

WHY A RETREAT ON CONFLICT?

Our group spent quite a bit of time thinking about what kind of final project we wanted to do. We wanted it to be useful for parish life, fun, and applicable to many kinds of church congregations. We decided that designing a 20-hour retreat would give us the right balance of teaching and learning, activities, fun, and fellowship. Our goal, as stated in the schedule, is to build a retreat that “looks to increase our individual and collective understanding of leadership styles, particularly as these styles relate to conflict.”

We feel strongly that congregations can be proactive in dealing with conflict; by thinking about one’s own leadership style, and how leaders relate to one another, conflicts can be dealt with more constructively. Perhaps this kind of retreat would be best implemented when an important staff person is changed, such as the (solo) pastor or senior pastor. It would be an opportunity for those leaders in a church to get to know their new co-worker in the kingdom, and an opportunity for the new staff member to get a sense of the types of people s/he will be working with.

In addition, we thought this sort of assessment would benefit the participants who work in secular careers, as well. Many people have leadership, management, and even conflict training at their place of work, but how many of those programs incorporate the spiritual --particularly Christian concepts--into their models? This retreat, with a Christian focus, could have benefits that spill over into everyday life (we hope!).

We think that our retreat could be used in a variety of congregational settings—large staff with council, small staff with council, or simply pastor with council and other important lay leaders (such as committee chairs). And we pray that you will find some, or all, of this project useful as you go out into church leadership positions.

Sincerely,

Heidi Heimgartner

Sarah Larson

Mike Toomey

Sara Wirth

Gretchen Porisch

THE WILD WORLD OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A retreat that looks to increase our individual and collective understanding of leadership styles, particularly as these styles relate to conflict

Schedule of Events

Friday Evening

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 7:00-8:00 pm | Registration / Settling In |
| 8:00 pm | Opening Gathering
Devotions
Activity |
| 9:30 pm | Teaching Time: Self-Assessment, Part 1 |
| 10:30 pm | Prayer of the Cross |
| 10:45 pm | Free Time |

Saturday Morning and Afternoon

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|----------|---|
| 8:00 am | First Word |
| 8:15 am | Breakfast |
| 9:00 am | Teaching Time: Self-Assessment, Part 2
Activity |
| 10:30 am | Celebration Worship |
| 11:15 am | Teaching Time: How Do I Relate To Others? |
| 12:00 pm | Lunch |
| 1:00 pm | Free Time (journal, take a walk, have conversation, nap,
whatever you wish!) |
| 2:00 pm | Teaching Time: Leading Others |
| 3:00 pm | Closing |
| 4:00 pm | Depart for Home |

RETREAT WORSHIP AND DEVOTIONS

Opening Gathering Devotions

Sing “Here in This Place” from With One Voice #718

Philippians Bible Study from Church Innovations

Questions to answer in small groups relating to this weekend retreat following study of the text:

1. Who do you see Christ being for you from this text?
2. Do you think of your role as a leader in the church differently? How?
3. What might “emptying” (vs.7) yourself look like this weekend?
4. What might “taking the form of a servant/slave” (vs.7) to those on Council with you, look like? To other members of the congregation?

RETREAT WORSHIP AND DEVOTIONS

First Word

All of Romans 12 will be read with time between appointed verses for silent reflection.

Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:3-8

Romans 12:9-13

Romans 12:14-21

Celebration Worship

With One Voice Service of Word and Prayer (pages 46-53)

Gathering Song "Listen, God is Calling" WOV #712

Greeting WOV p. 46

Scripture Song "Healer of Our Every Ill" WOV #738

Reading Matthew 18:10-20

Silence for Reflection

Response to the Word WOV p. 49

Peace WOV p. 50

Prayer

Prayer response "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" WOV #775

Petitions:

- Good Shepherd, each of us here is a sheep of your pasture. We thank you for seeking and finding us when we stray from you. You do not will that any of us should be lost. Give us the same love of your sheep, that allows us to serve you faithfully.
- Gracious Lord, though we have wounded you, you come to us with mercy and forgiveness. Even with your example, we too often fail to initiate reconciliation with our brothers and sisters when we are injured. Free us from our fear and resentment to trust your way of bringing peace.
- Holy God, you promise to be among us as we live in community. Guide us as we strive to do all things in the manner of your self-giving love, that what we bind and loose on earth, may be so in heaven.

