

68 Ways to Increase Worship Attendance (Without A Change of Pastors)

by Bob Crossman

If you are frustrated that your church is either slowly dwindling in size, or you cannot seem to break through to a higher level of attendance - then this is paper is for you. We will discuss a variety of ways to:

1. improve the attendance of your member households;
2. respond to absentees before they 'drop out' of active attendance;
3. invite guests to begin the journey toward faithful discipleship; and
4. welcome worship guests in appropriate & winsome ways.

INTRODUCTION: Why is this our topic?

- In the central part of the United States, if the 20 houses on your street are typical: 5 of your neighbors will attend worship this Sunday; 10 will attend worship before the month is over; 15 will attend before the year is over; and 5 will NOT attend any worship service this year. Agree with me today that God is not happy with those numbers, and that God desires for EVERYONE to become a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Agree with me today that God desires to work through EACH OF US to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- **In the United States, on a typical Sunday, 250 million people (82.5% of the population) stay home. Source: American Church Research Project**
- **Could it be that many of these 250 million are today's "lost sheep" and "prodigal" sons & daughters that Luke 15 invites us to reach?**
- Do not let the size of your congregation keep you from inviting others to join you. Whether your church has 12 on Sunday or 1,200 on Sunday, you have a wonderful gift to offer your friends, relatives, associates and neighbors who do not yet attend worship faithfully - it is a gift from Jesus Christ: forgiveness for their sins (Romans 3); a life filled with the increasing fruits of: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control." (Galatians 5:22 NRSV); and the promise of eternity in heaven (John 14: 1-3).
- Adam Hamilton, pastor of Kansas Cities UM Church of the Resurrection, (chapter 2, Leading Beyond the Walls) suggests that the leadership of your congregation needs to be clear about answers to three questions: 1) Why do people need Jesus Christ? 2) Why do people need the church? 3) Why do people need your particular church? He suggest that these might be the topic of a sermon series and an intensive study by the leadership of your congregation.
- If you keep doing what you've been doing, you are probably going to keep getting the results you been getting. *If you are currently getting great results, keep doing what your doing... if not, you might consider a few changes.*
- If the 25 year trends in your worship & membership are both declining - the reversal of those trends will require large-scale change and transformation of your church. Churches that have successfully "transformed," and sustained that transformation, report that: it took at least an 18 to 24 month process; it involved their pastor; it involved 6 to 10 of the church's key lay leaders; and involved an outside consultant to coach the leadership through the transformation process.
 - Here is an idea that involves all 4 of these key elements: Have your Local Church Council and pastor go through a study and process to clarify the Vision & Mission of your local church. Then lead your church to have behaviors that match your vision. Pick two or three of the following books
 - Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations,*
 - The Church Growth Handbook,*
 - 44 Questions for Congregational Self-Appraisal*
 - 44 Ways to Increase Attendance*
 - If it Could Happen Here*
 - Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*
 - Turn Around Strategies of the Small Church*
 - Deepening Your Effectiveness,*
 - Turnaround and Beyond: A Hopeful Future for Small Membership Churches*
 - Checking Vital Signs - Assessing Your Local Church Potential*
 - Can These Bones Live,*
 - The Race to Reach Out,*
 - Leading Beyond the Walls*
- **Why work to increase worship attendance?**
 - **If your motivation is to save the lost, to welcome the prodigal back home, to increase the population of heaven – God will honor and bless your efforts.**
 - **If your motivation is to get a few extra folks to help with the Sunday offering – that motivation is self-serving, empty and hollow, and does not honor the Lord.**

- There are only two ways to increase worship attendance: 1) to have your current members attend more often; or 2) to invite new people to start attending worship.
- Some of the following ideas will work in your particular church. You are invited to review the list below, and to discern the one or two ideas that fit your unique setting, the nature of your local church, and your own unique personality.

