

FOUR HELPFUL LISTS

This comprehensive guide provides everything needed to facilitate the Four Helpful Lists Assessment with your church leadership or congregation.

PREPARATION FOR THE ASSESSMENT

Materials Needed

- Large sheets of paper or whiteboards (4 sheets - one for each list)
- Markers for recording responses
- Individual worksheets for participants (provided below)
- Pens or pencils for all participants
- Timer or clock for managing time
- Name tags if participants don't know each other well

Room Setup

- Arrange seating in small groups of 4-6 people
- Ensure all participants can see the large recording sheets
- Create a comfortable environment that encourages honest conversation
- Have refreshments available to create a welcoming atmosphere

Participant Selection

- **Option 1:** Church leadership only (deacons, committee chairs, staff)
- **Option 2:** Representative sample (various ages, tenure, involvement levels)
- **Option 3:** Open to entire congregation with advance notice
- Aim for 12-30 participants for best group dynamics

DETAILED FACILITATION GUIDE

Introduction (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer Begin with prayer asking for wisdom, honesty, and unity in the assessment process.

Explain the Purpose "We are conducting this assessment to better understand our church's current reality as we search for our next pastor. This is not about criticism but about gaining clarity on what God has done through our church and what He may be calling us to address or develop."

Introduce the Four Categories

- **What is Right?** - Things that are working well and should be maintained
- **What is Wrong?** - Clear problems that need correction
- **What is Confused?** - Areas that need clarification or better definition
- **What is Missing?** - Gaps or opportunities for growth

Set Ground Rules

- Be honest but respectful
- Focus on patterns and systems, not individual people
- Use specific examples when possible
- Listen to understand, not to defend
- Keep confidentiality about what is shared

Step 1: Individual Reflection (15 minutes)

Distribute the Individual Worksheet (below) to all participants.

Instructions to Give: "Take 15 minutes to quietly think through each category. Write down specific examples or observations. Don't worry about having the 'right' answers - we want your honest perspective. You don't need to fill every blank, but try to have at least 2-3 thoughts for each category."

Facilitator Notes:

- Walk around quietly to encourage participants

- Give a 5-minute warning
- Remind participants to be specific rather than general

Step 2: Small Group Discussion (25 minutes)

Form Groups (2 minutes)

- Create groups of 4-6 people
- Mix different perspectives (age, tenure, involvement level)
- Assign each group a table or area with large paper sheets

Group Instructions (23 minutes) "In your small groups, spend about 5-6 minutes on each category. Have each person share 1-2 key insights from their individual reflection. Record common themes and unique observations on your large sheets. Focus on items mentioned by multiple people, but don't ignore important single observations."

Rotation Schedule:

- What is Right? (6 minutes)
- What is Wrong? (6 minutes)
- What is Confused? (6 minutes)
- What is Missing? (5 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Move between groups to keep them on track
- Encourage specific examples
- Help groups focus on the most important items
- Give time warnings for each category

Step 3: Large Group Compilation (20 minutes)

Reporting Process (15 minutes)

- Have each small group report their top 3-4 findings for each category
- Record all responses on large sheets visible to everyone
- Look for items mentioned by multiple groups
- Ask clarifying questions when responses are unclear

Pattern Recognition (5 minutes) Ask the large group:

- "What themes do you notice across multiple groups?"
- "What surprises you about what we've discovered?"
- "What items appear in multiple categories?"

Step 4: Prioritization (15 minutes)

Voting Process

- Give each participant 4 sticky dots or votes
- Ask them to place one dot on the most important item in each category
- Count votes and circle the top 2-3 items in each category

Final Discussion

Ask the group:

- "Do these priorities accurately reflect our church's reality?"
- "What do these findings suggest about pastoral leadership we need?"
- "Are there any crucial items we missed?"

Step 5: Closing and Next Steps (5 minutes)

Summarize Key Findings

Briefly review the top priorities from each category.

Explain Next Steps

- Results will be compiled into a summary report
- Findings will inform the pastor profile development
- Key insights will be shared appropriately with pastoral candidates
- The congregation will receive a summary of major findings

Closing Prayer

Pray for wisdom in using these insights and for God's guidance in the pastoral search.

INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET

What is Right? (Optimize)

What is working well in our church that should be maintained and built upon?

Ministries and Programs:

1. _____
2. _____

Church Culture and Relationships:

1. _____
2. _____

Leadership and Operations:

1. _____
2. _____

What is Wrong? (Change)

What problems or issues clearly need to be corrected?

Ministries and Programs:

1. _____
2. _____

Communication and Relationships:

1. _____
2. _____

Policies and Procedures:

1. _____
2. _____

What is Confused? (Clarify)

What areas need better definition or clearer understanding?

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. _____
2. _____

Expectations and Processes:

1. _____
2. _____

Vision and Purpose:

1. _____
2. _____

What is Missing? (Add)

What gaps or opportunities exist that could enhance our ministry?

Ministries and Programs:

1. _____
2. _____

Resources and Systems:

1. _____
2. _____

Leadership and Development:

1. _____
2. _____

RESULTS COMPILATION TEMPLATE

What is Right? (Top Priorities)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Pastoral Implications: *What does this suggest our pastor should preserve or build upon?*

What is Wrong? (Top Priorities)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Pastoral Implications: *What change management or problem-solving skills will our pastor need?* _____

What is Confused? (Top Priorities)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Pastoral Implications: *What communication and teaching abilities will our pastor need?*

What is Missing? (Top Priorities)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Pastoral Implications: *What gifts, skills, or experience should our pastor bring to address these gaps?* _____

COMMON PATTERNS AND INSIGHTS

Typical "What is Right?" Categories

- Strong missions giving or involvement
- Caring, family-like relationships
- Faithful core group of committed members
- Beautiful or well-maintained facilities
- Effective children's or youth ministries
- Strong biblical teaching tradition
- Good financial stewardship

Typical "What is Wrong?" Categories

- Communication breakdowns between groups
- Declining attendance or membership
- Lack of young families or children
- Facility maintenance issues
- Unclear decision-making processes
- Limited community outreach
- Conflict avoidance rather than resolution

Typical "What is Confused?" Categories

- Pastor's role vs. deacons' role in leadership
- Which committee makes which decisions
- Expectations for staff work hours or duties
- Process for proposing new ministries
- Budget approval and spending authority
- Membership expectations and requirements
- Vision or mission understanding

Typical "What is Missing?" Categories

- Discipleship training or spiritual formation
- Contemporary worship options
- Community outreach ministries
- Youth or young adult programming
- Leadership development processes
- Clear communication systems
- Strategic planning processes

FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate Actions

- Compile and distribute a summary report within one week
- Share findings with the broader congregation appropriately
- Use results to inform pastor profile development

- Address any urgent items in "What is Wrong?" that can't wait for new pastoral leadership

Pastor Search Integration

- Reference assessment findings when developing interview questions
- Share appropriate insights with serious candidates
- Use findings to explain your church's context and needs
- Include relevant results in your church profile document

Future Planning

- Plan to revisit this assessment with your new pastor after 6-12 months
- Use findings to develop initial ministry priorities
- Create accountability for addressing identified issues
- Celebrate progress in areas that were "confused" or "missing"