Lord's Prayer WOV p. 52

Blessing WOV p. 53

Sending Song "Go, My Children, with My Blessing" WOV #721

Dismissal WOV p. 53

Prayer of the Cross

On the floor in an open space, lay a blanket or rug down that is big enough to fit your entire group around. In four corners, place four platters filled with sand. On the floor next to the sand lay a number of candles that can be lit and have one candle burning at each station. In addition write a short prayer people can say together and have it printed at each station. In the center of the rug, light a number of candles and place a cross in the middle. This is the set up for the prayer of the cross service. The group will sit on the outside of the stations during the service.

As people walk in have a few candles lit and music in the background. Once everyone is seated, allow for a time of silence.

Begin with a welcome and brief explanation of the service.

Have a few readings, psalms, and scripture. Also prepare a couple of songs (use songs of repetition. The Taize songbook is wonderful.)

Explain the time of prayer:

We invite you now to come forward. As you come forward to pray or meditate, we ask the community to let no one come forward alone. You may show your presence simply by sitting next to someone or by placing a hand on their shoulder or arm. Please feel free to pray out loud or silently. When you have finished your prayer, please read the prayer printed on the sheet at the station together. You may come up as often and stay as long as you wish. Come, for all is ready.

In the background have some music playing. A wonderful CD is Voce from the Cambridge Boy's Choir.

Close the evening when you feel it is appropriate.

It is nice to read a psalm or say a group prayer together before dismissing.

Closing

Gather together in a circle. Talk for a little while about the high's and low's of the event. Take some time in silence together.

Share together in prayer. You can hold hands and have the prayer pass from one to another or you can have the progression be sporadic.

End with the Lord's Prayer

Teaching Time: Self-Assessment, Part 1

How do I deal with conflict?

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is for you to get a better understanding of how you deal with conflict.

Target time: 60 minutes

Method: For this exercise we will take a self-assessment of our conflict management styles using the Conflict Management Style Inventory.

- After taking the assessment, score yourself.
- Take a look at the first interpretation grid*.
- Figure out where your scores fall on the grid.

The group leader will then lead a discussion on the categories.

(Have fun with this pointing out both the positives and the negatives of the classifications.)

Go over the second handout.**

Have them ask:

Is this an accurate picture?

How will this affect the way I handle conflict?

What is positive and negative about this manner of conflict management?

Where are my growing edges? (point a few out for each “animal.”)

Let the group share their score with each other, but do not force it.

Also inform the group that they may and can change over time.

Questions for the Journal:

- What surprised you about your assessment?
- How has your manner of handling conflict in the past been beneficial?
- How has your manner of handling conflict in the past been negative?
- How does your faith and understanding of Christian life affect the manner you deal with conflict, specifically in the church? i.e. “Jesus told us to turn the other cheek,” or “In Second John we are told not to accept anyone who teaches us heresy.”
- Where do I need to grow?

* Two-dimensional Taxonomy of Strategic Intentions

** Care-Fronting Chart

Teaching Time: Self-Assessment, Part 2

How is God working through me?

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to examine how God works through us using our gifts, especially in the light of conflict management.

Target time: 45 minutes

Method: Yesterday we looked at how we react to conflict. Review this information, and encourage participants to share their journal writing and other thoughts.

Now we move on to today's agenda. Here we will make the move from conflict management styles to how and what spiritual gifts we have and how they can be beneficial in conflict management.

- First take the Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Short Form.* (this is a way and certainly not the only or the definitive way.)
- Score the assessment.
- Then review the First Word devotional. Romans 12: 9-16
These are seven spiritual gifts; giving, administration, teaching, exhortation, mercy, prophecy, and serving.
- Explain the spiritual gifts.
- Brainstorm how each spiritual gift can be beneficial/negative for conflict management.
- Tell which letter goes with which spiritual gift.

The presentation leader can pose the following questions for the participants, and encourage them to share their thoughts.

- Is this an accurate picture of you?
- So looking at the possibilities of the brain storming activity, what are the benefits/difficulties you may face when you deal with conflict?