IMPROVE THE ATTENDANCE OF YOUR MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

1. **Laity:** Want to increase worship attendance? Start with yourself. Do you attend worship at your church fifty-two weeks a year? Do you worship when you have company for the weekend? Do you miss when the weather is bad? Do you leave town on Friday afternoon, when you could have waited until Sunday afternoon for the trip? Decide right now that you will not miss worship this year.
2. At least once each year, perhaps in the New Year's resolution season, have a Sunday or two where faithful attendance at worship is preached and taught – and the congregation is invited to make a written commitment to grow one step toward faithful attendance – sign it, and place it on the altar. (Lyle Schaller reports that this alone will increase your worship attendance by 3%.) This strategy will be most effective among adults over 65.
3. Invite this commitment to faithful worship attendance within the context of a wholistic annual stewardship commitment. Invite commitments to: pray every day; be present in worship every Sunday; make financial gifts growing to the biblical standard of the tithe; hands on service in Jesus' name; and witness. Invite them to "pick all five" instead of "picking just one."
4. In Sunday School (and from the pulpit) teach the Ten Commandments. Remember that #1, #2 and #4 might have a word to say about worship & honoring God.
5. Keep "Ten Commandment" bookmarks in your hymnals, and have them available for people to put in their own Bibles.

RESPONDING TO ABSENTEES

6. Respond to absentees before they "drop out" of active attendance. If a regular attender misses six consecutive weeks of worship, it is very hard to get them to return to every Sunday worship again. Respond before they have missed six weeks.
7. **Keep Attendance.** Have your adult and youth small groups (Adult Sunday School classes, choir, UMMen, UMWomen, Disciple, etc.) keep track of attendance.
 - The first time a regular misses – send a "we missed" your postcard signed by everyone in the class.
 - The second time a regular misses – send a second postcard signed by everyone in the class. "Dear Fred, We know you were in Tulsa visiting your brother this weekend. We missed you. We are looking forward to seeing you next Sunday in class." (*signed by everyone in the class*)
8. Form a worship membership care team, that reviews the attendance pads/slips every Sunday afternoon or Monday morning. If someone misses three Sundays of worship in a row, send them a handwritten note from the church. "Looking through the attendance slips, we've missed your name! Hope to see you next Sunday." (Signed by everyone on the membership care team or prayer team, not by the pastor.) In a smaller attendance church, you can have a greater certainty of exactly who was present, and the wording can be more personal.
9. If someone misses four Sundays in a row, the membership care team asks a personal friend to telephone the absentee. Ask a choir mate, Sunday School classmate, or someone who normally sits on the same pew to telephone. "Hi John. We've noticed that Fred has missed about four Sundays. Do you feel comfortable calling Fred this evening and saying something like: 'Fred. Our pew has been kind of empty. I need your help. I've been missing you.' Can you make that telephone call this evening for us?"
10. If someone misses five Sundays in a row – maintain a loving relationship, invitational, not accusatory or judgemental. What about folks who miss five weeks, or five months, or five years? See the next idea.

11. Four times a year, telephone EVERY household in the church including the pastor (and every household who has ever visited your church), and invite them to some special event... *"Hi, this is Bob Crossman from the church. We are calling every household related to Wesley UMC this week, reminding everyone that this Sunday is Palm Sunday (OR, this Sunday is Decoration Day; the pastor is beginning a new sermon series this Sunday; the choir is singing the Messiah; this is Homecoming Sunday, Revival, Guest Preacher, Quarterly Pot Luck, etc.), and we want EVERY household to be present. I hope you will be there."* After the call, if they happened to tell you of any illness or concerns the pastor should know - call the church immediately.
12. Expand your grief response beyond the ten days after a death. Often, it is very difficult to return to worship after the death of a loved one, and it is not unusual for families to change their worship pattern after a death. If a death is significant enough to end up in the church bulletin/newsletter, form a Grief Support Team that will send a handwritten note every month for a year, signed by everyone on the team. (Or, send the notes until they have returned to regular every Sunday attendance) *"Dear Jan, We know it's been about seven months since your uncle died. We remembered you this morning at our Grief Support meeting. This verse might be helpful today: "_____ " Psalm __:__ (Be sure it was her Uncle who died, and not her Aunt. My wife received the wrong card for 12 months! The card was counter-productive.)* This team could also sponsor occasional classes on grief, and coordinate activities on All Saints Sunday.

