

1001 New Worshiping Communities Accelerator

Reflection Guide

Module 1 Testing Ideas

Starting with Why

So many church communities are clearer about what they do and about how to do it than about why to do it in the first place. Yet, having a clear sense of why focuses on and galvanizes communities. A compelling why offers people a way to connect and build trust with your community. A compelling why provides the energy and sense of deep call needed for leaders to persevere or even recalibrate during difficult times. A compelling why provides clarity and a shared sense of mission and purpose.

- What is the concrete, specific, inspiring personal why behind your decision to say yes to God's call to start a new worshiping community?
- What is the why behind your community? What is the specific, concrete, action-oriented, inspiring why undergirding your community's vocation and sense of call?

William Sloane Coffin once wrote,

"Most church boats don't like to be rocked; they prefer to lie at anchor rather than go places in stormy seas. But that's because we Christians view the Church as the object of our love instead of the subject and instrument of God's."

- Which parts of this quote stand out to you and why?
- How have you seen the church treated as an object of Christian's love more than an instrument of God's love?
- How can you help your new worshiping community and, by inference, the larger church cultivate a stronger identity of the church are God's instrument, called into being for specific, inspiring purposes?

Co-Creation

In the new era upon us, there is a shift away from hierarchical, centralized decision making to decentralized, participatory decision-making, and mass collaboration. The era behind us was often characterized by hard boundaries regarding who does what and who should be in which conversations. Now, permeable boundaries, conversation, and co-creation are cross-cultural characteristics of many thriving new worshiping communities.

- Why might 21st century people be particularly interested in permeable boundaries?
- For better or for worse, what do hard boundaries and hierarchical decision-making patterns “say”? Conversely, what do permeable boundaries and opportunities for co-creation “say”?
- What stands out for you in the back story of Ormewood Church or any of the communities who shared about cocreation and testing ideas?
- In your community, where do you and where could you co-create and offer permeable boundaries?
- Who might permeable boundaries bring to the table, who is not already well-represented there?

Reframing Failure as Learning

Failure is not the opposite of success. Instead, it is an essential component of success, assuming we are willing to face it and learn from it. As a result, new worshiping community leaders everywhere are free to experiment with ideas and initiatives, knowing that some will work and some will not. Reframing failure as learning brings health and freedom to test and experiment, as we continue rooting our identity firmly in being a child of God, rather than letting certain successes or failures shape too much of our sense of self.

- How and when has your new worshiping community tested ideas? What have you learned from failure? How might you continue to do so regularly as you move forward?
- How might you build testing ideas into the culture and foundational DNA of your new worshiping community?
- How do you or could you provide space in leadership meetings, reports, blogs, funder gatherings, etc. to have open conversations about failure? How do you or could you create space and time to incorporate lessons learned from failure into your community life moving forward?
- How do or could you have regular assessment of community life (i.e. program) priorities to ensure they are focuses on areas that have the greatest impact?
- How do you or could you have a process for discontinuing programs or aspects of your new worshiping community’s life when they are not having the expected or needed impact?