

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY:

An introductory guide for use in the
Church of Scotland

Sheena Orr

December 2009



Archbishop Oscar Romero's Prayer

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders;
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.
Amen.

***Special thanks to Rev Muriel Pearson for her encouragement
and vision for this piece of work!***



Contents

Imagine ...	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Overview of the AI Process	6
3. Stages in the AI Process	10
Stage 1 Define	10
Stage 2 Discover	14
Stage 3 Dream	16
Stage 4 Design	17
Stage 5 Destiny	18
4. Courage to move out of the comfort zone	19
5. Other things to think about	20
RESOURCES	24
BOXES	
Box 1 Why we chose AI	4
Box 2 More about the core	7
Box 3 The Appreciative Inquiry Model	8
Box 4 Forth Churches Group: An Overview of the AI Process	9
Box 5 The Basic Appreciative Inquiry Questions	10
Box 6 Example: Affirmative Topic Choice in Pastoral Care	11
Box 7 Example: Affirmative Topic Choice – tackling a ‘thorny’ issue in a new union	12
Box 8 Collecting Information	14
Box 9 Inquiry Creates Change	15
Box 10 Putting Dreams & Resources Together	17
ABBREVIATIONS	
AI Appreciative Inquiry	
ERG Edinburgh Road Grouping	
FCG Forth Churches Group	

Note: The word ‘Church’ has been used predominantly in examples throughout this Guide. However, all the examples apply equally to other faith-inspired organisations and projects and should be read with this in mind.

IMAGINE . . .

IMAGINE a congregation where members are enthusiastic about doing things differently....

IMAGINE a Kirk Session that listens to one another and dreams bold dreams....

IMAGINE working with your local community in a way that everyone feels a part of what is going on....

IMAGINE being able to move forward in creative and positive ways....

IMAGINE finding a creative way of getting different people with different views together to create a different future

This Guide is about Appreciative Inquiry – an approach, an attitude but most importantly a way of *being* which has been and can be used in all sorts of situations. Grounded in biblical principles it is a process which helps to turn imagination into reality.

Congregations face many challenges:

What to do with church buildings

How to grow as a Parish Grouping

How to develop an Area Team Ministry

How to work more closely with the local community

How to develop a Mission/Youth/Over 60s initiative

How to build a Church without Walls

Appreciative Inquiry is a hope-full and imaginative way of working towards the things that people want to see happen. It can be used with any group of people and to deal with almost any issue. It focuses on the positive, it appreciates the best of the past and it channels that energy into creating a shared future.

This Guide aims to provide a broad impression of how it might be used within a church or faith based context with reference to some examples of how it has already been used by some congregations to date. There are many handbooks on Appreciative Inquiry and this Guide does not intend to replicate what already exists. It does however provide an overview for those interested in exploring the use of Appreciative Inquiry and provides examples of current use as well as signposting to further resources.



1. Introduction

Churches and other faith-based organisations are constantly facing situations which, in one way or another, imply moving from where we are now to a new and hopefully better place in the future. This idea is not only reflected in the hope that underpins our Christian faith but also in our everyday living. Over the last decade the Church of Scotland has introduced a number of formal and informal initiatives to help the church to be more forward looking. The common denominator in all of them – be it Parish Groupings, Area Team Ministry or Church Without Walls – is some form of partnership with others.

When people get together the usual approach is to look at what is wrong and to try and work out a solution to fix it. In contrast, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) focuses on the things that are going well, the resources that already exist and the memories of ‘the best times’ as a basis for imagining how the future could be. As the imagination is matched with reality a new way ahead is created. Sharing stories becomes an important tool in the AI process rather than dry question and answer sessions or filling in a questionnaire. People are encouraged to imagine how they would like to see things and the stories help to identify experience from the past and resources from the present that can make this happen in the future. It is much more a way of being than a simple exercise in planning.

It was in the context of Area Team Ministry that the potential for Appreciative Inquiry was first noted and over 50 ministers and leaders were trained in the approach in 2004. Since then it has been used in a number of ways. For example, Forth Churches Group formed as an Area Team Ministry in 2004 and has used the approach informally to develop collaborative youth meetings (see Box 4 later in the Report); the Edinburgh Road Grouping, formed as a Parish Grouping in 2004, has used Appreciative Inquiry as a way of working with each other and the community resulting in a Youth initiative and a Befriending initiative (see Box 1). Edinburgh City Centre Churches TOGETHER has just started using the approach and is at the story gathering stage. In other places the principles have been used more informally to shape discussion, decision-making and even approaches to pastoral care.

