VESTRY RETREAT

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A continually updated Appreciative Inquiry bibliography, and additional resources, interview protocols, and training schedules can be found at the Clergy Leadership Institute web site at http://www.clergyleadership.com or by contacting Rob Voyle at rob@voyle.com
PLANNING YOUR VESTRY RETREAT

Basic Assumptions  The following is a retreat model that can be adapted to meet your specific needs as you plan your retreat.

At best the model is like a frozen dinner, you will need to thaw it and add your own seasonings

A MODEL FOR CHANGE

This basic model of change as going from A to B suggests that you need to know three things:

Where are you?
1. A clear idea of where the group currently is (State A).
   You can not provide directions to a person if you don't know where they are starting from. Most importantly we need to accept that we are at A, but we do not need to know why or what caused us to be at A.

   If we are working with a group we need to accept them at A and Join them at A. Until we have joined them at A and value them at A any attempt to move to B will be perceived as an act of judgment and resisted

Where are you going?
2. A clear idea of where they want to go (State B) which is also known as a preferred future state.

   B must be clearly and positively stated. It is impossible to work effectively on a negative goal such as reducing conflict. Rather we need to transform the problem into a desired outcome such as increased cooperation.

   B must be desired and valued.

   We also need to be open to the idea that the preferred future may change or unfold as we head toward B.

What do you need?
3. A clear idea of what resources you will need in order to get from A to B. The resources people may need vary enormously and could include tangible things such as money, material, personnel, or intangibles such as confidence, skills, or positive motivation.
Note: in this model State A does not need to be perceived as a problem state. Rather it is simply a beginning place, which may be a place of excellence, that we are seeking to develop and move from.

DESIGNING THE VESTRY RETREAT

Designing By Starting at B  Take a moment and imagine that the retreat has ended and people are saying that this has been the best retreat they have been on.

What has made it a great retreat?

Imagine you overheard members talking to parishioners about the retreat what would they be saying that made it such a great retreat?

Leadership Expectations  What does the leadership want as an outcome of the retreat? What would make this the best retreat from the leadership’s perspective?

Is the leadership expectations consistent with the Vestry members expectations?

Develop B  Synthesize the expectations of the members and the leaders to establish a clear picture of B, the desired outcome for the retreat.

Develop Resources  Consider “where” the Vestry currently is: Starting point A. Don’t concern yourself why they are at A, just accept and love them at A, knowing that God will not love them any more or any less even if they don’t get to B. It is in the light of the fact that they are loved at A that they will have the power to get to B. If you will only love them if they get to B they will feel judged and respond with resistance.

What resources do they need to get from A to B. Reflect on prior retreats. What has worked really well in the past? Pay particular attention to the underlying process rather than the content of the process. For example dialogue is a process that has a content. We want to duplicate effective processes but modify the content to achieve the specific goals of the retreat.

Appreciative Interviews  One of the best ways to discover and create resources is to have participants tell stories about their best experience of the goal.
DESIGNING APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Work Backwards from the Goal: Three Typical Areas of Inquiry:

1. Peak or best experience of the goal or the area previously defined as the focus of inquiry.

2. Values: What do people value about themselves in relationship to the goal and what they value about the goal.

3. Wishes or dreams for the future with respect to the goal.

The Sequence is Important Past, Present, Future

We inquire into the best of the past, we explore the present by going inward to discover what is of current value about the past and projecting that value into the future.

We want wishes for the future to be grounded in the best of the past. Having the person share their best experience and what they value about themselves and the goal will move their mindset into a positive frame that will encourage positive and creative thinking of the future. Wishes will be both reality based and expansive of that previous best.

Generic Questions About “A” If the organization has no clear sense of purpose or no specific goals then ask questions about their best experience of being at the organization. From the A-B change model perspective we are inquiring into their best experiences of A to create a foundation for determining B.

Specific Questions About “B” If the organization has a clear sense of purpose or specific goals in mind then inquire specifically into these areas. From the A-B change model perspective we are inquiring into their best experiences of B.

For example: If the mission is to: Worship, Educate and Serve.... Ask specifically about best experiences of worship, learning and service.

Crafting Questions Create initial and follow-up questions that discover in depth the person’s best experience of the goal. These questions should enable the person to "relive" the experience.

Gather Stories not Data Questions need to illicit stories about the best, not yes or no answers, nor conjecture such as: “What do you think?”

Stay Positive Questions need to be positively framed and illicit stories that the future can be built on.
TEACH APPRECIATIVE STORYTELLING

"Think of Appreciative Inquiry as a new conversation, as a search engine for the positive core of a system, as a convergence zone or "space" creating a multiplier effect in the area of human imagination and intellectual capital."

David Cooperrider

Interview not Dialogue

The interview process is designed to allow deep inquiry into the person’s experience. Remind people to interview not dialogue. In dialogue one person usually dominates the conversation, the interview process is designed to allow both person’s to have equal time.

