



Strategic Growth Initiative



Why Strategic Growth Initiative

God's dream for University Baptist Church has expressed itself in many iterations in the last 72 years. One thing has remained consistent: we are called to faithfully be the presence of Jesus in Baton Rouge.

It is a new chapter of University Baptist Church. It is a chapter filled with an extraordinary opportunity to create authentic community among our members, pivot this community to a sense of openness to Baton Rouge, meet the needs around us in real and unique ways and strengthen our journey together through new opportunities for theological dialogue and spiritual formation.

As we discover the new iteration of God's dream, we must open our eyes to the growing and changing neighborhood around UBC. Within one square mile of UBC's campus, homes are being flipped by middle-aged and young families, thousands of apartments have been built, startup business are sparking, and 50,000 plus students and faculty converge onto LSU every day.

God is doing something new. However, are we in the position to faithfully step into this new thing God is doing?

UBC has been working on a strategic growth initiative for some time now. We have reevaluated how we encounter guests online (website and social media) and when they join us on Sunday morning (Sunday Experience Initiative). We have reorganized our personnel structure to position the church to care for its current and future needs.

This new phase of the Strategic Growth Initiative is designed to maximize our capacity to love our neighbors and make disciples for Jesus through the expansion of MDO, maturing of Connect Group ministries, Soccer Academy, Arts Academy, Spiritual Formation Groups, intentional process for first time guests into full membership, care training for various group leaders (Spiritual Formation teachers, Deacons, Governing Board, Staff, and care teams), diversifying worship experiences, age-specific recruiting for membership, and other pertinent facets.

Through the Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI), we will consider the message we are presenting (marketing, ministries, worship, etc.), the invitation we are giving, and the connection we make with people while they are with us.

The SGI is a discernment process, not intended to get bogged down with policies, procedures, and committees to the point that a conversation cannot even begin until at least 6-months after the conception of the idea. This process is about substance over form, fluidity over bureaucracy, organic over mechanical, and spiritual over administrative.

The SGI is an invitation into an extraordinary conversation about who we are, why we do what we do, and how we might experience exponential growth. Conversations will lead to brainstorming, testing of ideas, discernment of God's leadership, and maneuvering to step into new practices.

Get Connected

You Matter to the Process

Each member, whether the newest among us or tenured, has something to bring to this process.

You have immeasurable gifts, strengths, dreams, assets, wisdom, and insights. Each one of us brings a unique piece to the puzzle of this process.

The desire is to engage in a church-wide process, not seeking passive spectators, but active collaborators in the building of a multi-generational church.

This initiative is an invitation to share our presence. Will you join the conversation?

Development of Church-Wide SGI Teams

The Governing Board will serve as an ongoing advisory council to the Strategic Growth Initiative. Through the Governing Board, Ministerial Staff, and Senior Pastor, various teams will be created and enlisted to manage the multiple facets of the initiative. A solitary team should not manage the magnitude of this process; instead, various teams can be created to focus on specific items of the SGI.

In a sense, the SGI will be led by a variety of teams that will encompass church members and staff with the purpose of discerning how God is leading us to grow University Baptist Church.

The desire is for this to be a church-wide collaborative initiative with a vast number of members joining groups that reflect their passions and giftedness.

A potential composition of the group would include members of the Governing Board serving as point persons and/or chairpersons on various teams. These teams could be composed of various enlisted individuals and representatives from specific areas included in the SGI.

The desire is for the teams to work collaboratively, creatively, and strategically. The teams will have a diversity of individuals from various age and ministry groups of UBC.

The teams will partner alongside existing governing bodies, committees, and ministries to implement the initiative.

Beginning in July, UBC will start to receive information about the initiative, the various teams forming, and how to join the process.

On September 8, UBC will host an information session during the Sunday School hour. The goal is to help lay the foundation for the beginning of SGI process, as well as answer questions about the initiative and process. Donuts and coffee will be provided.