Box 1

Why we chose AI

We knew we needed to find a positive way to work together after a slow start to the grouping. We also agreed that we needed to focus outward towards the community and try to identify some joint actions. We planned to undertake a community survey. Having looked at various approaches we decided we liked the Appreciative approach best – it focused on the positive rather than the negative and we felt that it would be good way of interacting with the congregations as well as the community.

*Rev Muriel Pearson
Edinburgh Road Grouping*

This guide seeks to provide an overview of the Appreciative Inquiry approach, how it has been used and how it might be used within different Church/organisation settings and what the implications of using such an approach might be.

Section 2 provides an overview of the AI approach. It briefly introduces the principles behind the approach and contrasts it with the common 'problem solving' paradigm that is often used. The principles can be applied in just about any situation without the formalities of a fully fledged AI exercise. This Guide, however, seeks to provide a glimpse of the full range of possibilities for the use of AI. Thus for those who want more detail Table 1 provides a succinct overview of the key features of each stage while Box 3 presents a more simplified visual representation of the process.

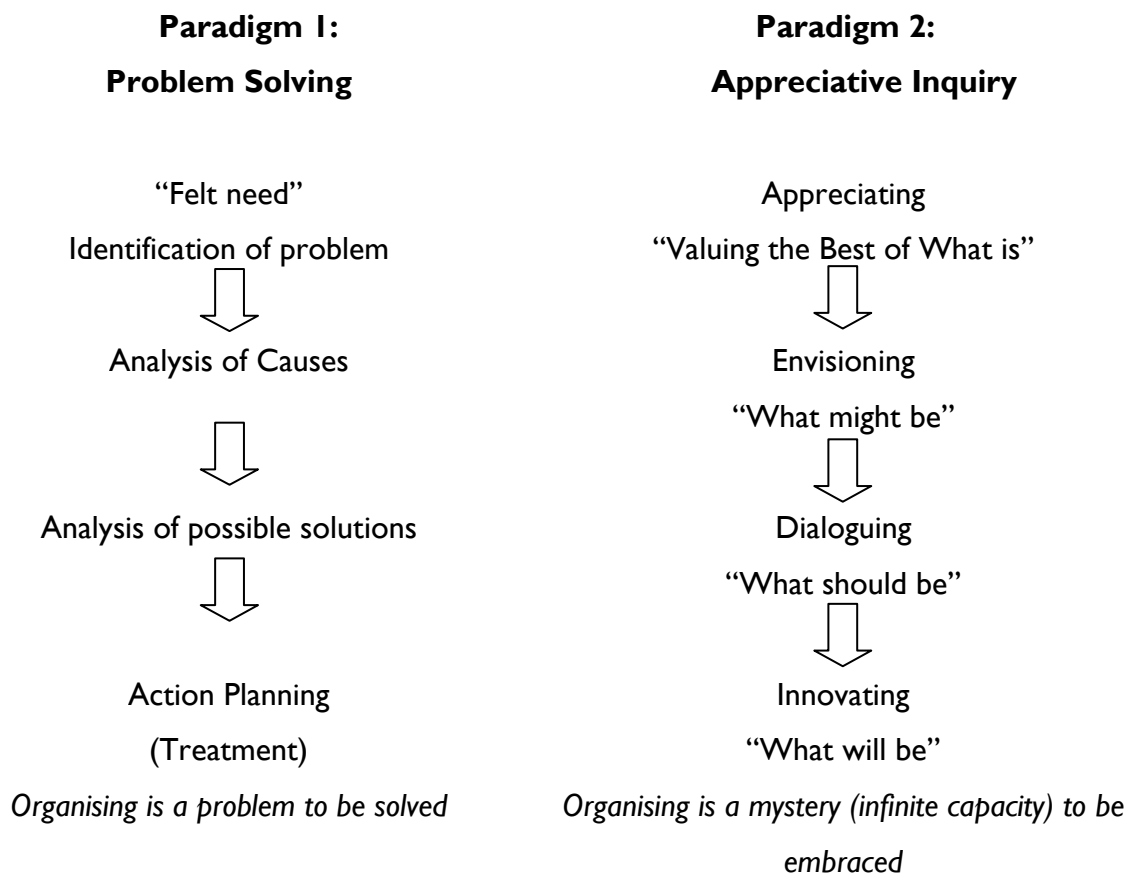
Section 3 goes into each of the 5 stages of the process in more detail providing examples and a range of supplementary Resources at the end of the Guide (from p26 onwards).

Section 4 looks briefly at how the AI process helps to move people out of their comfort zone and Section 5 invites the reader to think about the circumstances in which AI might be used and how to maintain initiatives. An important part of congregational development is understanding all the different parts of the local church that might need to adapt as a result of using an appreciative approach.

