

Model for Workshop in Consulting Skills

Developed for UCC "Partners In Education"

By Ruby Schroeder and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference Partners In Education

Objective 1:

Demonstrate an initial phone interview scenario of how a Partner might respond to a phone call from a church contact person who is seeking help in selecting a church school curriculum.

Scenario 1: (Pages 1-3 + Handouts #1 & #2)

Demonstration through role play (and fish bowl) consisting of:

Partner consultant

Mrs. Rowen, Church School Superintendent from First Church, Jonesville

An observer and reporter to those Partners attending workshop

Partner consultant role:

When you receive this phone call, you will want to:

- ✧ establish the identity, position in the church, and the setting
- ✧ clarify the issue(s) and purpose of the call
- ✧ review the background and history of the problem or challenge
- ✧ state your understanding of the issue and purpose for setting a meeting time with members of the Jonesville church to the caller's satisfaction
- ✧ state that you will be sending the church a form for background information that will help you understand the role of Christian education in that church before the meeting
- ✧ perhaps arrange a pre-meeting between the caller, pastor and/or Christian Education chair and yourself to learn more about the church and the issues and refine purpose and process for the meeting.

During the phone conversation, you will want to frequently check to make sure you are correctly understanding the caller's issue(s) or concern, clarifying the caller's intent and/or core issue, and articulate as clearly as possible your understanding of the goal of the proposed meeting. Use the attached form to make notes during your call. If a pre-meeting is arranged, you may want to make further notes at that time.

Also, tell the caller that it would be useful to have information about the educational program at the church, and that you will be sending her (or an identified person in the church) a form to fill out (preferably by the CE committee or comparable like group) and to return to you before the consultation. (See Handout #2)

In addition to the specific information on the form, you may want data about the geographical setting of the church and what is happening in the community. Try to discover who are the decision-makers, and the roles of the pastor, Christian Education Committee and the teachers in choosing curriculum.

Scenario 1 (continued)

Caller role:

Mrs. Rowen, you are the Church School Superintendent of First UCC in Jonesville, a small city in southwestern Indiana. Since the *Bible Discovery* curriculum is no longer available, the church

school needs a new curriculum resource. Your pastor, Rev. Martha, has recently begun her pastorate at First Church. She returned from a Conference meeting where she learned that the National UCC has trained Christian education consultants, "Partners In Education," who are available to local churches to assist in church education and that there is no cost for an initial meeting.

Since there is no cost for a first consultation, it will be important to plan carefully to make the best use of the Partner's time, as well as the time of church members. You review in your mind some of the information that the Partner might find helpful.

First Church is in a small town setting, surrounded by farmland, but also a new Toyota plant, which is bringing much new business and many new people into the area. Several families that are new have visited but have not been back. They have not attended the adult classes, but do intent to enroll their children in the church school.

First Church has a membership of 230, with 89 church school members. There are two pre-school classes, two elementary classes, a combined youth class encompassing grades eight through twelve, and two adult classes, one of which is a Bible class and the other a "Contemporary Christians Class."

The Church School has been using *Bible Discovery* curriculum for the past five or six years, although several teachers have chosen their own materials from other sources.

First Church has recently called a new pastor, Rev. Martha, who uses the Lectionary as the basis for worship and preaching. This is a new experience for the congregation.

Scenario 1 (continued)**Observer role:**

The role of the observer is to introduce the role play characters and briefly the setting. S/he will listen carefully to the conversation, perhaps taking notes of:

- ✧ clues responded to or missed
- ✧ data clarified or left unclear
- ✧ response to feelings
- ✧ clarity about details
- ✧ the ability to articulate clearly the issue, purpose and ownership of the proposed meeting.

It is the responsibility of the observer to stop the action of the role play at the appropriate time, to de-role the characters and invite comments from the audience. The characters, themselves, might be asked first to share their experience and feeling before opening the discussion to the group.

Role of workshop participants:

Members might be asked to pay particular attention to either the Partner or the Caller, Mrs. Rowen.

Proceed with role play - Mrs. Rowen dials the number and initiates the call.

Following role play, observations might be shared in groups of two before general discussion by the entire group.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Workshop participants will role play an initial phone interview scenario in small groups order to practice these initial contact skills.

Possible formats:

1) Fish Bowl - two teams of three persons

One team is composed of a Consultant, a Church representative and an Observer.

The other team members are observers.

Each role play is followed with opportunities for role players to debrief, to receive feedback of the Observer, and then the trio of observers.

After role play, the teams switch places.

2) Individual teams of three persons

Composed of Consultant, Church representative, and an Observer as above.

Each role play is followed with opportunities for role players to debrief, to receive feedback of the Observer.

Scenario 2: (Page 4)**Role of Partner:**

This Partner consultant has received training and resources from the National UCC. S/he brings experience and a willingness to be of assistance to churches in the important ministry of church education. Role is similar to Partner in Scenario 1.