On September 22 at 4:30 pm, UBC will host a church-wide gathering, at which we will focus on casting a vision for the initiative and have first meetings of the teams.

UBC will also host second Sunday luncheons for teams to gather for a free meal and meeting time after worship.

Each team will formulate the conversation, measurable goals and objectives, and frequency of their meetings.

The teams will submit updates to the Governing Board and Senior Pastor on a monthly basis.

For more detailed information about the SGI Teams, please see the SGI Team Resource section.

Philosophy

Deliberate Strategic Items

Yes, “deliberate strategic items” is intentionally redundant. Some of the strategic items conveyed in this process are deliberate interjections of the pastoral staff. These items have been discerned from the guidance of the Holy Spirit and intensely prayed over. That is not intended to sound overtly pious, but a humble admission of where God seems to be speaking to particular members of the staff.

In other words, some of the pastoral staff have an agenda. It is a pure and transparent agenda to see University Baptist Church better care for its members and expand its reach to the community.

Additionally, some of the items presented in this process are proven methods of growth for congregations from the experience of the pastoral staff and expertise of ministry consultants.

However, while some portions of this process are deliberate, the goal is to discover new and unseen initiatives to add to the plan through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the leadership of team members. Furthermore, the deliberate items added to this process are not finalized or unchangeable, but rather open-ended topics for the development and maturation of the team.

Evaluatory Measure of Success

When a church embarks on such a process, many will want to know how we will measure success. Will it be by a surge in membership, an uptick in contributions, or the commencement of a new ministry initiative?

It can be a theological challenge to measure God-driven success by some of the standard metrics of success (surge in membership, an uptick in contributions, the commencement of new ministry initiative).

Does one feel successful if they felt faithful to God but the results of their work do not produce numerical success?

At the same time, can numerical growth measure the development of spiritual formation and community?

Would numerical growth, both in membership and contributions, be a fantastic experience? Absolutely.

Would the beginning of a new innovative ministry be extraordinary? Definitely.

While we do not wish to discount these metrics, UBC will contemplate a new evaluative measure of success. This success will be measured by our willingness to step faithfully into this process together, the sharing of our (individual and collective) giftedness and strengths for the growth of UBC, the sense of community fostered through this process, and the enhancement of spiritual formation within individuals.

What if success is evaluated by our willingness not to be passive spectators of this process, but active collaborators in the building of a multi-generational church?

Spiritual Formation Groups

Spiritual formation is at the heart of who we are and why we do what we do as followers of Jesus. In turn, the church is the personification of our collective who and why.

From the Gospels, Jesus gives us an easy model: Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples. The focus on spiritual formation will zero in on making disciples, the ongoing process of becoming more like Jesus.

UBC has a healthy Sunday Spiritual Formation program, along with several weekday Bible study groups. Additional opportunities were created in the last year, including Off-Limits Conversations and the weekday theology conversation group.

The SGI will examine the current opportunities offered for each age group (children, teenagers, college students, young adults, adults, and senior adults) and how these opportunities might be enhanced and supported, and potentially create new opportunities.

The goal is to enhance the depth, variety, and fullness of the spiritual formation opportunities offered to UBC members and friends of the faith community. Additionally, we want to examine our method of raising and empowering new leaders with the focus of spiritual formation.

SGI Emphases

Age-Specific Recruiting

The phrase “Age-Specific Recruiting” could cause an awkward pause upon reading for the first time. *What do you mean by recruiting? Are churches really in the business of recruiting?*

The answer to these questions is a resounding “yes.” Churches have and will always be in the business of recruiting. While we might not use this language, nor have we thought about it in these terms, evangelism and discipleship are the ongoing processes of recruiting follower of Jesus to be part of a faith community. The mission of the church is to transform the world, one person at a time, with the invitation to follow Jesus. The efficacy of the life and work of a specific congregation will either draw or deter new members.

Often churches struggling to grow or who are plateauing look to the growth of large/mega churches, wondering why God is blessing them and not us. Most megachurches have grown, yes by the will of God, but also because they are actively recruiting people to be a part of their church.

