# Focus Group Process

### Conduct focus groups with target audiences

Organize focus groups of six to twelve people for your target audiences. Select a diversity of people in each focus group, reflecting the four scenarios, the ethnic/cultural and socioeconomic character of your church, and the various lifestyles (single, married, families, divorced, and so one). Have two people lead each focus group – one to record (computer) and one to ask the questions. The recorder can also follow-up questions as appropriate. Use the following questions as a guide for developing your own focus group interviews. Be sure every focus group asks the

1. How would you describe your age group in key words or phrases?
2. What are some of the key life tasks that your age group is experiencing?
3. What are some of the important life issues that your age group is experiencing today?
4. What are the most meaningful experiences you have in life? What makes these experiences meaningful to you?
5. How important is your relationship with God? Why?
6. Where do you experience God most?
7. What are the significant spiritual issues that your age group is experiencing today?
8. What is most important to you about being a Christian (or a member of a particular denomination or faith tradition) today?
9. How do you live your Christian faith? Name some of the ways you put your faith into practice.
10. How can the church help you to continue growing as a Christian? Be specific.
11. Name some of the things you would like to see your church offer for your age group?

### Conduct research in the community

Engage your team in becoming anthropologists by observing the people in your community. Develop an observation checklist and ask team members to spend a week simply observing people at work, at school, at play, at stores, and so on. Segment your audience by age groups for observation and analysis: families with children, teens, young adults, midlife adults, older adults, et al. Consider questions such as:

1. What are some of the most popular activities for (your group) in the community?
2. Where does (your group) gather outside of work and school—coffee shop, gym, mall, park, community center, YMCA/YWCA, and so on.? What are they doing there?
3. Where do people work? Do most people work in your community or do they commute to another area? What types of jobs do people have?
4. What are the most popular or well attended churches in your community?
5. Where are (your group) on Sunday morning, if they are not at worship?

### Compile the Results

Compile the results of the focus groups for each target group by identifying common themes that surface across all of focus groups. These point to important or significant religious and spiritual needs that you can address in your design work. Also pay attention to information that may be unique to one focus group. Sometimes you will uncover important insights that are only identified in one group.

Based on your analysis of the research, identify *the most important* life issues and spiritual/religious needs of your target groups that your church needs to address in the coming years. Answer the question: *What would people like to see the church offer them through faith formation?*