Inquire Deeply

Encourage follow-up questions. If an interviewee says their best experience was a Christmas Eve service, ask: “what about that service was memorable? Who else was involved? What did you do as a result of the experience?

Inquire Appreciatively

Gather stories, values, and wishes without judgment. Encourage people to state values and wishes positively. e.g. “I am not afraid to take risks,” is negatively stated. Positively it becomes: “I am bold and courageous”

Interview Length

For shared interviews create interview protocols that take at least 20-30 minutes per person per interview to complete.

DESIGN EXAMPLE

The Goals of the Vestry Retreat

1. To get the Vestry into a positive mind/heart set, enthusiastic about the parish and the future.

2. To clarify goals for the coming year.

3. To make explicit what is valuable about the church. (This is part of program development and cooperation building and at the same time conflict prevention. People go into conflict when they believe a value is compromised. If we know what is valued and work to enhance that value the probability of conflict is reduced.)

4. To orient new Vestry members, develop team cohesiveness and help the leadership discover and provide the resources they need to make serving on the vestry a rich and rewarding experience.

The following interview schedule, and worksheet pages were designed to enable these goals.
APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VESTRIES

Instructions: In pairs take time to interview one another using the following questions.

Be a generous listener. Do not dialogue, rather take turns to actually conduct an interview. If you need more information or clarification ask additional follow-up questions. Use this sheet to record the results of your interview. When your interviews are completed you will present the results to the wider group.

Before you conduct the interview take a minute to read the questions and decide how you will personally answer the question and make a mental note of your response. Now proceed with the interviews, paying full attention to the interviewee rather than to your story.

1. Best Experience: Reflect on your entire experience with your congregation. Recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, spiritually touched, or most excited about your involvement. Tell me about this memorable experience that you have had with your church. Describe the event in detail. What made it an exciting experience? Who was involved? Describe how you felt? Describe what you did as a result of the experience?

2. Best Experience of Serving on the Vestry: Reflect on your entire experience of serving on the Vestry. (If you are new to the Vestry, reflect on your experience of serving on another committee or working with a group of people to accomplish a goal.) Recall your best experience of serving on a Vestry or committee. What made it memorable and rewarding? Who was involved? What did you accomplish and how did you feel?

3. Values: What are the things you value deeply: specifically, the things you value about yourself, being a parishioner, and your church:
   (i) Yourself: Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself?
   (ii) Being a member of the Vestry: When you feel best about being a member of the Vestry what about yourself do you value?
   (iii) Your church: What is it about your church that you value? What is the single most important thing that your church has contributed to your life?
   (iv) Your Denomination: What is it about being a member of your denomination that you value? What is the single most important thing that being from your denomination has contributed to your life?

4. Core Value: What do you think is the core value of your church? What values give life to your congregation. What is it that, if it did not exist, would make your church totally different than it currently is? Please note that the core value of the church may be different from what you specifically value about the church.

5. Wishes: Imagine that the next year serving on the Vestry is the most creative and rewarding year you have had at your church.
   (i) What would you have accomplished?
   (ii) What would the Vestry have accomplished?
   (iii) If God gave you three wishes for your church, what would they be?
Vestry Retreat

Vestry Introduction Summary Page

Instructions: As you listen to the introductions use this sheet to make some brief summaries paying attention to common themes or unique things that really catch your interest and imagination.

1. Best experiences of the church:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. Best experiences of the Vestry:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. Values: The things people value about themselves and the church.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

4. Core Value of the Church:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

4. Wishes for the future:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
**Vestry Interview Synthesis Page**

**Instructions:** Use this page in your small group to synthesize what you are learning and hearing from the Vestry members.

**Positive Life Giving Core of Your Vestry**

Summarize those positive things that give life to and energize your organization. These include the values people bring and share in and the resources that are described or contained in the best experiences.

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**Exemplar Stories:** Are there one or two stories that capture the spirit or essence of the positive core?

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**Dreams for the Future:** Synthesize the dreams and hopes for the future. Pay particular attention to how these dreams have been manifested in part in the best experiences that you already have had.

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**Create a Presentation:** On a large sheet of paper create a presentation of your Positive Core and Dream synthesis to the whole group.
LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Inquire About Previous Retreats: What has worked well in the past?
What locations are conducive to effective retreats?
Use previous best retreat practices to inform your planning.

Determine the Time Frame
Where will it be held and what will the time frame be.
All weekend, just Saturday etc.
Consider your goals when determining location/time.
How much time will it take to accomplish these goals?

Let's Eat
Effective teams eat together so design your program to include shared meals.

Manage Energy
If people have to travel after work to a location design Friday evening to allow for low energy.

Location Considerations
To enable the most effective, creative, mindsets, have people sleep away from home two nights. For example, Friday and Saturday evening. The second night protects the work time on Saturday afternoon.

