

Reimagining Worship Conversation April 21, 2024

What does the information say to you? (reactions to data)

- Pandemic got us out of practice. Attendance is down
- Sunday School got us to church. If child not interested, not coming to church or Sunday School
- Lack of youth at service (reduces community when you don't see people like you)
- Not as many kids at 8:45am
 - Switched to 11am to find more kids to interact with
- Multiple engagement points at church helps community
 - Reduces uneasiness of children participating
 - Engagement = children's sermon, noisy offering...
- 1 service means less burden for volunteers
- Not watching online = not a draw

Looking at the Trends – What is going on (Social Analysis)

- Attendance may not be the best indicator of vibrancy (lots of other activities)
- Shift in families, previously parents drove the schedule, now the kids' schedules drive the family schedule and social circle
- If the kids are excited to come you will get parents in attendance
- Not much diversity in our community
 - Attract more diverse youth
 - More contact with partner church in Guatemala
- Missing demo between 16-adult (out of habit attending)
- Perception of regular attendance shifted (previously = 95% of the time, now 50%)
- K-5 fun based, 6th grade is not keeping interest (learning), 8-12th youth group (might also drop off at 4-5th grade because lumped in with younger kids)
 - Also lose them after confirmation
 - Like Service Trips and other activities
- Worship & service opportunities can exist separately in kids minds
- If we ask youth to participate (lead) one worship a month they may be more interested in participating

What Can We Do?

- Children's library at back of Sanctuary remodel (youth idea)
- Multiple engagement points for youth - about every 20 minutes
- Don't make kids shake hands with people
- Milestones (First Communion, Confirmation) are important, are there other things to lead up to that would be something to work towards
- Could we stream service throughout the building (allow youth to hang out but still listen)
 - More move and listen (hallway strolling)
- "Parent Area" for nursing or quiet space with service streamed
- For young families, how do we do?

- Average or below average (service long, pedagogy off, etc.)
- Creating community of church friends is important (otherwise church loses to other things)
- Can we include more free play & social opportunities (open room before adult ed)
- Intergenerational is wanted, but not necessarily attended
- Sports have taken over. If we go down to 1 service, maybe use the summer model

Recommendation for Council

- Test year: try to implement as many ideas to keep 2 services (youth idea)
 - Try noisy offering
 - Youth participation in service
 - Youth plan & lead service once a month
- Should this be a larger focus (from Leadership)
 - Seems to be a health of the congregation question
- Not opposed to 1 service
 - Might offer flexibility to have open-ended community building
 - Feedback on timing from families might be needed
- Flexibility to try an idea (and revert if needed), but be careful of whiplash

Reimagining Worship Conversation April 28, 2024

What is your reaction to a consideration of these circumstances?

- Trends
- Like a separate Sunday School for kids but kids are welcome in worship (not combined at same time)
- Amount of time devoted on a Sunday morning is hard
- Activities for families and competing demands on time
- Families with younger kids – harder to focus on worship and handle demands of parenting at the same time (spectrum of options)
- Core group of adults (close knit) and it's hard for newer folks to connect with “legacy” families
- Nursery = helpful. “Middle” ages of elementary need more considerations of structure and engagement
- How do we meet kids where they are?

Concerns? Issues?

- Intergenerational Opportunities
 - Sunday school being adjusted somehow to engage kids?
 - Service focused on family/adult service?
 - Music participation for kids starts around 5th grade
 - Acolyte for “middle school” age

- External activities take over time (Sunday only time is challenging)
- Parent connections needed
 - Community building
- Kids should always be welcome at service
 - Staffing playground/children's library
- Link between service & faith is critical
 - Streaming service in Courtyard Room?

Ideas

- “?” of parents in Library connecting during Wednesday choir time
- Wednesday (or other than Sunday) School (“Church”)
- Replicate Monday/Sunday year-round
- Other options added for youth not “performing”; especially for those who aren't interested in that
 - Fmsc more?
 - More service option either for kids or outside of Sunday School time so kids can participate (Sandwich making happens during Sunday School)
- Know what's coming for parents so there is a connection for adults (Sunday School)
- Volunteer parents to teach curriculum on occasion but not commit indefinitely
- Wednesdays are typically more open for families who are sports-focused