

Adding Worship Services

A How-to Manual



**New Congregation and Growth Resources
Unitarian Universalist Association
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Introduction

Making the decision to add an additional worship service, or even considering such a thing, is a major undertaking in congregational life. As institutions (and even as members of institutions), we don't always embrace even the smallest changes easily, and alterations in our worship styles and patterns are not small changes. Rather, they are often some of the largest changes that congregations choose to undertake. Yet many positive reasons for adding worship opportunities exist:

- to relieve overcrowding,
- to grow the congregation, or
- to offer something entirely new to the members and to individuals outside the congregation.

Adding services can provide a wonderful, invigorating climate for growth of all sorts, both individual and institutional. But large-scale change without adequate planning not only may doom the change but also may create additional problems. Therefore, planning well for this change, as for any other major change, is necessary to ensure that the process will be effective.

This document is presented as a resource for your congregation as you consider whether to add an additional worship service. It compiles knowledge from several sources—the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), our member congregations, and other religious movements that have considered and implemented such changes. We hope that you find this manual useful, and we encourage you to be in touch with the New Congregation and Growth Resources office if you have other questions, concerns, or suggestions for future revisions of this document.



Why Add a Worship Service?

A congregation might choose to add an additional worship service for many different reasons:

- to relieve overcrowding;
- to encourage growth;
- to fulfill a mission of the congregation;
- to add diversity.

Some reasons arise from the needs of the congregation, and others are driven by needs of individuals not yet within the congregational walls. Each reason provides different answers to the multitude of questions that arise in the process of adding worship services—questions about style, time, form, and format. To determine the answers to these questions and similar ones, leaders first must answer a basic question: Why add a worship service?

→ Relieving Overcrowding

One of the most common reasons for adding an additional service is to relieve overcrowding. This overcrowding may occur throughout the facility, or it may be only in the worship space, the religious education space, the parking lot, or another part of the congregation's facilities. If overcrowding persists, congregations are at best in danger of reaching a plateau in membership, and at worst in danger of actually shrinking.

Studies of congregational life show that when worship attendance reaches 75 to 80 percent of seating capacity, a congregation often experiences this plateau. Newcomers wonder if space even exists for them; when they do stay, others may leave, creating a revolving door phenomenon. Newcomers don't know where they belong, and longtime members may feel they aren't needed and thus stay home.

The same is true when other parts of the facilities are overcrowded. When people can't find a parking place, they may keep on driving until they find a congregation with parking space. When young people are crowded into religious education rooms, they may feel, sometimes unconsciously, a resistance to attending services. Overcrowding also hampers the provision of the kinds of programs and attention that our young people deserve. When lack of space in the social hall precludes conversation without coffee being spilled or people bumping into walls, members may be discouraged from joining in the hospitality.

Overcrowding is not always apparent to everyone in the congregation. Members without children may not know how many young people are crowding into the religious education space. Those who look at the sanctuary after the young people and teachers have left the service for their classrooms may not remember the sense of tightness they experienced when all were present at the beginning of the service. Individuals who sit in

the front or who come early may never experience frustration at not being able to find a place to sit together as a family or to park their car within a reasonable distance. If overcrowding does not occur in the worship space, members may not realize that the religious education area is crowded. Also, the feeling of being overcrowded is subjective. Some people feel comfortable in less space, relishing the close companionship of others, whereas others need more space to feel comfortable exploring their religious views and values.

The lack of growth caused by overcrowding has implications for all congregations—those that are trying to be bigger, as well as those that want to stay the same size. Without an influx of new people, congregations will shrink through the death or relocation of members and changing attendance patterns, thereby making it hard to maintain the same level of services and funding. Not making a decision to grow is, in effect, the same as making a decision not to grow.

When overcrowding is driving the move to add a service, congregations need to ask another question: Is adding a service a temporary step on the path to another solution, or is it the solution? If the congregation is also looking at either a building enlargement or a move, the decision-making process will be different. Many people are willing to undergo radical change if they know that it will be for a limited time. The dream of returning to the status quo—the way things were before—eases the process. The members know that they will be back together again later on. But if the additional service is seen as the actual solution or as the first of a series of additional services, members may be more anxious and concerned about the change.

→ Encouraging Growth

These days, many of our congregations seek to grow. The reasons vary, of course. Many congregations want to grow because they believe that Unitarian Universalism has something essential to offer to people in these days and times. These congregations have an evangelical sense of what it means to be Unitarian Universalist, and they want to share what they've found with others. This outward-focused mission is a more powerful draw to new people than the sense that they are wanted for their money and time. Some congregations want to grow to help spread the load; they find that they cannot maintain themselves easily with their current number of members. Congregations of all sizes share this feeling, but it is not a good reason to seek growth. Newcomers are attracted to congregations with a focus on mission, not to congregations that mainly want their money and work.

Yet growth comes with several costs. Life is not the same in a smaller congregation as in a larger one, and growth has both pluses and minuses. People fear that the addition of unknown others will spoil the close-knit feeling they have, and they fear that what is lost can never be recaptured. However, having additional people means having a greater pool of resources, both human and financial. New people bring more energy, creativity, excitement, and hearts and minds to serve the congregation and community. It is fascinating to note that despite the fear that larger means colder, people who are asked

why they attend their particular congregation most commonly answer that they attend because of the community, whether that community is comprised of 75, 150, 250, 500, or 3,000 people. The nature of the community may change with its size, but the sense of community still draws people into congregations of all sizes.

As stated earlier, growth is not likely in crowded situations, so adding one or more additional services may be necessary to make room for the additional members. If new members are wanted only to help share the load, the reasons to grow won't be as compelling, and maybe even not as successful. If people are excited about sharing their religious home because others need it, however, their excitement about an additional service will help ensure its success.

→ Fulfilling the Mission

More and more of our congregations are embracing outreach missions to serve various populations and groups within their communities. These “niche” ministries might be specific ministries to older people, single parents, young adults, disabled persons, people of color, or other groups that have a common interest or identity. Many times the groups are not currently represented in the congregation. Sometimes congregations discover that their current worship patterns do not adequately serve the part of the community they wish to reach. Outreach to the community of hearing-impaired individuals, for example, won't be successful without signing, assisting devices, and an understanding of deaf culture. A service only in English won't be as popular in a Hispanic area as one that includes Spanish. Early morning is not the best time to attract young adults to worship, and an evening service for seniors is not good for those who have trouble driving at night.

Again, a congregation that embraces a positive reason for the addition of a service is more likely to fulfill its mission. The members generate more excitement about the possibilities, and less resistance arises. The sense of mission helps carry the project through to its conclusion.

→ Adding Diversity

One of the benefits of our religious movement is that we embrace diversity both in our theology and in the composition of our congregations. We expect people to discern their own truths and to bring their whole selves to congregational life. Theological diversity often results in creative tension in our worship services. We strive to combine the needs of atheists, agnostics, theists, humanists, and those who defy description into a finite number of services. Some congregations speak to this varied group very well within the existing worship format, but other congregations find that this very diversity calls out for a variety of worship settings and styles. Adding additional worship opportunities can increase the strength of these congregations, and if done for this reason can also increase excitement and decrease resistance to congregational change.

Rarely does just one of the above reasons drive the desire for additional worship opportunities. Depending upon the reason or reasons, different strategies may be necessary to make the additional service a success. Congregations need to ask: What is our central reason for being, and which of our primary objectives will help us embody it more fully? Clarifying the reasons for adding worship opportunities is essential to managing the change effectively. Linking the addition of a service to the congregation's identity and mission is important. Whether a congregation owes its existing membership more comfortable conditions or wants to reach out to those not yet in its midst, mission-based and temporary changes are easier to explain and implement. But even congregations that feel forced to add a permanent service because of overcrowding can do so well if they plan properly and involve the members in that planning.



How Is the Decision Made?

How the decision to add an additional service is made can determine whether a positive move will occur. A good decision process can make the addition of a service a success; a bad process can create untold difficulties that survive well past the failed attempt. Yet no one right process exists. Rather, the best process varies, depending on the congregation's history, governing documents, size, style, and culture.

Congregational polity means that every congregation is its own authority, with the members making decisions on the key elements of the congregation's life. Some of the authority for day-to-day operations is delegated to a board and to committees, but the congregation members retain ultimate authority. Even though all UUA member congregations follow congregational polity as their governing structure, how it is lived out in day-to-day congregational life differs as much as do the individual thoughts and feelings of Unitarian Universalists. The size of a congregation has an impact, but it is not the sole factor in determining how leadership is mobilized effectively in the congregation. Effective leadership also is determined by individual ministerial style and the form of democracy the congregation has embraced. Some congregations make decisions through a "committee of the whole" process; others empower the board and committees to govern; and still others rely upon the ministers to act, in effect, as chief executive officers who determine what programmatic solutions will fulfill the congregation's mission.

Regardless of the style and form of leadership, what helps most during times of major change is the involvement of, and communication with, the entire congregation. When the professional staff, elected leadership, and congregation members work together collaboratively, ownership of the change is widely shared, and the possibility for success increases.

This collaboration is especially important when adding a worship service. The worship life of a congregation is the one area in which all are welcome and invited, and it is in worship that the largest proportion of the congregation comes together in a visible way. Changing worship changes people's sense of what it means to be a congregation. This transition can raise many concerns, logical or not, so managing the congregation-wide conversation, in an open forum, and including the relevant players are essential.

