

Creating a New Service: Questions for Reflection

© Peace by Peace Productions
www.marciamcfee.com

**I. Creating Sacred Difference:
Why?**

II. Creating Sacred Relationship: Who?

III. Creating Sacred Experiences: What?

**IV. Creating Sacred
Space: Where?**

**V. Creating Sacred
Time: When?**

VI. Creating Worship With Deep Soul: How?

I. Creating Sacred Difference: Why? This is a question about your MISSION in starting a new service. Are you clear about what this new service will offer to the community (both the church community and the wider community) that the existing worship does not? It may be a simple matter of needing a choice of times to worship or dealing with over-flow... or it may be that you want to draw in a different group of people than are coming presently, drawing on different kinds of worship expression and repertoire. Whatever the reason, there MUST BE A HEALTHY REASON. Now, what do I mean by “healthy?” Too many “alternative” services are started because there is a “worship war” brewing and we want to “fix” it. This is not a healthy reason to begin another service. Yes, there will always be differences among people about the way we worship, but if there are contentious feelings around the subject that are not dealt with in a deeply caring way, those feelings will still spill over in other ways. This first step is important... take your time with the “Why” of a second service.

II. Creating Sacred Relationship: Who? This is a question that comes out of the stated mission of the new service: who is related to why. It is important to spend some time thinking about WHO will come because this will make a difference in the next questions.

III. Creating Sacred Experiences: What? Identifying the modes of expression of a new service is the next step. What are your goals? Interaction and participation? Expanded repertoire of music? Use of multimedia? What resources (people, skills, technology) are needed?

IV. Creating Sacred Space: Where? The choice of space is a HUGE factor in what you are trying to accomplish. If “doing a new or different thing” than you are doing now is a top priority, holding the “new or different” thing in the same ole space will make it more difficult to create something that feels different. The space should SUPPORT the “what” in the question above. If more interaction is a goal, you’ll need a space that supports this with room to interact! If a strong sense of community is important, you may want flexible seating so you can worship in a configuration more conducive to cultivating relationship than forward-looking pews!

V. Creating Sacred Time: When? This question is crucial to the hospitality of your new service. Instead of relying solely on research or theory that abounds on what time/day works best for your “target” group, why not ask those you hope will actually come to the service? Early morning may or may not be an optimum time... an evening service may or may not be either. You’ll get a range of answers from folks... you won’t be able to please everyone but you can be aware of the issues for folks. Day or night also makes a difference for the kind of service (the “what”) you are planning.

VI. Creating Worship With Deep Soul: How? Once the above questions are thought through, issues of design and leadership and the nitty-gritty of preparing the space and getting the word out come to the fore. How will you make an enticing and provocative invitation to come, make sure that folks feel welcome once they are there, and create worship with content and leadership that draws people into a relationship with God and an experience of deep soul?