So, let’s clarify the meaning of age-specific recruiting.

First, we need to think strategically about what we are offering and engage persons of various age groups, whether Silent/Traditionalists (born before 1945), Baby Boomers (after 1945), Generation X (1965-1976), Millennials (1977-1995), or Gen Z (1996 to today). We will consider our message, opportunities, and ongoing points of connection.

Secondly, we need to think strategically about inviting a variety of age groups to be a part of our faith community.

Too often churches identify a specific age group that is lacking from the church, thinking, “How can we reach young people.” However, churches that want to fulfill the call to be intergenerational, must turn their focus to how to be a dynamic congregation for all age groups, not just a specific age group that might be lacking.

Theologically, experientially, and financially, the church needs all age groups represented.

Part of this evaluation process will be to study how we currently connect with the various age groups, as well as considering how we can improve and find new ways to connect with these age groups.

Conversations for this process will require the study of the preferred communication style, motivational factors, and priority factors for each age group. Resources for study should include Pew Research, GIS, and U.S. Census data.

Note that the contemplation of a specific age group should also entail consideration of the marital and parental status of individuals.

Care System

UBC has a formal and informal system of caring for guests.

The Sunday Experience Initiative was introduced in September, giving deacons and various volunteer groups a step-by-step process of encountering guests. Greeters are charged with welcoming guests, introducing them to other members within the worship space, collecting the guest's information, providing a gift from the church, following up with the guest after worship, submitting the guest's information to the office, and following up with the guest within the next few days.

The informal system of caring for guests comes from UBC members who take it upon themselves to engage in conversations with guests, inviting them to sit with them in worship or to attend Spiritual Formation, and sometimes inviting the guests to lunch after worship.

Part of this process will be to evaluate these current systems, find how they can be improved, how better serve the guests, and how they can empower the congregation as a whole.

Additionally, we should also consider what it would look like for UBC to have a formal system for each potential interaction a guest might have with UBC, whether on Sunday morning (worship, spiritual formation, or Church of the Nations), Sunday evening, Family Tree Café, Connect Groups, Off-Limits, and so on. In other words, what would it look like for UBC to utilize a uniform system across all ministries and potential connections with guests?

A couple of questions to consider...

What does that process look like? How do we train various ministry leaders, deacons, and staff to be fully equipped to care for guests? Who else needs to receive training?

How do we train the entire congregation to be familiar with this system and to engage in creating an authentic and formal process of hospitality? What tools can we use to equip our members to care for guests, such as local restaurant gift cards to take guests out for lunch after worship?

What does the process look like from being a first-time guest, to a deeper relationship with UBC to full membership?

Expansion of MDO

The Mother's Day Out program is one of the marquee ministries of UBC. It is self-sustaining, financially sound, and one of the most effective ways to connect with families. More specifically, the MDO has a continuous waiting list and made a \$10,000 profit in the last year.

To cultivate a broader reach to families, better connectivity between MDO families and UBC, financial aid to families in need, and to provide financial resources for UBC, we will begin formalizing a process of expanding the MDO.

The following is a snapshot of how the program can expand:

Connectivity of MDO Families and UBC

While the expansion of the MDO could provide strategic financial revenue for UBC's ministry, the primary reason for this initiative will be to enhance the connectivity between MDO families and University Baptist Church.

One strategic step in this direction has already taken place in 2018-2019 with the development of the Minister of Children and Young Families charge to provide pastoral care to the MDO. This connection will be improved and leveraged for better effectiveness.

Additionally, there is an informal system of connecting MDO families and staff to UBC events, which includes the Fall Gathering, Live Nativity, Spring Gathering, and Soccer Academy.

Nevertheless, the Strategic Growth Team, along with the MDO Board, should begin considering better ways to care for families and staff of the MDO as it pertains to inviting them into the various facets of UBC. While some MDO families and staff are already committed to local churches; many are unchurched or de-churched (previous church attendees), and they are in need of the love of Christ.

