

Measuring Effectiveness

As you work with your adult council, you will develop a shared understanding of what it means for adults to mature in faith and live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Each opportunity for ministry should support this vision of Christian maturity. Remembering the varying religious experiences of adults, you will offer settings that cover “the basics,” while other settings are designed for those who desire to deepen their relationship with God and who are looking for ways to live out their faith in their daily lives.

The Core Process of offering H.O.P.E. with adults, identified in the Guideline, involves information, formation, and transformation. To think about how effectively your current adult formation settings demonstrate this movement, note your responses to the following questions:

1. What information do adults need to grow in faith and discipleship?

2. What skills (formation) do adults need to grow in faith and live as disciples?

3. What experiences (formation) help adults grow in discipleship and faith?

4. How have participating adults changed (transformation) as a result of their experiences, and how can you tell?

Using your list of settings for adult faith formation in your congregation, make notes about how these settings develop knowledge and skills, as well as provide meaningful experiences for adults. It could be helpful to identify which aspect (knowledge, skills, or experiences) is primary for each setting. You can then identify gaps that should be addressed.

One of the easiest ways to obtain this information is to survey participants in adult faith-formation settings. At the end of a short-term study or experience or at least once a year for ongoing settings, distribute questionnaires that ask participants to reflect on their experience. (You can also e-mail these questionnaires or offer a way for adults to respond via your congregation's website.) The questionnaires do not need to be long or highly detailed. Here are sample questions to ask.

1. What was the most helpful part of this class/group/experience?
2. Would you recommend this class/group/experience to another person? Why or why not?
3. What revisions could improve this class/group/experience?
4. What other classes/groups/experiences would be most helpful for you as you continue to grow in faith and live as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
5. What spiritual gifts have been evoked or nurtured?
6. In what ways are your Christian life and faith different because of your experience with and participation in your class/group/experience?

You can also ask adults to rate settings according to a scale (1= high dissatisfaction and 4= high satisfaction). You can ask about content, leadership, facilities, and schedule, as well as spiritual growth.

Measuring Appropriateness

You will also want to evaluate whether the settings that are currently offered are what is actually needed for the adults in your context to grow in faith and discipleship. It has been said that the seven "last words" of the church are "We have always done it that way." That may be true, but it's not particularly helpful. A part of your ministry is asking not only "How well are we doing what we're doing?" but also "Should we be doing this in the first place?"

The standards you have identified related to faith maturity serve as the benchmarks for responding to that question. Additionally, you will take into consideration resources and leadership needed for continuing or beginning settings for ministry to be feasible. With your adult council, discuss whether the opportunities you offer are clearly designed to help adults grow in faith. If some are not, then ask whether or not you need to continue investing time and energy into those settings.