Turn cell phones off. If you do a one day retreat at church get a commitment not to bring cell phones. You need people to be mentally and spiritually present at the retreat.

For a one day retreat consider using a neighboring church to reduce distractions. (This is true for the leadership who will often get to their offices at breaks and return phone calls etc. rather than engage with the people)

Design Considerations
Many Vestry retreats have multiple goals, some include familiarization for newcomers with budgets processes etc.

Some plan team building exercises etc.

Explore which of these can be incorporated into the appreciative process. For example the interview process is highly engaging and will result in team building so that separate team building exercises will not be required.

Some business processes are best left to after the appreciative inquiry process because the planning phase may impact the decision making.

Facilitation Considerations
As the leader, you can lead and engage in the process.
If the Vestry is conflicted you can still use the process but having an external facilitator is advisable.
RETREAT SCHEDULE

Friday Through Sunday
The following schedule is organized sequentially for a weekend retreat for about a dozen people.

Friday Evening
Arrive and have dinner.

Introductions
Over dinner have people introduce themselves
a suggested introduction may be:

Who you are?

What do you do?

Beyond family what do you love, or love to do?
This helps people connect and develop relationships around common positive interests.

After Dinner
Depending on the time and energy you could start the interview process or you could spend about an hour having people informally introduce themselves by answering the following questions.

How long have they attended the church?

What was their very first impression that caused them to return to the church?

Who made them feel welcome and has blessed their presence in the church?

Evening Devotion
See compline service or conclude with some devotion.

Saturday
Morning Devotion, see morning prayer liturgy.

Briefly introduce the days program.

Conduct Interviews
Introduce the interview process and schedule.

Interview in pairs, if there is an odd number have one triad

Ensure that everyone, including the leader engages in the process. Apart from an external facilitator there are no observers just participants.

Interviews will take at least an hour.

Allow for a break after interviews

Depending on the numbers and keeping the interview pairs together, divide the Vestry into two groups of 4-8 people.

You could do one group of 10 but not 12.
A group of 4 and 6 would work.
Introducing Partner: Explain the introduction and synthesis process. Typically this will take about an hour. Have each person introduce their partners to the other 4 members in the small group. Have the hearers use the summary sheets to make brief notes. Pay particular attention to common themes and also unique experiences or thoughts that capture people’s interest and imagination.

Synthesize: After all the participants have been introduced have the small groups discuss and synthesize the information from the interviews and prepare a 5-10 minute presentation to the whole group. It is most helpful if they present this on a large sheet of newsprint. Although it is more expensive the poster pads with the wall adhesive are the most convenient and are less likely to bleed through if you write on them while they are posted on a wall.

Positive Life Giving Core: This captures the best of what is. It contains the values that people bring and share in as members of the church and Vestry. It also contains the resources and strengths that are described in the best experiences.

Exemplar Stories: These are stories that capture the essence or the spirit of the Vestry and the church. They are narratives of the life giving core.

Dreams and Wishes: These enable the life giving core to be manifested in the future. They express the hopes the members have for the Vestry and are the things the members are likely to spend their discretionary or voluntary effort on.

Create Presentation: Have each group prepare a 5-10 minute presentation to the whole based on the synthesis.

Have lunch

Dialogue: Convene a whole group session for 20-30 minutes to discuss any common themes or things that caught people’s imagination. Make any additions to the newsprint.
**Discover Interest**

Give each participant a colored marker or 6 colored dots. Get each participant to put 6 checks or dots on the things that they consider important or that they connect with. They can put all the dots on one thing if they consider it very important or spread them over several items.

**Pay Attention to the Spirit**

Conducting a retreat is like good jazz its all about improvisation, based on what is arising.

In most cases the dream phase or imagining the future would be next, but be open to deviate if the Spirit is moving in the conversation

**Guided Imagery Exercise**

See the imagery protocol.

The purpose of this exercise is to get the participants imagining their preferred future and to create a unified vision for their work together.

This phase moves the people from the best of what they have to the best the Spirit is leading them to be.

Because this process begins with the recollection of the best of the past this future vision is both reality based and possibility oriented.

**Drawing the Dream**

At the end of the imagery have the people divide into two groups to share their images and then to draw a picture that communicates their shared hopes and desires for the future.

**Designing the Future**

Be open to what is emerging.

If the group has no prior mission statement, now would be the time to create a mission or purpose statement.

If the group has an effective mission statement now would be the time to develop plans for the coming year.

Both will be based on positive images of the future.

**Taking a Break**

In anticipation of the Design phase give the group a beak.

If the facilities and weather allow a good exercise is to invite the participants to do a walking meditation for 30 minutes. (Include refreshment break in the 30 minutes)

Alternatively allow people a break to go back to their room and relax and rest.