Change in Rates

The MDO monthly rates are on par with most daycares in the area. In fact, the MDO monthly rates are less than most other providers. However, the MDO has not seen a rate increase in over five years.

A slight increase in the rates would provide additional resources for the MDO and give an opportunity for annual teacher and teacher assistant raises.

The potential rate increase would need to be researched and would not occur until January of 2020 or later.

Provide Daycare Hours

While the base of the MDO is stay-at-home parents, many of our existing and potential clients are families seeking full-time childcare for their children. The current working hours of 8:55 am to 2:00 pm, do not afford families full-time care.

The expansion of hours could include an earlier drop-off and later pick-up hours for paying families. The normal preschool hours of 9:00-2:00 pm would continue, with the additional option of pre and post-care. The additional charge for this service should be well researched.

Efficient Financial Chart and Service

To help with potential changes to hours, services, and variety of billing amounts by each client, the church can provide an efficient financial chart and payment system.

The chart would include various billings for specific sets of services. Here is an example of the potential breakdown of the groups: Group 1 (9:00 am – 2:00 pm) \$ __, Group 2 (7:30 am – 2:00 pm) \$ __, Group 3 (9:00 am – 6:00 pm) \$ __, Group 4 (7:30 am – 6:00 pm) \$ __.

These financial transactions can be set up on a monthly recurring draft through the Realm and/or Square systems. If the monthly billing group fluctuates for families, the options can be setup in an online payment menu through Square. A portal for the payment method could be connected to the website, much like the Family Tree Café donations and the Soccer Academy registration.

For an example of the online menu, please see <https://squareup.com/store/UBC-BR>.

Capacity Expansion and Space Usage Changes

A consistent waiting list for the MDO shows us that there is a need for quality childcare and education. Additionally, the neighborhoods around the church continue to gentrify generationally to younger families with children. Therefore, part of this initiative would include a capacity expansion of the MDO.

The expansion would need to be strategic in development, studying which age groups would see the best return on expansion.

For example, while there is always a need for infant care, this age group tends to be the most expensive to care for due to the child-to-caregiver ratio and care equipment (cribs, diaper changing stations, etc.).

The movement to capacity expansion would bring a change in space usage. The two options for expansion include the rest of the education building's first floor or the second floor of the education building. The Louisiana code would allow for certain age groups to utilize the second floor.

Financial Planning of Expansion

The additional revenue for the expansion would be strategically planned, including but not limited to:

- Endowed scholarship and financial assistance to families in need.
- Promotion of a proven MDO teacher to an assistant director role.
- Subsidy of janitorial staff salary for MDO use
- Subsidy for building changes, such as an elevator.

Connect Groups

Connect Groups began in the fall of 2018 as an outlet for creating a safe and authentic community within and outside UBC.

Connect Groups are designed to foster community through like-interest connections. A variety of individuals gather around activities they enjoy doing with other people who also enjoy doing the same things, such as reading a book, cooking, cycling, swimming, art, and so on.

We have several active groups, including Book Club, Cycling and Swimming, Guitar Lessons, Ladies Group, Cooking Club, Golf Group, Guys Group, Midday Theology Group, Off-Limits Conversations, Singles Group, Playdate Group, and Running Group.

Part of the SGI will be to enhance the Connect Group system, recruiting of leaders, and marketing to members and non-members. The goal is to see Connect Groups as one of the primary forms of enhancing community within UBC and creating outreach to the community. More specifically, the goal is to have each member of UBC active in at least one group and actively inviting friends to join the group.

Diverse Worship Experience

Starting in our days near LSU and through the tenure of Dr. Harlan, University Baptist Church has a rich and vibrant history of music. At times, the vision of worship has been expressed through piano-led anthems, while other times we have belted out familiar hymns to the strum of a guitar.

