



BE PASSIONATE: Developing Entrepreneurial Leaders StewardShop 105

Description

During this 55-minute workshop, participants engage in structured interviews that help them practice “appreciative inquiry” techniques. Using a tool that helps survey congregational passions, participants prepare preliminary plans for developing an entrepreneurial spirit in stewardship ministry.

Audience

“Be Passionate” is aimed at pastors and other congregational leaders who are willing to move past “training” toward more complex models of leadership development.

Skills

This workshop provides participants with an experience in conversational approaches to appreciative inquiry techniques. These skills are foundations for “gifts discernment” and entrepreneurial leadership.

Materials

- Handout, “Leading Passionate People,” one per participant
- Handout, “Finding Our Passions,” one per participant
- Handout, “What If We . . . ?” one per participant

Schedule

As Participants Arrive	
Presentation, “A Passionate Approach to Leadership”	(15 minutes)
Small Group Guided Conversations	(20 minutes)
Imagining Next Steps	(10 minutes)
Large Group Reactions	(10 minutes)

WORKSHOP DESIGN

As Participants Arrive

As soon as the first participants arrive at the workshop, give each one a copy of the handout, “Finding Our Passions,” asking each person to complete the items on the survey as completely as possible before the activity, “Small Group Guided Conversations.” If necessary, provide pens or pencils.

Participants who wish to use the materials of this workshop in their own setting might want to write their answers on a separate piece of paper so that the copy they receive here can be used as a duplicating original.

Presentation, “A Passionate Approach to Leadership” (15 minutes)

Begin the workshop with a short presentation about the concepts of leadership included in the handout, “Leading Passionate People.” The presentation should be a summary of the three ideals found on the handout:

- Effective leadership is motivated by passion that is focused on action.
- “Appreciative inquiry” helps find and affirm those passions among leaders and members.
- One expected result of these ways of thinking and acting: “entrepreneurial leadership,” in which leaders initiate and take responsibility for ministries.

The presentation should include all the points on the handout, taking care to connect the various ideas into the three major learnings noted above. The presentation prepares participants for engaging in a series of conversations that follow.

Small Group Guided Conversations (20 minutes)

In this activity participants practice and evaluate conversations in which the techniques of appreciative inquiry take place. This activity comprises the skill-development portion of this workshop.

Distribute copies of the handout, “Finding Our Passions,” to participants who arrived late. Immediately divide the large group into groups of two or three, assigning them these tasks:

1. Engage in an “appreciative conversation,” during which time you will try to find out the deep and abiding passions for ministry that exist inside of the person with whom you are talking.
2. Avoid “interviewing” or “quizzing” the person, instead talking naturally about some of the subjects that are suggested by the handout.
3. Each conversation will last about five minutes, so that each member of the small group gets a chance to be the appreciative conversationalist, the appreciated person, and (in groups of three) a silent observer of the conversations.

Provide each group about two minutes to get started, perhaps moving to more private locations and deciding who will take which roles. Remind participants of the items on the survey, "Finding Our Passions," which can serve as the basis for the conversation.

After five minutes, ask each group members to switch conversational roles and begin the second appreciative inquiry. Circulate among groups, seeing how participants are faring. Don't interfere in conversations unless a question is asked.

After another five minutes, ask group members to take another role and begin the third conversation.

During this time, write the following discussion items on the chalkboard or newsprint. These will be the content for each small group's processing of the experience.

1. What was more enjoyable, being appreciated or being the one who inquired in an appreciative way? Why?
2. What do you think characterizes "appreciative inquiry"?
3. What surprised you about these conversations?
4. What patterns of behavior did you notice?
5. Where might "appreciative inquiry" not work well?

At the fifteen minute mark, direct the small groups' attention to the items you have written, and ask them to pick any two items to focus their reactions to the experience they just had. They should try to stay on task and on the subject.

Imagining Next Steps

(10 minutes)

When five minutes of small group discussion time have elapsed, ask each small group to join with one other small group – this will create groups of four to six participants. In the next activity, these slightly larger groups will imagine together what might happen further if these techniques characterized the stewardship ministries of their congregations.

As the groups form, distribute copies of the handout, "What If We . . . ?" one per participant. Remind participants again that if they wish to use these handouts as originals for back-home workshops, they should write their notes or responses on another piece of paper.

Direct participants to this worksheet, and give them only three minutes to quickly survey the possibilities and prompts suggested so that they are prepared for the discussion that follows.

After three minutes, direct each group to engage in a “What If . . . ?” exercise, somewhat similar to a brainstorming session. In the new groups, participants summarize or outline quickly an idea or possibility that has sprung from the worksheet and/or their experiences with the appreciative conversations. The idea here is simple: To get many possibilities imagined into words and shared. Participants can take notes, but can respond to others’ ideas only with clarifying questions. The groups will have about seven minutes for this activity.

Large Group Reactions

(10 minutes)

The workshop concludes with a whole-group reaction to the experience. Bring the whole group together in one place and ask for reflections and reactions, using prompts or questions such as the following:

- “Appreciative inquiry” might be a way to change the way your congregation thinks about almost everything. How could you seed that possibility?
- How would you rate yourself as an “appreciative inquirer?” What brings you to that conclusion about yourself?
- What keeps entrepreneurial leaders going is
- How can you continue to “take charge” in the face of little appreciation? Should you?
- Which passions in congregation members would you most want to engage? Which would you rather not use?
- What causes members of your congregation to be passionate?
- What part of your stewardship ministry could be most positively affected by what you learned today?

