

Saint Adventurous

Approving a welcome statement should not be difficult for your community.
This isn't a race, but the beginning of lifelong journey. Enjoy the ride.

The congregational self-assessment tool is designed to pace your Reconciling in Christ (RIC) welcoming journey and take the temperature of your congregation's overall temperament when considering extending a specific welcome to LGBTQ people. When you complete it, have other leaders in your community take this assessment and then compare notes. This document has the recommended pacing for Saint Cautious.

STEP ONE: LEADING THE PROCESS

1-2 months

Tasks: Conduct One-to-One Visits and gather a Core Team. Check in with LGBTQ people in congregation to determine their preferred level of involvement in the RIC journey. Contact ReconcilingWorks if you need help beginning this journey.

Tools: Graceful Engagement, One-to-One Visits

People Involved: Core Team, LGBTQ People and Welcoming Church Program

STEP TWO: GATHERING INFORMATION

1 month

Tasks: Examine your congregation's history, conduct a power analysis, and examine your congregation's culture to gain a better understanding of how it deals with change and conflict. Choose a pace for your journey using the Congregational Assessment.

Tools: Graceful Engagement, One-to-One Visits, Congregational Assessment, Congregations and Conflict, How Does Change Happen in Churches or Any Organization.

People Involved: Core Team, Formal and Informal Leadership of Congregation

STEP THREE: OUTLINING THE PROCESS

1-2 weeks

Tasks: Outline each step of the Reconciling in Christ journey for your congregation based on the pace and frame you've chosen.

Tools: Graceful Engagement, Framing, the information you've gathered up to this point

People Involved: Core Team

STEP FOUR: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

1-3 months

Tasks: Conduct One-to-One Visits with formal and informal leadership and church members.

Tools: Graceful Engagement, One-to-One Visits, Public Storytelling

People Involved: Core Team, formal and informal leadership, church members



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STEP FIVE: MAKING IT OFFICIAL

1 meeting with governing body

Tasks: The Core Team transitions into a formally-recognized committee of the congregation, often called the RIC Task Force.

Tools: Consult your congregation's policies, One-to-One Visits, Framing

People Involved: Core Team/RIC Task Force, congregational governing body

STEP SIX: SETTING THE FRAME AND PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

3-6 months

Tasks: Set up a series of educational opportunities for the congregation.

Tools: Graceful Engagement, One-to-One Visits, Framing, Public Storytelling, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Resources, Bible studies, films, panels, newsletter articles, Reconciling in Christ Resources

People Involved: RIC Task Force, clergy, educators, congregation

STEP SEVEN: WRITING YOUR WELCOMING STATEMENT

2-4 weeks

Tasks: Create a draft Welcoming Statement (which specifically names "LGBT," "LGBTQ," or uses the phrase "people of all sexual orientations and gender identities") and present it to the formal congregational leadership. Revise statement as needed based on feedback.

Tools: RIC Sample Affirmations, your chosen frame

People Involved: Welcoming Task Force, formal leadership, ReconcilingWorks Regional Coordinators and/or staff.

STEP EIGHT: CONDUCTING AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY

1-4 weeks

Tasks: Send out postcards or develop an anonymous

online survey for the entire congregation.

Tools: Postcards and postage or free online survey service

People Involved: RIC Task Force

STEP NINE: HOLDING THE VOTE

When Exploratory Survey Shows at Least 75-85% Support

Tasks: Schedule and hold a vote according to your congregation's policies and procedures. **Tools:** Congregational policies and procedures **People Involved:** Task Force, Council, and all members, Welcoming Church Programs (Back Page)

Tools: Congregational policies and procedures **People Involved:** Task Force, Council, and all members

People Involved: RIC Task Force, Council, all members, ReconcilingWorks Regional Coordinators and/or staff (if needed)

STEP TEN: CELEBRATING AND PUBLICIZING

Soon After Successful Vote

Tasks: Notify your denominational Welcoming Church Program. Hold a worship service or celebration, and publicize your new RIC status to the greater community.

Tools: Special liturgy, bulletin inserts, church website, church sign, sample press release in RIC welcome packet

People Involved: RIC Task Force, clergy and staff

STEP ELEVEN: WE'RE WELCOMING NOW WHAT?

Ongoing

Tasks: Ensure church policies are LGBTQ-inclusive. Provide ongoing educational opportunities. Provide opportunities for church members to take action on LGBTQ social issues beyond the church doors.

Tools: Church policies, RIC Now What Resource

People Involved: RIC Task Force, clergy, educators, Social Justice committee, greater LGBTQ community



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