Invite people to imagine walking with Jesus and talking with him about the future possibilities for the church. Have the people imagine walking for the first 10 minutes with Jesus on their dominant side and the remaining 10 minutes on their non-dominant side and observe any differences in the experience. Most people notice significant differences. The nature of the differences is not clear and not necessarily important. However what the exercise does is heighten curiosity and draws people deeper into the experience of relating to Jesus.

An alternative might be to invite people to walk a labyrinth.

**Writing Purpose Statements** After the break review the church’s mission statement to ensure that it captures the essence of the community.

Perhaps the Vestry needs their own statement to describe their work and commitment to the church.

To write statement see the notes on creating mission statements or provocative propositions.

**Creating Goals** If the mission statement is appropriate now is the time to create goals for the coming year. See Goals section

**Break for Dinner** Allow time for socialization and relaxation.

**After Dinner Options** Conduct the business meeting of the Vestry if necessary,

Continue work on goal setting, especially if the afternoon concluded with writing a mission statement.

Design what you need to do to make the mission statement reality. Do some activities need to be started or stopped to bring them into alignment with the church’s values.

Alternatively create a presentation or short play or picture for the congregation that would communicate the Vestry’s vision for the church.

**Evening Devotion** See the attached liturgy

**Sunday Morning**

**Morning Prayer** See the attached liturgy

**Working Session** See above for after dinner options

**Eucharist** Celebrate the weekend. See the attached liturgy
IMAGINE A CHURCH EXERCISE

A guided imagery exercise following completion of the discovery interviews and presentations.

Explain that this is a guided imagery exercise and not a guided visualization, because people imagine in all sorts of different ways and not just visually. The exercise should be presented at a paced speed with time for people to imagine. If there is a disruption, build it into the presentation. For example, if there is a loud noise or cars on the street you could say something like: “and as you are imagining the church you may hear other noises and you can allow them to float on by as you allow your attention to come back to imagining the church where the people are gathering....”

Talk briefly about metaphors and images as a way for holding and communicating a truth. At the end of the exercise people will be invited to come up with a metaphor for their church at its best and you can seed this aspect of the exercise. Some metaphor questions might be:

Imagine yourself at your very best, what kind of animal would serve as a metaphor for you at your best, would you be a lion, or a deer, or a turtle, or a bird, and if you were a bird, what kind of a bird would you be?

The Script

Get comfortable, if you like, put your feet flat on the floor with your hands open in your lap. If you like you may want to close your eyes if it allows you to use your imagination. At the same time as you close your eyes allow your mind to be open to the Holy Spirit. You may find that interesting, that closing your eyes helps open the mind, but that's the way it seems to be for many people.

And you may be aware that you have your own way of imagining. Some people imagine things like looking at pictures, others imagine sounds, while others just have this sense or feeling of something, like you have in a dream. What ever way you imagine things is right for you and you may begin to wonder what kind of a church you would imagine if you were to imagine a church:

You could imagine a church where people gather to:

*add elements from peak experiences*

and you could imagine a church filled with people who have/are:

*add elements from what people value about themselves:*

and you could imagine a church that holds these values:

*add elements of core values*

and as you imagine this church where people experience these things....

*summarize peak experiences*

and is filled with people who have/are.....

*summarize personal values*

and hold these values.....

*summarize core values*

You can imagine the people working on these goals and making these wishes come into being.

*add wishes*
and you could imagine walking around this church and seeing these people

*add what they would be doing*.......,

and hearing them talk and sing and pray

and you could imagine what you would feel like as you were in this church with these people

and as you feel what it would be like to be in this church you realize that this is the church you belong to and these are the people that you belong to.

and as you imagine this church I wonder what you imagine their Vestry is like and the people on the Vestry who have been entrusted with the leadership of the church.

You could imagine a Vestry of people who have/are.....

*summarize personal values*

and hold these values.....

*summarize core values*

working together on their plans

*summarize wishes*

to realize their dreams for the church

and as you imagine this church you belong to you could imagine meeting a friend who you haven't seen for several years and you get into a conversation about churches and you begin to tell them about the Vestry and the church and what a neat place it is and what people experience there

*add experiences*

*and the people who go there*

*and what the church stands for*

*and what it is working to accomplish*

and you can tell your friend all these things about your church and what makes it neat and exciting for you to be a member of it.

and you can tell the friend what it will be like when the goals are all accomplished and how that will make your church an even more inspiring place to be.

and as you tell your friend about these goals its as though they are already completed and you can see how the church has grown and become the church that you prefer and you can capture that imagine of your preferred church as a picture or a sound or a feeling.

You can capture that image as a fragment that holds within it the truth of what you imagine, like a photograph captures an image of some event, or like a metaphor holds within it the truth of an image, like a tree can be tall and strong, or a rose fragrance can call to mind a a special valentine, or just a few sounds can call to mind a whole song, and so you can capture this image of the church that you enjoy and hold it in your mind as you allow your attention to come back into the room.

and as your attention comes back into this room in your minds eye is the image you captured and you open your eyes you can see that some of that church and its Vestry is right here in the room with you.

