**“The Way Forward”**

Need break out areas with a maximum of 10 people per group; plus children’s area.

Need: Flip chart stand(s), flip chart pads, flip chart pens, spare pens, Blu-Tack, coloured stickers, Post-its, cards, laptop, agendas, notes, “Gifts” sheets, etc.

A projector and screen for PowerPoint if possible (assume bring own laptop).

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| ***Time*** | Item |
| Before people arrive | A flip chart stand + pad and pens in main area.  Assign break out group colours to areas and make a list.  Arrange breakout areas. Put a flip chart, preferably with a stand, and pens in each breakout area. Write on the first sheet of each flip chart the “colour” of the group and 2 columns titled “good” and “not so good”.  Prepare to give out stickers as people arrive. |
| 9:30 | Attendees start to arrive.  Assign to groups at random using coloured stickers (don’t allow groups of people to stay together). |
| 10:00 | Welcome  Worship  Pray for the day – for wisdom, discernment and hearing God clearly. |
| 10:15 | **Introduction**   * We’re here today to discern God’s purpose for our church and then plan a way forward. * A clear purpose:   + Provides a manageable number of things to focus on and plan for.     - Instead of attempting lots of things and not succeeding.   + Helps a church decide what to spend its effort and money on.   + Reduces frustration by enabling people to:     - focus on things     - know what’s being planned     - see that things are being achieved.   + Makes a church “healthy”.     - The church fellowship is stronger because people are all pulling in the same direction.     - The church is more attractive to outsiders. * Format of the day |
| 10:20 | **Where are we now?**  We need to know where we are before we can move forward.  We must also remember that the church is already a very successful church and we mustn’t lose what’s good when we move forward.  Go into groups to discuss:   * What is our church good at? * What is our church not so good at?   One person makes notes on flip chart sheets (under “good” or “not so good”).  The group you’re in is according to the sticker you were given when you arrived.   * Does everyone have a sticker? * *Describe break out area for each “colour”.* * The flip chart sheet has the group’s colour written on it so that you can check you’re in the right group.   Bring each group’s sheets to central area and display.  Break at 11:00 for drinks - and take the opportunity to have a look at other groups’ sheets.  Back together in here at 11:20. |
| 11:00 | *Tea & coffee; and an opportunity to look at what other groups have written.*  *Back together.* |
| 11:20  12:10 | **Where should we be?**  Explain that we’re now going to decide what we believe God’s purpose for the church is and therefore what God wants the church to be doing.  This is an opportunity to dream dreams and capture their vision for the church. We’ll not be looking at how we’ll do these things just yet as we’ll do that this afternoon.  Meditation (Jesus’ view of our church) – see separate sheet.  Back into groups to discuss their vision for the church.  Each team write and/or draw a picture showing what the church should be like. As imaginative as possible – not just the building (e.g. a bird table).  Back into main group.  One person from each group to share pictures with whole group.  People write ideas on post-its with a number 1 to 3 indicating how important they think it is.  3 = essential; 2 = very important; 1 = quite important.  One idea per post-it! Max 4 post-its per person. |
| 12:30 | *Lunch*  *Use this time to:*   * *Collate post-its into focus areas and add up weightings.* * *Pick the 3 or 4 focus areas with the highest totals.* * *Complete the PowerPoint slide (or write on a flip chart sheet).* |
| 1:30 | Re-convene in main group.  Present outcome of “Where should we be?”  The 3 or 4 main areas to focus on – quite sufficient for any church to focus on at any one time. |
| 1:40 | Reflect and pray for continued guidance. |
| 1:45 | **How do we get there?**  Having discerned the things that they should be focussing on as a church, now look at the first steps we need to take. This is when they can start looking at how to do things!  Get back into groups to propose a small number of practical steps.   * Just one subject per discussion group * Not the same groups as this morning - choose a subject depending on your personal interest and/or experience. * Discussion groups should be roughly the same size as this morning’s groups. * At least one discussion group per subject. * Write proposed first steps on a flip-chart sheet. * Someone from each group to present when get back together again – but keep it brief, just a couple of minutes.   Show of hands for each subject – starting with bottom placed – to get groups. |
| 2:40 | Tea and coffee |
| 3:00  3:15 | Back together again.  Someone from each group to very briefly describe the “first steps” the group identified. Leave displayed..  **What can I bring to the party?**  Discover your gifts exercise.  Look around the “first steps” and compare with your gifts. Which of the steps do you feel you have the right gifts for.  You may want to pray about it first or as you go around.  Pick up a card - write this on the card to take home with you to remind you of what perhaps God is calling you to do at the church. |
| 3:50 | What happens next   * The output of the day will be written up and made available. * Proposed changes and actions arising from today will be taken to Church Council. * The “visions” pictures will be displayed at church(?)   Closing worship |
| 4:00 | Depart |