The minister or other worship leaders must be willing to participate, of course, but the list of areas of congregational life that are touched by the change is broad: religious education, music, choir, hospitality, membership, administrative, and custodial, to name just a few areas. For example, without the support of the religious educator and key religious education volunteers, a duplicate service with a full religious education program will not succeed. Without the support of the lay-people in changing their attendance patterns, the additional service may be attended only by those staff members who have to be there. Without the support of the administrative and custodial staff members, orders of service or heating and lighting for the additional service may be lacking. The leadership may be centered within one body (professional leadership, lay leadership, or the congregation as a whole), but to ensure the success of the change, everyone must be at least willing for the new service to proceed.

One of the easiest ways to bring together all the relevant people and committees is through the establishment of a task force to oversee the exploration and implementation of adding another service. The inclusion of representatives from the professional staff (ministers, religious educators, musicians, administrators, custodians, and so on) and from the relevant committees (worship, religious education, hospitality, membership, building needs, finance, and so on) immediately establishes communication about concerns and possible solutions. People who are at least neutral, if not enthusiastic, about the possibilities and who can articulate the concerns and the resources available in the process should staff this task force. (Naysayers have their place in the larger process, but if they have too great a presence on the task force, the work will be even harder than it might otherwise be.) The members of the task force should be champions for the process. They should be people who are trusted and respected, and who can hear and deal effectively with the concerns brought forth. In addition, some task force members need skills in managing the anxiety that undoubtedly will arise within the congregation. If the members of the task force are too uncomfortable with anxiety, they will tend to move too quickly to a premature plan that does not truly meet the congregation's needs. The task force needs to be able to allow the anxiety to surface, to contain it by listening considerately, and to move the group on when the time arrives.

After the task force is in place, its first job is to design and articulate the process for involving the larger congregation in the decision-making. This process needs to include both education on the issue and a chance for congregation members to share their ideas, concerns, and questions. Some congregations may need to revisit or redo their mission statement and reconnect with the reason they exist before they are ready to see the need for a new service. Some congregations use a series of workshops with leadership and the wider membership, whereas others provide education through town meetings and

newsletter articles. Surveys can help uncover concerns and questions. (In the resources Section at the back of this manual please see Sample Surveys, page 25 for the congregation as a whole, as well as a survey designed for parents of children in the religious education program.) Members of the task force who represent various other committees in the congregation are another valuable vehicle for communicating expectations, concerns, and questions between the subgroups they represent and the whole congregation. In 2003, each and every one of the Unitarian Universalist congregations surveyed about adding another service stressed the need for multiple opportunities for people to be involved throughout the decision-making process. It is especially important that the task force hear, explore, and respond to the members' concerns. Many congregations said that the work done before the change made the actual change easy to implement.

The task force might find it helpful to contact other UU congregations that have recently added an additional worship service for guidance, mentoring, input, and advice. By using this lateral connection, committees and congregations can learn from one another, thus decreasing mistakes and capitalizing on strengths. A district staff member or local minister can help you identify congregations in your area that recently have added a service.

Many resources for managing change in institutional life are available. Congregations are urged to consult this material, as well as to tap the people among them who have expertise on these issues. At the end of this manual is a bibliography of resources that may aid in planning change. The "Resources" Section, page 21, describes a sample workshop, or discussion process, that can be used with congregational leadership to uncover the congregation's concerns.



What Kind of Service Should We Add?

In the past, conventional wisdom held that to be a success, the additional worship service needed to be identical to the already existing service. The theory was that people might be enticed to change the time that they came to worship, but that they would not desire change in what was being offered.

Adding a duplicate service might be the perfect choice for some congregations, but it is not the only possible change, even when the motive is simply to alleviate overcrowding. Making the decision to add an additional service can be a time to look at the unmet needs of members or the kinds of outreach the congregation desires. Congregations can add theological, liturgical, or ritual diversity; different kinds of music; different times and days; or other elements designed to appeal to specific subsets of the congregation or the community it serves. More and more often, congregational life experts recommend that congregations find their niche market—the group they want and need to serve—as

a method of ensuring long-term viability and success. Therefore, the kind of service to add depends on the congregation's mission.

Any congregational hallmark should be considered as well. For example, if fine music is what the congregation is known for, then the quality of music at the additional service must be similar, even if the style of music changes. If quality preaching is an identity issue, then quality preaching may need to be preeminent in both services.

→ What Is Our Main Objective for the Service? Whom Are We Trying to Reach?

If the reason for adding a service is simply to relieve overcrowding, then the market to be considered is the already existing members, and a duplicate service might be the best answer. If the services are duplicates of each other, however, the time of the preexisting service must be changed to divert some members into the new service. We are such creatures of habit that often we just continue to do what we have always done until we are forced to make a change. Making the preexisting service time different, if only by fifteen minutes, forces every person to make a choice. It seems simple, but congregations that have used this strategy and have shifted the existing service by as little as fifteen minutes have found they have greater attendance at the added service.

If the reasons for adding a service also include increasing diversity, outreach to a specific part of the community, or meeting the unmet needs of people already in the congregation, then the needs of individuals who are not present and currently not served well by the existing worship life of the congregation take a higher priority. Some congregations find benefits in changing the style of the service; some add more ritual to one service, whereas others add more singing. Some find a good balance by having young people attend part of only one of the services, whereas others include children in all services. Still others hold special worship services for children outside of the regular service.

Some congregations find that by keeping the services as consistently similar as possible, they create a shared sense of worship that extends over the multiple services. Some add third and fourth services, with two or more services being identical and the newest service being very different. For example, "Soulful Sundown" (which can be found on the Web at www.soulfulsundown.org), an evening service designed to appeal to young adults, might be the best addition to more traditional Sunday morning worship. Congregations have added a shorter worship service on the night that most committees meet, thereby capitalizing on an increased midweek traffic flow. Some midweek services precede or follow a shared meal and provide time for adult education or tutoring for young people. These combination evenings increase opportunities for both worship and social gathering.

Some congregations fold theological diversity into their services. One service may be more spiritual or God centered and the other, more humanistic. Other congregations blend elements of several theological orientations into all their services. Some congregations hold multiple services during the full part of the year and then offer fewer

services during their off-season. The possible variety and diversity is unbounded. It is important for congregations to determine what mix works best for them and best serves their mission. This mix can be learned through the use of surveys, small group meetings, town meeting sessions, and the like. Once again, a carefully crafted decision-making process is very important in creating a good outcome. Unless they participate and feel their concerns have been heard and their questions realistically addressed, congregation members may not support the additional service avidly.

The imagination is the limit in designing a program that works to cover a congregation's particular needs, and what is first perceived as necessary may not be what ultimately works. One congregation tried three different yearlong alternatives before finding the one that works best for them. They began with duplicate services at 9:15 and 11:00—each with full religious education classes—only to discover after the first year that the later service did not have good attendance in either worship or religious education classes. The second year, they offered full religious education during the first service and children's activities during the second service. This solution still did not solve the crowding and attendance problems, so two years later they switched again. They currently offer two worship services, at 8:45 and 11:00. Children's religious education classes run from 9:45 until 10:45, with an adult forum from 10:10 to 10:45. Children participate in the first part of each worship service and then attend all-age activities such as arts, social service projects, cooking, music, yoga, and games during the remainder of the services. Childcare is available for the youngest children only at the later service. In this congregation, the full Sunday experience lasts about two hours and includes worship, religious education, and socializing during fun activities. If this congregation had stopped experimenting after year one, they would have lost this successful third way of serving their members, and they would not have had room for the growth they now experience.

Some of these questions come from "Second Thoughts about a Second Service," by Gilford Bisjack, Jr., of Alpine Community Church in California, as printed in "Leadership" 1987, © *Christianity Today*. Bisjack quotes the work of church life expert Lyle Schaller.

➔ **What Trade-offs Must Be Faced?**

Change requires trade-offs. Thus, another important question to look at is, what trade-offs must be faced? Every decision inevitably rules out other possible decisions, and congregations are best advised to explore these losses directly. Again, the use of surveys, small group meetings, town meetings, and other communication tools will help bring concerns to the surface and allow them to be dealt with appropriately.

The most common trade-off that congregations face in adding worship services is the loss of the image that theirs is a congregation where everybody knows everyone else's name. Although the truth of this idea is debatable even in congregations of seventy-five people, at least members recognize each other and feel that their congregation is one community. Adding a service breaks up this sense, if not the reality, of being one community. To combat this shift, congregations may choose to create frequent

occasions when members of the congregation come together outside of worship for social and worshipful experiences or, if space and time permits, have a joint social hour between the services. Monthly socializing helps people keep in touch with their friends who choose a different service time and allows opportunities to make brand-new friends.

Another concern of members is the fear that they will miss learning of milestone events in the lives of other members. By noting milestone events in both services, including this news in newsletters, or even posting it on bulletin boards, this important information can be shared appropriately.

The schedule for congregational and committee meetings that used to be held after the only worship service may need to be changed, thereby creating another night out for congregational business. Some committee work can be done through electronic communication, but care must be taken that this method does not inadvertently shut out some of the leadership who lack access to the necessary equipment. Congregational meetings and social gatherings might need to be held on a different day, and sometimes even in a different location, if the congregation's facilities do not permit full attendance.

These issues represent the troubling side of growth, but they can be balanced by the variety of extras that can be offered when more human and financial resources are available. Trade-offs are a real part of life in general, and of congregational life in particular, and they should not be overlooked in this process but instead be addressed forthrightly.