Caller role:

Rev. Jim Brown, you are the pastor of a large (950 member) city church that has an active Church School with classes for all ages: children, junior high, senior high, and five classes for adults, including young adults. Most of the children and youth classes have used denominational curriculum in the past. However, some teachers have supplemented with resources from a variety of sources, including a nearby local Christian bookstore. Youth classes use a variety of resources, as is true for the adult classes.

Rev. Brown, you have learned at a Conference meeting that there are "Partners In Education" available to visit local churches as consultants. You have decided to call a Partner for advice. You have a special interest in the new curriculum resources, and are also interested in how to choose appropriate curriculum, how to unify the resources being used by the entire church school, and especially concerned about how to remedy the appalling illiteracy about the Bible you feel is present among church members.

Observer and Reporter role:

Introduce the role play characters and the setting. Listen carefully to the conversation and take notes for feedback. Stop the action of the role play at an appropriate time. Invite the role players to debrief, de-role the players, and then invite comments from the trio of observers (if using format 1), or discuss the role play (format 2).

OBJECTIVE 3:

Participants will practice following up the initial phone call to confirm the meeting date and gather other relevant information for the consultation.

Possible formats:

- 1) Practice a follow-up phone call prior to the consultation or meeting at the church.

Confirm the date, time, and persons who will be participating, and issues and/or concerns that are present. Review the summary purpose as expressed on Partner's initial form. Seek additional information or clarification from the form sent to the church (and presumably returned).

- 2) Role play a pre-meeting with Partner, caller, and pastor using Scenario 1.

OBJECTIVE 4: (Pages 6- 14)

Use Scenario 1 to practice the visit to a church by a Partner, the purpose of which is to help the members select a curriculum for church education. The plan should include:

- components of planning
- focus on mission and/or goals of Christian education in the church
- attention to a process that will identify the questions, concerns, and issues in that local church
- opportunity to provide for biblical/theological reflection as it pertains to the congregation and choice of resources
- other criteria for curriculum evaluation
- a process for discerning and reflecting on above components
- next steps for the congregation or congregation and Partner

Church setting

First Church in southwestern Indiana is located near the new Toyoto truck manufacturing enterprise in a largely rural area which is on the fast-track of development. The church, which is located in a small town, has been organized for over 85 years, and like many churches, has seen a diminishment in membership.

Scenario: Use roles in Scenario 1 with the following additions (also individually listed on pages 10-15 for distribution to players):

Mrs. Rowen:

You have been the Church School Superintendent for the past nine years. You are devoted to the Church School, but discouraged because it is difficult to find teachers and attendance is down in the classes. You prefer that the teachers use denominational curriculum, but cannot prevent them from using materials they find they can use with less preparation time and easy handouts for the children. You are aware that there are new potential members moving into the community who are interested in the classes for their children, but they find it hard to be accepted in the adult classes. They are especially interested in strong classes for their young children. You sometimes wonder if someone else would be better to meet these challenges.

Pastor Martha:

You were called to First Church about five months ago and are still adjusting to serving a small church, living in a small town and learning to know church members, relating to them as congregants. You are interested in their church history, their life stories and their faith stories. In their call to you as their pastor, they emphasized their commitment to solid biblical preaching and teaching, their need to grow in numbers, and their sense of mission to the community around them which is changing dramatically and quickly. Their planning did not include any new long-range planning in regard to Jonesville or the wider church.

Additional players to Scenario 1 for Objective 4 - continued**Teacher John:**

You have been the teacher of the Bible Class for the past twenty years. You are committed to

this class, care about the members, and spend hours in preparation of lessons, always on the lookout for stories you can use, in addition to the curriculum resources. You have thought about retiring, but no one else has stepped forward to teach.

Teacher Beth:

You teach the kindergarten class, are a devoted and disciplined person who believes that children must learn to sit and listen and learn to color the pictures. Bible stories are the core of your lessons. For you, a successful Sunday occurs when all of the children are present to place their star in the proper place on the attendance chart and can repeat a memory verse.

Christian Education Committee member, Sarah:

You are a public school teacher in the Elementary School of Jonesville. You have won awards for your excellent teaching skills. You have good experience and educational skills, sound educational theory, and know curriculum theory and practice. As a leader in school and community affairs, your schedule is overflowing.

Parent Dorothy:

You are a mother of a pre-schooler, an elementary student, and a teen-ager. You come to the meeting as an interested parent who wants the best Christian education experience that is possible for your children. You attended Sunday School regularly as a child and were confirmed at age fourteen. Along with your husband, you are trying to be a good parent, and want the entire family to attend worship services together on a regular basis.

All the above persons are waiting in the Church Fellowship Room when the Consultant arrives for the meeting scheduled by the Church School Superintendent and the Partner (and the pastor?).

Proceed with role play

Use observer-reporter role and follow-up discussion in one of the formats described above.

