

OPTIONAL: Listening to our Property

What might our property tell us if we just listen?

Listening to our Property (25 – 30 minutes)

Review the list of groups and activities that your church building has hosted over the past six months. The leader should be prepared to answer questions about who the groups are, how they use the property and their programs/activities.

Assign each small group to a particular space in the church that has been used by one or more of these groups/programs, to discuss the following (give a time limit to reconvene).

Take time in your assigned space to reflect on the following questions.

- Who uses this space? For what purpose?
- Whom do these groups and programs benefit? Who participates?
- Discuss the impact of these groups and programs. How do they contribute to community vitality?
- What “harvest” does our church building make possible through these programs and activities?
- How might these groups and programs be indicators of our church’s current season of ministry?

Reconvene the groups for a short debrief of what they talked about. Ask participants to stand or sit in a circle and, going around it, ask each participant to give a one-sentence answer for each of the following questions (going once around the circle for each question):

- What did you hear in your conversations that sticks with you?
- What did you hear that might be the Spirit talking?
- What one question are you leaving with?



OPTIONAL: If These Walls Could Talk

What might we hear if our church walls could talk?

If These Walls Could Talk (25 – 30 minutes)

Choose two or three spaces that are central to the congregation's life and heritage. This can be the sanctuary, the fellowship hall, Sunday School rooms, etc. The best spaces are ones that folks often comment on being "empty" as compared to the past.

Assign each small group to a one of these spaces to discuss the following (give a time limit to reconvene):

- When was the last time this space was "bustling?" Who was using it and what was happening?
- What physical items or aspects of this space inspire memories and stories of a different time? Share a few memories and stories.
- Beyond the décor and physical items, what has your congregation inherited in this space? What is this space's legacy?
- What are some new ways the property could be used to continue the legacy your congregation has inherited? What kinds of activities, groups, or programs could keep that inheritance alive?
- What kind of legacy do you hope to leave as a congregation in this place? How do you hope the next generation of stewards will use their inheritance?

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OPTIONAL: More Than Bricks and Mortar

What do you feel in spaces throughout your church?

More Than Bricks and Mortar (25 – 30 minutes)

Send the small groups to different rooms in the building that are underutilized — spaces that are used by fewer than two groups (including the congregation) and for less than three hours a week.

- Each small group can visit one room or multiple rooms in proximity to one another (e.g., the second-floor classrooms).
- Take a good look around the room(s). What do you see? Hear? Taste? Smell? Feel?
- What are the physical aspects of this space? Look for amenities as well as problems.
- How do you feel in this space? What emotions do you notice?
- How do you hope a church visitor will feel inside the building? What do you hope they feel in their hearts?
- How might this space make visitors feel the way you hope they feel? Use your imagination and name as many ideas as you can (even ones that seem wild or outside the box).

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- What did you hear in your conversations that sticks with you?
- What did you hear that might be the Spirit talking?
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