→ What Specific Questions Will Have to Be Addressed in Making a Choice?

An almost unlimited number of questions need to be asked when adding, preparing to add, or deciding whether to add another service. Many of the questions are included in the "Resources" section at the back of this manual in "Frequently Asked Questions" and "A Systematic List of Questions," but specific questions will arise in each congregation. For example, is there a history of previous attempts at adding worship services? If so, what is that history, and how does it help or hinder this attempt? If a congregation rents or shares space with another group, questions will arise about the limitations and restrictions this situation imposes. If a congregation's professional staff members are already working at capacity, questions will be generated about what should get cut out of their responsibilities or how the workload could be shared in helpful and creative ways. Specific questions may arise depending on the size of the congregation and the size of the building. Very large and very small congregations will follow a different type of decision-making process. In smaller congregations, two or three small group meetings might be all that is necessary, whereas larger congregations may find they need five or more larger town meetings coupled with smaller gatherings. Larger congregations might have more resources that make viable options other than adding a worship service (such as adding on to the building), and therefore their process should include exploration of these alternate possibilities.

Some of these questions are readily apparent. Others may not be discovered until the process provides good opportunities for individuals shaping the future to listen to those whose future is being shaped. Again, expanding the conversation will help clarify which questions are important and which ones can be let go.



How Should We Handle Religious Education?

One of the key challenges in adding an additional service is providing religious education for children. What is needed, what will be offered, and how it will be done are large questions that need and deserve special consideration. The process of determining the answer to these questions runs parallel to questions about the style, nature, and structure of the additional worship service itself. If the religious education component of an additional service is not well thought out, then the worship service will have limited success regardless of how good it is in and of itself.

Furthermore, often the squeezed and cramped conditions of the religious education program are what initially drives the need for an additional service long before the adults in the worship space know that a problem exists. In this case, a variety of techniques can be used to help dramatize the problem. One method is to have an open house and show off the religious education space, making clear the numbers of young people using each space and clearly setting out what space is missing. Another way is to rearrange the furniture in the worship space to mimic the crowding of the religious education space. Removing chairs on Sunday morning can be an effective tool; when people can't sit down or can't sit down in comfort, they may catch on that a problem exists out of sight, in the religious education program. As people who consistently say that children are a precious resource, sometimes we need to be lovingly confronted with the reality of the situation in the other part of the church.

Every religious education committee struggles with the perennial questions: What kind of education do we want to have here? Which age groupings suit our needs best? How many young people should we have in each class, and therefore how many teachers do we need? How can we make efficient use of our rooms? These questions remain as additional services are added to the programs of the congregation. Some congregations find that offering duplicate religious education programs is the answer, whereas others find they need to change at least the age groupings. Some find that older youth won't attend an early service, whereas others discover that critical mass means that a particular group is offered only once a Sunday. Some congregations offer full religious education programming at one service and either alternative activities or multi-age programming at the other services. At a minimum, childcare for the youngest children should be offered at all services to make it easier for young families to attend; however, the optimal decision is to have something for all children at every service.

→ What Do We Need to Do?

Step 1: Needs Assessment

The first step in deciding how to handle the religious education program when an additional service is added is a needs assessment. The task force should ask the religious education committee to do this assessment for its programs for both children and youth. The following are some things the religious education committee will need to look at carefully:

- ⇒ What are the current attendance patterns?
- ⇒ Where is overcrowding most severe?
- ⇒ How many children are currently registered in each age group?
- ⇒ Who do we anticipate drawing to the additional service?
- ⇒ Do we need to rethink how classes are set up?
- ⇒ Do we have enough registrants now, at the existing service time, to fill two sessions of the same class? Does space exist for a second session?
- ⇒ How does the current situation affect our goals and vision?
- ⇒ How would an additional service affect our goals and vision?

With this information, the task force can ask the religious education committee to propose a rough plan for the additional service. This plan should include these details:

- ⇒ What classes will be offered during each service?
- ⇒ Will the classes be duplicates of each other or will different programming be offered?
- ⇒ Will there be a limit on the number of children who can register for a particular session?
- ⇒ What activities will be available for children who are present for both services on a given day (for example, children of choir members)?
- ⇒ Will children and families be allowed to switch back and forth between the various service times and religious education classes?
- ⇒ What happens if the registration is not balanced between the two services?

One of the greatest fears of religious education committees is that families will not cooperate in the change, especially if there is no room for them at their preferred time, or if the programming for their children is offered only at one time and it is not the most convenient time for the family. Although some people inevitably will leave the church over such issues, this resistance and anger often can be reduced by involving parents and families in the process early on.

Step 2: Surveys

Working along with the task force charged with putting together the plans for moving to two services, the religious education committee surveys its constituency. The survey can focus on nuts-and-bolts kinds of questions (“If we offered X and Y, which would you prefer?”) or on comments and responses (“Here’s our proposed plan. Would it work for you?”). This surveying can be done through written surveys (see “Sample Surveys,”

page 25 for examples), small group discussion, open town meetings, or a combination of these methods. Surveying the young people, rather than only their parents, may provide surprising insights and ideas. The religious education committee should listen openly to the concerns without becoming defensive, invite feedback and additional ideas, and provide information to the parents and young people so they know what to anticipate both in the decision-making process and when the changes are implemented.

Step 3: Make Adjustments for Success

After developing the final schedule of classes, the religious education committee should map out what the program will need to succeed. For example, the committee may find the need to revise registration forms and procedures, create a better record-keeping system, acquire more copies of the curricula for teachers, discover ways that teachers from various sessions can cooperate and collaborate on lessons, find more teachers, change the structure of teaching teams, increase the number of aides, or develop good plans for how supplies and class projects will be handled (shared or separately) across the different religious education program times.

Throughout this process, communication with the parents and the whole congregation must be ongoing and clear. Needs and proposals should be clearly stated. The biggest hurdle in preparing to have two sessions is the fear of a split congregation, and the task force and the religious education committee must keep it in mind throughout the process. Not only does this fear affect the adults; it also affects the young people, who are afraid that their best friends may end up in a different class and they will be left alone with young people they either don't know or don't like. In planning and implementing an additional service, it is essential to remain open to, and aware of, these feelings and to plan events that will both address these concerns and bring the congregation (young and old) together throughout the year. Some committees might find it helpful to have special sessions with the young people to talk about the changes, hear their concerns, and get their suggestions as to what might work best for them.

Coordinating the schedule of events for the whole congregation becomes increasingly important when multiple sessions are offered. Some areas that need particular focus are teacher orientation and training. In addition, events that formerly occurred after services (for example, a luncheon for parents, student graduation, or holiday decorating) can no longer be scheduled in the same way, unless only one service is scheduled on that day. The need for advanced planning for these changes cannot be stressed strongly enough.



What About the Staff?

Adding a worship service inevitably means more work for the congregation's staff, both professional and support. The leaders of worship and religious education must not only repeat the service, create a separate special focus, and oversee another religious education program but also do more planning, recruiting, and preparing.

- ⇒ For religious educators, having more teachers means giving more support in communication and planning. Increased attendance means more parents to talk with and the need for more outside communication.
- ⇒ Pastoral concerns may increase, as may the need for a good system to keep track of the lives of members. There may be more new people to welcome and integrate into the community.
- ⇒ Administrative staff will have more orders of service to prepare, increased newsletter production and mailing, and more hours to provide office staffing.
- ⇒ Custodial staff will face additional traffic and sometimes additional setup and cleaning time, especially if the new worship service is not on the same day as the existing service.

Once again, it pays off in the long run if the individuals whose workload will be affected by the change are brought into the process early on. Not every minister wants to preach twice on Sundays, and some find it harder to preach to two smaller houses than one larger one. Further, with the increased work of the additional service, the minister may need to cut back in other aspects of congregational life, to be offered additional compensation or benefits, or to have an increased ministerial staff. The positions of religious educators, administrators, and custodial staff members, especially those who are part-time, should be reviewed with a realistic eye toward increasing hours and compensation. A particularly sticky problem is part-time staff members who do not wish to increase their hours. Should they be replaced, should additional part-time staff be brought in to share the work, or should the process be held back?

No right answers to these questions exist, and every congregation will have particular issues they need to address. However, in all instances the key is involving the staff (or consulting with them early and often) as the plan for adding a worship service progresses. Congregations may wish to consult their district compensation consultant for help in assessing the equitable pay level in light of the increasing responsibilities brought about by the additional service and increasing membership. The Office of Church Staff Finance of the Unitarian Universalist Association oversees the work of the district compensation consultants. More details can be obtained from their office or at the following Web pages, www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances.



What Evaluation and Trial Periods Are Needed?

A formal evaluation of the additional service is important for a variety of reasons. Every program in a congregation needs to be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is meeting the needs and objectives of the congregation's ministry. (For an assessment tool for this purpose, please refer to uua.org/programs/ministry/publications/assessing.pdf for the document, "Assessing Our Leadership: Promoting Effectiveness in Congregational Leadership.") In addition, adding a service often is easier when people know that they will get a chance to change things if the addition is not working out well. Resistance fades when people recognize a goodwill effort to ensure that their expectations are reviewed on a regular basis.

