



The Episcopal Diocese
of Pennsylvania

Casting Nets

GOALS, CREATIVITY,
LISTENING, PLANNING
AND IMPLEMENTATION



Deep Water (Phase 1)

When it comes to our churches, most of us start by counting and calculating, don't we? Do we have enough?

What do we (or some outside experts) think may be possible?

*Do we have what we need to do to grow the church,
or even just to keep it open?*

What if?

What if we started with a dream instead?

And **what if** that dream was born, not out of necessity, but of purpose?

***What if** when we saw the needs of our community, we didn't jump immediately to thinking about numbers, but instead simply focused on what our faith calls us to do in response?*

We often focus on the “good old days” when the church was full of people. And so we seek to bring people into the building, declaring a welcome for all.

What if we shifted the focus?

What if we went to them?

We always measure numbers in terms of attendance and budget, but **what if we tracked the impact of our efforts?** We always begin by starting a program and developing a system.

What if we started instead with holy action? Then, trusting God and one another, acted in faith as a beautiful idea takes shape around us?

In the scripture above, Jesus challenges the disciples to go out to the deep water before casting their nets. This went against all conventional wisdom. Everyone knew fish were caught in the shallows, not the deep. Yet they had faith. They trusted in Jesus. They challenged their own assumptions and dared to dream of what might be possible if they dared to do things differently.

“When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”

Luke 5:4

What if?

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Fullfilling God's Purpose

When it comes to your dream, you already have all that you need to fulfill the purpose that God has for you.

This is the real miracle at the heart of the feeding of the 5,000. Although no one would have suspected it, the disciples already had all that they needed to feed the people. While it was Jesus who multiplied the loaves and fishes, he still chose to work with and make the most of the gifts the disciples already possessed. Nothing more was required. Through the grace of God, they already had all that they needed!

As you go out into the deep water and enter this sacred dreaming, know that there is already enough to accomplish what God has in mind for you.

You are already enough. You have enough time and energy. Your community is strong enough. God is calling you into something new, and God will equip you with all that you need to do that which he has called you to do. For it is not our dream, but God's that we seek to make real. God's dream for you is already a reality. All you need to do is discern it and then venture forward in faith as God works in and through us to make it real.

"Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets."

John 6:11-13

Recommended:

Please make copies of these next pages for all participants >>>

What to Expect

The Dreaming Exercise involves two tours, one of your church campus and one of your community. It is followed by a time of reflection and sharing. It is recommended that you do this exercise with your vestry and any other key leaders from your church.

Dreaming Exercise

You have enough ... enough people and resources. You have enough time and energy. God has given you all that you need to make your dream for your church a reality.

**NOW, WHAT DO YOU DO? HOW DO YOU CHANGE THE WORLD?
WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?**

If you could fix anything, it would be?

If you could help anyone, it would be?

In your dreams, your church looks like?

In your dreams, your community looks like?

Look with Fresh Eyes

How is Jesus present and active in your church?

- Gather the clergy and vestry and go everywhere inside and out.
- Look at the light streaming through the windows.
- Touch the stone and feel how strong it is.
- Look up the aisle and consider how many have walked there.
- Allow yourselves to revel in memories of music and midnight mass.
- Let the laughter that has filled the hall fill your heart.
- Where is Jesus in this place?

NOTES | PICTURES | SKETCHES | IDEAS

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Take a Field Trip

Where is Jesus in your community?

Next, the same group should make a similar tour of your community.

- It can be by foot, car or both, depending on your context and physical ability.
- If it is easier, go in small groups.
- Stop and talk to people.
- Go into businesses and shops.
- Open your eyes, ears and hearts so as to take in what life is like for the people who live around your church. As you do, make particular effort to go to the places that may seem strange, different or even frightening.
- Take the time to look and listen for Jesus.
- Don't rush. It may take multiple trips to gain a thorough sense of the totality of your community.
- Ask yourself: Where is Jesus?

FIELD TRIP PLANNER

DATE

LOCATION (S)

SCHEDULE

CONTACT

NOTES ON FINDINGS