

Instructions

Use these sheets to help you develop both your Key Message and your Communication Plan.

Your **Key Message** will be crafted using the four Key Questions found in the boxes-- What, How, Who and Why. The answers to those four questions will help you craft a well rounded communication, which in turn will help your congregation, staff and volunteers understand the change happening including what's next, those impacted and reason for the change. Creating a Key Message that answers those questions helps to alleviate misunderstanding, rumors and ultimately distrust in the change. Maintaining and building trust are critical to ensuring that change is accepted with a minimum amount of disruption. Some disruption should be expected depending upon the size of the change, but having a well crafted Key Message can mitigate how long it lasts and the severity.

I recommend filling in the boxes with all the pertinent facts--even if you may not use all the facts in your Key Message because of privacy reasons. This ensures that you're capturing everything and not leaving anything out. Stick to facts versus perceptions, feelings or hopes. You don't want to confuse your message as that will only create distrust or misperceptions.

Craft your Key Message based on the facts you've written down in your boxes making sure you answer in some form all four questions. Your Key Message should be as well rounded as possible, because it will be the initial "all in" communication in your Communication Plan. The Key Message will also be the basis for any reminders, or follow up communications even if you don't use it in its entirety.

Building a **Communication Plan** makes sure that you create what I call "surround sound". Not all in your congregation or community will hear the message at the same time or the same way-- having a plan in place ensures that you create clear, consistent communication across all communication channels. It's important when communicating change that you don't take a one and done approach. Instead think about creating a layered approach to communication. So an initial communication that's done verbally and in writing (website/email) which explains all, and then follow ups that point back to the original (website/email). If reminders need to go out that can be done verbally, in the weekly bulletin, social media and email. Depending on the change you may need to tweak the approach, but the important thing is to think about layering the communication so everyone has an opportunity to understand what's going on.

I recommend that all initial communications be done verbally, email and posted somewhere on the website for your community to refer back to. Not everyone will be in church on the day you announce the change, nor will everyone read the email so having somewhere on the website to refer back to will be critical for reducing rumors or misinformation.

Communicating Well

What-include what is changing
and what is not

How-the steps needed to
complete the change

Who-include those responsible
and those impacted

Why-clearly articulate the
reason or necessity for change

Communicating Well

In Person	Website	Email/Social Media
Announcements & schedule 1. 2. 3. 4.	Home Page Changes & timeframes 1. 2. 3.	Email(s) & schedule 1. 2. 3. 4.
Bulletin & schedule 1. 2. 3. 4.	Subpage changes & timeframes 1. 2. 3. 4.	Social Media & schedule 1. 2. 3. 4.