The addition of a worship service should have a trial period of no less than six months, and better still is a one-year trial period. As has been stated, change is not easy, and people (and congregations) need time to adapt to, and live in, any change. Attendance patterns and quality issues are best examined over a long period of time. Unforeseen "bugs" often need to be worked out, and their presence may give an artificially negative picture of the overall effectiveness and popularity of the additional service. Further, attendance may be unrealistically low or high at first, depending on the level of enthusiasm and advance promotion of the new service. Some congregations find that attendance is good from the beginning and just keeps increasing; some find that it starts out low and grows slowly; others find that it starts out great and withers away; and some find that it starts high, slows down, and then picks up again. The results assessed at the end of a year will give a much better understanding of what is working well and what is not.

If something is clearly not working well, however, do not extend the trial period for so long that it hinders the possibility of ever moving forward again. Tweaking the service and its contents, time, day, and the like might be necessary earlier rather than later. Fine-tuning the service requires a balance between a rash response and no response. Change during (and after) the trial period must be done only after good insight, consideration, and consultation.

→ How Do We Handle Resistance?

Resistance to new ideas comes from a surprising variety of places. Sometimes the laypeople, sometimes the leaders, and sometimes specific segments of the congregation worry about being overburdened. Sometimes the people in the professional leadership share that worry or are concerned about the ways their ministry will change because of the addition of worship opportunities. This resistance is not always conscious or logical, but it is clearly a part of human psychology. Pretending it isn't there doesn't make it go away, so soliciting concerns early on in the process is key. Holding a workshop like the one described in Appendix A is one way to cause such concerns and resistance to

surface. You may want to offer people the option of submitting questions in writing. Sometimes people will ask the important questions only if they feel safe in doing so, and written questions provide a degree of anonymity. Resistance is normal and a part of most change processes. Analyzing resistance also can help you identify issues that might have been overlooked. It also can help you identify creative solutions to problems and illuminate new aspects of the situation.

Nostalgia is another concern that must be addressed. When faced with change, we often imagine an idyllic past rather than realize that the past usually seems better in hindsight. For example, people who look back to the 1950s as a wonderful time for families often forget that the dreams and desires of women and children were not allowed to blossom fully at that time. The same is true in congregational life. People remember that terrific feeling “when everybody knew their name” but don’t necessarily remember that they didn’t know everyone else’s name or that it was never possible to be friends with everyone anyway. They remember fondly the times when there were more people crammed in the sanctuary but fail to recognize the shifting (increasing) sense of personal space in mainstream North American culture of the twenty-first century. We long for larger airplane seats, wider theater aisles, bigger houses, and more elbowroom on Sunday mornings. Make sure that you recognize nostalgic notions for what they are and gently remind people that nostalgia may be playing too big a part in the decision process.

Not Everyone Will Resist

Neither will everyone get on board. In the book *How to Start a New Service*, church growth consultant Charles Arn summarizes the various styles of members found in every congregation, as well as how they respond to change:

- ⇒ **Innovators** are the dreamers and visionaries in the congregation. They regularly talk about the future rather than the past but are not generally acknowledged as leaders or policymakers. Arn estimates that they make up 2 percent of the congregation.
- ⇒ **Early adopters** make up about 18 percent of the congregation; they are the people who know a good idea when they see it. Their opinions are generally respected by others, and they are influential in moving the congregation forward in new directions. They often receive credit for ideas that were not really theirs.
- ⇒ **Middle adopters** make up the majority of the congregation, about 60 percent. They tend to react to the ideas of others rather than generate their own. Although these people are generally reasonable in their analysis of a new idea, they are inclined toward maintaining the status quo and are more easily influenced by individuals opposing change than by those supporting it.
- ⇒ **Late adopters** are the last in the congregation to endorse a new idea. In congregational and committee meetings, these people often speak against and vote against proposed changes and new ideas. They may never verbally acknowledge acceptance of a new idea but eventually will go along with it if the

majority of individuals agree to support it. They make up about 18 percent of the congregation.

- ⇒ **Never adopters** are individuals who seldom, if ever, accept new ideas. Their commitment is to the status quo or the past. They often sow discord after change is adopted and eventually will leave if they don't get a following. Like the Innovators, they make up about 2 percent of the congregation.

In a twist of Universalist P. T. Barnum's old adage, you can please some of the people some of the time and some of the people none of the time, but you won't be able to please all of the people all of the time. Congregations that forget this fact will find themselves paralyzed in fruitlessly trying to eliminate all fallout from change. Instead, congregations need to clarify their vision and mission and then move forward. In moving forward, they can recognize and mourn the losses but still be true to their sense of mission and identity. Congregations can move and change in remarkable ways if people understand why the change is being made; if stability is built in through keeping the key elements that make church "church"; and if the transition is well managed, which includes the involvement of people in all aspects of the exploration and decision making.



How Should We Implement the Transition?

Once you have decided that you will add a service, what kind of service it will be, and what you will do about religious education, the focus shifts to how you will manage the actual transition. Again, no one right answer exists, but you should keep in mind several keys to successful implementation of your plan.

At this point, if you have involved the congregation in the process from the start, you are ready to implement the change. If, however, you have not involved the congregation and the additional service is news to them, internal publicity needs to start many months before you implement the new service. You will need to provide information on the service, the reasons for it, the process followed, and what will be changing. You will need to provide opportunities for congregational members to react to the news and the anticipated change.

You will need to decide when to implement the change. Most congregations find that it is easiest to add a new service in September. Although January is touted as the New Year, September is the actual beginning of the church year for many of us. Children go back to school and move into new classrooms; organizations begin new recreational programs; TVs are tuned to the World Series, football, and hockey; and people make choices as to how they will spend the winter months. Jumping onto this bandwagon

makes choosing between worship services just another part of fall's transitions rather than a big deal on its own.

That said, it is still a good idea to make the addition of a worship service a big deal on its own, because it is! This change is a good opportunity for a congregation to celebrate all that it has accomplished on the road to adding the service: mission and vision clarification, collaboration, flexibility, and so much more. Holding a kickoff service, making banners and posters, writing media releases, hosting a special social hour for the new service, and having a congregation-wide party are just some of the ways to celebrate the good work that has brought the congregation to this point. Remember to thank the people who have worked hard on the task force, as well as the staff members who have changed their lives to enable the service to be added. Releases in newsletters to members and friends should remind people of both the starting date and time of the new service and the change of time of the preexisting service; people don't like to be reminded that they overlooked an important detail by showing up for service at the wrong time! And don't be tempted to solve this problem by leaving the time of the preexisting service the same. Congregations have found that unless they move that time by at least fifteen minutes, they cannot shift attendance patterns enough to relieve overcrowding.

You may encounter resistance, so you will need to ensure that the service's champions listen carefully to the concerns raised and respond to them fully. One question that may well arise is why more people were not included in the decision-making process. The answer to this question depends on the leadership and governance style of your congregation. For congregations that follow a more businesslike process with a chief executive officer, the staff may have the authority to make such a key decision, and little resistance may result. Yet for most of our congregations in the small to midsize categories, concern that "no one asked us" is expected. The best way to circumvent this kind of resistance is to make sure that you do ask the congregation by involving the members in the process from the beginning. It is also important to provide updates and summarize information regularly so that newcomers and others who are just newly aware of the process are informed of the details.

Several months down the road, make sure that you plan a careful evaluation of the service, whether or not you opted for a trial period. Listen to what people are saying, and not saying, about the additional service. Tweak the small things as you go along, but don't make major changes until several months have passed so you know whether an issue is a temporary glitch arising out of change or a long-term problem that needs attention.

If the new service is subject to a vote after a trial period, allow ample opportunities for discussion of the change before the day of the vote. You may wish to use formal evaluations or simply hold small group discussions and town meetings. Remember, the congregation is not limited to a yes/no decision. By listening carefully, you may

discover things that would improve the service; thus, you may decide to revamp it and continue for an additional trial period before making a definitive decision.



What Other Points Should We Consider?

The following points are useful to consider and remember as the congregation faces the addition of a service and the consequent growth:

- ⇒ Communication must be much more deliberate and frequent. Announcements, newsletters, e-mail, and other methods should be used to repeat the message.
- ⇒ Board and committee membership should represent attendees of the various potential worship services to capture a true sense of the whole congregation.
- ⇒ The more crowded the Sunday morning schedule, the less the chance members will have adequate time to socialize and the greater the chance first-time visitors will be ignored.
- ⇒ The congregation needs to have a defined process for welcoming new people and following up on people who have not been seen for a while. Membership committees may need to be increased and systems of entry revised.
- ⇒ As the congregation grows, more small group programs are needed (including special interest or covenant groups) to help people connect more deeply. People can feel invisible as growth occurs. The use of small groups can augment the social and religious lives of all members, not only the newcomers.
- ⇒ Some congregations find that they revert to offering fewer services during the “down” time of the year—the summer for many congregations, but the winter for congregations that attract a higher turnout during the summer months.
- ⇒ The time between services becomes very busy and hectic, often with too much to do. Don’t overload your expectations for this period.
- ⇒ Costs do increase. As congregations grow, more programs develop, larger newsletters may be needed, and the custodial and administrative staff members have more work. All costs do not increase at once, and it is hoped that more people will share the expenses.
- ⇒ People need to feel that the additional service has equal value, though frequently one service always will have greater attendance. This situation does not need to diminish the value of the additional services.
- ⇒ Spontaneity decreases as the congregation increases in size and as planning becomes more necessary.
- ⇒ Scheduling and planning farther in advance are often necessary to facilitate communication and calendar coordination.
- ⇒ Some staff members adapt very well to the addition of a service, and some never do. Turnover of both support and professional staff members may occur with change in congregational life.



