

PRESBYTERIAN OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES NETWORK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Developing and Planning an Ongoing Ministry in Your Congregation

Church and society are faced with challenges shaped by revolutionary changes in the demographics of the nation and the world. Building an effective ministry to senior adults involves knowing the basic characteristics of boomers, middle adults, older adults, and senior adults. In particular how they relate to the church and spirituality. It calls for careful planning in deciding what action to take. Older adults must play a major role in deciding where the church will focus its resources.

Here are a few questions for you to ponder or use as you wish in your planning and evaluation process.

“With increasing numbers of older adults in our church, we need to focus more on their needs. Where do I begin?”

Specific information about the church demographics and age groups will help in the planning process.

What demographic/age group will make up the group?

What are the basic characteristics of your group?

What is the breakdown in the number of boomers, middle adults, older adults, and senior adults?

Does your church maintain an up-to-date data bank or information service regarding older adult services in the community?

Specify who will be responsible for the principle role in planning and implementing the ministry.

Is there a staff person (other than the pastor) or a lay person responsible for older adult ministry in your church?

Does a committee/council help in the planning of older adult ministries?

How do we raise awareness and generate interest from our session leaders?

In what ways can older adults make important contributions to the life of your congregation?

In what ways are older adults already engaged, involved, and included in the ministry of your congregation?

What are the areas that need to be addressed?

What does your church "do well" for older adults?

Accurate information regarding older members is essential to developing a holistic ministry in a congregation. Develop and approve appropriate surveys and then develop a plan for sharing general findings and comments with the pastor(s), session, and the congregation. You can find models at www.poamn.org.

Has an older adult survey been made in the last 4 years to determine needs and response of members to meet those needs?

If no, do you need an older adult survey form for members 55+?

In the planning process determine if there will be a caring committee to focus on specialized ministries with older persons facing problems.

Does your church currently offer regular support services and resources to older adult caregivers?

Does your church operate a systematic home visitation program for older adult shut-ins?

Does this include the homebound and those in nursing homes as well?

Does your church provide decisive encouragement for ministry and volunteerism by seniors (VBS, mission trips, visitation, mission projects, leading Bible study in a care facility)?

Does your church partner with other churches in meeting needs of seniors?

[This survey consists of excerpts adapted from Older Adult Ministry. A Guide for Session and Congregation, published in 1991.]

QUESTIONS TO AID IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

- 1) In Older Adult Ministry (OAM) what are we trying to do? (Purpose statement)
- 2) What are the specific matters with regard to OAM that we are trying to work on? (Issue)
- 3) What is a specific thing we want to accomplish in addressing an issue? (Goal)

- 4) How will we accomplish it? (Action Plan)
- 5) What are some tasks we need to do? (Objective)
- 6) Who will do each task? (Responsibilities)
 - a. When will each be done? (Time Frame)
 - b. What kind of help do we need? (Resources)
- 7) How will we know when we are finished? (Evaluation)
- 8) What does success look like, and how well did we do? (Evaluation)

[This survey is adapted from: Gallagher, Dr. David P., Senior Adult Ministry In The 21st Century.]