The presentation leader should also make it clear that one can grow in all these areas. And that this test may not be completely accurate. And that "in your weakness God's power is made perfect." (2 Co. 12: 9)

Questions for the Journal:

- What surprised you about today's self-assessment?
- How can you use your spiritual gifts in managing conflict?

* "Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Short Form," *Discovering Our Place in God's World*. William Easum.

How I Relate to Others

I. "How I relate to others" self-assessment (20 minutes)

II. Small group activity (20 minutes)

III. Brainstorm possible strengths and weaknesses of each approach as it would apply to dealing with conflict management. (10 min.)

IV. Compare to the possibilities that the book gives. (10 min.)

I. "How I relate to others" self-assessment (20 minutes)

This portion of the retreat deals with how we relate to others. Many of the self-assessments, after determining which personality type someone is, then go on to describe how this person (generally) would get along with the other personality types. Therefore, this section would probably be determined by which self-assessment you are familiar with or which one you think best fits your group. Some, like the Myers-Briggs, work with many different categories (E,N,T,F,J,S,P,I). Others, like the one I found in "Building Strong People", work with more general categories like Leader, Manager, Worker and Reactor.

I found "Building Strong People" by Bobbie Reed and John Westfall (Baker Books, 1997) to be an excellent resource for this retreat because it combines the leadership aspect with the different personality types. The way they defined the different personality types of Leader, Manager, Worker and Reactor was very "user-friendly." For those people who have already taken the Myers-Briggs test and/or other assessments, this would be a new approach. (Because of copyright laws, you would have to write and ask for permission to use this test with your group.)

The group would take the "Leadership Quotient" assessment, which is divided into five sections: Philosophy of Ministry, Planning, Organizing, Implementation, and Evaluation. The numbers are put into the defining categories of Leader, Manager, Worker and Reactor; the numbers are totaled. The scores from each area are plotted on six separate graphs which include the above five sections and a composite score of the grand total of all five sections. The numbers on the vertical axis are lined up with the types on the horizontal axis. The graphs are marked with a "too strong" area, a "too weak" area, and an "ideal" graph line. (See example.) After plotting one's scores, one can see in which areas one is too weak, too strong, or close to the "ideal" line. For instance, if you are in the leader category for Philosophy of Ministry and in the manager category for Implementation, something is inconsistent. If you want to work toward the ideal progression, then you would concentrate on seeing where your scores differ significantly from the standard progression.

II. Small group activity (20 minutes)

Give each small group a list of the following people:

1. Mr. Get-It-Done 2. Ms. Manage-by-Crises 3. Mrs. People Pleaser 4.

Mr. As-Long-as-it-Works 5. MS. DO-IT-MY-WAY-OR-ELSE

According to these persons' "nicknames", what do you think some of their strengths and weaknesses would be? (As time allows, invite sharing of their types with each other. Were there any surprises for you?)

III. Brainstorm possible strengths and weaknesses of each approach as it would apply to dealing with conflict management. (10 min.)

-Remind them of the definition of "brainstorm."

-Two minutes per approach

Compare to the possibilities that the book gives. (10 min.)

After the brainstorming, their answers can be compared with the six main beliefs behind this approach and the six main ways that people usually respond to this approach according to the authors of the book. For instance, two of the *beliefs* behind the Manager approach are:

1. People and programs need to be managed or controlled.
2. Measurable results are critical.

Two of the ways that people usually *respond* to this approach are:

1. Rebelling against the rigid procedures and high expectations, or
2. Meekly following the policies and procedures.

Remind the group that this is only a tool to get us "pondering" about leadership in the church and to help us discern what our leadership style might be. Close with prayer.

(Journal questions prior to the next session would be: 1. Suppose you are involved with a family-owned and operated business. You're getting older and the business is expanding. None of your children are old enough or have the proper education/training to run the business. You will have to train someone to take your place. Which is more important: a strong business or a strong person running the business? 2. Do you agree/disagree with your leadership style assessment? Why or why not?)

Leading Others

I. Bible reflection (20 minutes)

II. Is my leadership oriented towards tasks or people? (20 minutes)

III. Task-People Activity (20 minutes)

I. Bible reflection (20 minutes)

Open with prayer. Have someone in the group read Matthew 20: 1-6, the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Now have them number off from 1-4 or 1-5. Ask them to listen to the text once more (try to use a different translation), but this time listen to it as one of the following people:

1. Early-in-the-day worker
2. Mid-day worker
3. End-of-the-day worker
4. Landowner
5. Manager

Get into the small groups according to the numbers. Share your feelings/reactions to your assigned role. What would you say to the others?