There are a couple of things we know about our existing worship experience. We are enriched each week by an excellent choir. We are blessed to host multiple LSU scholarship students. We are treated to the tunes of a men's quartet.

At the same time, we have musically inclined members of the congregation that have yet to share their talents to add to a full worship experience. Additionally, we have not quite lived up to the full potential of a collaborative partnership with musicians from the University, whether vocalists or instrumentalists.

As we engage this next chapter of our music worship experience, the goal is to create a diverse and rich musical experience that connects with all of our existing members and guests.

Many churches have struggled to find the sweet spot of music that touches the hearts of worship participants. Churches have swung back and forth between traditional, contemporary, and blended experiences.

The SGI team will consider what it looks like for UBC to step into a dynamic worship experience by considering what it would look like for UBC to incorporate the staple of the choir, the personal experience of singing new and familiar songs to well-known and new tunes, while also engaging in moments of musical reflection to enhance the overarching focus of worship.

In other words, what would it look like for UBC to not to be defined by a particular music model? Instead, what would it look like for UBC to offer a diverse and vibrant musical experience that encompasses classic, contemporary, and experimental worship?

The development of a diverse worship experience is not an attempt to be all things to all people. Instead, the goal is for each worship participant to experience at least one song in each service that speaks to their worship style.

Academy

In the Spring of 2019, UBC offered a Soccer Academy Preview. This four-week experience saw over 35 children learn the basics of soccer through activities and scrimmages while building community with other children their age, including UBC members.

Building off this success, UBC will be offering a six-week academy in the fall. Children, three to ten years old, will be broken up into age and skill appropriate groups for the activities and games for one hour. The activities are designed to teach the fundamentals of soccer through fun drills and exercises.

The key to this academy experience is that practice and games are incorporated into one hour on a Saturday morning. This frees families to have their whole day open to other activities, instead of managing multiple games for more than one child on a given Saturday and practice day.

This offers UBC a unique experience to connect with young families and their children.

The Strategic Growth Initiative will include caring for the development of these families and how we connect them to UBC.

Online Presence

Every human has 168 hours in a week. For most, the church interacts with a member one hour out of the 168. This one hour is typically represented in the Sunday morning worship experience. This amount of time fluctuates based on whether or not an individual participates in Sunday Spiritual Formation, committee meetings, and other church-related activities.

Nevertheless, the church has the opportunity to interact in the other 167 hours of a given week. One way to intersect with members and potential guests is through UBC's online presence.

A recent Pew Research study found that out of the 7 billion people in the world, 2.5 billion are on social media.¹

In the last year, UBC has gone under a tremendous overhaul of our online presence, including:

- The reboot of the website
- Development of a presence on Instagram and YouTube
- The debut of more than a dozen UBC videos, featuring stories of church members
- The invitation and training of member participation on social media platforms through sharing, like, commenting, and checking-in during UBC activities
- A comprehensive social media scheduling process that demonstrates the identity and upcoming opportunities of UBC

¹ Pew Research Institute, Social Media Facts Sheet, <https://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/>

However, research has found that people tend to interact with online videos about faith or spirituality.² Cisco predicts that by 2021, 82% of all consumer internet content will be video.³

Therefore, part of the SGI process will be a comprehensive examination of our online presence, evaluation of the content presented through our platforms, and the improvement of interaction with church members and potential guests.

The online presence focus of the SGI might include the live streaming of worship services, the creation of video shorts about our identity and core values, and video versions of sermons.

Resource Guide for SGI Teams

What's This Going to Look Like?

As processes such as this begin, there are a lot of questions, such as:

What is expected of individuals? What is expected of the team?

Who leads the team? What is expected of the team leader?

How should a team meeting take shape? How often will we meet?

What are we supposed to accomplish?

How are we supposed to take action on our questions, findings, and practical steps?

Will there be food involved in our meetings?

Okay, a smaller percentage of people are asking that last question. But you have to admit, aren't you a little hungry now?

