

PROPOSED "GARDINER" MODEL

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Below is a summary of the model I encountered several years ago, as part of a UUA-sponsored, social justice program. (I've tweaked it here and there, as have some of the congregations who've adopted it.)

The primary goals are:

1. To engage the greater congregation in designing, delivering and assessing its justice/service programming;
2. To give direction and focus to the committee(s) charged to lead the congregation in its justice/service ministries;
3. To better utilize justice/service resources – human, financial or otherwise.
4. To allow for, but keep at the smallest number possible, other justice-related projects, causes, etc.

The Model:

1. Justice work is divided into two broad categories: Local and Global;

Local issues are those that have to do with the immediate area, and often involve partnership with an agency or another congregation. Examples: food pantries; soup kitchens; shelters; race relations; Habitat for Humanity;

Global issues are those that involve the congregation in efforts that are outside its "parish". Examples: slave trafficking; women and children affected by war; climate change; Amnesty International; UUSC programs;

2. The Committee identifies three possible issues for each of the two categories (six, total), complete with a short plan for each issue. Plans should include estimated necessary resources and responsibilities. See sample below:

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT PLAN

- Objective: To eliminate the state's death penalty
- Means: Broad, sustained, lobbying program
- Estimated Resources:
 - A. Financial: \$1,500
 - B. Space: meetings, presentations, advocacy and rallies
 - C. Human
 - a. Committee – design, promote, administer and assess the plan as approved by the congregation; draft, if necessary, proposed changes to existing bylaws related to the new model

- b. Board – ensure funding as approved by the congregation; become educated in the new model; cooperate, if necessary, in proposing bylaw changes related to the new model
 - c. Minister – participate in activities as available; preach one related sermon during the church year; attend SJ team meetings; lend name and support in lobbying efforts
 - d. Staff – develop methods to include the identified goal in key areas: lifespan education, worship, leadership development, membership, finance, etc.
 - e. Leaders – see Staff goals
 - f. Congregation – participate in issue-related programming; promote/attend programming beyond the congregation; generate new ideas for how to become more involved in the identified issue(s).
3. An educational plan is designed and implemented at least six weeks in advance of the next Annual Meeting (or otherwise duly called congregational meeting), describing the new model, any related bylaw amendment proposals, the six identified issues and plans for each.
4. Committee members attend Annual Meeting (or other duly called meeting) prepared to present and explain the new model.
5. The congregation votes to make any necessary bylaw changes.
6. The congregation votes to identify two areas of focus, one, local and the other, global.
7. The Committee begins its work, complete with means of assessment and progress reports.
8. The Committee, beginning in April of that church year, prepares the justice proposal for the congregation's next justice plan. (Congregations may renew the issue(s) from the previous year, but only after a second congregational vote.)