From the Parable of the Laborers we learn that comparing ourselves to fellow workers pits us against one another. Instead, Paul gives us a better picture of what the body of Christ should be. Have the group read 1Corinthians 12, each taking two verses. Now in case some of the group is feeling “down” about their leadership style, this reminds all of us that all of the members of the body of Christ are valued and needed, *even* the person with whom we may have a difference of opinion.

II. Is my leadership oriented towards tasks or people? (20 minutes)

As leaders of our church, we need to know if we are going to be more interested in the ministry itself (i.e., getting things done, providing numerous programs, etc.) or in people and their relationship to their Lord and to each other? What are we here for- to get a job done or to love others and help facilitate ways for them to grow in their faith?

Remind them that while Jesus was on earth, he was more concerned with the quality of relationships not the quantity of relationships. After all, by today’s standards an important leader should certainly have had more than twelve disciples! Not much to show for three years of very intense hands-on training. (And one would think that the Son of God could have at least weeded out the traitor!)

Have the group take a short questionnaire found in *Communicating in Small Groups* that determines if a leader is more task-oriented or people-oriented. (Something similar to this could also be gleaned from any of the assessments mentioned above.) At any rate, it is

important for each person to realize whether they are more interested in the task of getting the job done (“Let’s just get this conflict over with!”) or whether they are more interested in the people who need to get the job done (“Let’s make sure that we listen to everyone’s opinion and try to work out a solution together.”).

Score the assessment. (This is for their information only.)

III. Task-People Activity (20 minutes)

Leaders need to take time to reflect on *why* they do things the *way* they do. When it comes to leading others, we are going to look at the way we view tasks and people. Another helpful section of *Building Strong People* entitled “Looking in the Mirror” deals with four very basic questions: Who is in control in my life? Who has the power in my life? How do we keep score? How do we keep cool? The first two questions are in your journal. They are for you to think and pray about.

We are going to brainstorm possible answers for the last two questions from a task-oriented and a people-oriented perspective (i.e., How do we keep score/keep cool if we are concerned about completion of tasks? How about if we are concerned about importance of people? What do we use as a “yardstick” to measure completion or success?).

Closing remarks: We have all learned a lot about each other and ourselves during this retreat. Between now and our Post-Retreat, please feel free to use your journals to process your thoughts and feelings about what you learned about your conflict-management style, spiritual gifts and leadership style. How do you see God using you in his church?

Other helpful resources on this topic:

1. Steven A. Beebe and John T. Masterson. *Communicating in Small Groups* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2000).
2. H. Newton Maloney, Ph.D. *Win-Win Relationships: Nine Strategies for Settling Personal Conflicts Without Waging War* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995).
3. Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, Sr. Baker. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*. (Grand Rapids, MI.: 1997). [This is an excellent resource for assessing the dark side of your leadership style and a plan of action to help you overcome it.]
4. Rochelle Melander and Harold Eppley. *Community Builders: 50 Exercises for Church Groups*. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998). [Two-page Bible studies on various topics.]
5. M. Scott Peck, M.D. *The Road Less Traveled: The Unending Journey Toward Spiritual Growth*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).
6. Bobbie Reed and John Westfall. *Building Strong People* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1997).

[Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Character assessment and Temperament Assessment (English, Spanish) can be found on the ELCA Web page under Division for Congregational Ministries: Evangelism, Teaching. They also have interactive workshops on various topics.]

Activities List

These activities are meant to serve as ideas, not as a cut and dry format for a personalized retreat. Take what you can from them, feel free to use them, but do not let them stop you from digging into your own creative potential.

M&M GAME

Supplies: a bag of M&M's

Since this group knows one another, we will use a more "in-depth" name game called the M&M name game. The game goes like this.

A bowl of M&M's are passed around the group. Everyone is asked to help him or herself. Give no instructions other than that they are not to eat them until they are told. Once the bowl is passed, make sure everyone took at least a few. (If someone can't have chocolate, ask him or her to take some any way and they can give them away instead of eating them.)