Second Sunday Team Luncheons

Let's tackle the first obstacle for most people, time. People are busy. We are all busy. And the thought of adding one more thing to our schedules seems very unenticing.

To create a more convenient meeting time and to avoid additional weekday evening meetings, UBC will offer a free lunch on second Sundays after worship for SGI teams.

Teams will be encouraged to grab lunch and begin to gather for conversations.

Free childcare will be available for participating SGI team members.

Team leaders should check with team members and report luncheon and childcare numbers to the church office by 12:00 pm on Thursday before the second Sunday.

² Barna Group, How Technology Is Changing Millennials Faith, <https://www.barna.com/research/how-technology-is-changing-millennial-faith/#.UmFdf2R4b51>

³ Cisco, Cisco Visual Networking Index, <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/white-paper-c11-741490.html>

A Spiritual Conversation and Discernment Process

The SGI is intended to be an organic process driven by the spiritual conversations and discernment of the specific initiative teams. The Governing Board and Pastoral Staff will share insight, ideas, and guidance for each particular area of the initiative. At the same time, each SGI team has the autonomy to converse, explore, and create measurable goals and objectives.

At the same time, the desire is for each SGI team to follow a logical procedure:

1. Express hopes for the specific initiative
2. Evaluate existing UBC programs connected to the specific initiative
3. Research about the specific initiative
4. Explore enhancements and new opportunity for the specific initiative
5. Establish measurable goals and objectives for the specific initiative
6. Share findings and goals with the Governing Board and Pastoral Staff

Example: Age-Specific Recruiting-Baby Boomers

This team might begin by talking about why Baby Boomers bring a unique facet to the church and what they hope to accomplish by recruiting more Baby Boomers to the church.

The team might then begin to talk about the various ministries that currently connect with Baby Boomers, such as Sunday Spiritual Formation, Connect Groups, and Sunday worship.

The team might discover through research that many Baby Boomers are now entering various stages of retirement, traveling seasons, grandparent life, and taking care of aging parents.

The team might find more research that indicates a shift in church participation from Baby Boomers, which included an exit from the church in the 1990s and early 2000s, but now a rapid return in participation.⁴

The next step in the process might lead to interviewing existing Baby Boomer members of UBC and age-specific members of the community about their interaction with the church.

These conversations might lead the team to formulate several strategic goals around enhancing existing ministries and formulating new ministries to recruit 55-74-year-olds better.

The team might formulate a priority level on each of these goals, along with a timeline, reporting these matters to the Governing Board and Pastoral Staff.

Monthly Update

As the team gathers for conversation and the development of measurable goals and objectives, the team leader should submit a short monthly update to the Governing Board and Senior Pastors.

The updates should be brief and to the point.

⁴ USC Edward R. Roybal Institute on Aging, <https://news.usc.edu/140334/baby-boomers-and-religion/>

The updates should be sent to manager@ubc-br.org with the memo “___ (Team Name) SGI Team ___ (Month) Update” by the second Wednesday of every month.

Measurable Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Growth Initiative is designed to move from big ideas to measurable goals and objectives. On the micro level, this means that each team will be responsible for developing measurable goals and objectives.

A popular acronym for this kind of process is S.M.A.R.T: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Specific

Your goal should be clear and specific, otherwise you won't be able to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated to achieve it. When drafting your goal, try to answer the five "W" questions:

What do I want to accomplish?

Why is this goal important?

Who is involved?

Where is it located?

Which resources or limits are involved?

Measurable

It's important to have measurable goals, so that you can track your progress and stay motivated. Assessing progress helps you to stay focused, meet your deadlines, and feel the excitement of getting closer to achieving your goal.

A measurable goal should address questions such as:

How much?

How many?

How will I know when it is accomplished?

Achievable

Your goal also needs to be realistic and attainable to be successful. In other words, it should stretch your abilities but still remain possible. When you set an achievable goal, you may be able to identify previously overlooked opportunities or resources that can bring you closer to it.

An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:

How can I accomplish this goal?

How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?