**Drawing Exercise:** In groups share your metaphors and then draw them.
WRITING PURPOSE, VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

If you want to build a ship, then don’t drum up men to gather wood, give orders, and divide the work. Rather teach them to yearn for the far and endless sea.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Every group needs a clear compelling statement to communicate its purpose and guide its actions.

Vision Statements
Primarily relate to human being and are often aspirational.

Mission Statements
Primarily relate to human doing or action

It is not essential to have both and effective statements may have elements of both. In appreciative inquiry language effective statements are called provocative propositions.

Provocative Propositions
A statement that bridges the past/present with the future. They bridge "what is" and "what will be."

They describe the individual or organization at its very best. They are written as though the desired future is a reality.

Bold aspiration statements grounded in what we know to be true.

They describe what the organization believes God is calling them to be and do.

Provoke
To call forth or evoke. Provocative Propositions call forth the best that we or a group can be.

Provocative Propositions may combine both vision and mission elements.

Jesus’ “I am” statements are provocative propositions.

Jesus’ Kingdom of God preaching is an example of the provocative process. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God which was a future reality, that was already known in part, but would come in its fulness in the future. The more he proclaimed this Kingdom the larger it grew in their consciousness.

Some folk find the name “provocative proposition” difficult other’s love them. Another title that has worked is “courageous proposition.”

Regardless of what you call them organizations need a clearly understood and agreed to sense of purpose.
WRITING PROVOCATIVE PROPOSITIONS

You can write them for individuals, an organization or a subgroup or department within the organization i.e. The church could have a unifying statement, the staff or Vestry have another, and the outreach or worship committee have one that describes their work within the organization.

They need to be provocative: Stretching, challenging, and interrupting of the status quo.

Watch for and eliminate waffle words: such as aim to, striving for, aspire to.

They may contain descriptive statements and also value or action statements.

Are they grounded: has the ideal been demonstrated as a possibility?

Is the outcome desired by the organization

Is it affirmative, stated positively?

Will it guide future action?

Does it expand the range of possibility?

They need to be memorable.

Will they enable your average church member describe the core purpose of your church in 30 seconds or less?

They need to preach.

Write some that are off the wall.

Seeking Greatness

Being Better than Others?

Jesus never rebuked the disciples for wanting to be the greatest. What he did was tell them how to be great.

This is not about being better than others

We can be better than someone else by making ourselves better or by making someone worse than we are.

What we are doing is being the best that we can be.

When we are at our very best we most closely approximate the image of God that God created us to be.
Examples of Provocative Propositions

Jesus of Nazareth  I am the bread of life..... I am the light of the world.

Rob Voyle  I am helpful, humorous, and healing.

Charlie Pfeifer  I enable and facilitate the Diocese (of Southern Virginia) to spread the word of Christ and make new disciples.  
(Charlie is the financial controller of the Diocese)

All Saints Staff  We are the staff of All Saints-by-the-Sea, serving our community as the embrace of Christ.

Christ Church  Christ Church is a growing, caring, sacramental community.

We provide an open, Christ-centered sanctuary for worship, reflection, education and service for our children and all who enter.

St. James Wichita, Kansas  Ancient Worship, Open Minds
Come Inside, Make a difference

Diocese of Eastern Michigan  Currently reworking their mission statement. Notice how it is becoming more provocative.

Current  The Diocese of Eastern Michigan is becoming an apostolic community of miraculous expectation for grassroots mission.

Emerging  The Diocese of Eastern Michigan is a grassroots community that gathers in One Baptism, at One Table, as One Body, reconciling the world to God in Christ.

Using the Provocative Propositions

Communicate  Needs to be communicated at least once a month to be effective influence.

Create redundant forms of overlapping communication.

Use it to guide decisions.

Use it to guide praise.

E.g. “As you now part of our mission is to serve the poor and I want to thank Bill and Joan for their work in the homeless shelter last week and invite you all to sign up for next week’s food preparation for Hospitality House.”

Teach it to newcomers.

Use it in fund raising and stewardship promotion
CREATING GOALS

**Design Phase**  Developing achievable plans and steps to make the vision a reality. Action planning to enable the dream.

The dream must be grand but the process of fulfilling the dream must be a series of small achievable acts.

Co-creating a sustainable preferred future by aligning values, structures and mission with the ideal.

What will we need to do to make the provocative propositions a reality?

**Remember A-B**  Creating multiple small “b”s to enable the big “B” or creating realizable intermediate goals and steps

In organizations the task may be to provide the appropriate social and organizational architecture.

Changing mental models and structural variables

For Example: Going from "Who is in power?" to: "How do we share power to empower people for ministry?"

**Form Follows Function**  Are steps consistent with purpose, identity, and values?

If necessary align goals with values and purpose.

