

Greening the Congregation - 2010

Communicating With Your
Congregation

June 3, 2010

Joyce A. Lanning

A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

Tapping the Wisdom in the Room

- ◆ Seek to understand others' views better than your own
- ◆ Be generous with your own skills and experience – and inexperience
- ◆ Newsprint –
 - List things you want to know
 - List resources/experience/skills you're willing to offer

Creative Change Caveats

- ◆ Congregations have many priorities
- ◆ Capacity for volunteer attention may be limited but it can help to identify with a larger purpose
- ◆ You need not have everyone on board - spiritual leaders & maintenance staff help
- ◆ People want to feel that what they do makes a difference

Start Where You Are

- ◆ If energy and water efficiency save you money, why doesn't everyone automatically do it?
 - Not sure what's possible
 - Information about costs and benefits isn't always readily available
 - Those who bear the costs (changing behavior) may not see the benefits
 - Sometimes the changes seem harder than they really are

Invest in Information

- ◆ Internal Information
 - Environmental audit
 - Benchmarking
- ◆ Community Information & Education
 - Recycling opportunities
 - Utility savings opportunities
 - Participation in national programs
 - Resources for worship and education

Accentuate the Positive

- ◆ Acknowledge the guiding principles in your faith tradition for an ethic of environmental stewardship
- ◆ Look for and celebrate your congregation's past successes
- ◆ Should there be differences, work to create opportunities for mutual gain – “us”, not “them and us”

Creating & Sharing Your Vision

- ◆ Write your personal mission statement – keep **your** passion in your mind and heart
- ◆ Listen, learn, and address the concerns of different groups in your congregation to recruit allies
- ◆ Help translate abstract possibilities into concrete realities – show how each person can make a difference

Creating & Sharing Your Vision

- ◆ Acknowledge uncertainties, start with facts - don't overplay your hand
 - Emotional numbing
 - Single action bias
- ◆ Use both analytical and experiential approaches
- ◆ Consider a visible and achievable small project as you start or grow
- ◆ Remember that proactive patience can be rewarded


About Framing

- ◆ Framing is unavoidable – setting an issue within an appropriate context
 - Promotion (make something good happen: maximize gains)
 - Prevention (avoid having something bad happen: minimize losses)
- or
- Now (more relevant and urgent)
- Future (discount the importance)

About Framing

- ◆ Broaden your message to show the interconnections with other values:
 - Stewardship of Creation
 - Economically sound practice – savings
 - Good for the environment
 - Better for health (non-toxic cleaners)

Engaging Congregational Action

- ◆ Brainstorming with a small group
 - ◆ Learning – classes or study groups
 - ◆ Obvious needs and challenges
 - ◆ Activating congregation assets, skills and interests
 - ◆ Survey or consensus-building among possible options
 - ◆ Joining forces ...
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Look for Ways to Make Behavior Change Easy

- ◆ Where possible, change the default option to the desired one
 - Changing to 2-sided printing as the computer lab default option saved Rutgers University 1,280 trees annually
- ◆ Provide near-term incentives
 - Even publicity can be an incentive
- ◆ Put recycle bins in convenient places
- ◆ More ...

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