

What is appreciative inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry is a systematic way of mining the past for the very best of it, learning in the present time who we and our organizations really are, declaring what the most desirable and preferred future would look like, and finally making plans toward that future. This is a totally future-oriented enterprise that depends on the very best of past and heritage to build a far better future than would simply happen by accident and the passage of time.

*The Rev. Theodore W. Edwards, Jr.
www.appreciative-preacher.com/course.php*

*Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."
Matthew 13:34-35, NIV*

You hear me speak. But do you hear me feel?

Getrud Kolmar

When Jesus had something important to say, he told a story. Our stories can reveal God's deepest callings to us when we take the time to listen carefully to one another. Today we will share our stories about ministry: what has worked well, helped us to grow and sustained us over time. Our individual stories are connected to the deeper universal story. The wisdom within our stories often emerges through the telling.

We will listen to each other's stories as a way of developing a vision of who we hope to be. We will start with paired interviews. Then we will gather in small groups of about 3 pairs to share what has been discovered through the interviews. We will end as a large group with a brief summary of common themes that emerge from what each group discerned through discussion.

Purpose: During this stage of the search process we need to capture our stories, experiences, and hopes as a means of sharing who we are as a community with potential candidates.

Want to learn more about Appreciative Inquiry?

Episcopal Church Foundation: <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/appreciative-inquiry-at-st-marys-manhattanville/>

The Appreciative Preacher: <http://appreciative-preacher.com/>

Step 1 - Paired Interviews (35 minutes)

1. Find a partner and take turns interviewing each other - 15 minutes each

Interview Question:

Think over the time you have been part of the community at St. Timothy's. Recall a time when you have felt God's spirit most at work. Tell a story about that experience. What happened, and who was involved? Include your thoughts, emotions, and other details that help capture the essence of the experience.

Here are some prompts that may be helpful:

- What do you value most about your own role or involvement at St. Timothy's?
- What are essential ingredients of a faith community that bring your faith alive?

2. Please write down the story you just heard below – 2 minutes

Teller's Name _____ **Listener's Name** _____

Step 2 - Small Group Process (30 minutes)

Form small groups of 3 interview pairs (6 people total) and complete the following tasks:

1. Choose one person who will be the Recorder/Reporter – 2 minutes

This is a note taker who will record highlights and common themes discussed in the next steps and then report them to the large group.

2. Individual Sharing – 15 minutes

In a round, each person shares the most powerful highlight or insight from the paired interview. It may be from what you or your interview partner shared or from the comparison or contrast between the two stories. Each person takes about 2 minutes to share. Do not retell the story.

3. Group Discussion - 8 minutes

Discuss as a group what you've learned about God's work and our community through participation in ministry, as reflected in our stories. What common themes did you hear repeated? The Reporter captures highlights as they are being shared on half sheets of paper provided.

4. Group Decision - 5 minutes

Decide as a group on 3-5 themes/ideas that seem the most important and relevant to share with the large group in the next step.

Step 3 - Large Group Reporting (20 minutes)

Gather back together as a large group. Each Reporter briefly shares the suggestions their group has recorded.

Thank you so much for participating in this crucial process! Before you leave please hand the story that you recorded to a Search committee member.