

Dream Session

Paper No. OCCG-21

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 50 to 150 words which generally states the topic of the report and the general summary. It should be recognized that a number of the readers will only read the summary, and will read the remainder of your paper if you gain their interest.

KEY WORDS:

A short listing of words you would recommend for an internet search to find your paper, e.g. exit interview, church of Christ, Back Door, Side Door

GLOSSARY:

Definition of words which may not be familiar to some of your readers, e.g. if you use the word hermeneutics.

REPORT:

In the paper titled "OCCG-015 Mystery Guest Program" which is posted on the occginstitute.org website a form for congregation visitors is provided. It gives an anonymous way for those visiting a different congregation to give a friendliness assessment of your congregation.

The premise behind this paper is that the results would indicate that we are not very objective about how potential prospects see our facility. Many good prospects may not be knowledgeable to know the scriptural nuances of different groups who go by the title of "Christian", and may be influenced by minor factors before you get a chance to explain them.

In an example case, a potential prospect can drive down the street towards a church of Christ and a denominational congregation across the street. The denominational congregation has a well-trimmed yard and looks tidy in general. The church of Christ has tall grass and the building looks tired. The prospect chooses the denominational facility and begins attending there. Possibly a silly example, but it happens. That decision ultimately can impact the salvation of that prospect. That would make the appearance of your facility a salvation issue. Mowing your grass is not going to save anyone, but we should not want any artificial handicaps.

We know of one congregation which had an obviously broken trash can lid in the men's restroom for several years. All the members were accustomed to it and just ignored it. One can only think what a visitor thought.

That being said, if your congregation receives a Mystery Guest survey, it can be like a free independent church growth analysis. It would be appropriate to pay attention to it.

This paper is an attempt to take exactly the same questions as were on the Mystery Guest Survey, and make them more user friendly and useful to your congregation. They are repeated as the last 2 pages in this paper, with one slight change. There are two sets of answers. The first set is called 1st and the second is called 2nd.

It is easy enough to fill the answers out, but this paper has a better goal. Have a Dream Session.

The Dream Session is to get your entire congregation together and pass the forms out to everyone. Ask everyone to fill out the first column. Most of the answers are bite size and people will know them, but many will not know all of them.

Then ask them to divide up into 9 groups as the questions are in 9 groups. It would be good to have group leaders already signed up, knowing among other things how much budget flexibility they have (if any) and operating requirements.

Obviously if you have a small or very large congregation, adjustments will need to be made on the groups.

The question for the groups is if there are facility problems which can negatively impact evangelism in their chosen area, what can they do which is:

1. Scriptural,
2. In budget, or
3. They will pay for themselves

Collect some of the papers scored in the first column and while the next session is going on. Have someone to add up a representative number of the papers and get an average total and give the papers back.

After the individual groups look at their section of the questions, ask them to put scores in the second column for their section.

When the groups look at the questions and a representative reports back to the whole

group on what they will do. The answers have frequently changed to all 5s. Have someone adding all the reported second columns to a copy of the questions and quickly add up the total. Then divide the new score by the first average to compute an improvement percentage for your Dream Session.

What you have done is:

1. Effectively received a consultant's review of your facility for free,
2. Identified items in your facility which can be upgraded to help evangelism,
3. Received commitments to get them fixed,
4. Stayed in budget,
5. Promoted member involvement, and
6. Reported back to the group how much improvement can be made if they work together.

All these are good things. The congregation and Great Commission evangelism have received something good at no cost.

Half the goal of this is to get good things done in your congregation. Members willing to do work will often find out what they can do. The other half is to remind everyone from top to bottom what can be done if we work together. Many church problems can be the subject of getting together and openly discussing the problem. Solutions can sometimes become obvious.

References:

1. Paper OCCG-015 Mystery Guest Program

Reviewers:

DREAM SESSION QUESTIONS

Congregation name: _____ Date: _____

All questions scored between 0 and 5, with 5 being good or best. If you don't know, it is an N/A.

	1ST	2ND
PRE-ARRIVAL		
1. Googled "church of Christ in town" and easily found the congregation	_____	_____
2. Website quality (0 for doesn't exist, 5 for professional quality)	_____	_____
3. Appropriate area directional signs (e.g. if off major thoroughfare)	_____	_____
4. Quality of signage from the street	_____	_____
PARKING		
1. The entrance to your parking area is well marked	_____	_____
2. Location of visitor parking well marked	_____	_____
3. Visitor parking well marked	_____	_____
4. Location of lobby well marked from visitor parking	_____	_____
FACILITY, OUTSIDE		
1. Did the facility seem generally up to date and not "tired looking"	_____	_____
2. Quality of exterior appearance	_____	_____
3. Quality of parking lot appearance	_____	_____
4. Quality of parking lot lighting (Estimate if you are there in daylight)	_____	_____
LANDSCAPING		
1. Quality of flowers	_____	_____
2. Quality of shrubbery	_____	_____
3. Quality of grass	_____	_____
4. Quality of trees	_____	_____
GREETING		
1. Quality of Lobby	_____	_____
2. When entering the front door, was there a Welcome Center	_____	_____
3. Quality of Welcome Center	_____	_____
4. Did you meet a person whose service it was to make sure you knew the layout of the facility and where you should go (Specifically, the place to go now, the restrooms, and the worship area.)	_____	_____
5. Were you escorted to your first location	_____	_____
6. Were you introduced to someone at your first location	_____	_____
7. Were you engaged by a person of a similar social situation. (Marriage status plus age group)	_____	_____

DREAM SESSION QUESTIONS
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|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 8. Did you feel appropriately greeted | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Were generous and useful signage and maps provided | _____ | _____ |

NURSERY

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Quality of Nursery | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Did contemporary security procedures seem to be in place | _____ | _____ |

BIBLE CLASS

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Quality of preschool appearance | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Did contemporary children's security procedures seem to be in place | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Quality of elementary area appearance | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Quality of teen area appearance | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Was the Bible Class offered as a forum to discuss personal prayer needs | _____ | _____ |

WORSHIP SERVICE

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. At any point, were you uncomfortable because you were a visitor (5 = no) | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Was the Sunday AM sermon uplifting or relevant from your point of view | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Did you learn something from the sermon | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Was the song service uplifting | _____ | _____ |
| 5. If the songs were projected, were notes provided with the songs | _____ | _____ |
| 6. If the Bible verses were displayed during a reading, did the versions read and projected match | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Did the sermon, songs, and readings have a common theme | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Did the service seem organized and intentional | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Did the worship service appeal to all ages | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Did the worship service start and end on time | _____ | _____ |

GENERAL

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Quality of the interior appearance | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Quality of Rest Room appearance | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Does the racial diversity of the congregation match the community | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Were there public reminders of the congregation goals and objectives | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Is there an attitude of excellence in all things in the congregation | _____ | _____ |