

Mutual Mission Survey Form

I. Introduction

The Mutual Mission Evaluation Survey has been developed for use as the first step that a congregation may take as the beginning of a comprehensive self-evaluation of its specific missions in Christ's Church. The Survey is a short and easily-use technique to elicit the sentiments of a congregation's membership on a variety of basic activities common in Christian communities, and to record those sentiments in numerical form for later analysis.

The Survey Form is an eight-page bulletin-sized pamphlet designed to be used at a meeting of the congregation. It can be used in the pews or sitting in folding chairs without tables. It can be administered in 30 to 45 minutes, but there are several weeks of preparation necessary.

The Survey Form is also designed to be used in a Christian setting. It includes passages from Scripture, and prayerful reflection is a necessary part of using the Form effectively.

II. Deciding to Use the Mutual Mission Evaluation Survey in Your Congregation

All organizations in modern society need to deliberately review their goals and challenges, as well as critically evaluate their activities and accomplishments from time to time. Most businesses, government agencies, schools and universities have made review and evaluation a regular part of their routines and accreditation.

In the case of religious communities, such as your congregation, the goals and accomplishments are spiritual more than material. For example, fiscal responsibility – “the bottom line” – is important for a church and for a business. But, it serves drastically different purposes for a business than for a church. While fiscal responsibility may be the goal of a business, in your congregation, it serves to foster God's purposes– your unique gifts and challenges.

Consequently, self-evaluation for a congregation must involve prayerful reflection, focusing on the spiritual purposes of its existence. For this reason, the Survey Form's questions may seem very general compared to survey instruments used in business and government. In the marvelous diversity of Christ's Church, one form cannot capture it all. Hence, the Survey can only be a starting point for your congregation – hopefully the beginning of conversations, discussions and prayers about the specific missions you are engaged in.

(A) The “Seven Faith Practices”

The Survey Form is designed around the ELCA's Seven Faith Practices – Prayer, Study, Worship, Inviting, Encouraging, Serving and Giving. These are things that we all do as Christians within our own congregations, however unique in detail your own congregation is. These seven faith practices are something we all should do.

(B) What the Survey Measures

The Survey is designed to be an initial self-evaluation of all parts of a congregation – the rostered leadership, the lay leadership, the congregation as a whole, and also the individual member filling out the Form about his/her own practices.

Each page of the Survey Form is focused on one of the seven faith practices. Each member participating is asked to rank on a scale of 5 to 1 (with 5 being the highest) how well he/she feels the practice is being pursued (a) by the pastor(s) of the congregation, and then (b) by the congregation's lay leadership, (c) by the congregation as a whole in its specific activities, its budget and its policies, and finally (d) by the member making the rankings about him/herself.

It is expected that a ranking of “5” would indicate that the member feels fully confident that God's gifts are being used well and effectively by that ‘part’ of the congregation being rated. On the other end of things, a ranking of “1” would likely indicate serious concerns or worries.

Each page includes a question below the rankings and space to write comments and suggestions. These will need to be saved and reviewed at a later time, since they will likely prove quite valuable in your subsequent self-evaluation activities.

Once compiled as a series of averages between 1.00 and 5.00, the Survey reveals a set of patterns reflecting the sentiments of the congregation towards itself and its central elements. Hopefully, the patterns across the seven faith practices – and the written comments – will identify topics for further conversations, reflections and prayer about the specific goals and missions of your congregation.

(C) An Overview of the Survey Form

Each page of the Survey Form focuses attention upon one of the faith practices. (See Figure 1, at end) It begins with a passage from Scripture. For each ranking on the page, there is a sentence or two for members to think about as they ponder their ranking. At the bottom appears a question. Members are invited to write out comments pertaining to the question.

The Survey is designed to be used slowly, perhaps in the manner of a Bible Study. As a result, the survey forms should not be mailed out and back. Nor should the forms be taken home and returned at a later date. Prayer and reflection as a congregation are an important part of your efforts at effective self-evaluation.

III. Organizing to Administer the Mutual Mission Survey Form

Once your Council has decided to use the Mutual Mission Survey Form, there are several important preliminary steps that need to be taken:

- (A) Select a Survey Committee of members to do the actual work of preparation, administration and compiling the results. The larger the number of people likely to take the survey, the larger this committee should be.
- (B) Set a Date for administering the Survey Form. Give yourself anywhere from six to ten weeks (more if needed) to prepare, depending on the time the Survey Committee has to devote to this task, as well as other resources available.
- (C) Determine the Setting which needs to be communal. The Form is designed to be used in a group. Immediately following Sunday Services might work best.
- (D) Set a Schedule of Tasks in preparation:
 - a. Announce and explain the Survey to the Congregation's members (see below).
 - b. Download the Survey Form and review it. The first page of the Form should be edited to make reference to your congregation, and it should be signed by the council president and the (senior) pastor before copying. It is also possible to insert a digital congregational logo onto page one of the Form.
 - c. Reproduce enough copies of the Survey Form for all members likely to be in attendance, with a few extra.
 - d. Design an efficient way to distribute and collect the forms. Experienced ushers might assist with this.
 - e. Assemble enough pens and/or pencils for members to make their ranking and write their comments.

