

MISSION ASSESSMENT TOOL

This tool is designed to help you and your congregation evaluate an ongoing mission project or initiative and may be particularly helpful as you review a year in mission or consider your next steps. It will encourage you to think critically about the mission work you are currently doing and measure its impact on both your own church and the community with whom you are engaged.

HOW TO USE THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

This assessment tool is organized around different “Mission Values and Priorities” that each highlight an aspect of mission critical to its overall success. As you move through the tool and read each Mission Value and Priority, consider how your current mission work does or does not align with the goals and aspirations of your church. Each of the Mission Values and Priorities listed below can be ranked on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Examples are given for what a score of 10, 5 or 1 might look like, but please note that you may select any score within that numerical range that you feel is most appropriate.

At the end of the assessment tool, there is extra space provided for you to add other Mission Values and Priorities that are of particular importance to your church but not already included. For example, if your congregation is primarily composed of families with children, you might determine that mission initiatives which provide spiritual nourishment for young people is a unique quality you want to emphasize. On the final page, add up all the scores for each category for a more complete picture of what is working well and what could be improved.

TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES

- This document is best used in a group setting in which members of the church are talking together about the mission project. Invite both laity and clergy to participate.
- You might choose to have several people complete this form independently, then come together to discuss their views and find an average score. Or, you might choose to have many folks sit together and work to find consensus around each individual mission value.
- Whether persons complete this form individually or as a group, make sure you leave time for discussion about the conclusions you reach.
- Do not be discouraged if one person’s scoring is much higher or lower than another’s. Instead, use this opportunity for group discernment and explore your differing viewpoints.

Name of Mission Initiative/Project: _____

Date: _____

Mission Values/ Priorities	Guiding Questions	Score of 10	Score of 5	Score of 1	Score
Faith-Based, Christ-Like, and Incarnational	Can this type of mission be connected easily to the spiritual formation of you and your church? Is your work deeply intertwined with your faith? Does it allow you to put the life and teachings of Jesus into practice?	This mission is integral to both individual and congregational spiritual formation. It allows us to “practice what we preach” on a regular basis and provides opportunities for theological reflection.	Mission and spirituality are intertwined, but not explicitly. We must work hard to find connections between our faith and this initiative. Our work helps us learn more about God but only infrequently.	Our work is detached from our faith. There is no substantive difference between our methods and values and those embraced by secular nonprofit organizations.	
United Methodist Theology of Mission	Does this project/initiative reflect the United Methodist “Theology of Mission?” Does it faithfully represent our denomination’s stated goals of making disciples; supporting Christian communities; alleviating suffering; and seeking justice, freedom and peace?	Our engagement helps us to embody our United Methodist identity. We are actively “making disciples for the transformation of the world.”	We do not often think about the United Methodist “Theology of Mission” when planning our work but could find some points of connection if we looked closely.	None of the four denominational goals are a part of this mission. Our work stands in contradiction to the United Methodist “Theology of Mission.”	
Mutuality and Relationship	Does this type of mission provide opportunities for genuine friendship between those who serve and those who are being served? Does it promote cross-cultural understanding? Do those being served help decide end goals and methods? Are you accompanying others in their journey or doing something to/for them?	Divisions between “us” and “them” have eroded; we are working alongside one another with a shared goal. We view each other as trusted friends. Our partners are in positions of leadership.	We know the names of the people we serve but not much else. We rarely ask questions about what others might truly desire; we stick to our own plans.	There are significant power imbalances between those serving and those being served. Meaningful and enduring friendships do not exist.	
Asset-Based vs. Needs-Based	Is your work oriented around deficiencies that must be corrected or around strengths and assets that could be expanded? Does the project help you resist the desire to “fix” someone else? Does it reflect Wesley’s understanding of prevenient grace— that God is at work in all times and places, including long before you arrived?	Our deep and enduring friendships with others help us to see their strengths and understand their God-given dignity. We recognize others’ potential and work together to unleash it.	We treat others with common courtesy but tend to view them as needy and dependent upon our help. Most of our interactions are transactional, in which we give, and they receive.	We view ourselves as “saviors” and see others as completely incapable of helping themselves or understanding what they truly need to thrive.	

Mission Values/ Priorities	Guiding Questions	Score of 10	Score of 5	Score of 1	Score
Justice-Oriented	Does your work alleviate only the symptoms of a particular issue or does it also address the root causes?	In addition to alleviating episodic suffering, we are also actively working to dismantle the structures that keep people in poverty, isolation and fear. We are trying to “work ourselves out of a job” so that our services are no longer needed.	We are trying to figure out how to work on this deeper level but do not know how. It is easier to just give out free meals instead of trying to figure out why people are hungry.	We meet the immediate needs of others but aren’t thinking about or working on the underlying issues that bring about their suffering/struggle.	
Widespread Participation	Can everyone in your church— young and old, new attendees and longtime members, those with and without financial resources, etc.—find a way to participate in this project or initiative? If you have discovered barriers to participation, can they be overcome with reasonable effort?	We recognize that everyone in our church has gifts to share, though they may not all be the same gifts. We have found multiple avenues for people to get involved and are actively developing new leaders.	Participation has grown and expanded over the years, but only a select group of people are deeply engaged on a regular basis. We could do more to train the next generation of leaders.	Only a very small percentage of our congregation participates in this project. Others in the church know very little about it.	
Transparency and Financial Accountability	Does your church leadership team or mission committee use best practices in financial accountability? Are you transparent about where money comes from and how it is spent? Do you clearly communicate how and why key decisions are made? If you are working with a partner organization or external party, do they also follow these guidelines?	We share all relevant information on our website or post it in a conspicuous place of the building. People feel comfortable asking questions about money and leadership structure.	We do not have anything to hide but are also not actively disclosing how decisions are made and money is allocated.	One or two people run the entire operation and are not willing to share information when asked. We trust but do not verify that money is spent appropriately.	
Scope	Does your work reach a large number of people OR connect with a small number of people more extensively? Is your work scalable?	Our impact is significant, and we continually discern new opportunities for growth and expansion.	We are making a difference but could do more to broaden our reach and/or deepen our impact.	Our work is both narrow and shallow. We are not working to engage more people more deeply.	