Relevant

This step is about ensuring that your goal matters to you, and that it also aligns with other relevant goals. We all need support and assistance in achieving our goals, but it's important to

retain control over them. So, make sure that your plans drive everyone forward, but that you're still responsible for achieving your own goal.

A relevant goal can answer "yes" to these questions:

Does this seem worthwhile?

Is this the right time?

Does this match our other efforts/needs?

Am I the right person to reach this goal?

Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

Time-bound

Every goal needs a target date, so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals.

A time-bound goal will usually answer these questions:

When?

What can I do six months from now?

What can I do six weeks from now?

What can I do today?

Timeline of Process

For each SGI team, the process will take a different timeline. The goal is to discern and develop measurable goals and objectives for growing UBC.

At the same time, teams should not feel rushed or over-eager to prolong this process. There is a "sweet spot" of a progressive pace that groups should find.

As the team leader checks in with the Governing Board and Pastoral Staff, he or she might be coached to slow down or quicken the pace of the group's conversation and goal setting.

Guidelines for Healthy Dialogue

We come to this process as equals. However, equality can often feel dissolved when opposing personalities, communication styles, and varying agendas come together.

Therefore, we want to offer a few guidelines for healthy team dialogue.⁵

1. Be Open with Each Other.

Be candid with each other, openly expressing ideas, opinions, problems and feelings with other team members.

⁵ Extraordinary Team, 10 Ways Team Leaders Can Encourage Robust Dialogue, <https://www.extraordinaryteam.com/10-ways-team-leaders-can-encourage-robust-dialogue/>

2. **Poll Others Where Appropriate.**
Ask others to voice their ideas.
3. **Be Innovative.**
Be responsive to new ideas and different ways of doing things.
4. **Support Other Ideas.**
Clearly express and support your views as well as the views of others on the team.
5. **Be Helpful.**
Support each other by providing assistance to others, asking for and offering help.
6. **Challenge Ideas.**
Ask tough, probing questions. Be willing to debate the issues without taking it personally.
Find realistic solutions.
7. **Balance Courage & Consideration.**
Have the maturity to balance the need to say what needs to be said and to listen to what others are saying.
8. **Generate Light; Not Heat.**
Conflict is normal and natural to the process – it’s all in the way the team handles it.
Manage the inevitable disagreements in a healthy, constructive way – and don’t let it escalate into a fire.
9. **Park it.**
Stay focused on the topic at hand and put tangents in the parking lot.
Develop a team code word or cue that recognizes and puts tangents in their place.
10. **Provide Feedback.**
Feedback is often called “the breakfast of champions.” Periodically point out what’s working and what’s not working so the team can continue the constructive behaviors and adjust the not-so-positive behaviors. To improve dialogue, create a code word, cue or movement to let team members know when they are not engaging in a robust dialogue. For example, gently knock on the table three times to let people know when they are dominating the discussion or generating conflict through unhealthy dialogue.

Celebrating Ideas and Progress

The work of the various SGI teams is the work of the church. Therefore, we want to celebrate the work of God through the Window, website, social media platforms, in worship, and other ways.

As teams face different points in the process timeline, the pastoral staff might ask you to share a story (update, celebration, breakthrough, etc.) with the church. At the same time, the team might sense a need to share their story. Therefore, groups are encouraged to communicate this desire with the pastoral staff.

Research Tools

Pew Research on Generations: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/generations-and-age/>

Silent: <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/silent/>

Baby Boomers: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/baby-boomers/>

Generation X: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/generation-x/>

Millennials: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/millennials/>

Generation Z: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/generation-z/>

Pew Research on Religion:

Age Gap: <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/13/the-age-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/>

American Purpose of Meaning: <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/11/20/where-americans-find-meaning-in-life/>

Census Data: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/batonrougecitylouisiana/RHI225218>

Parish Economic Facts & Trends: <https://brac.org/economic-development>

EBR GIS: <https://web-ebrgis.opendata.arcgis.com/>