

## CLOSING ACTIVITY

A church that decides to close is often torn between a desire to see God work through imagining new ministry that reaches their changing neighborhood and the reality that this new work will take time, energy, and resources that they don't have at their disposal. This activity helps you discern what new ministry opportunities may be available in your community, and how your congregation can envision devoting resources to them. In this way the church's legacy lives on through new ministry in the community.

### Time needed for activity

An initial 60-minute conversation, to create a plan to explore options in your community, which will be an ongoing process of listening and discernment

### Group size

Ideally a small group of people who are familiar with the church's ministry partners and budget. They should share the results of the conversation with the rest of the church.

### Steps for Activity

1. Read Acts 1:6-11. If you're willing, dwell in this passage, as you did in the "[Listening to God](#)" activity. As Jesus gets ready to end his ministry on earth, he tells his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NLT). The gospel began spreading into new locations as well as to different types of people who heard it. God's people in Jerusalem, who shared much of the same religious history and traditions for centuries, usually didn't associate with people from Samaria and other nations. As the gospel went out into new places and was shared with new people, the methods and models of ministry had to adapt to new contexts.
2. The community context around your church has also likely changed since your church began. How has your community changed in ways that your church has struggled to address? A [demographic study](#) can help you learn about your community (available from your [Resonate Global Mission Regional Team](#)). (In the United States the demographic report is called [MissionInsite](#). In Canada we recommend [Outreach Canada](#).) You may also choose to learn about these changing demographics through neighborhood associations or through your local and regional government offices.
3. Given what you've learned about your changing community context, whom could the gospel reach with an investment from your legacy? Draw a picture of the recipients, using visual elements that describe their character (for example, a picture of a family with young children, and both parents have a briefcase to show they both work full-time).
4. God may be asking you to leave a legacy that reaches this new people group. If the time, energy, and leadership to do the work to reach them is outside of your capabilities at this stage of your church's life, then that's validation that closing is a good decision. The resources you leave can be directed to start a new ministry for a particular purpose or people group. The next activity for this *Closing* stage, [Directing Funds](#), will give you ideas on how to leave a legacy that fulfills this vision.

## **Facilitator's Questions**

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

1. What surprises you about the demographics of your community today?
2. Whom do you know that fits a demographic in your community that your church hasn't been able to reach?  
What would it look like for the gospel to transform their heart and life?
3. What else do you need to learn about your community, and whom do you need to learn it from, before you can make a decision about how to invest in the future?