

CLOSE/REIMAGINE ACTIVITY

When fear and anxiety are present, they tend to crowd out creative thinking and imaginative ideas. In churches that feel pressure to fix a congregation before it shrinks to nonexistence, it's important to remember that there are numerous possibilities to be considered. This activity is one option. It may spark other ideas.

Time needed for activity

1 hour

Group size

Any number of current members and regular visitors

Steps for Activity

1. The facilitator should set the tone for this conversation by explaining that the meeting space is a safe place to dream and imagine. For example, one could note that there's an invisible "umbrella of mercy" over the room that shields everyone from judgment, criticism, and being assigned to new committees. The goal of this session is to let the conversation flow around the question "What if . . . ?" Every idea (crazy and wacky ones included) could be a stepping stone to discerning what God wants your church to do.
 - If you're doing this exercise in a small group (up to 12 people), provide a story (see options below) to each person or to small groups of two to three persons. Ask them to take some time to read through the story and answer the Facilitator's Questions (below) on their own.
 - If you're doing this in a large group (12+ people), you may want to ask small group leaders (identified in advance) to read through one of the stories before the activity. Have each leader tell their small group about the story they read. The small group can then answer the Facilitator's Questions (below) together.
2. Have each person or small group share what they discussed. Hand out sticky notes or small pieces of paper to each person. Invite participants to write down any "ah-ha" moments as they listen. The goal is to generate lots of ideas by the end of the story readings and discussions, expanding the group's creativity for discovering the possibilities that God could have for your church.

Stories:

- [*Bringing Coworking to Idle Church Space*](#)
- [*Sharing a Building Leads to a Shared Mission*](#)
- [*Sunday Night Football Church*](#)
- [*Ministering to the Grandchildren of the Lost Son*](#)
- [*What Does Church Planting Look Like Today?*](#)
- [*RedArrow Ministries: Ten Years of Growing in Place*](#)
- [*America's Epidemic of Empty Churches*](#)
- [*Houses of Worship Find New Life after Congregations Downsize*](#)
- [*A North Carolina Nonprofit Helps Churches Convert Property from Liabilities into Assets*](#)

Facilitator's Questions

After the activity, allow time for discussion around some questions like these:

1. What themes do you see emerging?
2. What got you most excited? What created energy in your conversations?
3. What community needs are not being fully met? How do these needs match the resources (skills, interests, finances) of your church?
4. What other conversations should you have in order to explore ideas that have emerged through this exercise?