- f. Determine a time and place for compiling the survey results. This will be a tedious task, if done by hand. Compiling the results will take time and space. Large tables around which people can sit works best. If the rankings can be computerized, things will go more quickly. In either event, give yourself lots of time. (See more below)

(E) Notify the Membership of the Up-Coming Survey. If your congregation has never done a self-evaluation before, the members may need to be educated about the Survey and your hopes for its usefulness. It is suggested that all of the ways the leadership currently communicates with the membership be used: newsletters, service bulletins, e-mailings, etc. The more familiar people are with the Survey, the more effective it will be. Other things you might consider:

- a. One or more Temple Talks by a member of the Survey Committee announcing the Survey, explaining its purpose, and describing how it will be administered.
- b. Make “Sample Forms” available before and after Services for members to review, with members of the Survey Committee nearby to answer questions.
- c. Weekly reminders just before the day of the Survey.

IV. Administering the Mutual Mission Survey Form¹

¹ These are suggested procedures. Your Survey Committee is free to augment or amend them as best works in your congregation.

(A) Before the Meeting. Assemble all the people who will be involved and review each person's role. Assemble the forms in a way that will make it easier to distribute at the beginning of the meeting. If the meeting is taking place after Services, the forms should be distributed after the conclusion of Services.

It is recommended that visitors not complete the form. They are not likely to have the depth of experience within the life of the congregation to give informed responses.

(B) Starting the Meeting

- (1) Distribute the forms and pens/pencils to the members present.
- (2) A member of the Survey Committee, chairing the meeting, introduces the Survey, explaining (one last time) its purpose. He/She should review the Form briefly, pointing out (again, one last time)
 - a. the Scripture passages,
 - b. the "things to think about",
 - c. where the rankings are recorded, and
 - d. the questions and space at the bottom of each page to write questions.
- (3) Explain that members need not make a ranking if they do not feel comfortable doing so. Let them leave that rank blank. You will be counting the blanks when the Survey results are compiled.
- (4) Ask if there are any questions, and address them.
- (5) Call for silence.

(C) Completing the Survey Form – Order and Timing

- (1) Offer a prayer to God for the Spirit's Guidance in the decisions that about to be made.

- (2) Read the Verse for Faith Practice #1, on page two of the Form. Pause. Then, read the question lower on the page. Pause.
- (3) After a moment of silent reflection, members read the page, mark their rankings, and record their comments. Estimate time at three to five minutes.
- (4) After three minutes, or so, ask: “Are we ready to move on?” But, do not push anyone! Let everyone have the time they need, especially to write comments.
- (5) When everyone is ready, to go Faith Practice #2 and repeat the steps above.
- (6) Repeat for each of the other faith practices.

(D) Upon Completing All of the Forms

- (1) Gather all of the Forms.
- (2) Offer a prayer of thanks.
- (3) Give the Thanks of the Council and Survey Committee to the members.

V. Compiling the Mutual Mission Survey Form Responses

The two most important things about compiling the results are (1) accuracy and (2) not double-counting any of the forms. As long as those two principles are maintained, any method of compiling the results will work. Outlined below is one such method. The Survey Committee should review this recommended method, and adapt it as necessary to best work in your situation.

(A) On Computerizing the Compilation:

If there is a member of the congregation with the appropriate computer skills, it might be a good idea to recruit him/her to be involved in the compilation. There are a number of computerized statistical applications available commercially, but that can be expensive.

There is a ‘quick-and-dirty’ way to compile the results on any PC with Notepad and Excel:

- (1) Open a new Text file in Notepad and name it for one of the faith practices.
- (2) Input the numerical responses on each form for that faith practice into the file as lines of numbers, one line of four numbers for each form. Input ‘blanks’ as zero. Round off any responses that are not whole numbers – as in, when two numbers have been circled.
- (3) At the end of the forms for the first faith practice, save and close your Text file.
- (4) Repeat the process for each of the other faith practices.
- (5) When all responses from all of the forms have been input, open a new Excel file.
- (6) Open the first Text file in Excel. There will be a series of formatting windows: make sure that each column in the Text file becomes one column in the Excel file.
- (7) Save the file as an Excel file.
- (8) You can now compute the averages for each column, producing the average rankings for that faith practice – making sure that the zeros are not included in the calculated average.
- (9) Repeat this process for each of the Text files, creating seven Excel files and seven sets of four rank averages each.