INVITING NEW PEOPLE TO BEGIN ATTENDING WORSHIP

13. Live out these two scriptures: Romans 15:7 *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in wonder to bring praise to God."* Hebrews 13: 1-2 *"Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels without knowing it."*
14. PRAY: Pray until your heart aches and the tears flow. Pray for every child in your community being raised up outside the church. Pray for every marriage in town that doesn't have Christ at the center of that relationship. Pray for every church in town until every pew in town is full every Sunday! Pray until every soul is saved. Pray until every lost sheep is found. Pray until every prodigal son or daughter has come to their senses, turned their hearts toward home, and have been welcomed back to church. Pray until every member of YOUR extended family is an active disciple of Jesus Christ.
15. PRAY – not in general but specifically for 5 households. On a 3x5 inch card, write down the names of 5 households who do not attend worship. Think of friends, relatives, business associates, recreational associates, or neighbors. In weeks one and two, pray for them by name every day. In weeks three and four, search for opportunities to interact with each of these 5 households. In weeks five and six, invite them to sit with you in worship and come over for lunch afterwards. If they decline your invitation, repeat in two months.
16. Have a web site. In an increasing number of communities, if you do not have a web site, you are invisible. Increasingly, people use the internet and Google the same way our grandparents used the Yellow Pages. The web presence can be very simple-- a single page with a map, worship times, simple welcoming invitation, and contact information.
17. Take advantage of Facebook and other social network internet sites. These social network sites are increasingly the way people connect with one another and discover the church.
18. Gather email and other electronic contact information from your contacts at every opportunity - through your web site, doorprize registration at community events, and registration process at worship.
19. Use email, Twitter, text messaging, and Facebook each midweek to invite everyone in your network to worship, to share a summary of the upcoming worship's theme, and start conversations that build relationships.
20. Are there lots of children in town, but not in your church? *(They need Jesus too)* Are there single moms in town, but not in your church? *(They need Jesus too)* Is anyone in town on food stamps or public assistance? *(they need Jesus too)* Are the new 'yankees' building \$500,000 homes? *(They need Jesus too)* Are many of the new residents Hispanic or Latino? *(They need Jesus too)* Are your neighbors from a different ethnic group? *(They need Jesus too)*
Decide today, to open your minds, hearts & doors to reach these new faces. It will NOT be easy. You may have to change your music, sermon content, Sunday School and personally (and this is the hardest part) - decide to enlarge your circle of Christian Friends. *The Lord will honor and bless you!*
20. Enlarge your circle of Christian friends. Right now you probably have three or four close, personal, Christian friends. The truth is, you don't need any more friends. However, if your church is going to be successful in inviting (and retaining) new

people to join this church “family,” about ten to twenty of the leaders of your church must do something very difficult – enlarge their circle of Christian friends. Inviting four or five additional people into your inner circle will not be easy, but the Lord will honor and bless your efforts.