We hope this guide of use and welcome feedback and accounts of experiences where the approach has been tried.

2. Overview of the AI Process

AI offers an alternative to the deficit based 'problem solving' paradigm that is so widely used in our churches and organisations. The AI paradigm sees **the church as a mystery that should be embraced** as a community of believers with infinite imagination, infinite capacity and potential. This makes all the difference as to how the question of congregational change and development is approached:



Underpinning Appreciative Inquiry are eight principles or assumptions. These set the tone of the whole process and should shape everything: the way that we think about how to tackle an issue, the way we define the issue, the questions we ask, the way we think about things and the discussions and sharing which form the centre of the process. They are essential for tapping into the life-giving energy that is present in every church, group or organisation.

1. **Words create worlds** – our language and conversations shape our future (Proverbs is full of this wisdom!)
2. **Inquiry creates change** – in the very process of inquiring change happens
3. **We can choose what we focus on** – what we focus on makes a difference- and we tend to get more of what we focus on
4. **Imagination inspires action** – human systems move in the direction of their dreams
5. **Positive questions lead to positive change** – momentum is generated through positive questions which tap into the positive core of a church or organisation
6. **Wholeness brings out the best in people and organisations** – working together stimulates creativity and builds collective capacity
7. **Acting 'as if' is self-fulfilling** – we must be the change we want to see
8. **Free choice liberates power** – people perform better and are more committed when they have the freedom to choose what and how they contribute

When right-living people bless the city, it flourishes. Evil talk turns it into a ghost town in no time.
Proverbs 11:11

Box 2

More about the core...

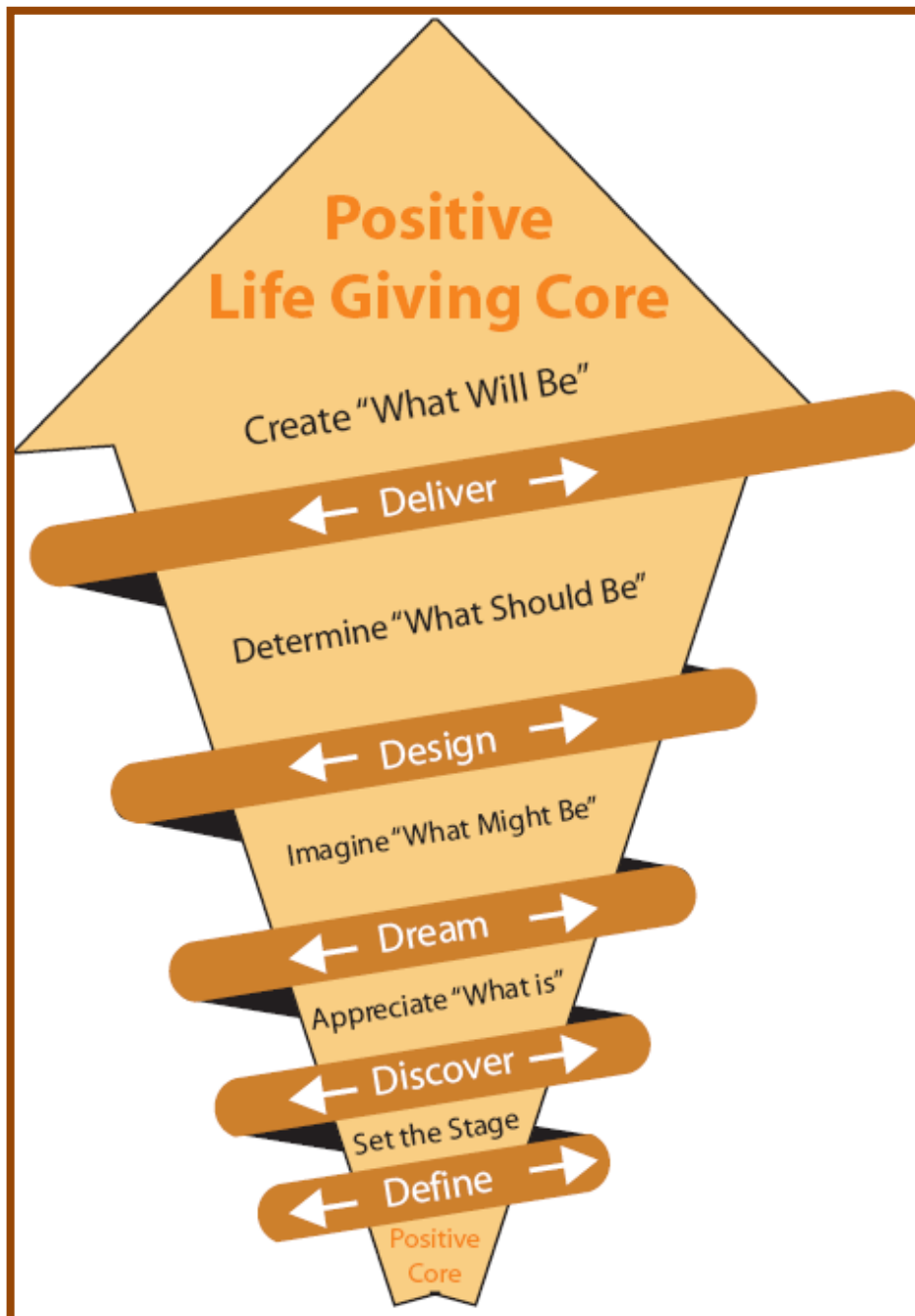
AI is an iterative process that uses collaborative inquiry and strategic visioning to unleash the positive energy and creativity within the Church to enable Christ's work to be done in the world.
Quote from the Clergy Leadership Institute.

