

Session 10B: Implementation

Learning Objectives:

- To put into practice the plan for implementation
- To work on communication skills as a way to help the implementation plan
- To engage in conversation with others about the plan for the benefit of all

Session Summary:

This session may simply be putting into action what has been decided.

However, it might be that the LWC group needs to interface with another area or areas of the congregation in order to implement the plan. If this is the case, you may wish to use this session as a way to assist in that process, particularly if the conversation may not be easy.

The process outlined in this session provides time for the group to: 1) focus and strategize about how to hold the conversation(s), 2) actually have the conversation(s), and 3) take some time to debrief afterward. The workshop leaders should decide ahead of time which pieces of this session will be helpful.

Background:

In many congregations, collaborations between different parts of the congregation are easy and natural. Also, many groups within the congregation may wish to explore how to make their work more intentionally *Welcoming* and may lack time, expertise, or human-power to make this happen. In such cases, consultations between the LWC group and the other groups in the congregation may happen quite easily.

In some congregations, there may be territorial issues that have evolved historically and/or personalities that make things more difficult. There may also a particular group in the

congregation that is unable to see how work on Welcoming Congregation issues applies to them. In such cases, taking a little time to reflect and strategize may benefit the process.

Chances are, based on the group's experience in the church, you will have some sense of how a consultation is likely to be received before your group does it.

Materials:

1. Newsprint
2. Markers
3. Paper
4. Writing utensils

Preparation:

- Find a time when you can meet with the group(s) with whom you would like to consult. It may be possible to do several groups at once or you may wish to schedule with various groups at different times depending on the groups and the possible conversations. Make sure to allow time for the participants to meet and strategize before meeting with the other groups.
- You may wish to have newsprint and markers available to record information for all to consider.

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 Guidelines/Meeting Guidelines (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to review your own guidelines about how you agreed to work together. Talk briefly about how these have worked and consider how they might work with the group being consulted. What, if any, changes need to be made for this meeting?

Expectations (20 minutes)

In pairs, have participants reflect on the following three questions:

1. What expectations do you have for meeting with this group? What outcomes do you hope for?
2. What expectations do you have for yourself in this meeting? What do you need to be mindful of? What are you willing to agree to do?
3. What expectations of you (the LWC group) might this group you are meeting with have? What might they ask from you?

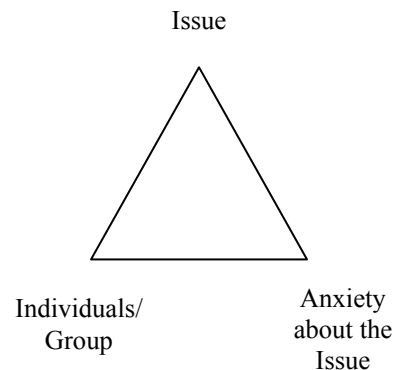
Bring participants back into the large group. Take five minutes to reflect on the questions with the entire group. In that discussion, you may wish to target particular areas of common concern for the following optional piece. You

may also need to clarify any expectations you have for this group as needed, particularly if there are areas where you disagree.

Dealing with Anxiety (15 minutes)

If the group has anxiety about something or anticipates anxiety from the group(s) they are meeting with, then it would be useful to spend time on the topic of anxiety.

Draw a triangle on newsprint. At one point of the triangle, write the word “Issue”. At another point, write the word “Individuals/Group”; at the third point, write “Anxiety about the Issue” (see below).



Ask the participants to look at the triangle. Tell them that these three components may be present in the meeting. Inform them that everyone will be aware of the three components of the triangle (consciously or unconsciously).

The three points ideally should be in balance and the group should be able to deal with all three equally. However, if there is more attention/energy on one of the three points, then it will take attention/energy away from the others. For example, anxiety about an issue may keep the group(s) from focusing on the issue at hand or from communicating effectively with the individuals/groups involved. Therefore, it is possible that they (the participants) could be distracted from talking about the issue because there is anxiety in the room. And the anxiety is often increased if it remains unspoken.

Engage in a short conversation about what kind(s) of anxiety might be present in the meeting. Are there ideas and possibilities that may lessen individuals' anxieties in order to better focus on the issue at hand? What can individuals do? What can the group do?

While there may not be time to "solve" the issue, awareness may help things move more smoothly. It could be that in talking about the anxiety, some of it will be alleviated.

Review Plan and Presentation (10 minutes)

Take a few moments to review your plan from the previous session (9B) and discuss how this plan will be presented to the other group(s) if you have not done so already.

Meeting with Other Group (50 minutes)

Welcome the other group(s) to the meeting. Introduce one another as needed, give a brief history of your work and express your desire to be a partner with this group in deepening the *Welcoming Congregation* process.

Tell the visiting group(s) that: this is a dialogue; your group (LWC) understands that each group brings particular gifts to the congregation; and this meeting is about using these gifts together.

Let the visiting group(s) know that in considering the entire congregational life, the area that they represent seemed to be ready to deepen the work of *Welcoming Congregation*. Ask the visiting group(s) to briefly inform you of what work they are currently doing at the church (you are asking for the group history not individual histories). Allow for a few minutes of sharing and then invite conversation about how the groups present can work together.

You may wish to share your hopes with the group. Create a climate in which ideas can be shared and possibilities explored. This could be a meeting where the visiting group(s) is

delighted by the suggestions and figuring out what to do next will be fun!

If the visiting group(s) is feeling defensive or overwhelmed, your group may need to be supportive and pastoral. You may find that in order to work on the task, your group will need to be advocates for the "other" in the larger congregation. If there is resistance, try and explore what it is about and if there are ways the groups can work together to remove the resistance.

In most cases, at this point in the congregational life, the conversation between the groups will be friendly, productive and invigorating. Take time to enjoy one another, to celebrate the work of the groups, and to work together on this project. Be sure to thank the groups for the meeting when it is completed.

Debriefing (5-10 minutes)

Take a few minutes after the visiting group is gone to reflect on the conversation: what went well; what, if anything, did not; and where does follow-up work need to occur. If there are additional tasks to be done, you may wish to hold off on session #11 until they are completed.

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.