21. According to Doug Anderson’s research, the average United Methodist only invites someone to worship once every thirty-eight years. Decide today not to be an average United Methodist.
22. What is the most effective method of increasing worship attendance? Personal invitations. Invest sixty seconds, once a week, to invite someone to attend worship with you. (*a friend, relatives, neighbor, co-worker, supermarket clerk, postman, friend at the playground, teammate on Little League or bowling*) I am not suggesting a heavy duty, door to door witnessing campaign, or a Bible thumping and of time street evangelism. Rather, just a natural invitation. Tell them briefly about one good thing that is happening at your church (*such as: the choir, your Sunday School class, the bell choir, summer camp, youth retreat, remodeling of the building, or the pastor’s new sermon series*). Just share that one good thing in three or four sentences, and invite that person to join you the following week. No tricks, no prizes, no gimmicks.
23. My mother used to work at a Poultry Supply Company in the front office. Every day, two dozen different Poultry farmers would come to her desk. On Mondays she would ask, “How was church yesterday?” If they said, “The choir was wonderful. We go to Saint Mark’s,” she would respond, “Oh that is wonderful. It is so important to have a church home.” If instead they mumbled, or said they didn’t go to church. She would hand them a left over worship bulletin, and say, “Next time you want to attend a church, why don’t you try First Methodist? Our worship services are so meaningful to me.”
24. Kwasi Kena, our General Board Director of Evangelism, suggest a model. It’s a three piece model. One or two sentences each - a total of 3 to 6 sentences. If you grew up in a Christian Home the three parts are: 1) My life in a Christian Home (was it good?); 2) When I claimed it for myself; and 3) My life with Jesus Christ now. If you did not grow up as a Christian the three parts are: 1) My life before Christ; 2) When I claimed it for myself; and 3) My life with Jesus Christ now.
25. If you want to leave something in print after you witness, there are UMC Discipleship Resources Pamphlets such as: Begin With Jesus; Learning New Habits; Gifted in Christ; and Understanding my Faith Journal with Christ . There are small booklets from the same source: 10 FAQ’s of New Christians; A Brief History UMC; Our Membership Vows; and The Meaning of Holy Communion. Each are available in English or Spanish
26. Invite, invite, and invite again. Why invite the same person every two months? Because there are seasons of life when each individual is more receptive to start attending worship. Those seasons occur when some event shakes their life, and causes them to rethink life, how they spend their time, and their relationship with God. (*events such as: just married, just divorced, lost job, got promoted, new baby, miscarriage, child enters kindergarten, mother has cancer, car accident, former college roommate drops dead of a heart attack, recently retired, etc.*) If we invite just once, we are not likely to overlap one of these seasons. If we invite every two months or so, we are more likely to receive a positive response.
27. Increase the number of people on the fringes. Some churches almost run people off if they are not deeply devoted disciples, almost saying, “*If you’re not ready to tithe – go away. If your not ready to attend worship every Sunday, go away. If your not ready to join Sunday School, go away. You can’t bring your kids to Vacation Bible School until you are a regular.*” That is a bad idea. Instead, celebrate that you have people on the fringes. These people are not deadbeat, cheap grace, free loading tagalongs. Instead, these people are your future, your prospect list, and your next potential generation of deeply devoted disciples. Discover new ways to increase the number of people on the fringes.
28. A healthy church has many levels: (*from the outside in*) 1) hundreds of people who have never been inside your building, but they have a positive impression of your particular church; 2) hundreds of people who have been inside your building for a wedding, funeral, to vote, boy scouts, girl scouts, Weight Watchers, or AA but they have never been to worship - but they have a positive impression of your particular church; 3) hundreds of people who have only been to worship a couple of times perhaps on Easter, Christmas Eve, or Mother’s Day – , but they have a positive impression of your particular church; 4) another group of people who do actually attend worship ten or fifteen times a year; 5) another group of people who are in worship three or four times a month; and also 6) the saints, who never

miss worship. Do not drop these first few levels from your newsletter list or membership list. Levels one, two and three above are your prospects - your future - the source of the next wave of deeply devoted disciples. Do not fuss at, or threaten levels one, two or three. Instead, find winsome ways to continually invite them to deeper levels of attendance and discipleship. Also, find new and creative ways to continually invite new people to enter level one or two.