Are the steps measurable and time determinable?

**Locating Resources**  What resources do you need to achieve the step.

Staying positive, appreciative, and resourceful.

If necessary re-iterate and do more discovery to locate necessary resources.

**Seek and Satisfy Objections**  None of us is 100% motivated to do anything.

Each of the people, even the supporters will have objections to the goals and plans as they are made.

Ask each person what their objection to the goal is and what would satisfy the objection.

Satisfying objections is different from overcoming objections. The latter is an act of violence and will create resistance. Satisfying objections is deeply respectful and increases commitment. The Quakers ask the question: “Are all hearts clear?”

**Goals for Core Purposes**  Remember to create goals for core programs that are already functioning well. Many congregations forget to create goals and allocate resources for core activities such as worship.
**Liturgies for the Retreat**

The following liturgies have been inspired by and adapted from:

A New Zealand Prayerbook, ©Copyright 1989 the Church of the Province of New Zealand,

The Book of Common Prayer (Episcopal) ©Copyright 1979, The Church Pension Fund

Enriching Our Worship ©Copyright 1998, The Church Pension Fund

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**Compline**

O Lord how manifold are your works; in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.  
Ps. 104:25

**Officiant** The angels of God guard us through the night  
**People** and quieten the powers of darkness.

**Officiant** The Spirit of God be our guide  
**People** to lead us to peace and to glory.

**Officiant** Creator God, giver of good things and lover of souls, we thank you for all that is good, for our creation and our humanity, for the stewardship you have given us of this planet earth, for the gifts of life and for one another, for your love which is unbounded and eternal.  
O You most holy and beloved, our Companion, our Guide upon the way, our bright evening star.  
We repent of our wrong doings.  
silence

**Officiant** We have wounded your love  
**People** O God heal us.

**Officiant** We give thanks for our right doings  
silence

**Officiant** Light of the world inspire us.  
**People** Spirit of God dwell in us.

**Officiant** Eternal Spirit, living God, in whom we live and move and have our being, all that we are, have been and shall be is known to you, to the very secrets of our hearts and all that rises to trouble us and inspire us.  
Living flame, burn into us, cleansing wind, blow through us, fountain of water, well up within us, that we love and praise you in all our words and deeds. Amen

Psalm 16:5-11

O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; it is you who uphold my lot.  
My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; indeed, I have a goodly heritage.  
I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me, night after night.  
I have set the Lord always before me; because God is at my right hand I shall not fall.  
My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope.  
For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the Pit.  
You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy, and from your right hand flow delights for evermore.
A reading from Ephesians
According to the riches of God’s glory, may you be strengthened with might through the Holy Spirit in your inner being, and may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph. 3:16-19

Silent reflection concluded with:

Officiant  Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.
People  Amen. All that the Lord has said we will do.

Officiant  Gracious God, you have given us much today; grant us also a thankful spirit.
Into your hands we commend ourselves and those we love.
Be with us still, and when we take our rest renew us for the service of your son Jesus Christ.
Amen

People  In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Thanksgivings and intercessions may be offered

Officiant  Lord, it is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done; help us let it be.
Be present, Spirit of God, within us your dwelling place and home, that this house may be one where all darkness is penetrated by your light, all troubles calmed by your peace, all evil redeemed by your love, all pain transformed in your suffering, and all dying glorified in your risen life. Amen.

Officiant  Let us bless the Lord.
People  Thanks be to God
MORNING PRAYER

Officiant  You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that God will give you whatever you ask in my name.  

Officiant  O God let our mouths proclaim your praise.  

People  Let our hearts rejoice in your goodness.  

Officiant & People  Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor, power and might be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.  

Canticle: A Song of Pilgrimage  

Before I ventured forth, even while I was very young, 
I sought wisdom openly in my prayer.  
In the forecourts of the temple I asked for her, 
and I will seek her to the end.  
From the first blossom to early fruit, 
she has been the delight of my heart.  
My foot has kept firmly to the true path, 
diligently from my youth have I pursued her.  
I inclined my ear a little and received her; 
I found for myself much wisdom and became adept in her.  
To the one who gives me wisdom will I give glory, 
for I have resolved to live according to her way.  
From the beginning I gained courage from her, 
therefore I will not be forsaken.  
In my inmost being I have been stirred to seek her, 
therefore have I gained a good possession.  
As my reward the Almighty has given me the gift of language, 
and with it will I offer praise to God.  
Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: 
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.  

A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah  

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth.”  

Silent reflection concluded with:  

Officiant  Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.  

People  Amen. All that the Lord has said we will do.
Lord's Prayer from New Zealand Prayerbook

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.  Amen.

Officiant  Lord, hear our prayer;
People  And let our cry come to you.
Officiant  Let us pray.

