

Evaluating Your Ministry with Midlife Adults

1. Consider the various life situations of midlife people in your congregation. These might include new Christians, parents with children, divorced individuals, empty-nesters, newly retired, working professionals, and so forth.
2. List at least three segments of midlife adults in the columns below, use additional sheets if needed. For each group list the ministry opportunities available in each of the categories listed.
3. Are there any blank boxes on your chart? What new ministries might you need to start?

Study			
Spiritual Growth			
Nurture Fellowship			
Support Accountability			
Mission Service			
Leadership Development			

Reaching and Receiving People at Midlife

Use this checklist as a springboard for discussion to help your adult council consider how you are currently reaching and receiving adults and what you need to add or change.

Which of the following describe your congregation

- ___ Good signage that directs people to adult classes, small groups, worship, and so forth.
- ___ A regularly updated web site that provides basic information that someone considering your church would want to know. (Mission, vision, and core values, classes, small groups, expectations of members, worship times, calendar of events, how to find the church, and so forth.)
- ___ Greeters that intentionally introduce visitors to others in the congregation with whom they can easily relate.
- ___ A system of visitor welcome and follow-up that is hospitable.
- ___ Intentional opportunities for adults of all ages who are curious about the Christian faith to encounter and engage with members of your congregation in a positive and non-threatening manner. This might include activities that occur off site such as church soft ball teams, groups that use church space such as AA or other recovery groups, community events sponsored by the congregation, outreach ministries that serve the community, and so forth.
- ___ Trained mentors and guides who walk with newcomers as they enter the life of the congregation.
- ___ A spiritual gifts assessment process to help everyone in the congregation, including newcomers, discover and use their spiritual gifts.
- ___ A comprehensive communications system that ensures members and visitors are kept up-to-date on congregational news. This may include newsletters, telephone chains, websites, e-mail lists, announcements, and so forth.
- ___ An intercessory prayer ministry that supports adults at all life stages.
- ___ Long time members constantly monitor themselves to ensure they are not being inhospitable by using acronyms and other language that exclude others, assuming that “everybody already knows...”, and adopting attitudes of “this is the way we have always done it” or “we tried that once before.”

Equipping for Discipleship

Use the following scale to evaluate each statement related to participation in your congregation. Use the results to help determine how you are currently equipping adults for discipleship and what needs to be added or changed.

NA: Opportunities are not available

F: A few people

M: Most people

E: Nearly everyone

- Participate in classes or small groups that introduce people to the Bible
- Participate in classes or small groups that study the Bible in depth
- Understand our Christian heritage
- Understand the unique contributions of the United Methodist Church
- Participate in a class or small group for support and accountability such as a Covenant Discipleship Group
- Participate in corporate worship
- Participate in leading worship (choir, liturgist, usher, and so forth)
- Participate in a prayer ministry
- Regularly share how God is at work in their lives
- Fast as a spiritual discipline
- Tithe
- Participate in intentional reflection about how their faith influences their everyday lives
- Have a plan for personal spiritual growth
- Teachers and small group leaders regularly participate in training and other learning opportunities that strengthen their abilities as spiritual leaders
- Have regular opportunities to be in relationship with people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, and economic conditions
- Participate regularly in the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion
- Listen to other's faith stories
- Tell their own faith stories

Sending Forth

Disciples are formed so that the world might be transformed. How is the world and specifically your community more just, more compassionate, and more hopeful because God is working through the disciples in your congregation?

Which of the following describe your congregation

- Our congregation is known for its ministries of justice.
- Our congregation is known for its ministries of compassion.
- Our congregation is known for its ministry beyond our community.
- Individuals in our congregation take leadership in community justice issues.
- Individuals in our congregation are actively involved in making our community a safer and healthier place for the the most vulnerable.
- Our congregation regularly recognizes congregational members who are involved in ministry beyond our congregation.
- Our congregation helps and encourages people to find places of service outside of the church building.
- People from our congregation regularly visit those who are in jail or prison.
- Our congregation has a system for identifying community needs and then addressing those needs.
- Members of our congregation look for opportunities to share their faith with others.
- Our congregation cooperates with other faith groups and secular groups to effect change in our community.
- Our congregation spends more of its financial resources on outward focused ministry than it does on inward focused ministry.
- Our congregation regularly organizes ministry opportunities that allow people with a wide range of skills and abilities to use their gifts to make a positive difference in the world.