29. **Recycle your worship bulletins.** *"As you leave worship this morning, please take your worship bulletin with you. Keep it on your front seat or on your desk at work until you have given it to someone along with your personal invitation for them to join you in worship here next Sunday."*
30. Distribute a simple 3x3 card each Christmas & Easter Season. The card has a simple map and list the address, phone, and worship times. At the top of the card, it reads, *"If you are not active in a local church, worship with us this Christmas Season."* On Sunday morning, invite your members to take one, saying, *"To help you invite your friends and family to worship this Christmas Season, pick up a handful of invitation cards at the door this morning. These are also great to give to your haircutter, grocery checker, the person standing 5 feet away at the gas pump, or on the door of every house on your street."*
31. Distribute door flyers in target neighborhoods near your church. Don't knock on the door, just put the flyer on the handle. Repeat on the same doors 6 to 8 times a year. It is more effective to do 500 doors six times, than 3,000 doors one time.
32. Send mass mailers to targeted postal carrier routes near your church. These, like door flyers, are most effective if they are repeated 6 to 8 times a year. What times of year? You could mail three in the back-to-school season, two in the pre-Christmas season, and one in the pre-Easter season. Like door flyers, it is more effective to mail to the same 3,000 households six times a year, than to mail to 18,000 households once.
33. Purchase temporary roadside "real estate" signs to put out for a few days and then remove them for a few days. You could also put them out on Sunday morning, and pick them up at noon after worship. You need a permanent sign in front of your building, however those signs tend to become invisible. These temporary signs catch the eye, and only cost \$20 or \$30 each. They should be very simple with little wording, such as: "Worship 10 am Sunday. You are Invited." "Easter Sunday 11 am Your Invited" "Everyone is Welcome," or a simple arrow and the word "Welcome!"
34. Purchase permanent roadside directional signs to point the way to your building. Official United Methodist signs are available from Cokesbury Bookstores.
35. If your building is not on the main highway, install a large lighted sign on the highway, to direct people to your building.
36. Install a community welcome sign. In smaller communities, an attractive 4 x 8 sign on the main highway into town that reads in large print, "Welcome to Vilonia" and then in much smaller print in the corner, "The United Methodist Church, 123 4th Street."
37. For a short season, a billboard may catch the eye. "Worship with First UMC this Christmas Season. 123 4th Street"
38. Have a "Bring a Friend Day" or "Fill-a-Pew Day" or "F.R.A.N." Day. A church-wide effort for each household to bring a Friend, Relative, Associate or Neighbor. Select a Sunday, 8 weeks in the future, when something special is going to be happening - (homecoming, Easter, Thanksgiving, Vacation Bible School starting, Christmas Eve, etc.) Six weeks ahead, announce the FRAN day. Four weeks ahead, ask for written names of who each will be inviting - list is for church prayer team. On FRAN day itself, hospitality should be wonderful, church should be clean and neat, Sunday School classes / music / sermon all at their best. Company is coming! Be prepared!
39. At least once per year, *perhaps in the Pre-Christmas Season*, have a Sunday or two where 'becoming an inviting people' is preached & taught - the congregation is invited to make a written commitment to grow one step toward faithful inviting / witnessing. - sign it, and place on the altar!
40. How many new people should your church add each year. Keep adding until every soul in town is saved! You might think of adding **at least** 10% new faces each year. In the typical congregation, you need to add about 10% annually to replace those who die, experience poor health, move out of town, transfer, or become disillusioned with the church. If you do not add about 10% new faces each year, within 10 years you will lose vitality and the critical mass of people needed to continue the broad range of ministries you now offer.