Almighty God, pour upon us your wisdom and grace as we embark on this journey of discovery.
Enkindle in our hearts the fire of your love that warmed by your presence and inspired by your spirit we
would quest for your purpose and bring you glory in the way we live our lives through Jesus Christ our
Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.  Amen.

Thanksgivings and intercessions may be offered

God of infinite blessing, when you fashioned the world the morning stars sang together and the host of
heaven shouted for joy: open our eyes to the wonders of your creation and teach us to use all things for
good, that we may be blessed and be a blessing so that all may live in your abundance; through Jesus
Christ our Lord.  Amen.

Officiant  Let us bless the Lord.
People  Thanks be to God
EVENING PRAYER

It is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 

2 Cor. 4:6

Officiant O God, make speed to save us.

People O Lord, make haste to help us

Officiant and People Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor, power and might be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Canticle: Rich in Mercy

You O God are rich in mercy: out of the great love with which you loved us.

Even when we were dead through our sins: you made us alive together with Christ.

You raised us up in union with him: and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that you might show the immeasurable riches of your grace: in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

You raised us up in union with him: and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that you might show the immeasurable riches of your grace: in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O son of God, O God of life, and to be glorified through all the worlds

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Officiant Lord, hear our prayer;

People And let our cry come to you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Oh God of peace keep us from being content with things as they are. Let us all know that at the heart of change and turbulence there is an inner calm that comes from faith in you, and that from this central heart of peace, there may flow a creative compassion, a thirst for justice, a relentless proclamation of your love, and a willingness to give of ourselves in the Spirit of Christ. Amen.

Thanksgivings and intercessions may be offered

Loving Creator of all, watch over us this night and keep us as the light of your presence. Let our praise continually blend with the song of all creation, until we come to those eternal joys which you promise in your love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord;

People Thanks be to God
MORNING PRAYER

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them, for the one who loves them will lead them and guide them beside the springs of water.  

Officiant O God let our mouths proclaim your praise. 

People Let our hearts rejoice in your goodness. 

Officiant & People Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor, power and might be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Canticle: The Third Song of Isaiah

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. For behold, darkness covers the land; deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.

But over you the Lord will rise, and God’s glory will appear upon you.

Nations will stream to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawning.

Your gates will always be open; by day or night they will never be shut.

They will call you, The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Violence will no more be heard in your land, ruin or destruction within your borders.

You will call your walls, Salvation, and all your portals, Praise.

The sun will no more be your light by day; by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.

The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

A Reading from the letter to Philippians

Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 

Phil 4:8

Silent reflection concluded with:

Officiant Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.
People Amen. All that the Lord has said we will do.

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Officiant Lord, hear our prayer;
People And let our cry come to you.

Officiant Let us pray.

God of life we thank you for the mystery planted in us, the paradox of life from death and your church, a gathered community from scattered disciples. Blessed is your risen Christ, the Lord of growth and discovery, of beauty and joy, of peace and justice, who makes all things new. Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give of ourselves to your service, and live each day in love to one another and to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thanksgivings and intercessions may be offered

God of love, set that morning star which never sets, the risen light of Christ, in our hearts that together we will walk in your presence with your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, your strength in our wills, that in all we do we bring glory to you and your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord;
People Thanks be to God
Eucharist

Celebrant  Grace to you and peace from God our Creator, the source of our being, the love at our beginning, and without end.

People  God is with us, here we find new life.

Celebrant  Let us give thanks for the coming of God's reign of justice and love.

People  Jesus Christ is good news for the poor, release for the captives recovery of sight for the blind and liberty for those who are oppressed.

Te Deum Laudamus

You are God: we praise you; You are the Lord: we acclaim you; You are the eternal One: All creation worships you.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven, Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you. The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you; Holy God, of majesty unbounded, your true and only Son, worthy of all worship, and the Holy Spirit, our advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory, the eternal Son of God.

When you became human to set us free you did not shun the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You are seated at God's right hand in glory. We believe that you will come and be our judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people, bought with the price of your own blood, and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting. Amen

Celebrant  The Lord be with you.

People  And also with you.

Celebrant  Let us pray

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lesson  A reading from the first letter of Peter

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

Reader  Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

People  Thanks be to God

Psalm 95: 1-7

1 Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.
3 For you are a great God; you are great above all gods.
4 In your hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are yours also.
5 The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land.
6 Come, let us bow down and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
7 For you are our God, and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand.
8 Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!
The Gospel

**Mark 1:14-20**

**Gospeller** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**People** Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

**Celebrant** The Gospel of the Lord.

**People** Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Prayers of the People

**Leader** With a spirit of thanksgiving for God’s goodness,

let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Caring God, we thank you for your gifts in creation: for our world,

Thanksgivings for creation, the world and the congregation are invited

**Leader** for your abundant goodness we thank you Lord

**People** help us to use your gifts responsibly.

**Leader** We pray for our congregation, and offer to you our hopes and dreams

The people are invited to offer the plans that have been made during the retreat

**Leader** We thank you for the opportunity to serve you:

**People** embolden us with courage and compassion to proclaim your love in word and deed.

**Leader** We pray for those on our hearts who suffer and need your healing Lord, especially,

The people may silently or aloud remember those on their hearts.

