



Living Local: Joining God

Step I: Listening to Learn

(Main handout from January 21, 2017 Training Day)

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Workshop Schedule

January 21, 2017 at Christ Church, Gardiner

Purposes

- Provide overview of the Living Local—Joining God (LL: JG) Process
- Engage in training for Step I: Listening to Learn
 - To the Word and the Spirit
 - To members of our congregation
 - To our neighbors
- Develop a plan for implementing the Step 1 work between Feb – Apr
- Making plans for developing a Summary Listening Report for May Training Day
 - Summary of Dwelling Listening
 - Summary of Member Listening
 - Summary of Neighbor Listening
- Enjoy day of fellowship and mutual learning

Schedule

9:30 - 10:00	Gather for coffee and conversation
10:00 - 10:10	Welcome and Introductions
10:10 - 10:30	Understanding the LL: JG Project (pp. 4-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing the Four Dioceses Involved in this Process• Overview of Five-Step Process
10:30 - 11:10	Listening to Learn—to the Word and the Spirit (pp. 6-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dwelling in the Word (15 minutes)• What are we learning about this process?• Making plans to engage in this process back home
11:10 - 11:20	Break
11:20 - 12:00	Listening to Learn—to Members of Our Congregation (pp. 9-11) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review process for conducting interviews of members• Practicing one of the questions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Share a story of a time in your experience of our church when you felt most spiritually alive, energized, and engaged.• Making plans to implement this work back home
12:00 - 12.45	Lunch (coaches meet over lunch with Point Person)

- 12:45 - 1:00 Hearing from Bishop Steve
- 1:00 - 2:00 Listening to Learn—to Our Neighbors (pp. 12-17)
- Defining What Is Our Neighborhood
 - Review process for engaging in neighborhood walks or utilizing an observation location
 - Review process for conducting interviews of neighbors
 - Review interview protocol
 - Making plans to implement this work back home
- 2:00 - 2:30 Managing the Logistics of This Process (p. 18)
- Guiding Team
 - Meet at least monthly—possibly more
 - A designated leader
 - Designated person/process for gathering the summaries of what is learned
 - GT as whole prepare an overall Summary Listening Report of what they learned from all the listening work they do
 - Coach
 - Stay in contact with GT as they meet—preferably face to face but probably some virtually
 - Meet at least monthly as a group of coaches with Point Person—either face to face or virtually
 - Priest/Rector—Clergy Learning Cohort
 - Meets regularly
 - Diocesan Staff—Diocesan Learning Cohort
 - Meets regularly
 - Communications System
 - To/From diocesan office
 - Develop data base of all participants
 - Develop platform for sharing stories
- 2:30 - 2:45 Groups Schedule Their Next Meeting
- 2:45 - 2:55 Where Have You Seen the Spirit of God at Work Today?
- 2:55 - 3:00 Closing
- Next Steps
 - Closing Prayer

Next Training Day

May 2017—date TBA

Overview of *Living Local: Joining God* for Congregations

Key Question: How do we go on a shared journey in discerning what the Spirit is doing ahead of us in our neighborhoods and communities in order to join God in those places?

Time Table

Step 1: Listening to Learn

January – May 2017

- Congregations practice listening to God, one another and their neighborhoods.

Step 2: Reflecting and Discerning

June – September 2017

- Listening work is brought together from each congregation. Congregations are assisted in identifying and shaping a series of new behaviors.

Step 3: New Behaviors—Behaving Our Way into New Thinking

October 2017 – June 2018

- Engaging in new behaviors takes place across all the congregations.

Step 4 and 5: Reflecting and Deciding

July - December 2018

- Congregations:
 - Identify the learning develop through implementing the new behaviors
 - Identify what 'next step' actions are needed
 - Continue to identify new behaviors in which to engage

Role of the Congregation Guiding Team

The Guiding Team:

- Guides the work of *Living Local: Joining God* in their congregation
- Works with an external coach who assists them through every phase of the journey
- Regularly updates its work and what is being learned to the vestry of the church
- Involves members of congregation in various activities as well as engaging and regularly updating the congregation on what is happening
- Meets with the Guiding Teams of other congregations from time to time to share stories of what they are doing and learning as well as receiving the training and resourcing needed for each part of the journey.

Goals for Step 1: Listening to Learn

1. A growing number of people in your congregation are becoming curious and willing to participate in *Living Local: Joining God*
2. A growing number of people in your congregation are engaging in *Dwelling in the Word* as a regular practice of congregational life.
3. A growing number of people are learning each other's stories of life in your congregation.
4. An initial number of people in your congregation are doing neighborhood listening and beginning to reflect on what they are discovering and learning.
5. Your congregation begins to have stories to share with the other participating congregations about what it means to listen to God, to one another, and to your neighbors.