WARMLY WELCOMING WORSHIP GUESTS:

41. **The circle of ten.** Invite the Church Council, as leaders of the church, to personally greet everyone (member or guest) who may sit within ten feet of them on Sunday. What to say? *"Hi John. Great to see you this morning." "Hi, My name is Betty. I don't believe I've seen you sitting on this side of the room before." "Good morning. My name is Nancy. I don't believe we've had the privilege of meeting before."*
42. **The rule of three.** Invite the Church Council, as leaders of the church to follow the rule of three: at the end of worship, following the benediction, for three minutes to only speak to people they don't know. Most of us typically spend that time speaking to family and friends, and we ignore the worship guests. Have your leaders first look around to be sure the guests are not being ignored. Guests typically quickly gather their children and leave the building within three minutes. The rule of three helps to insure that they receive a warm greeting before they leave for home.
43. A permanent street sign pointing the way is also a part of hospitality, helping guest find your building without having to wander about looking.
44. When a guest arrives at your building, is the building and landscaping well cared for? Or, is the paint peeling, eaves rotting, and the weeds are out of control? This is one of the ways you let guests know that you were expecting company.
45. When a guest arrives at your building, is the parking lot paved and are there empty spaces? This is one of the ways you let guests know that you were expecting company.
46. When a guest arrives at your building, are the best parking spaces reserved for guests? Just because you arrive first doesn't give you permission to take the best spaces. The pastor, staff, and church officers should park on the edge of the parking lot, leaving the best spaces for others.
47. Is the parking lot in front of your building? Don't hide your cars. Cars in the parking lot are one of the ways we witness to the community that something important is happening here.
48. Is there one main obvious entry into your building that worship guest will naturally walk toward? An entrance sign can help direct guests to the right door so they don't wander aimlessly through your building.
49. When a guest arrives at your church, are they greeted in the parking lot? Give a couple of men orange vest and have them wave and smile as cars pull in. On rainy days, they can escort guests and members to the door under a church umbrella. If your parking lot is large, let them drive golf carts to carry folks to the door.
50. When a guest arrives at the door, are they greeted by a smiling face? (Women are best at this. Men at the door tend to look like guards or bouncers to pre-Christian guests.) Just smile, open the door and say, *"Good to see you. Glad you are here."* No 'third degree.' Do not ask for their names, W-2 form, or social security number! Many guest are very cautious and prefer to be a bit anonymous. The larger the church - the more this is true.
51. As guests leave after worship, have greeters at all the exits, smiling, shaking hands, and simply saying to members and guests, *"Glad you were here. I hope to see you next Sunday."*
52. When a guest gets past your front door greeter, does the hospitality continue? Are there smiling faces, ready to answer questions or to escort guests to the nursery? Are coffee, sweet rolls, and juice available? In large buildings with complicated layout, have greeters wear matching vests standing at the interior intersecting hallways.
53. When a guest enters your door, do interior signs clearly mark the rest rooms, nursery, and worship rooms?
54. **First Friends.** If your church is attempting to reach a new age group, economic, racial or cultural group - the First Friends ministry is an important addition. Train a pool of people, from a variety of ages and stages of life, to watch for first time guests who seem to be alone. The first friends makes first contact, sit by them, treat them to lunch, and telephone them on Saturday inviting them to come tomorrow. Basic idea: no guest should enter the building alone; no guest should sit alone, and no guests should eat lunch alone.
55. Do you want to attract and keep families with young children? Is the nursery the nicest room in the building? No clutter, no broken toys, new cribs without teeth marks, close to the worship room (not hidden down a maze of hallways), staffed with adults, and no diaper smell. As you church gets larger, you will need to have pagers, security check in and check out, and nursery staff wearing uniforms with a photo ID.

