are invited to pick a reading and/or an opening hymn. Singing The Living Tradition is an excellent resource. Other options are a moment of silence, a prayer, or a brief check-in. You are encouraged to also begin with a chalice lighting. Please submit any readings and/or hymn choices that you have used successfully to the OBGLTC as feedback for possible inclusion in future editions of LWC.)

Activities:

Review (30 minutes)

Tell the participants that they will now review what they have discussed over the previous sessions. Point to the questions and tell the participants these questions will help to review what has happened and begin to clarify thinking about what needs to happen next. After they have reviewed with the five questions, the group will take a moment to add any other questions not on this sheet and discuss them.

Go through each question, allowing for general discussion for the time listed.

1. (2 minutes)
2. (2 minutes)
3. (8 minutes)
4. (5 minutes)
5. (8 minutes)

Invite any other questions that the group feels needs to be addressed and take some time to discuss these further. You may wish to record key points on newsprint.

Ideas (25 minutes)

Ask the participants to take five minutes and write down their idea or ideas of what project seem(s) best for their community. They should also write the merits of doing that particular project, the potential payoffs and trouble spots, and the resources needed to make the project happen (including people and time). After five minutes of writing, have the participants pair up and share their ideas with another person. Allow 3 minutes for this and then ask the group to re-gather.

Tell participants that you are now going to ask for people, to volunteer their ideas aloud. At this point ask only for a generic description of the proposed idea, and tell the participants, specifics will be asked for shortly. Take five minutes to record these ideas.

Then ask the presenter of each of the ideas to briefly share any of the pertinent information they wrote, along with further reflections from their partner. (You could also take all the information at once at the beginning instead of asking only for the project idea.)

When this is completed, tell the participants they will now decide which projects to undertake.

Choosing a Plan (15 minutes)

Ask the participants to review the five questions before moving into the decision-making process. This is also the time to ask questions about the various projects if there are any. It might be that a consensus is already clear. If you believe this is the case, check with the entire group.

If not, ask the participants to write down their top three choices in order on a sheet of paper. When this is done, collect the papers and tally up the votes to find out which project has the most support. (If this is not obvious, assign three points for a 1st place vote, 2 points for a 2nd place vote and 1 point for a 3rd place vote).

Examine the results and ask for comments. Depending on the action taken, it may be possible to do more than one—for which you need agreement from the group. When this is finished, write the topic up on a fresh piece of newsprint and move toward planning the event.

Creating a Plan (45 minutes)

On the newsprint you just created, underneath the title, write the words “What, Why, How, Who, When, Where” as shown below.

Title:

What:

Why:

How:

Who:

When:

Where:

Inform the group that now the plan will be developed. (If there are two items to do, you can either do them simultaneously, one at a time, or in two smaller groups.)

For each plan, go through the questions as listed below.

What: will be done at this event(s).

Why: it is important to be able to articulate clearly why you are doing an event. Create a “why” statement of 1-2 sentences that easily convey the intent, hopes, and possible outcomes for this event.

How: will this be done? Take some time to lay out all the different things that will need to be done in order to make this event a success—include whatever details need to be done about telling others (for example, who you hope to impact/attract, the wider congregation, media) in this list.

Who: Now add names next to the list of tasks that need to be done. This should include not only the person(s) taking responsibility for the task, but whom s/he needs to talk to in order to make the task happen.

When: will this event take place is only part of the concern. You may also need to decide when certain tasks need to be completed in order to make the event a success. Add dates next to people’s names.

Where: Decide where the event will be as well as the location for various things that need to happen ahead of time.

Take a look at your plan and assess if it seems manageable. What other questions do you have that still need to be addressed? Take some time to assess these questions, firm up commitments, and get ready to have fun implementing your plan.

Closing Reading/Hymn (5 minutes)

(You are encouraged to find a suitable one. The difference between the Opening and Closing is that we suggest that one reading and/or one hymn is selected to be used as the closing for all sessions. The Opening may vary from session to session.)

Suggested Hymns

Suggested Readings

Add Your Suggestion

Ask participants to hold hands as they are willing, able, and comfortable.