

SAMPLE CONGREGATIONAL EVENT SCHEDULE

Theme: Dreaming Our Future

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

8:45 – 9:15	Convene , get settled with tea, juice, coffee, rolls, fruit, etc.
9:15 – 9:30	Welcome, description of retreat’s purpose: <i>“To obtain commitment from a broad base of members including young adults for the support of the gathered life of the congregation and the serving and witnessing activity of the church.”</i>
9:15 – 9:30	Explanation of Appreciative Inquiry process: <i>“We can construct our most desired future when we pay attention to and learn from the best experiences of our past.”</i>
9:45 – 10:30	Paired interviews: The participants will be paired off, and each member of a pair will interview the other, using the interview question below, taking notes so that each can effectively describe the other person’s experience to the larger group. Each person will have about 20 minutes to interview the other.
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:30	Report out results of “best experiences” interviews.
11:30 – 12:00	Identification of common themes, elements and underlying values of our best experiences
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch (brought in)
1:00 – 1:15	Presentation of “Healthy Congregation” model: “witness/ gathering” and “sending/serving”
1:15 – 1:30	Individually: write a response to the question, <i>“If you could wish for three things that would be true of Crystal Springs in two years, what would they be?”</i>
1:30 – 2:10	Paired interviews: Each member of a pair will have about 20 minutes to interview the other about their three wishes.
2:10 – 2:50	Report out results of “three wishes” interviews
2:50 – 3:00	Wrap-up and homework explanation
3:00	Adjourn

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 9:00 A.M. – 10:30 P.M.

9:00 – 9:15	Review of previous day
9:15 – 10:00	Paired interviews: <i>“What simple yet compelling commitment are you willing to make to achieve your wishes for this congregation?”</i>
10:00 – 10:30	Report out “commitments” interviews. Identify three volunteers to report their commitment as a part of the 11 am worship service.

Assumptions:

1. What we focus on becomes our reality.
2. Focusing on what has worked or is working generates positive energy.
3. Sharing positive experiences brings to light elements that lead to creation of future success.
4. Remembering positive past experiences, appreciating what is, dialoguing what might be can provide energy to create future successful experiences.

Homework prior to retreat: To prepare for the workshop, each of you is asked to think of an experience you have been involved in sometime in the past, which you would describe in response to the following interview question:

“We have all been members of church or religious or worshipping communities at various times in our lives. Think of a specific experience you had in such a community that made you feel most appreciated, alive, challenged or effective as a member of that community. Describe it:

- *Where was it?*
- *What happened?*
- *What were your feelings about the experience?*
- *What elements of the experience made it so positive and rewarding?*
- *What did you value most about the experience?*
- *What one word would sum up that experience?”*

Homework for 2nd Day (Sunday): Having heard the collective “three wishes” expressed by the participants on Saturday, think about the following:

- *What resources do you bring to the congregation to help make any one or more of those wishes come true?*
- *Do you envision yourself as more excited by engaging in “witnessing/inviting” activities or in “sending/serving” activities?*
- *What activities would you feel passionate about doing to help bring about those dreams for the future of the congregation?*
- *“What simple yet compelling commitment are you willing to make to achieve your wishes for this congregation?”*