56. Are the children's Sunday School rooms clean, neat, lessons well prepared, and the room well staffed?
57. Is the worship bulletin, or screen, visitor friendly? Are the actual words or at least the page numbers printed for any 'secret' songs or prayers?
58. For the benefit of first time guests, are the sermons "visitor friendly" every Sunday? Are they well prepared, on a topic relevant to daily living, and invitational? First-time guests are usually not interested in Greek, Hebrew, Tillich or Kierkegaard. Instead, they show up for worship looking for Jesus, for hope, for help with their marriage, forgiveness for the past, healing for their brokenness, or strength to make it through the week ahead. Doug Anderson reports that 90% of first time guests are attending because they have experienced some difficult event in the past thirty days.
59. In worship, are the musicians prepared and the music well preformed? Is the music a style that your worship guests prefer? *I wonder what style of music your guests were listening to in their cars as they drove to your church?*
60. Move to a higher level of 'good enough' in every area of ministry: prayer ministry, landscape and building ministry, children/youth/young adult ministry, education ministry, membership care ministry, missions ministry, welcoming ministry, worship ministry, music ministry, and pulpit ministry. As your church grows, guests will expect a higher and higher level of excellence. Are you going on to perfection?
61. In worship, have you found a way to acknowledge and welcome guests, but not to single them out or embarrass them? In many communities, guests prefer to be anonymous, and asking them to stand and introduce themselves is counter-productive. Also, asking them to sit while members stand and glare down at them is also counter-productive. You might consider saying from the pulpit, *"We are honored to have guests today in worship. It is our hope and prayer that you will experience the presence of Jesus Christ in worship this morning, and that you will want to return every Sunday and make this church your home."*
62. In worship, have you found a way to collect names and contact information of your worship guests? Some guests will prefer to be anonymous, but those who wish to give you contact information should find that process easy and readily available.
63. After worship, how is your follow up?
 - Doorstep visit attempted before 3 pm that Sunday?
 - Letter or telephone call from the pastor within 2 days?
 - Are they added immediately to newsletter/email list?

AFTER 2nd VISIT

 - Telephone call from church with 36 hours? (Youth Minister, or Sunday School Teacher, or Choir Director - whoever matches with this particular household)
 - Letter from Lay Leader or Sunday School Sup within 2 days?

AFTER 3rd VISIT:

 - Telephone call from Lay Leader?
 - Adam Hamilton suggests it's now time for a home visit by the pastor (see chapter 6, Leading Beyond the Walls)
64. After their first visit, are short-term small groups starting that newcomers might be interested in? The leap to Sunday School can be large for a newcomer (i.e. attending every Sunday for the rest of your life). Newcomers might be more likely to attend a 4 to 8 week study several times, before they are open to making the Sunday School commitment. Cokesbury has several resources including: Beginnings, Get Acquainted with Jesus, Get Acquainted with the Bible, Get Acquainted with the Christian Faith, United Methodist Questions and Answers, or Alpha's Questions of Life.
65. The group of newcomers who have visited in the past year, might be interested in an informal coffee with the pastor or a cookout at the pastor's home. Some of your worship guests, after 4 or 5 Sundays would like an opportunity: to get to know your pastor, hear your pastor's personal testimony, discover the future hopes and dreams of your church, meet a couple of the church lay leaders, learn what it means to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ, learn what your church expects of its members, and to ask any questions they might have.
66. You might consider adding an additional worship service to reach new people who would prefer a different time; or to reach new people who would prefer a different style of worship & music. "How To Start A New Service" is an excellent resource with reasons not to add a service, and hundreds of positive suggestions. (available from Cokesbury)

67. Perhaps the fastest way to increase United Methodist worship attendance - start a new church, or a second site - across town or nine miles down the highway. Sending ten missionaries to start a new church down the road may be the fastest way to double United Methodist worship in the county. If there is a town nearby with 500 people, and no UMC - how about starting a two or three point circuit? In that town of 500, there is a good chance you could help to give birth to a new congregation with attendance of 50 to 75 on Sunday.
68. Don't forget that you have a Conference Ministry Staff. Their services are available to you at no cost. Your apportionment dollars already pay for their time and travel. Many conferences have specialists on staff to help your church strengthen children's ministry, youth ministry, missions ministry, and with strategic planning.

WHEN?

- If you believe one or two of these ideas might be helpful, when should you start to implement them? This week!



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