(B) Compiling the Results By Hand

This will be a slow and repetitive task. It involves recording ‘ticks’ on tally sheets. (See example at end, for copying as needed) There will be at least one tally sheet for each faith practice. Reviewing the Tally Sheet beforehand, when the Survey Committee finalizes its compilation plan, should make the following instructions clear.

- (1) Organizing the Counters – At least seven counters are best for this task. Each counter focuses on one of the faith practices, minimizing the chance of double-counting. If enough people can be recruited, seven teams of two will make things move faster. In a team, one person speaks the ranking numbers and the other makes the ticks on their tally sheet.
- (2) Organizing the Forms – Control of the forms is essential if double-counting is to be avoided.
 - a. Count the Total Number of Forms – Record this number on the Final Calculations Sheet (see at end). This number will be useful at the end of the counting process.
 - b. Bundle the Forms – It is suggested that the forms be separated and that each physical sheet be grouped together. One sheet will have Faith Practices #1, #6 and #7. The other sheet will have Faith Practices #2-5. Put the sheets into bundles of 25, or so, or whatever number the Survey Committee thinks will work best. Remember that each bundle will be handled several times. Keeping the bundles together with clips (or such) helps keep them together as they are passed from counter/team to counter/team.
 - c. Label or Number the Bundles – Label or number the form on top of each bundle – such as “TOP A,B,C...” or “START 1,2,3...”, etc. As each counter/team completes tallying a bundle, they will put their initials on the labeled top page. This helps prevent double-counting.
- (3) Doing the Count
 - a. Each counter/team fills out the information at the top of their Tally Sheet.

- b. Each counter/team, then:
 - i. Takes a bundle and notes its label/number on a separate piece of paper.
 - ii. Taking one form at a time in order, the counter/team records the ranking from each form onto the Tally Sheet, by drawing 'ticks'. Each ranking has its own column, and each part of the congregation has its own row. Blanks are to be recorded in the column at the far right.
- c. When a bundle is completed, the counter/team writes their initials on the labeled top sheet, and hands the bundle to the next counter/team.
- d. The counter/team then begins on its faith practice responses from another bundle. With all counter/teams working at the same time on different bundles, the task should proceed as efficiently as can be.

(4) When All Responses Have Been Counted


- a. Each counter/team completes their Tally Sheet by counting the number of 'ticks' for each row, and recording the numbers in the far left column.
- b. All of the Tally Sheets are then gathered together. The totals from each Tally Sheet are recorded onto the Final Calculations Sheet (see example at end).

(5) Conducting the Mathematical Calculations

- a. Calculate the total value of the 'ticks' by multiplying as indicated on the Final Calculations Sheet – for example, the number of tick of '5' for the pastor(s) multiplied by five, the number of tick of '4' for the pastor(s) multiplied by four, and so on,

- b. Add the numbers of ‘ticks’ for – in this example – the pastor(s) and record it as ‘PN’ at the far right. Do not be concerned with PN does not equal TN (the total number of forms), since blanks are not included in the math.
- c. Add the total rankings and record it as “PTSum” at the far right.
- d. Divide PTSum by PN. This number is the Average Ranking of the pastor(s) on one of the faith practices.
- e. Repeat this for each part of the congregation – lay leaders, the congregation, and “me”. You now have four Average Rankings for your entire congregation on one of the faith practices. Record these Average Rankings on the Summary of Rankings Sheet (see at end).
- f. Repeat this for each of the seven faith practices. The resulting chart constitutes the Results of the Mutual Mission Survey for your congregation.

Figure One: Sample Page

To Pray!		Faith Practice #1				
		Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you! -- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18				
<u>Things to think about as you determine a rating:</u>		Your Rating High -- Low (circle one below)				
A. Pastors	The pastor prays regularly in public, speaks of his/her private prayer life, and encourages us to daily prayer.	5	4	3	2	1
B. Lay Leaders	Our lay leaders pray in public and encourage us to daily prayer.	5	4	3	2	1
C. The Congregation	Other than in worship services, our meetings, study groups, meals (etc.) regularly include prayer. We regularly pray for the needs of the world, the injured and ill, church leaders, national leaders, the poor, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
D. Me	Other than in worship services, my prayer life enriches me daily, wit things like private and public prayer, devotional booklet, etc.	5	4	3	2	1

What do we need in order to pray more faithfully?