

INSTRUCTIONS FOR A POTLUCK OR PROGRESSIVE DINNER



One of the best ways for people to share is over food. Jesus knew this when he instituted communion – people who eat together feel connected.

There are two simple ways for this exercise to be done in one-day using meal formats: a potluck luncheon/dinner or a progressive dinner. Both are simple and fun. Both help people gather lots of info and share in meaningful communication and conversation. Both can be the beginning of shaping the culture of your congregation to be more intentional about asking good questions and listening to each other's answers.

In both cases, use the three half page handouts to give people the questions they will discuss. It helps to give people the sheets BEFORE the event and to ask them to spend some time jotting down ideas BEFORE they come. This way no one is caught cold and struggling for ideas. Everyone comes able to share. It also helps to copy the three question sheets on different colors of paper. This makes it easy to sort them out after the event and put like questions together. Be sure to collect everyone's responses at the end of the event!

For a progressive dinner: Use a three-course meal and organize people into groups that are manageable to fit in people's homes. Usually keeping groups to 6-8 people and defining groups by geography makes this most efficient. In a progressive dinner, people change houses after each course. The appetizer at one home. The main course at another. Dessert at another. Each group will need to plan or receive instruction about how to organize their food prior to the day of the event.

At each home, start with a prayer of blessing for the food and the time. Serve the course to be served when it works for the group. Then, one person take the lead at helping the group work through the questions on the sheet that is to be discussed during this course (Assets at appetizer, Wows with main course, and Needs with dessert). When everyone has eaten and shared their answers, move to the next house and eat the next course and discuss the next questions. When all three courses and discussions have happened, people will know each other better and the congregation will have lots of info about what its members think.

For a potluck dinner: Use the same basic format as for the progressive dinner and design a three-course meal. Organize people by what to have them bring (i.e. – Names starting with A-F bring appetizers, G-R bring main dishes and side dishes, S-Z bring appetizers – be sure to use letter patterns that match your membership so foods balance out well).

Then, use the same pattern as for the progressive dinner above. Have people get up and get their appetizers and discuss the answers to the Assets questions. Then have them go to the main course table to get the main dishes and the side dishes and come back to discuss Wows. Then have them go to the dessert table and over dessert discuss their Needs answers. Collect all responses at the end of the event. A dinner like this can usually be done in about 2-2.5 hours.