

Building a Church for the Unchurched: Sociological Influences

Instructor's Guide

**Evangelism Resources
USA/Canada Mission/Evangelism Department
Church of the Nazarene, International**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Director of Course Development..... Dr. Lyle Pointer

Author of Module Dr. Lyle Pointer

Curriculum Developer Stan Christopherson

Permission is granted to copy this material for local church training. No part of this material may be copied, photocopied, or reproduced in any form for the purposes of sale.

**© 2003 Evangelism Resources
USA/Canada Mission/Evangelism
Church of the Nazarene, International**

All Rights Reserved

Building a Church for the Unchurched: Sociological Influences

The table below identifies each module section, the time allotted for each section, and a brief description of the section's objective. When you are familiar with this module, you may want to teach from this page rather than the detailed information.

MODULE AT A GLANCE

| SECTION | TIME | PAGE | BRIEF DESCRIPTION |
|-------------------------------|----------|------|--|
| 1. Module Introduction | 5 mins. | 5 | ·Introduce module, objectives, outline. |
| 2. Lecture | 25 mins. | 6 | ·Facilitates or presents information that will bring the participants together as a team. The facilitator will encourage the teams to work together to enhance the morale of their church and begin developing a sense of anticipation. |
| 3. Small Group Exercise | 15 mins. | 10 | ·Participants work in teams to reflect on the information presented in the lecture and begin applying the concepts. |
| 4. Discussion | 5 mins. | 10 | ·Participants share thoughts about the information presented and insights about how the information will assist in their leadership. ·Two possible questions to start the discussion in addition to the questions answered during the exercise are: What new ideas or thoughts did God reveal to you? What new techniques will you begin using as you think about others in your church? |
| 5. Action Planning/ Reporting | 20 mins. | 11 | ·Participants begin preparing for their homework assignment: Based on the information presented and ideas generated from the training session, develop a project (or plan) for building morale and bring people together. ·In preparing for these activities, participants discuss how, who, when, and expected results. ·Participants will report the results of the activities a at the next workshop. |
| 6. Module Wrap-up | 5 mins. | 11 | ·Close the module with your final comments regarding the topic. |
| Total Module Time: 75 minutes | | | |

Permission to copy for local church training.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

The following information will help you prepare to instruct this module.

Review the material and make notes of specific areas for special emphasis.

- The instructional material includes a copy of each slide.
- The material includes suggested narrative at points where instructions or transitions are important. The suggested narrative is the *italics*. Even experienced facilitators might want to use the suggested narrative to insure the key information is communicated. However, you may feel more comfortable using your own words as you become more familiar with the module.
- Check to insure the following materials are available:
- Powerpoint presentations/transparencies (transparency masters can be produced from the Powerpoint slides)
- participant booklet (copy as needed)

Gather the following materials:

- transparency markers
- laptop for PowerPoint presentation (if used)
- pens and/or pencils
- other material you want to use

Make copies of the following material (one for each participant):

- participant booklet
- handouts

Check the classroom for:

- TV/VCR (if necessary)
- overhead projector
- chalkboard, whiteboard or flip chart
- sufficient number of tables and chairs for the participants.



Arrange the room so that each church team sits around an individual table and you have ample room to move among the teams.

Your instructor's material contains the following icons:



Special instructions or suggestions



Time suggestions



PowerPoint Presentation with its corresponding number

Permission to copy for local church training.

I. MODULE INTRODUCTION (5 Minutes)

| |
|---------------------|
| PPT #5, Slide #1 |
|---------------------|

Prior to the beginning of the session, i.e. as participants are returning from break, put slide #1 (Building a Church for the Unchurched: Sociological Influences) on the screen.