**Leader** deliver them from their distress,

**People** in your mercy hear our prayer.

**Leader** We remember those who have died,

The people may silently or aloud remember those who have died

**Leader** into your hands we commend them

**People** let light perpetual shine on them,

**Leader** and comfort those who mourn,

**People** bring them peace in their time of loss.

**Celebrant** Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned.

**People** We will confess our sins to the Lord, We will not conceal our wrong doing.

Silence is kept

**Celebrant** God forgives and heals us.

**People** We need your healing, merciful God: give us true repentance.

Some sins are plain to us; some escape us, some we cannot face.

Forgive us; set us free to hear your word to us; set us free to serve you.

**Celebrant** God forgives you. Forgive others; forgive yourself.

Silence is kept
Celebrant: God the Creator brings you new life, forgives and redeems you. Take hold of this forgiveness, approach your God in peace, and live your life in the Spirit of Jesus.

People: Amen.

The Peace

Celebrant: Christ calls us to live in unity

People: We seek to live in the Spirit of Christ

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

The Holy Communion

Celebrant: God of all creation, you bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine.

By your Holy Spirit this bread and wine will be for us the body and blood of Christ.

People: All you have made is good. Your love endures for ever.

Celebrant: The Spirit of God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts to heaven.

People: Where Christ in glory reigns

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Celebrant: It is right indeed to give you thanks most loving God, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, the first born from the dead, the pioneer of our salvation, who is with us always, one of us, yet from the heart of God. For with your whole created universe, we praise you for your unfailing gift of life. We thank you that you make us human and stay with us even when we turn from you to sin.

People: God's love is shown to us: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Celebrant: In that love, dear God, righteous and strong to save, you came among us in Jesus Christ, our crucified and living Lord. You make all things new. In Christ's suffering and cross you reveal your glory and reconcile all peoples to yourself, their true and living God. In the power of endless life Christ is risen from the grave. His death has broken death and opened for us the new and living way. Christ is now our peace, our freedom and our joy.

In your mercy you are now our God. Through Christ you gather us, new-born in your Spirit, a people after your own heart. We entrust ourselves to you, for you alone do justice to all people, living and departed.

People: Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.

Celebrant: Therefore with saints and martyrs, apostles and prophets, with all the redeemed, joyfully we praise you and say:

People: Holy, holy, holy;

God of mercy, giver of life;

earth and sea and sky and all that lives,

declare your presence and your glory.

Celebrant: All glory to you, Giver of life sufficient and full for all creation. Accept our praises, living God, for Jesus Christ, the one perfect offering for the world, who in the night that he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this to remember me.

After supper he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you, and for many to forgive sin. Do this as often as you drink it to remember me.
Therefore, God of all creation, in the suffering and death of Jesus our redeemer, we meet you in your glory. We lift up the cup of salvation and call upon your name. Here and now, with this bread and wine, we celebrate your great acts of liberation, ever present and living in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come.

People

Amen! Come Lord Jesus.

Celebrant

Lord Jesus Christ ascended in majesty be our new and living way, our access to you, Father, and source of all new life. In Christ we offer ourselves to do your will. Empower our celebration with your Holy Spirit, feed us with your life, fire us with your love, confront us with your justice, and make us one in the body of Christ with all who share your gifts of love.

People

Through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, our Creator God. Amen.

Celebrant

And now with gladness let us pray together.

Together

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

People

We who are many are one body, for we all share the one bread.

Celebrant

The cup of blessing for which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ. Bread and wine; the gifts of God for the people of God.

People

May we who share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us.

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Celebrant

Let us pray.

People

Most loving God, creator and redeemer, we give you thanks for this foretaste of your heavenly banquet. Blessed is your risen Christ, the Lord of growth and discovery, of beauty and joy of whom our hearts sing. His is the inspiration that has altered and shaped our lives; His is the power that has brought us to new challenges and opportunities. Set us free as your new creation to serve you in the world with all our hearts, watching and learning, listening and singing, loving and caring until at the end of our journey, we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Blessing and Dismissal

Celebrant The God of Truth bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficiality so that you live from deep within your heart. Amen.
The God of Understanding make you tender in the face of pain and rejection so that others can know the comfort of your acceptance. Amen.
The God of Justice make you fierce in the face of oppression and exploitation so that others can live with dignity in the midst of your respect. Amen.
The God of all Wisdom bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can lead others to do what many claim cannot be done. Amen.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, and Life Giving Spirit, be upon you and those you love now and for ever. Amen.

Celebrant Go in beauty to love and enjoy the risen Lord

People Thanks be to God