Now that everyone has their stash, give each color of M&M a topic. For example...Red-greatest fears, Blue-greatest accomplishments, Green-favorite toothpaste, Brown-something you would like to do in your lifetime, etc. (Write them down so you don't forget.)

Everyone takes turns. Some people will have to share more than others do. Be reasonable. If someone took half the bowl, let them skip a few just for time's sake. Go around in a circle until everyone is done.

Now that everyone has had some time to open up a bit, move on to the next activity. Before you start the next activity take some time to talk about the significance of problem solving in the work you do. A brief discussion may ensue regarding the difficulty of such decision-making and even the gravity of it. Let it happen. The activities are intended to create situations that may be some abstract or concrete way mimic real life.

Hot Potato (kind of)

Supplies: A ball

Have the group stand in a circle (let it be sloppy and miss-shaped). Once they are in a circle, explain that they will be timed for the event.

Rules:

Every person must touch the ball.

Only one person can touch the ball at a time.

Answer any questions. Do not offer any other assistance aside from the rules.

Go!

After they have completed the activity, ask them if they are satisfied with their time or if they think they can do it faster. They must come to a unanimous decision.

They can do the activity, as many times as they want until they are satisfied.

Before finishing debriefing, make sure everyone's emotions are steady. In the case that someone is intensely frustrated, work with that as you can with the group but, be willing to do some individual debriefing.

Mine Field

Supplies: a long rope and lot's of stuff to throw in the middle.

Set Up:

Place the rope in a circle. The diameter of the circle should be at least six-eight feet across. Inside the circle, place a number of objects, for example, a couple stuffed animals, a shirt or two, some pencils, a rock, a couple sheets of paper, etc.
Place the objects around the inside of the circle but make sure there is some open space.

Have group members get a partner. Have each partner stand across the circle from one another. Before they go to their places have each pair decide who will guide and who will follow.

Rules: When standing outside the circle you are in neutral territory.
Everything inside the circle is live. (If you touch anything inside the circle you must turn around and start over.)
The rope is not live.
You must reach the other side by entering the circle. You can only step outside the circle where your partner is standing. (In other words, you can't step into the circle, step outside the circle then walk around to your partner)
The person who is inside the circle must be blindfolded.

Have the partners switch roles.

Have partners switch rules.

Add a rule:

The blindfolded person cannot talk.

Again ask them to switch roles.

Add a rule:

Both the leader and blindfolded person cannot talk or use any vocal sound whatsoever.

You have three and a half (or whatever) minutes to discuss how you will communicate.
Once I say go there is no verbal communication.

Upsy Daisy! (Some physical restriction may apply. Do not do this activity if you know some will not be able to participate.)

Supplies: People

Have people partner up.

Instruct partners to sit on the floor facing one another.

Rules:

You cannot let your hands touch the floor.

Your feet must be touching at all times.

Have the partners try to stand. They must try to remain standing for at least 7 seconds.

Next, have partners double up. In other words there should be four to a group.

Rules:

You cannot let your hands touch the floor.

Your feet must be touching. (Both feet must be touching two other feet)

You must stand for at least 7 seconds.

Continue to double the groups until everyone is working on the initiative.

Debriefing

The essentials of Debriefing

Any time you do an initiative with a group, the most important part of the activity is what happens after they have completed the exercise. To some these tips may be no-brainers, if that's the case, great! If not, no worries. That's why this little help box is here.

Make sure you take sufficient time to talk. Give people adequate time to fully process their involvement in any event.

*Always use open-ended questions

*Start with the experience alone, not with their opinions

*Move on to their personal experience of the event.

*Talk about their perceptions about the times of tension.

*Address the problems that may have occurred.

*Question how this activity represents real life.

*Find time to affirm everyone. A good way to do this is have everyone say something positive so you aren't the only one doling out compliments.

*Close in prayer.

THE WILD WORLD OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

POST-RETREAT WRAP-UP

A time for us to share our experiences and reflections,



with one another and with those who could not be with us

- 7:00 pm Devotions by Council President
- 7:15 pm Brief Review and Sharing of Retreat Experiences
- 7:35 pm Group Discussion: How to Implement These Ideas in our Church?
(may want to use a case study as basis for discussion)
- 8:10 pm Regular Council Agenda
- 8:30 pm Adjourn