Distribute Participant Material

Let the participants know the material is theirs to keep and encourage them to take notes. The participant material includes:

- purpose
- objectives
- “fill in the blanks” for the lecture
- application exercises

*The purpose of this module is to **develop a better understanding of the sociological influences that affect church growth.***

The objectives for this module are:

- Examine why people don't attend church.*
- Look at ways to reach the unchurched.*
- Explore incorporation versus assimilation*
- Applying sociological principles.*

Review the process for this module :

- Introduction..... 5 mins.
- Lecture 25 mins.
- Small Group Exercise 15 mins.
- Discussion..... 5 mins.
- Action Planning/Reporting 20 mins.
- Module Wrap-up..... 5 mins.

II. LECTURE

Permission to copy for local church training.

(25 Minutes)

Introduction

What do you think are the reasons people do not attend church?



Give participants time to respond and use a whiteboard to list responses. Elaborate on some of their ideas (or suggest some other concepts).

A survey done in 1988 by Gallup says that the major complaint of unchurched people is that the church is too preoccupied with organization and programs.

PPT #5,
Slide #2

Put slide #2 (Unchurched Americans) on the screen.

I. Unchurched Americans (Gallup 1988)

1. 75-80% of all churches in the U.S. are not growing
2. In the last decade, an average of 3000 people dropped out of church in America each week.
3. 44% of all Americans have no church affiliation.
4. Of those who have no church affiliation, the following statistics apply:
 - a. 77% pray
 - b. 58% believe in life after death
 - c. 63% believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God
 - d. 44% have made a commitment to Christ in the past
 - e. 58% are open to returning to the church

II. Reaching the unchurched

1. Gallup identifies reasons why people would come back to church:
 - a. **52%** said they would probably become active in the church again

Permission to copy for local church training.

- b. **17%** said that they would become active if there were a pastor or friend with whom they could **discuss** their religious beliefs.
 - c. **15%** to discuss spiritual **needs**
 - d. **14%** to a church **concerned** with bettering society
 - e. **14%** to a church with good **preaching**
 - f. **13%** to a church where they were **invited** by a member, and if they liked the people
 - g. **13%** to a church with a good religious **education** program for youth
 - h. **12%** as a result of a **change** in my family situation like marriage, separation, or the birth of a child
2. What are church **shoppers** looking for?
- a. A warm and friendly **welcome**
 - b. A place where children will **feel** welcomed, and want to return
 - c. Parents are seeking new **friends**
 - d. Church shoppers usually choose a **larger** church
 - e. Church shoppers are apt to ask: “Where will I be needed most, and where can I **serve** God effectively?”
 - f. They want a church that is **joyful** and accustomed to celebrating
 - g. A church that will meet the religious and spiritual **needs** they feel
 - h. They **identify** with the pastor
 - i. Someone from the church made **contact** with them **shortly** after their first visit at that church
 - j. Church shoppers were caught up with the high level of **enthusiasm** and variety of activities
3. National trends
- a. A return to traditional values including renewed popularity for Sunday School and a rise in church membership
 - b. Younger adults are looking for:
 - 1. good **fellowship**
 - 2. good Bible **teaching**
 - 3. a source of **encouragement**
 - 4. **inspiration**
 - 5. a sense of **meaning** and purpose for life

Permission to copy for local church training.

- c. The church has become known as a ministry **center** as well as a meeting place
- d. It is important for the church to **practice** what it is preaching
- e.

III. Incorporation vs. Assimilation

1. Incorporation

- a. Is the process of helping newcomers feel socially **comfortable** with the church
- b. Takes place **before** evangelism can occur
- c. Is necessary before people will **listen** to church members talk about God
 - 1. If social discomfort is diminished **quickly**, the person is apt to return to worship
 - 2. Remember that you never have a **second** chance for a first impression
- d. Means they are officially **accepted** (taken into membership)
- e. Implies newcomers may not be **missed** when absent
- f. Does not include turning to newcomers for **advice**
- g. Means they probably don't have many friends, just a few **acquaintances**

2. Assimilation

- a. Is the process of helping newcomers feel they are **accepted**
 - 1. The best test of being included in the fellowship is the measure of **trust** perceived by a person
 - 2. If people **feel** rebuffed, they do not stay
 - 3. When church leaders **trust** newcomers to chair a committee, to greet at the door, to run for an office, or to ask their **opinion/advice**, they feel assimilated
- b. Assures the person of being trusted and **sought** after
- c. Give the new person a feeling of **oneness** and integration in the church
- d. Means to be unofficially, but nevertheless certainly, **accepted**

Permission to copy for local church training.

