

Sunday Morning Evaluation Team Recommendation Report, Tuesday, June 24, 2014

Background

A Sunday morning schedule with discipleship opportunities for children and adults concurrent with worship, has been in place for the past school year (2013/2014). This was done to provide greater GROW class opportunities and to make Sunday morning more welcoming to newcomers. Following the Congregational Conversation of April 6, a team of people who are involved in Sunday morning discipleship for children, youth and adults, was assembled to evaluate the effectiveness of the concurrent schedule.

Team Process

1. Team created a SMET mailbox and posted invitation for church to communicate with us.
2. Conducted a One Question Survey in early May. Received 60 responses
3. Held Congregational Conversation about the schedule in mid-May. Approximately 50 attendees.
4. Conducted an extensive 10 question survey in late May. Received 136 responses.
5. Developed a schedule built on feedback from the congregation that the team believes best meets the needs expressed by the church body and balances shared sacrifice and shared gain.
6. Team members had informal discussion of proposed format with members of the congregation.
7. Reviewed proposed format with staff and Governance Board in early June.
8. Held open congregational forum to present and discuss the proposed format mid-June.
9. Final report delivered to Ministry Staff and Governance Board late June.

Key findings and summary of surveys and Congregational Conversation

In response to the question, *“Overall, the change in the Sunday morning schedule has had a positive impact on me”*, about one third strongly agree or agree, one third neither agree nor disagree and one third disagree or strongly disagree. People with younger children (birth to 5th grade) view the new schedule more positively than parents of older children (6th thru 12th grade).

<i>“Overall, the change in the Sunday morning schedule has had a positive impact on me”</i>	With infants – 5 th grade 27 respondents	With 6 th -12 th grade 28 respondents	Without Children 88 respondents
	Agree/Neutral/Disagree %	Agree/Neutral/Disagree %	Agree/Neutral/Disagree %
	42.3/42.3/15.7	22.2/33.3/44.4	34.1/32.9/32.9
	Overall: 31.8/ 35.6 / 32.6		

The largest number of respondents to the survey were people without children in Sunday School. Of these, 13 attend Jr/Sr High Sunday School class, 18 attend adult GROW classes more than once per month, and 60 do not attend GROW classes at all. Consistent comments for those who do not like the new schedule were: a much later finish time for those who had been attending the early service (12 noon v. 10:30 am), perceived less flexibility in worshipping and attending a class as a family unit, and children appearing to be absent from the worship service.

The common coffee hour was much appreciated, and was highlighted as an opportunity to build relationships for those new to the church, and for mixing between the early and late service attenders.

Our Values

RELATIONSHIPS - Provide opportunities to make and strengthen connections within the church.

DISCIPLESHIP - Provide opportunities for people of all ages to grow in Christ-likeness.

WORSHIP - Provide opportunities for corporate worship that support family relationships and needs.

Recommended schedule for the 2014/2015 school year

1. Move the first worship hour to 8:30am from 9:00am
2. Move the second worship hour to 10:00am from 10:45am
3. Sunday School for children and youth concurrently from 8:30 to 9:45am and adult Grow Classes concurrent with both worship hours.
4. Children’s church will start just before the Scripture reading during the second hour of worship. Families may opt to keep their children in the service or send them to Children’s church for age-appropriate worship.

Current format – 9:00-12:00

Time	Youth Discipleship	Worship	Adult Discipleship	Infant/Toddler/Pre K
9:00-10:15	Sunday School	Service (63-65 mins)	GROW	Nursery/Tykes Time
10:15-10:45	Coffee & Fellowship			
10:45-12:00	Children’s Church (K-4)	Service (63-65 mins)	GROW	Nursery/Tykes Time

Proposed format – 8:30-11:00

Time	Youth Discipleship	Worship	Adult Discipleship	Infant/Toddler/Pre K
8:30-9:30	Sunday School	Service	GROW	Nursery/Tykes Time
9:30-10:00		Coffee & Fellowship		
10:00-11:00	Service	Service	GROW	Nursery/Tykes Time
	Children’s Church (K-4)			

Advantages of proposed format:

1. Balances start and finish times. An earlier finish time was important for many respondents.
2. Matches duration of Sunday School + service under old (2012) format (2 ½ hours). This is important for families with young children.
3. Encourages family worship through a shortened Children’s Church (similar to 2012 format).
4. Maintains coffee hour which was very popular in surveys and CC comments.
5. Provides margin after second service for fellowship opportunities such as meals, service projects and more.

