

"I LIKE CHURCHES THAT..."

A retreat or training warm up exercise
from **Peter Bowden** and **UU PLANET**

People have gathered for a vision or planning retreat. They've had a little coffee, maybe a pastry or two... **The energy level is low** and it just doesn't seem like the people assembled are ready to meet the challenge of the morning.

The following exercise is a quick (10-15minute) exercise that will get people moving, laughing and thinking about their values and the purpose of the church.

Set Up: Form a circle of chairs with exactly enough chairs for every person with *one person standing in the middle* (this person will introduce and start the exercise). This works best if the circle is the set up for the morning and no moving of chairs will be necessary after this exercise.

PART 1

Have each participant sit in a chair with all belongings moved outside of the circle. You, the leader, stand in the middle. At this point there are **NO EXTRA CHAIRS**, all people are sitting down and looking to you for instructions. Here is a basic script:

This game is called "I like Churches That..." It is very simple. I will say "I like churches that..." and complete the statement. The only rule is that it must be something that is true for me. For example, "I like churches that serve great coffee." Once I complete the statement, again, one that is true for me, and then everyone who feels the same way must get up and find another chair.

Note that you may not move one seat to either side of you! As soon as you start moving the person in the middle tries to sit down as well. This will leave a new person stuck in the middle. This new person will say her or his name, then say "I like churches that..." and complete the statement. Again, if the statement is true for you, get up and find a new seat.

PART 2

After doing "I like churches that..." for about five minutes, or until people are laughing **AND** before the energy level drops, interject that you are going to do another round, but with a **new question**. Tell them that now people will be completing the statement "I go to church because..."

→ **DO NOT** tell people about Part 2 ahead of time. ←

I've found that spending 10 -15 minutes on this exercise enhances the energy level and tone of a retreat, adding both a sense of levity and purpose to the day before it even starts! If you develop variations of this exercise please share them with me at peter@uuplanet.com.