What If the Answer Is No New Service?

Sometimes congregations decide that the stumbling blocks and concerns of the congregation are so great that adding an additional worship service to relieve overcrowding is not an option for them. For these congregations, other options may relieve overcrowding: rearranging the furniture, moving, adding on to the building, or starting a new congregation are all possibilities.

The sense of a full or empty worship space is determined more by the number of vacant seats than by the width of the aisles. Rearranging the furniture, or even purchasing new furniture, may go a long way toward alleviating space concerns for a time. This solution does not eliminate the problem of overcrowding in a growing congregation, but it might buy additional time for education and slower, planned change.

Congregations may find that moving or adding on to their building, even though time-consuming and expensive, may be more acceptable to the congregational members than adding additional services. An exploratory process that includes these options alongside the proposal to add a worship service will help clarify the real desire and solution. Beware, though, that talk of a building project or move sometimes is only a resistance tactic.

If the congregation is concerned that it is growing too big, it may find that spinning off a new congregation is a viable choice that disrupts life less than the addition of worship opportunities. Your district staff has information regarding spinning off or starting a new congregation. The office of Congregational Fundraising Services of the Unitarian Universalist Association can help with advice on building projects and fund-raising.

What is increasingly clear is that crowded congregations that don't address the issue directly will end up addressing it indirectly, through attrition, church fights, and other ways. When people feel that "there is no room for them at the inn," the congregation will find ways to shrink to a more comfortable size unless growth is actively encouraged and embraced. Rather than allow a congregation to dwindle through fear or lack of effort, healthy congregational leadership will address the issues directly, thereby making a positive choice for the future. Not to decide is to decide. When congregations address issues directly, they have better results, even if the answer to whether a new service should be added is still no.



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Discussion Process for Considering Additional Worship Services

This workshop is designed to help congregational leadership look at the process of adding another worship service. It allows for the exploration of the potential pluses and minuses of adding the worship service, and also provides information pertinent to the particular reason for the service addition. This exploration is best done after the congregation's leadership has identified the mission of the congregation so that the material can be related back to the sense of self that the congregation currently holds. All the key stakeholders should be involved in the process.

Step 1

Invite participants to reflect on the following questions, first alone and then either in small groups of three (if more than twelve people are participating) or as a whole group. If small groups are used, have each group write down the answers to be shared with the larger group; if the group meets together, record the answers as spoken. The posting of the responses during the workshop allows the participants a chance to reflect on the different categories of responses.

- ⇒ What is it about us as Unitarian Universalists that creates a tendency among us to resist adding additional worship services?
- ⇒ Is there something about our model of church that influences our feelings and opinions on this matter?

Sample responses: "We like the status quo." "We have a great sense of community, and we might be split into two congregations." "I fear we may lose our cohesiveness." "I might miss out on something."

Step 2

Make the following brief presentation on the dynamics of the crowded congregation:

When service attendance consistently averages 75 to 80 percent seating capacity (or parking lot capacity), (a) some members stop coming, (b) newcomers and potential members find it harder to find a niche in a crowded church, and (c) longer-term members may feel they aren't needed.

Over the past twenty years, our psychological sense of space has increased, and people want and need more physical space to feel comfortable. This is also true in the religious education space. Today's parents are not content with the same degree of crowding in classes as in prior generations. Religious education programs must be very dynamic and exciting to overcome the parents' sense that their children are being shortchanged in regard to facilities.

Over time, a congregation will experience a plateau in membership growth. Part of the reason is related to psychological space, and part of it to how easy it is to get "in" to the congregation. New people need to make six new friends within the first

six months in order to stay; if they do not have a way to meet other people, or if the congregation is too crowded, new people may not stay. Furthermore, if a congregation is not taking in enough new members to replace the exiting members, it naturally will lose size through attrition. Through death, moving, family changes, and so on, the congregational membership will decline.

When these dynamics play out, it may not feel like a crisis, but a crisis may be brewing. Shrinking (or even static) membership numbers increase the financial burden on a congregation's population and limit who has access to Unitarian Universalism.

Step 3

Ask the group to name some of the pinches it currently feels in regard to its church membership growth. List them on flip-chart paper.

Sample answers: "I don't go to coffee hour anymore; it's too crowded." "In such a crowded atmosphere, I find it harder to find other younger adults I want to connect with." "Parking is difficult." "The noise level is disruptive to after-church meetings." "The religious education rooms are packed." "Latecomers have a hard time finding a place to sit."

Step 4

Prepare three different large, presentation (or flip-chart) sheets: "The Status Quo/No Change Made," "The Worst Case," and "The Best Case." Then invite the group to consider these three scenarios, writing down their answers. Explore each answer individually rather than jumping around, so that people have a chance to imagine what the outcomes of each scenario would be.

First ask the group to consider what Status Quo/No Change Made would look like. Refer back to the pinches they are already feeling in relation to their congregational membership growth and space, and also refer back to the dynamics of the crowded congregation. Ask them to imagine what it would be like in five years if they did not add an additional worship service and these pinches continued. List their ideas on flip-chart paper. Don't move on until you have fully explored this situation with them.

Then ask the group to consider The Worst Case. Ask them to imagine what the worst case would be five years from now if they decided to add an additional worship service. This is a time for them to express their concerns and fears. List their ideas on flip-chart paper. Don't move on until you have fully explored this situation with them.

Finally, ask the group to consider The Best Case. Ask them to imagine what the best case would be five years from now if they decided to add an additional worship service. List their ideas on flip-chart paper. Again, don't move on until you have fully explored this situation with them.

Step 5

Continue to explore the following questions:

Ask the group to reflect on the three possibilities (no change, worst case, and best case) and then to list questions they would want to consider if they were to add an additional worship service. The questions should be listed on flip-chart paper as they are raised.

The questions that are raised will be specific to your congregation, but the following are some of the questions raised by other congregations:

- ⇒ Are two sessions of religious education feasible?
- ⇒ How do we get people in and out of the parking lot between services?
- ⇒ Should the two services be the same?
- ⇒ Why is membership growth good?
- ⇒ How do we sell this idea to the congregation?
- ⇒ What should our process of decision making be?

Other areas in which questions might be raised include hospitality, music, setup, membership, rental costs, increased volunteer needs, and visitor follow-up.

Step 6

Appoint a task force that will explore these questions and report back to the board of the congregation.

The task force should include representation from the key committees that would be involved in the addition of a service or, at a minimum, engage members of these committees in discussion about the change. Any recommendations should be shared with, and discussed by, these key committees prior to the task force's reporting to the governing board. This task force may want to talk to other Unitarian Universalist congregations that have made the transition to an additional service recently. (See the Acknowledgments for list of congregations that have shared their experiences.) Your district staff can refer you to other congregations in your district that have implemented an additional service.

Step 7

Have the task force present its report to the board, which will act accordingly.

After the task force has reported to the board, the board should discuss its next steps. If the board is convinced that your congregation can succeed in adding a service, a process must be created to get the congregation on board and behind the change.



Sample Surveys

Surveys are a way of discerning attitudes, questions, and concerns about adding worship services. Here are three samples—two general surveys and one related specifically to religious education. They can be modified easily for your specific situation. Also, they can be useful for collecting names of people who would be willing to volunteer to teach in the religious education program or help out with other tasks, such as greeting, hosting, or providing refreshments.

→ Sample Survey on the Proposal to Go to Two Services

1. If we went to two services with a program period in between, what activities would you suggest for that interim hour?
2. If we went to two services, what would you like to see in the 9:00 A.M. service? In the 11:00 A.M. service?
3. Do you have suggestions for modifying the proposal for adding a service?
4. Do you have ideas on how to relieve the staff of additional Sunday burdens?
5. If we went to two services, which session of church school would you prefer to teach?
6. If we went to two services, what should be implemented first in the 10:00 A.M. program period?
7. If we went to two services, which service would you be more likely to attend?
9:00 A.M. _____ 11:00 A.M. _____
8. What do you think of the idea generally?

Thank you very much for responding to this questionnaire. If you have any questions about our plans for next year, please call (contact information).

From the First Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York.

→ Congregational Survey on Sunday Service Alternatives

Responder Profile:

Name (optional) _____

- a. Are you a member? yes no
If yes, for how long have you been a member? less than 1 year
 1–2 years 3–5 years 6–10 years over 10 years
- b. On average, how many Sunday services do you attend per month from September to June?
 less than 1 service 1–2 services 3 or more services
- c. Do you have children in the religious education program? yes no
- d. How many hours per month do you spend on fellowship activities related to running the church? (Include activities such as committee meetings, organizing social events, teaching classes, and bringing refreshments. Do NOT include attending services, classes, or social events.)
 none less than 1 hour/month 1–4 hours/month
 5–7 hours/month more than 8 hours/month
- e. Do you attend church social activities? yes no

Survey:

1. Have you noticed any recent congestion in our Sunday services space?

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> at the door upon arriving | <input type="checkbox"/> in closing circle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> latecomers standing in back | <input type="checkbox"/> during coffee hour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> finding accessible open seats | <input type="checkbox"/> during “Moments with Children” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in the parking lot | <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in religious education classes | |

2. What are your current feelings about the possibility of our church’s moving to double sessions to meet our needs for space and to promote further growth?