Mission Values/ Priorities	Guiding Questions	Score of 10	Score of 5	Score of 1	Score
Impact and Effectiveness	What evidence do you have that this project is truly making a difference, both for church members and for those whom you are serving? Can you envision a time when your efforts are no longer needed? Are you actively working toward that goal?	On a regular basis, we see evidence that others are growing and thriving, becoming more resilient and better equipped to handle future challenges. Our church is also being transformed through our involvement.	We see incremental changes in the lives of others but do not know how or why those changes are happening. We do not detect much change in our personal lives or in our church.	We are treating the exact same needs of others over and over again. We do not have an end goal in mind and do not have a clear vision for what “success” really means. Our work feels more like an obligation to be met than an opportunity for us to grow and learn.	
Long-Term Sustainability	Have church members expressed a willingness to have a long-term commitment to this project/initiative? If you are working with a partner or external organization, does that group have a long-term vision for how to sustain itself and grow its impact?	We are focused on working alongside this particular community or on this particular issue for the long haul. We are actively working to ensure that people and resources are committed for the long-term.	We would like for this work to continue, but we are not thinking ahead about what future challenges and opportunities we might encounter.	This is a fad that has caught our attention for the moment but will likely fade away. We have not made a long-term commitment to this initiative or to the people with whom we work.	
Possibilities for Collaboration	Does this project/initiative create opportunities for you to collaborate with other organizations or individuals? Can your work help you to grow deeper relationships with others in your community?	This mission teaches us how to be the church outside of our own building and to participate in the kingdom of God out in the community. We are building new relationships and points of connection.	We occasionally cross paths with others from outside of our church but have not fully explored how we might work together with them.	We are not interested in sharing our efforts and energies with others. The desire for control outweighs whatever opportunities might exist for collaboration.	
“Divine Discomfort”	Does this experience appropriately challenge your worldview? Does it help you to see others differently and understand the community and your role in it differently?	We are routinely challenged to rethink who God is, what God is doing in the world and how we partner with God in that work. We are growing and learning with one another all the time.	We frequently encounter people and circumstances that cause us to stop and think, but we don't know how to do that well or with one another. We should pursue more opportunities for reflection and discernment.	We are generally left unchanged after our interactions with others. We do not stop to reflect on what we are doing and why/whether it matters.	

Mission Values/ Priorities	Guiding Questions	Score of 10	Score of 5	Score of 1	Score
Local Church Value I: _____					
Local Church Value II: _____					
Local Church Value III: _____					
				TOTAL	

SCORING RUBRIC

NOTE: this scoring rubric is based on the assumption that you have identified three additional mission values important to your church. Each will be worth 10 points. The rubric will need to be adjusted if you identify more or fewer values.

115+	91-115	65-90	Under 65
<p>EXCELLENT</p> <p>Your current mission initiatives have been planned with great care, are functioning smoothly and still have more potential to expand. You've incorporated spirituality into your work and are developing deep and meaningful relationships along the way. Both you and those with whom you work are experiencing genuine transformation.</p> <p>Consider serving as a resource for other congregations that might benefit from your insights. Be willing to share freely about what has worked well for you and about all the lessons you have learned along the way.</p>	<p>GOOD</p> <p>You are asking all the right questions and moving in a positive direction but also recognize that you have more room to grow. Your work is causing you to think more deeply about sustainability, your own spirituality and how you can make a bigger impact. However, not all of your questions have been answered fully.</p> <p>You are right around the corner from really thriving and making a huge impact. Keep going! Do not be afraid to ask all of the really hard questions and follow wherever they lead. Continue consulting with experts and other external resources.</p>	<p>HAS POTENTIAL BUT NEEDS WORK</p> <p>Some of your efforts are leading to positive outcomes, but you may not be sure why particular elements of your work are successful and others are struggling. You are just beginning to ask questions about long-term sustainability and how this work connects to your own discipleship and formation.</p> <p>Despite some positive signs, you might not know exactly how to move forward. Consider digging in more deeply. Find resources – books, experts, trusted confidants, even your own past experience – and try to incorporate additional insights into what you're doing. Keep up the good work!</p>	<p>SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES</p> <p>There may be some pretty significant flaws in the mission work you have been doing. Despite your dedication and good intentions, you have not made the impact you desire and are not set up for future success. Many facets of your work need improvement.</p> <p>Do not allow yourself to be discouraged. Instead, think about how you can build up from this point. Should you redirect your energy to some different projects/ initiatives or take time to fundamentally reorganize your current work? Either way, give thanks for the journey and keep going!</p>

A low score does not necessarily mean you should abandon your current mission initiative altogether. It should, however, be an invitation to rethink your goals and methodology. Instead of starting over from scratch, think about how an ongoing mission project might be reimagined so that it better aligns with who you are and what you believe. For example, could you make an intentional effort to build relationships with those you serve? Could you integrate a Bible study or regular prayer with your mission work? Could you make time to read or talk to seasoned experts about best practices in community development and incorporate what you learn? Realignment might be difficult, but it should not in any way cause you to forget or disregard the previous work (and accomplishments!) of the congregation. Do not be discouraged, but instead see this as an opportunity for growth!

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