










# **Handling Change and Transitions** in the Small Congregation





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*A key to success is how the congregation feels about themselves as a religious community.*

## **These factors determine a congregation's "self-worth":**

-  How much you invest of yourselves
-  How generous you are with your resources
-  How open you are to "outsiders"
-  How embracing you are of change
-  How committed you are to your mission
-  How much fun you have together
-  How easily and quickly you resolve your conflicts
-  How resolute you are in finding solutions to problems
-  How hopeful you are about the future

## **What a congregation needs to build self-worth and self-confidence:**

-  At least one caring and capable leader (lay or clergy)
-  Openness to thinking and acting differently
-  Awareness of which area's of the congregation's life need to be changed or enhanced
-  Some strategies for changing the way people feel about their congregation



## **Twelve Steps to Change:**

- 1.** Use the "church morale survey" to see where you are.
- 2.** Plan one sure-fire successful event or program. Celebrate! Plan another!
- 3.** Ask someone to do basic leadership training with your governing body.
- 4.** Make worship more meaningful, more spirited, and more enjoyable.
- 5.** Take at least two steps to make things more special and more beautiful.
- 6.** Hold an all-congregation potluck dinner. Ask everyone to contribute to creating a list of the twenty strengths of your congregations, and your successes from the past two years. Publicize this information.
- 7.** Capitalize on one of the strengths on your list.
- 8.** Identify one significant problem, brainstorm solutions, pick one and do it, then celebrate. Pick another problem. Repeat.
- 9.** Choose one new mission project – do it and celebrate.
- 10.** Implement one interior and one exterior spruce-up project. Schedule it. Do it together.
- 11.** Over the time of working these steps, ask everyone to give 10% more money to the church. Do not use this money for the budget, but for a special mission, or special project.
- 12.** At the end of this program, have a party and celebrate!

*Adapted from THE INDISPENSABLE GUIDE FOR SMALLER CHURCHES, by David Ray*

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