Check the ONE response closest to your current attitude.

- I’m excited about the possibility and ready to start tomorrow.
 I’m excited about the possibility and think we should start next September.
 I agree it is necessary, but I can’t personally give more time to support it.
 We should wait until we have standing room only every Sunday before starting double sessions.
 We should try all other reasonable solutions before considering double sessions.
 I’m willing to increase my financial support to avoid having double sessions.
 Double sessions will hurt the Fellowship.
 If the Fellowship starts having double sessions, I will stop coming.

3. What time(s) would you be willing to attend a regular weekly service assuming you could attend only one service?

Rate ALL these times as (B) best, (A) acceptable, (C) conditionally acceptable, or (N) would not attend:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 3:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 4:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9:30 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 5:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 6:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 7:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12:00 noon Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 8:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1:00 P.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday evening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2:00 P.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday evening |

4. What time would you be willing to have your children attend religious education (RE) classes?

Rate ALL these times as (B) best, (A) acceptable, (C) conditionally acceptable, or (N) would not attend

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 4:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 5:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9:30 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 6:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 7:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11:00 A.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 8:00 P.M. Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12:00 noon Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday evening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1:00 P.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday evening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2:00 P.M. Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3:00 P.M. Sunday | |

5. Rate ALL the following schedules for double sessions as (B) best, (A) acceptable, (C) conditionally acceptable, or (N) would not attend either service:

- Two Sunday morning services
- Sunday morning and Sunday evening
- Sunday morning and afternoon
- Sunday morning and midweek evening

6. Rate ALL of the following alternatives to double sessions as (B) best, (A) acceptable, (C) conditionally acceptable, or (N) would not attend. (Do not consider costs or availability of a facility.)

In a larger facility with religious education at same time as a single service:

- single Sunday morning service
- single Sunday afternoon service
- single Sunday evening service
- single midweek evening service

In a larger facility with religious education before or after a single service:

- single Sunday morning service
- single Sunday afternoon service
- single Sunday evening service
- single midweek evening service

In our current facility:

- Have a short service for children, teachers, and parents starting 15 minutes before the regular service. Other adults would enter after the children leave.
- Give children and teachers their own service, and don't have them participate in the regular service.
- Have ushers and latecomers remain standing until after the children leave.
- Have children stay in their chairs during "Moments with Children," making room in front for more chairs.
- Rent another classroom for coffee hour.
- Have children participate in the regular service only once a month. (Others would expect to arrive early on those days, or stand in back until the children leave.)
- Never have full intergenerational services.

7. If we decide to move to a new facility,

- a. About how much would you be willing to INCREASE your financial support per week in order to find a new facility that would accommodate growth in a single service? **Check ONLY ONE:**
- b. none \$1/week \$5/week \$10/week \$20 or more/week
- c. Would you be willing to take children to a different location for religious education? yes no
- d. Would you be willing to have children's religious education classes in your home? yes no
- e. Would you be willing to set up chairs, hymnals, the sound system, and so on each week for service? How many times per month? *Check ONLY ONE:*
 none once in two months once a month twice a month three or more times a month
- f. How would you feel if the sanctuary had a prominent cross or other religious symbol? *Check ONLY ONE:*
 - It wouldn't bother me.
 - I wouldn't like it, but I could tolerate it.
 - I would stop coming.
 - It would depend upon the symbol. Please specify: _____

- 8. Effect of double session on Sunday School teacher recruitment:**
- a. Would you consider teaching Sunday School at some point? __ yes __ no
 - b. How many times per month would you be willing to teach if you could attend a second service? __ none __ 1 __ 2 __ 3 __ 4
 - c. How many times per month would you teach if teaching meant missing the church service? __ none __ 1 __ 2 __ 3 __ 4
- 9. If we go to two services, what ideas do you have to help us maintain the sense of community that we currently share?**
- 10. Describe one or more benefits that you can think of from having two Sunday services and religious education programs.**
- 11. Describe one or more negative aspects of going to two services and religious education programs.**

Note: If you have more extensive ideas than this form allows, you may write comments on an additional sheet.

Survey comes from the UU Fellowship of Sunnyvale, California, as they considered all options for overcrowding in their rented space.

→ Sample Questionnaire for Parents of Church School Youth

This is a sample of the questionnaire from a congregation that chose to offer a limited religious education program during the early service and a full program during the later service. The congregation also includes special activities during the second service for the children of religious education teachers.

Dear Parents,

The move to two services requires planning on the part of the Religious Education Committee so that we can offer religious education classes to meet your needs. We intend to offer classes for infants through 6th graders at the 9:00 a.m. service, and for infants through high school students at the 11:00 A.M. service.

The same curriculum will be taught during each session. This does not mean, however, that you can move your child or children from class to class depending on whether you wish to attend one or the other service on any given Sunday. To maintain a stable classroom situation, we are asking you to make a yearlong commitment to either the early or the late service and to register your child or children accordingly.

To help us plan for the fall, we would appreciate your taking the time to answer the following questions and returning this questionnaire to the Religious Education Office.

1. How many children (including infants) will you register for Church School for the 20__–20__ school year? _____
2. What are their ages? _____
3. What grades will they be entering in September? _____
4. For which Church School session do you intend to register your child/children?
Circle one:
9:00–10:15 11:00–12:15
5. As a rule, how many times a month do your children attend Church School?

6. The Middle School Class will be offered only at the 11:00 A.M. time. Do you have any children who want to be in the Middle School Class next year?
Yes _____ No _____ How many? _____
7. In the past our Church School teachers have been forced to sacrifice attending the service in order to teach. This year you can teach *and* go to a service! To make this even easier for you, activities will be available for the older children of teachers to complement the children's classroom experiences. For children five and under, we suggest that they simply attend the regular classes, both sessions, because the activities for those ages are active and should be of value to them. For children six and up, we are planning a variety of activities and

would like to know what you would be interested in for your child or children. If you are committed to teaching next year, do you want your child (children) to participate in these extra classes/activities?

Yes _____ No _____

8. Do you have a preference as to which session offers the extra activities?

Yes _____ No _____

If you have a preference, which session would you like to see offer the extra activities?

Circle one: 9:00-10:15 11:00-12:15

9. Please circle the activities below that you feel would interest your children, and put the ages of the children next to the activity.

Youth choir _____ Youth hand bells _____ Drama _____

Art _____ Social service _____

Quiet room (with books, quiet games, and adult supervision) _____

Teen lounge (in the Youth Room, with adult supervision, early session only)

Storytelling (geared to certain age groups) _____

Any other ideas for activities?

10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to help us plan for next year?

11. And finally, staffing two Church School sessions will require more teachers! Would you be willing to teach?

Full year, 9:00 service _____ Full year, 11:00 service _____

10 weeks, 9:00 service _____ 10 weeks, 11:00 service _____

If you are willing to teach, what is your name and telephone number?

Thank you very much for responding to this questionnaire. If you have any questions about our plans for next year, please call _____, at _____.



Frequently Asked Questions and Common Concerns about Adding Worship Services

For some congregations, adding an additional worship service (and possibly additional religious education sessions) is a significant change. Any change is difficult for an organization, but the change in number of worship services seems to prompt some particular fears and feelings. They need to be articulated, recognized, affirmed, and responded to so the change can move forward effectively. The following are some common concerns and ways to respond effectively to them.

→ **Concern: Adding an additional worship service will split the congregation, and we'll lose the sense of being one religious community.**

When more than one service is held, things do change. Sometimes members' best friends (or their children's best friends) end up going to another service. Sometimes when more people come to a service, longer-term members feel they don't know anyone anymore. The losses are real, and it is best if the congregation talks openly and honestly about them. This discussion needs to take place in an atmosphere where people can truly communicate their concerns. Immediately addressing the concerns and seeking quick solutions is tempting, but it can result in the need for long-term remedial work.

Yet people's concerns should not be overestimated, and many of them can be overcome. Often the "we know everyone here" feeling is more a sense of recognizing the faces rather than truly being one big, happy congregation where everyone knows everyone's name. Talking about this reality can help alleviate concerns. Also, friends and families can check with one another about the services they will each attend, and they can plan to attend the same one to mitigate the sense of loss. The congregation can (and should) plan several all-congregation social events, where people from the various services can interact with one another. It may be possible to hold a joint social time between services, if parking space and timing allow. Communication must be heightened; with more than one service, things need to be said more than once, and in a variety of ways. Written communication may become paramount.

→ **Concern: If we add more services, we will lose the family feeling in our congregation; we will be too big.**

The concern that they will lose their close-knit feeling is heard from all sizes of congregations. Yet congregations of all sizes can be friendly or not, depending on the atmosphere they cultivate and how they choose to interact. Family feeling can be there, whether the family is a two-person unit or one that includes multiple generations and extended groupings. The major determining factor is how people

relate to one another and whether they have the chance to fit in and be seen. Some congregations have found that small group ministries or other sorts of affinity or interest groups break down that sense of isolation and allow places for members to meet others and interact more personally than they can during corporate collective worship. Other congregations find that offering active social justice programs is a way to connect people, whereas others rely upon continuing education programs for this linkage.

→ Concern: We already have a problem staffing our religious education program; with another service we will be stretched to the breaking point.

This legitimate concern is hard to deal with, and it reveals one of the paradoxes of congregation life. Often we tout our children as the future, yet too often a struggle ensues to find enough people willing to teach our most precious resources, regardless of the number of services. Adding an additional worship service calls for creativity in solving this problem, yet it also provides a unique opportunity for recruitment.

