

DISCOVERY WEEKEND (Church Assessment) Revised July 2012

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral leadership transition is an important time to prepare for the new chapter God is opening for your church. No decision you make will affect the future of your church as much as the decision of choosing your next pastor. Transformation Ministries (TM) commitment, therefore, is to provide the coaching and resources to ensure the best possible outcome.

One key experience in determining your church's needs and then matching them to qualified candidates is the Discovery Weekend. This special weekend will allow your Search Team/Committee to:

1. Provide an opportunity for every member and attendee to participate in finding the next pastor;
2. Take a "snap shot" of the church's current reality;
3. Discover your church's strengths and challenges;
4. Provide the interim leadership with specific goals during the interim period; and
5. Discern the specific qualifications you need in your next pastor.

DISCOVERY WEEKEND

A typical Discovery Weekend is conducted around three (3) main components, and concludes with a written report and coaching for the Search Team/Committee and church board.

1. The first component is the **Self-Study Review** for you and your church leaders to complete. The Self-Study covers a brief history, congregational demographics, financial overview, issues and questions. Since the information you provide in this Self-Study helps in the preparation for the Online Survey and Focus Groups, it needs to be completed and sent back to TM at least two weeks (2) prior to the actual Discovery Weekend. Information you gather will be used directly by the Search Team.
2. The second component is the **Church Health Online Survey** which we publish for you in a private website for your entire congregation to take, at their convenience. This survey provides much broader information on church life than is possible in the focus groups. The survey assures anonymity in order to promote honesty and openness.

TM asks that the church makes every effort to encourage as many as possible to take the Online Survey, as possible. It can be available to members, non-member attendees, former members and anyone who has strong connection to the church.

Once the church completes the Self-Study, TM can send the church a sample survey so that you can edit some of the questions to your specific situation. Once you approve the survey it will be published and available only to your congregation for the dates agreed upon. Once it is published, we will provide you with an email containing the link for this website. This link can be sent to your congregation by email, or through your church website. Everyone in your congregation can then "click" on the link and

begin taking the survey. The results of this survey will be tabulated by the website and provided to the TM CALL Team.

We realize that some people do not have a computer with access to the World Wide Web; therefore, TM provides the church with a "hard copy" that can be duplicated for the benefit of your members. These hard copy surveys must be handed in to a volunteer you select who will go online to enter the data on behalf of the individual who filled it out.

3. The third component of a Discovery Weekend is the opportunity for as many of your congregation as possible to attend a **Focus Group** at the church facility on Saturday of the Discovery weekend. It may be possible to have a Focus Group meet during the Sunday church school time or after worship, but that must be negotiated with the TM coaching team.

We encourage you to make every effort to get as many of the congregation as possible to attend a Focus Group. In order to facilitate open discussion, each focus group should not be larger than 12 to 14 people. Therefore, if the church has 100 active attendees, TM would hope to have a minimum of four groups of 12 persons, each, for a total of 48 persons or roughly half the active attendance. A sample sign-up sheet is available in the Focus Forms, as well as a sample bulletin insert to advertise these focus groups.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Groups are ninety (90) minutes in length. Each group is led by a TM coach. Since we have a team of two (2) TM coaches, we can conduct two (2) groups at the same time.

We find it helpful for Focus groups to be formulated around specific demographics. We have designed several focus group forms for each possible group. At a minimum these groups should be:

- Your key leadership team (board, council, elders, heads of committees, etc.);
- New Members/Attendees (those three years or newer);
- Long Time Attendees;
- Senior Adults;
- Youth Group; and
- Church Staff.

Once we receive your Self-Study, TM will work with you to determine which focus groups to offer, prepare a draft set of Focus Group Forms, and send them by email attachment for your edit and approval. You may also request additional questions be added to the Focus Groups Forms. The church will be responsible to make enough copies of each form for the specific number of scheduled groups and anticipated attendees.

DISCOVERY WEEKEND SCHEDULE

The Discovery Weekend schedule can be customized based on your situation. Please let us know if this needs to be adjusted.

Note: A Friday evening may be appropriate for larger churches to allow for greater time on Saturday for additional Focus Groups. If a Friday night is possible, it would be used for the Leadership Focus Group described below most frequently planned for Saturday morning for the typical smaller- to medium-sized church.

Saturday

8:00 to 10:00 am: Leadership Focus Group

- We want to begin with your leadership team who gathers as a focus group. There are specialized forms for them to fill out a targeted presentation. This will last two hours.
- An option is to hold this focus group with your leaders on Friday night instead of Saturday morning.

- We hope you can assign some volunteers to welcome folks who come for the focus groups, direct them to the appropriate location, hand out the forms, pens, and/or pencils and have them begin to complete them. We have found a little light refreshment sets a good tone for each group (juice, water, coffee, possibly cookies and/or crackers).

10:00 am: First Regular Focus Group(s)

- First groups arrive and begin completing their forms, followed by discussion and conclusion at 11:30 am.

11:00 am: Second Focus Group

- Second Focus Group begins, concluding at 12:30 p.m.

12:30 pm: Lunch for TM Coaches

- Lunch for TM Coaches until 1 pm

1:00 pm Focus Group Begins

- Focus Group Begins, concluding at 2:30 p.m.

2:00 pm: Etcetera

Sunday

Throughout the morning the TM Team observes the congregation at worship, learning, and fellowship.

Follow-up

The Church Health Online Survey will generate a report that will be presented and interpreted by the TM Coach to the Search Team/Committee. Specific qualities will be discerned that the church needs in its next pastor. This information and the data from the Self Study will be used to write the search profile/prospectus.

The report will also be very helpful for the board/leadership during the interim period. The TM Coach will arrange an opportunity to discuss the report with the church leaders.