Dwelling in the Word

Guiding Team Activities

1. Review Dwelling in the Word – How To.
2. **Begin each Guiding Team meeting with Dwelling in the Word using Luke 10:1-12.**
3. Identify two or three groups that meet at least monthly in the congregation where Dwelling in the Word can be introduced and practiced regularly over the course of the coming months.
4. Contact these groups and explain to them that you would like to meet to share the practice of Dwelling in the Word with them.
5. At the meeting:
 - a. Thank them for being willing to participate.
 - b. Provide them with Dwelling in the Word resources (How To and Text/Questions).
 - c. Practice Dwelling in the Word with them.
 - d. Describe what you want them to do: invite them to practice Dwelling in the Word as a group several times before the end of April.
 - e. Agree when to meet back to learn from their practicing Dwelling in the Word.
6. Include in your Summary Listening Report what the GT and the other groups are learning from engaging in Dwelling.

Dwelling in the Word – Guiding Team Planning Worksheet

Group Name	Group Contact	GT Member(s) Assigned	Meeting Date	Follow Up Meeting Date

Dwelling in the Word – How To

Dwelling in the Word is a simple exercise that is rooted in the traditions of the church. It is a practice in which all the people of God can participate. It helps to cultivate and nourish a community rooted in listening to God and each other through Scripture.

1. Read

- a. Ask for two volunteers (male and female) to each read the passage aloud
- b. Invite people to be open to the Spirit through these questions:
 - i. *Where do you find yourself stopping or being caught in this text?*
 - ii. *How was your imagination engaged by this text—words, phrases, or ideas?*
 - iii. *In what ways might the Spirit of God might be speaking to you, to us, to our congregation?*
- c. First reader shares the text, followed by a brief time of silence
- d. Read the questions again
- e. Second reader shares the text, followed by a longer period of silence

2. Listen

- a. Find a partner. Where possible, consider someone you might not usually spend time with or do not know. Sit in a comfortable place together where you can hear one another.
- b. Each person has several minutes to respond to the questions. You may want to ask a question or two in order to understand what your partner is saying and take notes to capture his/her reflections. The focus of attention here is to listen attentively to the other.
- c. After several minutes, switch roles with the other person listening.

3. Listen Together

- a. After about ten minutes, reconvene as a whole group.
- b. Invite people to share what they heard their partner saying (not their own questions or thoughts). This is actually much harder than we might first imagine! Rather than listen closely, the temptation is to anticipate what the other will say or jump in and share one's own thoughts.
- c. Wonder together as a group if there might be any specific ways the Spirit was speaking to us through the text.

Dwelling in the Word Resources—The Text

Text (Luke 10:1-12)

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace to this house!” And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.” I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Questions:

- a. Where did you find yourself stopping or being caught in this text?
- b. How was your imagination engaged by this text—words, phrases, or ideas?
- c. Where might the Spirit of God be speaking to you, to us, to our congregation?

Listening to One Another

Guiding Team Activities

1. GT recruits 5 to 7 persons from congregation to assist them—at least as many additional persons as there are members of the GT. GT members pair up with these additional persons to conduct the interviews.
2. GT identifies persons in your congregation that you feel would be willing to respond to an interview—suggest from 10 to 15 interviews. identify which GT pair will interview which person; and have them proceed to schedule their interviews.
3. At the interview:
 - a. Thank them for being willing to participate.
 - b. Explain that the members of the GT want to gather people’s responses to some simple questions about the congregation.
 - c. State that the conviction of the GT that: “God has been working among us as a people for a long time and we want to listen to one another to hear the stories of how we have experienced God’s work amongst us.”
 - d. Take notes of responses from each interview.
 - e. Finalize an interview worksheet and turn it into the GT.
4. GT gathers completed worksheets to process for the Summary Listening Report.

Listening to One Another Interview Questions

Name of Member: _____

Pair Conducting Interview: _____

1. How long have you been part of this church and what led you to become involved?
2. Share a story of a time in your experience in this church when you felt most spiritually alive, energized, and engaged.
3. How is the Spirit of God most present in the life of our church at present?
4. What are the most important changes that have taken place over time in the community around the church? How have these changes impacted our church?
5. What's one hope you have for our church?

Neighborhood Listening

What is My Neighborhood?

One of the most common questions asked by people beginning to do this work of listening in their local context is “What is my neighborhood?” They ask:

- Do you mean the neighborhood I live in?
- Do you mean the neighborhood where our church meets for worship?

Neighborhood can take on different meaning for different groups. We suggest you think about neighborhood in at least four ways. The Guiding Team can choose how best to focus this work.

