

Worship and Outreach in a Midwestern Parish

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Introduction

Respond to these common Midwestern stereotypes:

- “Practically everyone has a church home. The mission fields are outside of the Midwest.”
- “Everyone goes to church.”
- “In general, people know that they should be in church because of their upbringing.”
- “Young people are looking for contemporary worship.”
- “Close communion is a major turn off for the unchurched.”
- “Doing mission work as a Lutheran is easier in the Midwest than in outlying areas.”

Part I: “Excellence” in Worship and Outreach

Respond to the Pastor who says,

“When I hear we need “excellence” in worship and outreach, I feel guilty.”

Why strive for excellence? After reading Isaiah 6:1-8, answer these questions.

1. Describe the scene that Isaiah sees.
2. What effect did seeing God in all his holiness have on Isaiah?
3. Isaiah despairs, God repairs. The angel takes the coal from the altar – why?
4. Why did the angel touch Isaiah on the lips?
5. In verse 8, Isaiah readily volunteers to go for the Lord – why such a strong desire?

Notes:

Part II: Midwest Keys to Excellence in Worship and Outreach

Give the best response to common Midwestern WELS criticism:

- *“You are the church that hates women”*
- *“You’re not allowed to talk to people who aren’t WELS”*
- *“You’re the strict Synod”*
- *“You think you’re the only ones going to heaven”*
- *“You’re the ones that only let your own club go to communion”*

Put the following percentages where you think they belong: 3%, 9%, 14%, 18%, 56%

___ Because of previous loyalties to that denomination

___ Because the pastor visited them

___ Because a friend or relative invited them

___ Because trained lay members visited them

___ Because of the church’s location or building

Use a great resource! After reading John 1:35-51, answer these questions.

1. What is our message? (v. 36)
2. Immediately Andrew tells his brother. What does that teach us about Outreach?
3. Philip immediately tells Nathanael. Nathanael reacts with skepticism. Knowing that this is a “natural” reaction, why is it so important that we have a relationship?
4. Philip handles Nathanael’s objection masterfully. How?
5. What does that teach us (and fellow members) about Outreach work?

Notes:

Part III: Planning in Worship and Outreach

Notes:

Now that you’ve tasted that the Lord is good!