



Missouri Mid-South Conference Ready, Set Grow Project Description

Purpose: Provide churches with opportunities to work together to enhance their congregations' vitality by creatively and cooperatively engaging with the Congregational Vitality Initiative of the United Church of Christ.

Composition of Local Church Teams:

Churches will be invited to create teams (including the pastor). Suggested size of the teams is 4-5 persons.

The Pastor of the local church is key for encouraging change and therefore is expected to be on the Local Church Team. Although a local church could send a Team without the pastor, the Pastor must be supportive of the Team and work with the Team as it engages this project.

Expectations of Local Church Teams:

Members of the Teams are expected to remain consistent during the program. Church Teams will be expected to attend 4 gatherings over the course of the project where they will:

- Be introduced to a specific module of the Ready, Set, Grow Project
- Work in Partner groups that will provide support and accountability

Teams will study the materials together at the plenary gatherings and within their own context working to assess and implement the module in ways that strengthen their local church's mission and ministry.

Covenants

In order for the Ready, Set, Grow Project to impact the mission and ministry of a local church, the Local Church Team needs to be recognized and its work valued by other church leadership. Therefore, the Church Council will be expected to sign a covenant recognizing the Team and indicating their support of the learnings and work of the Team. It will be suggested that the Teams be recognized in worship or through their church's newsletter.

The Local Church Team will also be asked to sign a covenant as part of the Ready, Set, Grow Project expressing their commitment to participate in the gatherings and seek to implement the programs as designed for their context.

Partner Groups:

Partner Groups of Local Church Teams will be created for sharing and accountability. These Partner Groups may be created based on geographical proximity of churches, congregational affinities, or other criteria that makes sense to the Local Church Teams. Partner Groups will meet during the quarterly meetings and if desired, have contact between meetings.

Quarterly Gatherings:

Each of these gatherings will introduce a new module of materials for the Local Church Teams. The Teams will create plans for implementation of the modules within their own local church. The Teams will also have the opportunity to share in Partner Groups with other churches. These gatherings will be daylong events scheduled as follows:

Module 1 - Ready!

September 15 – Eastern Association

October 6 – St. Louis Association

October 13 – Western Association

Module 2 – Set!

January 12 – Eastern Association

January 26 – St. Louis Association

February 2 – Western Association

Module 3 – Grow!

April 5 – Eastern Association

April 12 - St. Louis Association

April 19 – Western Association

Evaluation

June 7 – Eastern Association

June 14 – St. Louis Association

June 21 – Western Association

Specific locations and times will be posted in coming weeks.

Cost:

Churches will be expected to pay a registration fee of \$100, covering the cost of the program and materials. Lunches during each of the gatherings will be arranged for participants at an additional nominal cost.

Congregational Vitality Initiative Coordinator:

The Coordinator will provide administrative, organizational, and program support for the overall project, the quarterly gatherings, and communications. Salary and expenses for the Coordinator will be paid by the Conference through a grant from St. Louis Association and the Conference Growing Ministry.

Congregational Vitality Initiative Task Force Function

The Task Force is accountable to Growing Ministry

Responsibilities include:

- Design the Project
- Work with Growing Ministry to hire the Coordinator
- Support/oversee the Coordinator
- Evaluate the project