

Guidelines for Conducting Workshops

Extending the Conversation - Tips on Leveraging Workshops

Each workshop is a portal, a way to engage members of the congregation in some aspect of this work. The workshops you choose will be a function of your action plan, your team, and how your congregation works.

Any given workshop probably won't, of itself, create the kind of change you're seeking in your action plan. But the workshops you choose can help you introduce ideas, raise questions for people to continue to ponder, and create some "buzz" in the congregation.

One way to get some extra mileage from a workshop is to write about it in your newsletter, blog, or social media after the workshop. What was it about? What ideas were introduced, and where can someone learn more? What did some of the participants take away? You might include some question(s) for further reflection.

For the most part, these workshops are intended for a broad cross-section of the congregation. Many of them also have a natural tie-in for people already involved in certain aspects of congregational life or beyond. Your team can leverage these workshops to help your ongoing conversation with these committees or working groups, and to help them become and remain more deeply engaged in the process. By engaging with people in an area where they are already deeply committed, you are also widening the group of people who are transmitting change.

If you have selected a workshop with a tie to a working group or committee that you can identify, make sure the group or its leaders know the when, what, and where. Invite them!

If you can, talk with some of the people from that committee in advance of the workshop. Ask them to take a special role, observing how the group as a whole responds, what was difficult for the group, and where the energy seemed to be. Have a follow-up conversation asking them to share those observations. You might include some their observations in your newsletter article or blog post. Consider asking further questions that might encourage that committee to delve more deeply into issues raised in the workshop. Together you may develop ideas for further projects, presentations, or posts.

We encourage you to invite, welcome, and empower all people in the congregation who are "out" about having disabilities to take roles, major or not, as they prefer, in this specific work – and throughout the rest of the process.

Even if you have decided not to include a particular workshop in your action plan, you may find materials in these workshops that you might want to use in conversation with a committee or task group. Remember, your congregation has made a commitment to this process; there is no better time to ask for some time from any group in the congregation!

We have included some notes for Extending the Conversation in the body of some workshops to help get things started. **We welcome your ideas to help other congregations in the future!**