Because an additional service will be held, some people who have been reluctant to teach because it meant giving up worship now have the chance to do both—teach and attend services. Or it may be a time to try a different structure, such as team teaching, shorter terms, interest centers, or parent volunteer commitments. Team teaching allows a natural flow of several individuals through the classroom but doesn't require teachers to forgo worship for a large number of Sundays in a row. By seeking out curricula of a fixed length—one month, two months, or ten weeks—teachers may make a finite, limited commitment. If parents are required to teach, the pool of teachers increases; fewer people feel trapped into the commitment, because it is shared more widely. Clearly, good cooperation, coordination, and involvement of the religious educators are needed as the congregation moves forward into implementing an additional service, but the obstacles can be overcome when the desire to add a service is real.

→ Concern: How will we handle all the events after worship when we have more than one service?

If the additional service is on the same day as the preexisting service, the nature of congregational life on that day will change. If congregational meetings have historically followed the single Sunday service, then a decision must be made: to hold the meeting between the services, hold the meeting after the later service while dealing with overcrowding on that one day, or hold the meeting on an entirely different day and at a different time. Special celebrations will need to be examined, too. Some congregations handle special celebrations by doubling the events, others rotate them through the day's calendar, and still others change things more dramatically by changing the days and times of the events altogether. Some

congregations have moved preservice events to a time slot after the last service, and at least one congregation has discovered an increased interest in the former preservice event since it was moved. Many congregations leave events after the later service; they find that some members and friends who attend the early service come back for the special events, whereas others choose not to return. Every congregation will have to wrestle their way to the decisions that work well for them.

→ Concern: If we go to two services during our building campaign, will we be able to go back to one service after that?

Some congregations move to the use of multiple services as a temporary measure. Most often they are beginning a building addition, and their dream is to return to one service after the building is completed. For some congregations this strategy has worked, and they return to one service quite happily. Others, though, have found that the growth they experienced during the building process was so great that even after the new space was completed they could not return to a single service. Every situation will be different, and this question should be addressed during the planning phase: What happens if it turns out that we cannot return to one service? For some congregations this scenario would be a crisis and for others, a great opportunity and success. The possibility, though, should be addressed before the problem arises.

→ Concern: How long a trial period is necessary, and how do we know if the addition of another service was a mistake?

If a trial period is desired, it should last at least six months, and preferably a year. Some congregations have noticed an initial increase in attendance at the additional service, only to notice a decline as people reconsidered what worship patterns work well for them. Later, attendance at the additional service picked up, and overall attendance once again increased. Making a decision too soon may hamper growth for the foreseeable future, whereas with patience, concerns may evaporate over a longer period.

Some congregations find that the additional service is not successful in addressing either overcrowding or outreach. Before dropping the service, they should assess why it has not succeeded. Was there adequate congregational support? Are age-appropriate religious education and childcare offered? Is the style of worship appropriate for what the congregation is trying to achieve or for the target population, if one exists? Was the time of the existing service changed so that people would be forced to make a real decision about their churchgoing habits? Is the time and day of the additional service the problem, and what would happen if it were changed? Did the planning committee understand the needs it was trying to address by the additional service? Congregations may find that evaluating the process and the service will provide solutions other than eliminating the additional service.

Sometimes the additional service does not work for a variety of reasons, both internal and external to the congregation. The closing of a major employer may reduce the level of attendance and membership, and internal congregational fights often have disastrous effects on attendance and membership patterns. In cases where the service is clearly no longer necessary or where it is not fulfilling the actual needs of the congregation and community, it should be ended. The congregation should celebrate the success that occurred and pay attention to those things that did not work, keeping good notes for people to review in future congregational planning.

→ Concern: What if we can't decide whether or not to add a service?

Success in adding a service increases as the support from the congregation increases. Although a service could be added if 51 percent of the congregation were in favor, chances are that a service with such low support would not succeed. Under these conditions the plan is better put on hold or refocused as an education process rather than risk the failure of a plan with only a lukewarm response. If a decision cannot be reached, then more discussion is recommended, paying particular attention to the reasons for resistance. Deciding not to decide is also a decision—one that shows the level of ambivalence, fear, or concern in the congregation. Stepping back, listening more deeply to the voiced and unvoiced concerns, and addressing them before proceeding is advised. What is clear is that if no broad-based support emerges for the decision to add another service, the new service will not be successful.

→ Concern: Communication is difficult enough now; what will happen when we add an additional service?

As congregations grow, communication techniques must become more deliberate and effective. The best advice is to repeat, repeat, repeat. Spoken announcements made at one service must be made at all services, and people must be more intentional about planning ahead in the promotion of events and in sharing news and information. Written communication becomes more critical through the order of service and newsletters, and some congregations make sure they post more information on their Web sites. (Take care, though, to ensure that information is equally available to all. Electronic communication works well for those who have access to a computer, but if information is shared only through this medium, those who do not have access to it are shut out.)



Systematic List of Questions About Adding a Service

More questions exist than can be (and probably should be!) asked about adding an additional service and the impact that it will have on congregational life. Then, once the decision to add a service is made, an even longer set of questions needs to be asked in the designing and implementation stages. Many of these questions are found in various parts of this manual, but the following lists are offered for those who wish to have a more systematic listing of questions. Questions specifically about religious education programming are found in the section entitled “How Should We Handle Religious Education?”

→ Nature of the Service

- ⇒ If a duplicate service is desired, will the service be a duplicate in all aspects?
 - Will the central focus (usually the sermon) be the same, or will it change?
 - Will the music be the same? Will a choir perform? If there are special musicians, will they perform at all services, or only one?
 - Will children’s religious education be available during the new service? For all ages, or only for some? Is childcare available for the youngest children? (Many questions about how to provide for the children arise. Please make sure you read the section entitled “How Should We Handle Religious Education?”)
 - Will the special elements (for example, child dedications and coming-of-age services) be featured consistently at one service, or will they rotate through all services? Will days with special elements be changed to days with only one service?
- ⇒ If a different service is desired, what differences will be incorporated?
 - Will the service be designed to fulfill the unmet needs of those already present, or will it be an outreach to a new constituency out in the community?
 - How will we determine the unmet internal needs?
 - How will we determine the needs of our outreach constituency?
 - Is the time and day appropriate to this new segment?
 - What supportive elements will there be—music, hospitality, child care, religious education, and so on?
- ⇒ When is the right time for the service?
 - Should it be on the same day as the existing service? Earlier? Later?
 - Should it be on a different day than the existing service? If so, what day and time?
- ⇒ Will children be included in the service?
 - How will they be included?

- What part of the service will they attend—all of it or part of it (and then which part)?
- Will there be a special focus for the young people? Who will do this?
- What impact does including or not including the children in part of the service have on class time? On the worship service? On overcrowding?

→ Music

- ⇒ Will the choir perform for all services, or just some? If just some services, then which ones?
- ⇒ Will special music be offered at all the services? If not, what will take the place of the special music part of the service?
- ⇒ Will congregational singing be included? The same amount? More? Less?

→ Hospitality

- ⇒ Will a single fellowship time be held, or multiple ones? Before the services? After the services?
- ⇒ If a single fellowship time is held, how will people be brought out of fellowship and into the worship service?

→ In-between Time

- ⇒ If the additional service is on the same day, how much time is needed between the services?
- ⇒ Will any programmatic element be held between the services? If so, what will it be, and for whom? What impact does this activity have on traffic patterns and overcrowding? Is parking a concern, and if so, are two coffee hours needed?

→ Logistics

- ⇒ How much time is needed to allow people to depart from the earlier service and to arrive for the later service?
- ⇒ How will the traffic flow between the services? In the parking lot? Indoors?
- ⇒ Will parking lot attendants be needed?
- ⇒ Does space allow for a single social time, or will more than one be needed?
- ⇒ If the new service is on a different day, what arrangements need to be made for setup and snow removal midweek?
- ⇒ Will additional people be needed to handle the additional collection and bank deposit?
- ⇒ Will the office be staffed during all services? If so, by paid staff, by volunteers, or by a combination?
- ⇒ Will an activity be offered for the children whose parents are active in both services? Will they go to two sets of religious education classes, or will alternative activities exist for them?

→ Finances

- ⇒ Will an increase be needed in the hours and/or pay for musicians? Religious educators? Custodial staff? Administrative staff? The minister?
- ⇒ Will rental costs increase?
- ⇒ Will utility costs increase?
- ⇒ Will photocopying costs increase?
- ⇒ Will additional religious education curricula and/or materials be needed?
- ⇒ Will an increase in membership and in member contributions likely cover all anticipated increased costs?



Advice from Congregations Who Have Been There

A questionnaire about the process and effects of adding an additional worship service was sent out to several congregations in the spring of 2003. The following are some of their answers to the questions posed and their advice to others undertaking the process.

→ Why did you add another service?

- ⇒ Being near capacity on Sunday morning; reading Alice Mann's book *The In-between Church*; and having a Unitarian Universalist healthy church consultant tell us that if we wanted to grow, we needed to add a similar service.
- ⇒ We need our values (freedom, respect, tolerance, and so on) in the larger community.
- ⇒ As part of our outreach effort in young adult ministries.
- ⇒ Outgrown sanctuary space.
- ⇒ We were 80 percent full 89 percent of the time.
- ⇒ We were more than 80 percent full at the first service.
- ⇒ Crowding in seating, religious education, and parking.
- ⇒ To accommodate growth.