Additional comments and possibilities:

In addition to a role play, the above scenario could be used as a case study, or just as a basis for discussion. It could be developed into a "rotation model" with centers staffed by a designated leader skilled in one of the following factors which should be included in a Partner's consultations about choosing curriculum:

1. The mission of the Church and of that specific congregation.

2. The purpose of Christian education in that local church, as it enables the church's mission.
3. The role of curriculum resources as a tool in the church's mission.
4. Criteria for curriculum selection.
5. Study of biblical and theological foundations for educational mission.
6. Nurturing and equipping teachers for their ministry, especially with possible new curriculum.
7. Designation and authorizing of decision-makers of the curriculum choice, and a process for selection.
8. Introduction of curriculum resources and implementation of the process.

Wrap-up of training session

Share additional printed resources for consulting with special attention to consulting skills, helping churches define needs and determine process, setting goals and objectives, exploring churches' theological and biblical perspectives, and criteria for selection of curriculum. (See attachments)

Participants share new understanding and sensitivities from the workshop program. Discuss any other issues or observations about being "Partners In Education" in the United Church of Christ.

Additional players to Scenario 1 for Objective 4 – on individual pages for distributionMrs. Rowen:

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Sample Schedule for Workshop in Consulting Skills

- 9:00 Opening song or prayer.
Introduction to workshop and of participants
Share goals and objectives
- 9:30 Scenario 1 – One person introduces; three role players
Share handout #1 (form for initial information)
- 10:00 Scenario 2 – Organize clusters of 3's for role play practice
- 10:30 Remind participants of need for follow-up confirmation for consultation
(objective 3). If time allows, practice one of the suggestions. If participants are
to be included in scenario 4, make assignments at this time.
- 10:35 Break
- 10:50 Scenario 4 – Role play. Person taking consultant role should have had previous
time to plan. Workshop participants not take taking part in scenario should be
assigned observer parts.
- 11:20 or 11:30 End role play. Discussion of consultant's approach and responses, and the other
roles. Include discussion of other alternatives in similar setting.
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Give workshop participants to come up with their own "plan" in a situation
similar to scenario 4 (or choose another possible scenario).
- 1:30 Present and discuss participants' plans (in small groups if workshop has many
participants).
- 2:00 Share other handouts. Go over valuable information and skills for Partners.
Share example "Partner Box" of IKC Partners. (IKC Partners have plastic file
boxes for our supplies and information, in addition to notebooks.)
- 2:15 Closing prayer

Handout #1 – Form for Initial Information taken by Partner when receiving a phone call from a church for help:

**Sample Form for Data to Be Recorded by Partner
From Initial Phone Inquiry from a Church**

(Some of this information, such as date and time, may be ascertained from a follow-up call)

Name of caller:

Name of church:

Location of church:

Name of Pastor(s):

Role/position of caller in the church:

Precipitating reason for the call:

Issues:

Purpose/goal of possible consultation:

Persons who would be present:

Date:

Time:

Place:

Directions:

Summary purpose developed by Caller and Partner:

Handout #2 (2 pages or front and back of one sheet)

Christian Education and Your Church

In preparation for your church's meeting with a Conference "Partner in Education," it would be helpful for your education committee and/or a group of people appropriate for the consultation to complete the information below. This will enable the Partner to prepare more appropriately and will help your church review all dimensions of your present program and resources.

Return to: _____

Church Profile

Church's Name _____ Membership _____

Address _____

Pastor(s) _____

Staff person responsible for Christian Education _____

Do you have a Christian Ed. Committee or Board? Yes ___ No ___ Elected ___ Appointed ___

Number of members on Committee/Board _____ Church current expense budget _____

Christian Education Budget _____ Is Sunday School included in C.E. budget? _____

Check () the Following That Presently Happen at Your Church

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Vacation Bible School | Adult Bible Study | Children's Church |
| Confirmation classes | Adult Re-confirmation | Membership classes |
| Short-term study groups | Family Retreats | Youth groups |
| Stewardship education events | Mission education events | Seasonal studies |
| Children's Sunday School | Adult Sunday School | Youth Sunday School |
| Intergenerational learning opportunities | | Teacher training |

Other _____

Administration and Resources

Does your church have a mission statement? _____ For Christian Education? _____

Who makes decisions or sets policies for Christian Education? _____

Who decides what Sunday School curriculum is to be used? _____

Where does the money for Christian Education come from? Church budget? _____

Sunday school offering? _____ Other _____

Does your church have a Library? Yes___ No___ Who maintains it? _____

Does your church use resources (persons/printed material/videos) from the Conference? _____

Does your church use the Congregational Resource Center at Christian Theological Seminary?

No___ Occasionally ___ Often___ Do you know where your CRC video catalog is? _____

Please Fill in the Following Information about Your Sunday School

Name of class No. of students Age of students No. of teachers Curriculum

Do you have teacher meetings or teacher training events? Yes___ No___ How often _____

What time does your Sunday School meet? _____ What time(s) is worship? _____

Miscellaneous Questions

How many people went to church camp last year? _____

How many Bible study groups do you have? _____ Who leads Bible study? _____

When do they meet? _____

Who is responsible for Confirmation instruction? _____

What adults besides the pastor are involved in Confirmation? _____

List any "Support Groups" your church sponsors: _____