

# REDISCOVER MACEDONIA

A spirit of gratitude and  
generosity



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## ELCA Macedonia Project Relational Ask Guidelines

The Relational Ask Team schedules and oversees congregational Teams of Two that visit households in the congregation. The purpose of the visit is to listen for input on how the congregation can more effectively serve the community and its members; and to briefly build the case for the congregation to expand its ministry. Prayer requests and/or praise comments are noted at each visit, and can be added to the congregation's prayers during worship. The visits are usually 20 to 30 minutes each, very informal and intended to enhance existing relationships and build new friendships. It is recommended the visits be held at a coffee shop, restaurant or other casual site, not necessarily in homes or at the church. This allows for an informal atmosphere that may result in the start of new relationships. Visitation Teams of Two are to visit with members they do not know, or do not know well.

### **I. Description of Activities for a Relational Ask**

- A. A Relational Ask Group consists of a Relational Ask Captain and five Relational Ask Teams of Two. This group of six Teams will visit 20 families, or about three visits each. The number of Relational Ask Teams will be determined by the size of the congregation, and the number of people volunteering to serve on a team.
- B. Relational Ask Teams of Two make three visits to different member households. Meet in a public setting like a coffee shop, restaurant, etc. Inactive members, those not directly involved in leadership roles or worshipping regularly, are scheduled first and more active members second. If you cannot connect with inactive members for a visit, invite them to a special event at the church.
- C. Pastors, senior staff and selected leadership Teams of Two are identified to visit households directly involved in the leadership of the congregation. These visits would usually be in the homes of those to be visited. This will be about 10 percent of households in the congregation.
- D. Relational Ask Teams of Two complete a Visitation Dates Available Form that designates four three-hour time periods during the visitation period they are available to make visits. (Sample provided).
- E. The church office staff provides a list of households to be visited and Relational Ask Report Forms to the Relational Ask Team Captain(s). The Captain(s) then select households and assign to the Relational Ask Teams.
- F. The Relational Ask Team Captain then contacts households and schedules visits during the times Relational Ask Teams of Two have indicated they are available. If the Captain does not get three households to visit from their initial list, more household names can be requested.
- G. Those making a Relational Ask Visit are invited to make each visit a matter of prayer.

- H. Each Relational Ask Team is responsible for completing a Relational Ask Report for each visit. A 3 X 5 card will also be provided for prayer requests. The name of the person making the request need not be identified. The form and prayer requests are to be returned to the Captain or church office.
- I. Special leaders visited also receive a Financial Planning Brochure and are encouraged to give a gift above regular giving.
- J. Everyone is informed of coming events dates and invited to attend.

## **II. Planning Areas in Relational Ask**

A. **Number of Relational Ask Teams of Two** - 25 percent of the congregation contacts the other 75 percent of the congregation's families. A congregation of 100 families will need 25 Teams of Two to make Relational Ask visits. Take your number of homes and divide that by four to calculate your target for the number of Relational Ask Teams of Two you need. Adults on the Visitation Teams of Two are not visited. Their prayer requests are shared with each other at the Relational Ask Team training.

B. **Relational Ask Questionnaire** - Each year a short survey will be taken with three to five questions about how the congregation can increase its effectiveness to families, the community and the world. Questions are selected by the pastor and a leadership team.

C. **Automatic Withdrawal Giving** - If your congregation encourages an automatic withdrawal system of giving, the Relational Ask Teams of Two should be informed of how this works, so they are able to talk about it if asked.

D. **Training Your Relational Ask Teams of Two** - Take all your Relational Ask Teams of Two through a training session where you will have them role play simulating a Relational Ask Visit. Talking them through the training helps them see how easy it will be and may encourage others to sign up to assist with making visits. Invite every Relational Ask Team to provide four dates they can block out — three-hours each — on their calendar to make their three visits. Don't schedule visits closer than one hour apart. Many visits become wonderful times of interaction where the adults being visited want to continue visiting.

E. **Charitable Giving, Planned Giving and Estate Planning** - Select a reputable, professional financial planner that will provide free advice to members about various federal tax benefits for charitable giving. Share with households that a financial planner will be confidential and at no cost to them or the congregation. Anyone with assets of stock, real estate or other investments should have periodic reviews of how to best manage their estates. In some cases members can make charitable gifts to the congregation that actually cost them nothing because of matching tax savings.

F. **Corporate Matching Gifts** - Another resource to not overlook is corporate matching gifts service by area employers. Some companies will match gifts an employee makes to their church. These are usually limited to one gift per year. In this case members should consider combining their annual giving in a single gift up to the employer's limit.