How Our Values Inform our Recommendations

RELATIONSHIPS-the social time between services supports the goal of allowing people to develop relationships on Sunday mornings. It also was popular in the survey and the town hall meeting.

DISCIPLESHIP-GROW classes provide valuable discipleship opportunities. Holding them at the same time as children's Sunday School enables parents to avail themselves of GROW classes on Sunday mornings.

WORSHIP- Moving the services to start earlier balances the desires of those who prefer an earlier option on Sunday with those who do not. Configuring the second service to include children for the first part of the service supports family desires to worship together.

Feedback on proposed schedule

The team reviewed the proposed schedule with many different groups within the church (see steps 6, 7 and 8 in the Team Process.) Feedback from the groups:

Staff: Response from the staff was positive. Steve Nielsen responded that the new service length was “totally doable.” There was some concern expressed about the new start time of 8:30 for children’s Sunday School, but overall the staff endorsed the proposal.

Governance Board: The Governance Board reviewed the proposed schedule and endorsed it.

Congregation: The team informally reviewed the proposal with various small groups, including a couple of GROW classes, the high school Sunday School class, and several informal groups. In general, the feedback was that the proposed schedule was an improvement over the prior schedule, especially for people who had been attending the 8:00 service. High schoolers did not express concerns with the earlier start time. It was pointed out that the 8:30 start time will make for an earlier morning than a weekday for some elementary-age children.

The congregational forum discussion was generally supportive of the proposed schedule. There was concern raised about shortening the worship time, even by 5 minutes. The schedule allows for services to exceed the 60-minute target by going slightly into the social time if needed. The question was raised whether any changes should be made in the church at this time. There was substantial conversation about providing children the opportunity to participate in the service. The change to a shorter Children’s Church supports this, but it is ultimately up to the parents to decide whether to keep their children in the service or not. The other major topic of the forum was the end time of Sunday morning. At the end of the forum, the team asked whether anyone was opposed to the schedule, and no one spoke up. The overall tone of the end of the meeting was positive.

Potential consequences / watch items with proposed schedule

1. Perception that we are “shortening worship.” Communication needs to be clear that we will flex the schedule as needed if a particular service runs long.
2. Some people who only come to service may shift from 9:00 to 10:00, so the attendance of the second service may increase relative to the first service.
3. 8:30 AM start may be too early for some people. The team has interviewed key groups and this seems to be a small risk, but should be monitored.
4. Effect on other church activities (Joyful Noise, etc.) will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Goals for the concurrent Sunday school schedule

1. We want to help families worship together and grow together. We believe Sunday morning can be an important time of spiritual formation, especially for children.
2. Making physical and relational space in GROW classes for newcomers and especially for parents of children eligible to attend Sunday school can foster participation by their children.
3. A concurrent schedule permits Trinity to offer a greater number and more varied Adult GROW Classes during two services due to greater number of available spaces. Also, it allows more opportunities for people to identify giftedness and develop as teachers.
4. A common coffee hour between services allows for more time to build relationships. More classes for adults also create greater opportunities for community.

Key survey findings

Groups	With infants – 5 th grade (27)	With 6 th -12 th grade (28)	Without Children (88)	Overall (136) ¹
Key Finding	Agree/Neutral/Disagree ²	Agree/Neutral/Disagree	Agree/Neutral/Disagree	Agree/Neutral/Disagree
Schedule is disruptive to me	19.2/26.9/53.9	48.0/7.4//44.5	33.7/17.4/50.0	34.6/16.5/49.6
Worship before 9am is important	20.8/16.7/62.5	32.0/20.0/48.0	26.5/33.7/39.8	27.6/27.6/44.9
Important that my children are in worship and class	60.9/23.1/19.23	74.1/11.1/14.8	N/A	66.7/16.7/16.7
Social time between services is too long	12.0/20.0/68.0	19.2/38.5/42.3	13.0/31.0/56.0	13.8/30.8/55.4

It is important to note that there were many comments received that were outside the scope of the task given to us to assess. These comments have been disseminated to the proper staff members for consideration and review.

Respectfully submitted by: Phillip Beatty, Karen Bristol, Tina Irish, Darcy Johnson, Caitlin Ritchie, Chuck Russell, Nate Shippee, Chris Tonzi, Sarah Beth Tonzi, Peter Tullson and Brian Wylie (Chair.)

¹ Some respondents had children in both age groups. Hence the sum of the categories is more than 136.

² (Strongly Agree + Agree)/Neither Agree nor Disagree/(Strongly Disagree + Disagree)