1. Newcomers are probably **involved** in some friendship circles
2. They are ministering in a **meaningful** way
3. They are **missed** when absent
4. They have 5 to 7 **friends**

3. Application

- a. Plan events that encourage a **shared** experience
- b. Help people develop a history and **bond** with the church and its members
- c. Make sure to include **newcomers** in the activities of the church, especially social ones

IV. Applying Sociological Principles

1. People have a great capacity to influence **change** in others
 - a. We draw prospects for our church and the Lord from our **acquaintances** at work, school, clubs, etc.
 - b. People want a warm, loving, supportive and accepting atmosphere in which to learn to **live** for God
 - c. People desire others who will give and receive a ministry of **love**
2. People possess varying sociological **needs**
 - a. People need to **celebrate** (worship)
 - b. They need to **identify** with a larger group (congregation)
 - c. Some need to **fellowship** in a small group (class)
 - d. Others need **intimacy** (the cell group) in order to adequately handle life
3. The church must attempt to minister to a multitude of **perceived** human needs
4. People move in and out of **openness** to God and the church
5. We must minister to people where they **are**, not from the place we wish they were

PPT #5,
Slide #3

Put slide #3 (Engles Scale) on the screen.

6. New Christians have more **contacts** with the world than those who have been Christians for some time

Permission to copy for local church training.

7. People with **similar** life styles, values, racial and economic backgrounds tend to group together because they are most comfortable with like-minded people
8. People wish to serve the Lord **together**, not in **isolation**

III. SMALL GROUP EXERCISE (15 Minutes)

The small group exercise portion of the module provides an opportunity for the teams to discuss the information presented and how it applies to their church.

Please divide into your church teams and turn to the small group exercise in your material. Take the next 15 minutes to discuss the climate regarding church growth currently felt in your church, and some of the things you can do to improve the climate.

Questions from Small Group Exercise

1. What do church shoppers discover when they visit your congregation?
2. What are the needs to which your church is trying to respond?
How do we know if a person is assimilated into the life of the church?

Remain available during the exercise time to answer questions. Announce to the group when five minutes remain. Again announce to the group when two minutes remain.

IV. DISCUSSION (5 Minutes)

The discussion portion of the module provides an opportunity for people to share their thoughts about the material presented and questions resulting from the small group discuss.



If you're ahead of schedule, the discussion can go a few extra minutes. However, it's easy to lose track of time so watch the clock.

Permission to copy for local church training.

Call the group back together and open the floor for discussion. If the group is hesitant to discuss, start with one of the questions they discussed during the exercise. The questions were:

V. ACTION PLANNING/REPORTING (20 Minutes)

The homework assignment for this module is:

Based on the information presented, and ideas generated from this training session, develop a project (or plan) for helping people get 'connected' with your church.

Let's take about 20 minutes to discuss how you plan to use this information as a church. In your material you have an Action Planning/Reporting page with your homework assignment. In your teams discuss and document how you will complete this assignment before we meet again. You will probably need to continue this discussion later.

Move among the groups to answer specific questions. Listen for discussions that are not focused on developing a plan and guide them into developing a plan. Let the groups know when there are five minutes remaining and ask them to begin to conclude their discussions.

VI. MODULE WRAP-UP (5 Minutes)

This section provides an opportunity to close the module.

- Ask participants to share their thoughts about the module.
- Remind the participants to record their results and be prepared to share the progress at the next session.
- Answer any questions and provide encouragement.

Permission to copy for local church training.