- Where you live
- Where you worship
- Where you work
- The primary affinity or volunteer groups in which you participate

1. Conducting Neighborhood Walks or Observation Locations
 - a. GT recruits 5-7 congregation members (and more if people are willing) to participate in neighborhood walks and/or observation locations to engage in listening
 - b. Invite these persons who are interested to meet with you and:
 - i. Provide copies of “A Simple Neighborhood Walk or Observation Location” worksheet
 - ii. Ask people over the next month to try out some of these walks or observations—they may want to engage in the same walk or observation location several times to take the listening deeper.
 - iii. Invite them back to a meeting to share what they have observed and heard through engaging in this process.
2. Engaging in Listening to Neighbors
 - a. GT recruits 5 to 7 persons (and more if people are willing) to engage in listening to their neighbors
 - b. GT provides orientation to the process and plans work
 - i. Provide copies of “Listening to Your Neighbor” worksheet
 - ii. Ask people to interview some of their “neighbors” over the next several months
 - iii. Persons conducting interviews prepare summary of interview worksheet for each interview
 - iv. Invite persons conducting interviews back to a meeting to share what they have heard and learned through their interviews.
3. Convene Feedback Sessions with Vestry and Congregation
 - a. Develop Summary Listening Report from all sources
 - b. Schedule and Convene feedback session with Vestry
 - c. Schedule and Convene feedback session with Congregation

Neighborhood Listening Resources

Planning Neighborhood Walks or Observation Locations

1. Recruit 5-7 congregation members (and more if persons are willing) to engage in Neighborhood Walks or Observation Locations exercise
2. Describe to people what they are going to do.
3. Provide copies of the worksheet “A Simple Neighborhood Walk or Observation Location”.
4. Share that this is about listening by simply walking around the neighborhood or observing people in a set location.
5. Have persons fill out a summary observation worksheet
6. Convene a follow up meeting with those who engaged in walks to share what they learn through their neighborhood walks or from their observation locations.
7. Capture this feedback and incorporate it into the GT Summary Listening Report

Planning Steps for Introducing Listening to Neighbors Interviews

1. Recruit 5-7 congregational members to join the Guiding Team (and more if person are willing) for interviewing your “neighbors.”
2. Provide people with an overview of what they are going to do. Suggest persons introduce themselves to perspective interviewees as follows:
 - There are a number of us out today who are trying to learn more about how people view and experience our community/neighborhood. We are part of an area church that is seeking to make deeper connections in relating to and serving this area. Would you be willing to take a few minutes to answer a few questions and offer your suggestions to help us?
3. Provide copies of the interview worksheet “Listening to Your Neighbor.”
4. Share that this is about interviewing people in your neighborhoods simply to listen. You may want to role play an interview to give people some ideas about how to draw out answers to the questions provided. Your coach can help you think through how to do this.
5. Conduct the interviews and prepare a summary of interview worksheet for each interview.
6. Convene a feedback session with those who conducted the interviews so they can share what they learned through listening to their neighbors.
7. GT incorporates this feedback into the Summary Listening Report.

Preparing Summary Listening Report

1. Provide an overview of what you did and describe what worked and what didn't
2. Report primary themes that emerged through each listening experience
 - a. Dwelling experiences
 - b. Member Interviews
 - c. Neighbors
 - i. Walking or observing
 - ii. Interviews
3. Note particular stories that emerged that provided perspective or insight
4. Note key images or metaphors that emerged
5. Provide an overall summary of what was learned from this Listening to Learn

Providing Feedback to Vestry

1. Suggest try to meet with Vestry for a "special meeting"
2. Begin with Dwelling
3. Go through report section by section inviting their observations and feedback
4. End by exploring implications this report has for the future of the church

Providing Feedback to Congregation

A few tips:

- Finalize Summary Listening Report
- Schedule meeting at time conducive for people to come
- Include food if possible!
- Determine a method for capturing what you hear.
- Pay particular attention to who is energized by this activity. These people could be important partners for you as you continue on this journey.

(More details will be provided in the future for conducting this meeting.)

Timeline of Step 1 Activities—Check List

January – February 2017

- Initial training in Step 1: Listening to Learn
- Guiding Teams roll out Dwelling in the Word to 2 or 3 existing groups in their congregations.
- Guiding Teams Plan and Schedule Interviews of Listening to One Another
- Guiding Teams Plan and Schedule Neighborhood Walks or Observation Locations
- Guiding Teams Plan and Schedule Interviews with Neighbors

February - April 2017:

- Dwelling in the Word whenever GT meets
 - Guiding Teams collect and summarize what learning
- Listening to One Another:
 - Guiding Teams conduct interviews with members
 - Guiding Teams collect and summarize all interviews
- Guiding Teams conduct Neighborhood Walks or Observing Locations
 - Introduce “Listening and/or Observing the Neighbors”
 - Guiding Teams collect and summarize all reports
- Guiding Teams conduct Listening to Neighbors Interviews
 - Introduce “Listening to Neighbors”
 - Guiding Teams collect and summarize all interviews
- Guiding Teams conduct feedback sessions
 - With Vestry
 - With Congregation

May 2017:

- Guiding Teams prepare final Summary Listening Report
- Guiding Teams participate in May Training Day on Discerning