→ What were the biggest stumbling blocks?

- ⇒ Just getting started took almost as long as the actual planning and implementation did. It took a lot of soul searching on *why* we wanted to make the effort. Fear—what if we have it and no one comes. Putting it in terms of a one-year trial helped, as did knowing the experience of others, how attendance would probably drop in the three- to six-month time frame, and so on.
- ⇒ There haven't been any.
- ⇒ Some of the congregants were concerned about losing the closeness of a pastoral-size church as we transitioned to a program-size church. The time we have between the two services may need to be shortened.
- ⇒ We had a Forum that met at 9:30. It took a long time and a lot of work and involvement of the entire congregation to get them to move the Forum to 1:00 in the afternoon. Attendance at the Forum is up this year.
- ⇒ Whether the choir would sing at both services and what to do about children's religious education.
- ⇒ Religious education. It took a while to iron that out.
- ⇒ Opposition to having two congregations and not seeing friends.
- ⇒ Convincing religious education that they could handle it. Convincing the few who were opposed that we really needed this. Figuring out how to handle all the logistics; worrying that we would miss something and then people would complain about the change. A handful of people recognized that this would

allow us to grow but didn't really want that. We worked with them to reassure them that they could have the same quality church experience even if there were significantly more people in the congregation.

- ⇒ At first the time was too early to really attract more than a handful. The 8:30 service put a big burden on the nursery, since it had to be staffed from 8:15 to 12:30. The first service was moved to 9:30. This year, the average attendance at the 9:30 service has passed that at the 11:00 service.
- ⇒ Getting over our history of its not working last time.
- ⇒ Recruiting more religious education teachers and persuading the choir to spend additional time at church on Sundays.

→ What went better than you imagined?

- ⇒ We hoped for fifty people on the first Sunday early service—we had seventy-five. We started a café (we'd always had coffee) with coffee and munchies and lots of tables to sit and talk at the early service. For a while we just had a sign-up sheet for bringing food; then our Coming of Age parents decided to take it over as a fundraiser. A person can still get free coffee, but there are also gourmet drinks and munchies, coupon books, and so on. The children's activity hour had been run by just one or two parents, but when we added it to the "areas of concern" list, a lot of creative ideas surfaced.
- ⇒ It was remarkably simple to gather a group of young adults who wanted to learn and to practice the arts of worship.
- ⇒ The actual process of having two services.
- ⇒ The actual change to two services went very smoothly, in part because we had taken so much time to consult the congregation and get their buy-in and consent.
- ⇒ After spending a year talking about it, nobody really said much after we did it.
- ⇒ It was a lot easier than I had been led to believe it would be.
- ⇒ My stamina was better than I thought it would be.
- ⇒ Pretty much all the logistics, like finding enough ushers and making sure we had coffee ready after both services.
- ⇒ I think people have been surprised at how popular the 9:30 service has become. Also, having the 9:30 service coincide with the Forum and religious education has given parents more of a choice.
- ⇒ After what felt like a long and involved congregation-wide decision process, the transition itself went smoothly.
- ⇒ From the beginning, attendance at the first service was better than we imagined it would be.
- ⇒ The adult forums—it's much easier to get people to come if they are already coming to church than to get them to come for an adult education program on a weeknight. A more even split of attendance between services makes it easier on the speaker, and smaller crowds make it easier to make pastoral connections with more people after church.

→ What was the biggest surprise?

- ⇒ Almost from the first day, we averaged a forty- to fifty-person increase in Sunday attendance.
- ⇒ I have been surprised that so many older members have been drawn to Soulful Sundown (a service designed as young adult outreach). It has been a less effective outreach tool than we had hoped.
- ⇒ How well the transition went. Many projects need addressing, such as volunteers for two coffee hours, additional greeters and ushers, a board member to welcome and greet the congregation each Sunday for two services, and the music for two services.
- ⇒ I was hoping for about forty people to start with. We started with about sixty. Things have gone well. The biggest surprise was not so much the switch to two services but how long it took to get the congregation prepared. We had many, many meetings in which we had to go over and over the same issues because a few new people would come. But in the end, I think the patience was what made it all work.
- ⇒ For a while there was a cultural difference between the two services. One was more lively than the other. Over time, that changed.
- ⇒ There wasn't much that surprised me, but I think many members of the congregation were surprised at how easily it could be done and how nice that small, early service could be. We were used to having more than a hundred people in attendance at worship, and some worried that it wouldn't be a good worship service with only thirty or forty fellow worshippers. Several people told me that they really like it better and were glad I had suggested that small worship could be very satisfying. We had the most difficulty with the choir at the first service, and that was a surprise to me. The choir wanted to sing at both services and needed to warm up before the first service. So the plan was to have the anthem after the sermon, and the choir would come into the sanctuary as I finished it up. It was much more difficult than I had imagined to figure out when to tell them to come in so that they could move seamlessly into position for the anthem. Most Sundays it works quite well, but even after a year and a half, some Sundays they end up standing outside waiting while I finish, or we have a "moment of silence" while we wait for them to appear!
- ⇒ How little trauma it all caused.
- ⇒ Attendance at forums. Willingness of religious education teachers to take the extra time.
- ⇒ Nice to have aisles again.

→ What was the biggest disappointment?

- ⇒ Not enough greeters.
- ⇒ It has been a less effective outreach tool than we had hoped.

- ⇒ The religious education program at the early service has been very slow in coming up to speed.
- ⇒ There is a loss. As a preacher, I enjoy preaching to a full house. I know that some people do miss seeing “everybody” on Sunday morning.
- ⇒ None.
- ⇒ 9:30 religious education did not work.
- ⇒ Again, nothing was particularly disappointing to me, but some people really regretted the loss of having everyone present at the same time. The way I have answered this is to encourage everyone to be present at the coffee hour between the two services, which works well for us since we don’t have a parking problem.
- ⇒ I’m sure some folks wish we could all gather as one body on Sunday, but with the growth we have experienced, it just wouldn’t be practical.
- ⇒ That many families are not willing to spend more than an hour at church, attending both religious education classes and worship services; there are a surprising number of children who come only for the religious education classes. (Our congregation has religious education between the services, with other activities during the services themselves.)

→ What do you wish someone had told you before?

- ⇒ Actually, I think the group did pretty good research—we used books, articles from the UUA, and calls to other churches. If there’s one thing you should do, it’s to be sure your hospitality committee is ready.
- ⇒ Keep the additional service focused on outreach, or it will naturally become one more enrichment program for the people who are already active in the church.
- ⇒ I felt that most questions were addressed prior to the actual change. We did not rush the process.
- ⇒ We did a lot of consulting and research, so we weren’t surprised.
- ⇒ I wish they had told me it was not really a big deal.
- ⇒ Actually, other ministers did tell me, but I wish I’d listened to how much more tired I’d be doing two services than I was with only one. I learned very quickly that I need to sit down between the two services, so I place a chair strategically on our patio and do my meeting and greeting from there. I also have curtailed my Saturday night social life, which makes me feel like a fuddy-duddy, but it helps!
- ⇒ The follow-up assessment and report to the congregation on the transition are really important to some people and should not be skipped.
- ⇒ Relax; it will work; it was necessary.

→ What is your best advice for others?

- ⇒ Get as much of the congregation involved as possible, do your research, give it time, and be honest about why you want to make this change.

- ⇒ Remember what worship is for, work hard at it, and then let go. Always provide excellent childcare or, better yet, structured religious education classes. Be sure that whoever leads worship at your church has a strong sense of ritual authority.
- ⇒ Make sure the congregation has opportunities to express their views and concerns. Make certain the transitional work is defined, organized, and implemented prior to the change.
- ⇒ Take as much time as you need. Getting a large congregation to change its ways of relating is very time-consuming. Religious liberals are very conservative about changing how they relate to one another. I wish we could have figured out a way to have a new time for each service. Our 11:00 service is at the same time as the old single service. I think it would have helped if we could have changed that time as well.
- ⇒ DO IT. It serves more people. Get over the hesitation. Plow ahead.
- ⇒ Don't be afraid.
- ⇒ Fear not.
- ⇒ Start early! We began studying the situation and doing public relations work with the congregation a year and a half before we began to hold two services. We worked long and hard to get congregational buy-in, as well as to gather all the wisdom from others who had done this before. It really helped. Also, we presented the idea to the congregation as a "pilot program," which helped with some of those who were very worried that it would ruin their experience. They could agree to a trial program much more easily than they would have agreed to an immediate permanent change. By the time the pilot period was over (one year), the vote to institutionalize two services was a no-brainer.
- ⇒ Keep everyone involved in the process. Consult with everyone who will be affected by the change. Let them know you care about what they think. Take their input seriously, but don't be held prisoner by people who are simply afraid of change.
- ⇒ Communication with the congregation and the congregation's trust in church leadership are key. The congregation needs to make a clear decision to grow. Leaders need to clearly communicate the negative impact of crowding on growth. In making the decision and following through with it, leaders should expect some resistance to change.
- ⇒ Plan well in advance, get input from plenty of people, and make sure the move to two services is necessary.
- ⇒ Don't make such a change abruptly, without giving people a chance to be heard and to understand the issues and the various alternatives. The amount of process needed for acceptance varies with the congregational culture, of course.



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