### **III. Relational Ask Task List**

Visits are to be accomplished in a two-week period on the following timeline:

#### **1. Pre-work**

- a. Enlist Relational Ask Coordinator
- b. Enlist Relational Ask Team Captains
- c. Announce and record names of Teams of Two at all worship services two weeks before the Relational Visit Period and again one week before the visit period.  
A helpful recruiting strategy is to point out that one team member may be the primary spokesperson and the second team member may be an observer and recorder.
- d. Obtain a list of households for visits and Visit Questionnaires from church office
- e. Distribute Relational Ask Questionnaires to Relational Ask Team Captain(s)
- f. Assign Relational Ask Teams of Two to Captains and ask Captains to enlist additional Teams of Two if needed
- g. Assign Leader Teams of Two to visit households directly involved in the leadership of the congregation.

#### **2. During the two-week visit period**

- a. At worship on the Sunday beginning Visit Week #1 – Teams of Two attend all worship services to be introduced to congregation, prayer for guidance, and give a 30-second review of Relational Ask goals at all services
- b. Relational Ask Visit Team Meeting #1 – provide training – Sunday beginning Visit Week #1, Teams of Two schedule all visits for week # 1 and Week #2; prayer time
- c. Relational Ask Visit Team Meeting #2 – report progress– Sunday beginning Week #2 – 50 percent of the visits to be completed and reports submitted to Captains; prayer time
- d. Relational Ask Visit Team Meeting #3 – final report of visits and recognition and edification of Teams of Two, de-brief and suggestions for next year – 100 percent of visits completed and reports submitted to Captains; special prayer time
- e. All completed questionnaires and financial responses returned to church office

#### **3. After Relational Visit Period**

- a. Share results and positive stories with congregation through an announcement for Temple Talk.
- b. Prepare summary of experience and results. Include identification of what would be improved the next time this approach is used.
- c. Submit summary report to the congregation council and ask for their feedback
- d. Prepare a final summary and send a copy to the Director for Evangelical Mission in the synod.

# Relational Ask Visit Questionnaire

- Instructions:
1. Please complete one form for each person visited.
  2. List prayer requests and praise comments. Explain requests can be anonymous. Put each request on a different 3 X 5 card. (Have several with you for each visit.) Convey urgent requests that night or next morning to the church office.
  3. Briefly review the coming ministry events and congregational goals.
  4. Relational Ask Teams of Two calling on special leaders will also explain and leave literature about confidential financial planning resources.
  5. Complete questions below (Pastoral Team to confirm questions each year)
  6. Turn this report in to your Relational Ask Team Captain or the church office the same week as your visit.

Names of Relational Ask Team \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Relational Visit Team Captain \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Adult visited (1 per Questionnaire)

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of children \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_ ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate Comments and Suggestions to Share:

## Sample Questions for Relational Ask Visits

1. Is our current contact information current? If not, correct on form.

2. Do you have any prayer requests? If so, write on 3 X 5 card.
3. How long have you been a member of our congregation?
4. What do you most appreciate about our congregation? Why?
5. What are your hopes and dreams for the future of God's work through our congregation?
6. Are you familiar with the theme and purpose for our visit? If not, share these.
7. Through these visits we are learning to share our faith journeys with each other. Here is what I would like to share with you ...
8. Please tell us about your faith journey. What would you be comfortable sharing?
9. When was a time you received a special gift? I recall ... How about you?
10. Through these visits we are also talking about giving to God's work. Here is what I have discovered is important to me ... What is important to you?
11. Through these visits we are also talking about principles for giving. For example, I have learned ... What principles guide you in your giving?
12. We are inviting people to grow in their faith practices. This would include prayer, worship, serving, learning and giving. I have chosen to grow in ... Where are you most comfortable growing in your faith practices?
13. One of the ways I have found to grow in my faith practice of giving is by making a financial commitment to our congregation. I have found this to be ... Are you accustomed to making an annual commitment to grow in giving?

We invite you to prayerfully consider making a commitment this year. We invite our members to practice proportionate giving. This means growing our giving by whatever percent would be significant for us, and then asking God to bless that commitment. (Share what you plan to grow, even if as a percent increase or in a general way.) We invite you to join us in making a commitment. (Hand them the commitment card to fill out and invite them to put it in the envelope so you can finish your responsibility and take it to the church office.) Thank you for the marvelous conversation. I look forward to seeing you in church.

Before I close with a short prayer, are there any suggestions you have for our congregation?

Let us pray. God, bless this visit and our relationship with each other and our relationship with you. May we discover the spirit of gratitude and generosity that taught the early church. In Jesus' name, Amen.