At the end of the ten minute discussion period, offer a prayer of thanks for leaders such as this, and God’s Spirit’s work in filling them with passion. Dismiss participants with your thanks.



LEADING PASSIONATE PEOPLE

Principles and Guidelines

Developing “entrepreneurial leaders” in your congregation – people who initiate and take charge of ministries – is a goal you can reach! Use the ideas on this page to develop and sustain that kind of leadership.

- 1. Passions compel action.** “Passions” are the yearnings, hopes, or desires already inside leaders that compel them to act. In finding or developing entrepreneurial leaders, your first task is to excavate those forceful emotions.
- 2. Where there is no passion there is no change.** Leaders and members of congregations participate in change when their will, freedom and intelligence are engaged. Without these, “change” is elusive and people are “acted upon” instead of becoming leaders.
- 3. Trust the power of conversation.** Authentic conversation between people is a biologically profound activity that joins individuals together in common understanding. Conversation can diminish fear, anxiety and anger. When it is laced with humor, courage and appreciation, conversation can help people reveal their feelings and hopes. Good questions and deep listening fuel authentic conversations.
- 4. Name and appreciate passions.** Your spoken feedback helps prospective leaders know how they are perceived by others. When you give the spiritual passion a name or otherwise identify it, you begin to tell leaders that they are valued. In adding your appreciation – showing how the passion finds focus, detailing its value among the members of the congregation, or connecting it with your own hopes and yearnings – you build up leaders by your implicit gratitude for their inner qualities and their willingness to act.
- 5. Focus passions toward actions.** Your appreciation helps prospective leaders channel emotion into accomplishment. You can focus the emotion with prompts such as:

- What would you like to do next in order to fulfill your hopes?
- Who feels the same way (about these matters)?
- How would you enlist others to work with you?
- What risks are you willing to take?
- What small, first step would you later regret not taking?
- How have you already begun working at your passions?

6. These things take time. Be patient with the process. Because you are developing rather than “training” leaders, you can rejoice in the slow, sure steps individuals take toward entrepreneurial leadership. Once they discover their own abilities and connect their passions with possibilities, their leadership will be secured.

7. Look closely at small successes. The strongest evidence of entrepreneurial leadership may be hard to see at first. To notice first steps toward this style of leadership, look for an evidence that:

- Leaders consult with others about their ideas for action, instead of asking for permission.
- New ideas percolate to the top without being pushed or convinced.
- New leaders emerge, doing what they are good at.
- New value or benefit gets added to congregation members.
- Leaders are thanked or otherwise rewarded for their work.
- New groups coalesce around new leaders.
- Unlikely folks (youth, “inactive” or unknown members, children) start something in your congregation.
- “Failures” don’t stop leaders from acting on their passions.

8. Passionate leadership is chaotic. At first, the emergence and activity of entrepreneurial leaders will seem to be disorganized or worse. Remember, though, that you are replacing “listless order” with “owned purpose.” Over time, patterns will emerge – repeated successes, ways in which people group for common purposes, connections to the congregation’s mission – and the order will become apparent.

9. Entrepreneurial leaders are accountable. As you evaluate new, take-charge leaders, you and they connect their leadership to the good of other people, to the congregation’s wider purpose and to God’s will. Passions are re-fueled, costs and rewards are meted out, and both successes and “failures” are examined carefully as evidence of the Spirit’s action in your congregation. “Accountability” changes from a subtle blaming mechanism to a way of inspiring people for next steps.



FINDING OUR PASSIONS

A Survey Tool

This survey tool will help leaders in our congregation assess the kinds of passions for God's mission that already exist inside members' hearts. Complete the items below and return the completed survey as instructed separately. Thanks for your sharing of what God's Spirit has implanted in your own spirit!

1. I became a member of this church so that I could . . .

2. I'd like to be known for . . .

3. Sometimes it makes me sad that I can't . . .

4. What really excites me about being a Christian is . . .

5. This is my dream for this congregation:

6. Most people don't know that I really like to . . .

7. If I could bring my real passions and interests in life to this congregation, I would . . .

8. Sometimes I feel that God is calling me to . . .

9. If you knew me outside of church, you would see my passion for . . .



WHAT IF WE . . . ? Worksheet

This worksheet will help you see what might happen if you took the ideals of “appreciative inquiry” and “entrepreneurial leadership” further. What would happen next? What would happen because of these ideals? What might change? What might break open? What might God do in your congregation? Just imagine

Evangelism

If we found out the passions of all new members, then . . .

If we could tap into the perhaps-unknown passions of “inactive” members, they and we might . . .

New Leaders

If we removed the layers of permission-giving and made decisions based on our passions, our leaders might be able to . . .

If we kept asking “the passion question” everywhere, we might find new leaders who . . .

Planning and Decision-making

If most of our decisions were based on members’ passions, then . . .

If leaders took initiative to envision and initiate ministries that matched their passions, then . . .

Stewardship

If we helped congregation members live out their passions for ministry in their daily lives, we might . . .

If we knew members' yearnings to be stewards of their lives, we might change . . .

Ministry With Families

If we knew what parents and children sensed as their compelling wishes for their lives, then we might . . .

This is how "youth ministry" would change if we knew the spiritual passions of youth:

Funding God's Mission

If we asked about members' passions as a part of our annual fund appeal, then . . .

If we formed our congregational budget according to fairly accurate knowledge of members' compelling interests for mission, we would . . .

Pastoral Leadership

If we knew what our pastor's deepest passions for ministry *really* were, we might . . .

If we encouraged our pastors to follow their passions, then . . .