More than a method or technique, the appreciative mode of inquiry is a means of living with, being with and directly participating in the life of a human system in a way that compels one to inquire into the deeper life-generating essentials and potentials of organisational existence.
David Cooperrider

The AI process is made up of five main stages – define, discover, dream, design and deliver (see Box 3). Different books and practitioners represent this in different ways but they all convey a sense of moving through a series of activities which ultimately takes the organisation from point A where they are now to B where they want to be in the future. The framework used here is the one used by the Clergy Leadership

Institute (See Resource 1 for details). It is particularly useful because it stresses that the whole process is driven forward by focusing on the 'Positive Life Giving Core' which is to be found in any church or organisation. It also includes the 'Definition' stage which is extremely important but not always explicitly placed in diagrams of AI frameworks. (See Resource 2 for the essential elements of each stage and the main decisions to be made).

Box 3 THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY MODEL



Forth Churches Group has used the AI approach and their account is given in Box 4.

Box 4 Forth Churches Group: An Overview of the AI Process

The Ministry Team in Forth Churches Group (FCG) was introduced to Appreciative Inquiry early on in its collaborative work. Conversations around what is 'life giving' within the grouping's congregations helped create an atmosphere of hope and creative potential for future collaborative work. While the possibility of a Grouping wide process of interview and engagement with all members and friends of the congregations, and some of those in the community from beyond the church walls, still remains a possibility AI in the meantime has shaped and influenced a variety of situations. Ministry Team members and other pastoral visitors have been aware of the benefit of taking the appreciative attitude into pastoral encounters - encouraging the telling of stories and dreaming of dreams and conversing in the things that really matter. Good past experience, Values and Dreams have shaped the FCG collaborative journey... a journey committed to taking the best of the past into a better future.

A specific example of how AI has shaped collaborative ministry in Forth Churches Group is in the area of Youth Ministry. After much talk of the need for shared Youth Ministry, there was yet another meeting to talk and to progress this. Working through the five Ds, the scope of the challenge was **defined**: to explore how the FCG churches might work together in ministry among teenagers. **Discovering** all that was already happening brought some surprises: "I didn't know you had a Girls' Brigade Company...". Far more than any one person was aware was catalogued, and inspired the group to move forward taking the best of the past's good practice. **Dreams** followed: how about a regular gathering together of all the teenagers who are engaged in some way with the local church? We could use the BBs equipment for games... it will be important to have a "God slot!" There are lots of people who would commit to making this happen... and with gathering momentum, within the space of an hour and half the group had **designed** "Teen Sunday" - a monthly get-together for teenagers from within the Parish Grouping Area, meeting on the evening of the tenth Sunday of the month, at different venues. Teen Sunday has been **delivered** most months since, and from the outset has been bigger than the sum of the individual "Bible Class" congregational groups.

3. Stages In the AI Process

Stage 1: DEFINE

The first two questions that need to be answered at the start of any process of development or change are

- a) what are we hoping to change/develop (is it a new vision for our church, or a new way of working as a Kirk Session or of creating Area Team Ministry or of exploring ways of working with the community or of improving pastoral care, etc)?
- b) what is the best way to go about bringing about the change (who is involved and how)?

Appreciative Inquiry takes time and resources and there may be other ways of bringing about change. However, most situations, including ones of conflict, the principles of the AI approach can be used. What then becomes important is the way the principles of AI will be used in a particular situation. Time, resources and the size of the issue will all determine whether you go for full blown AI or whether a small group uses the approach to deal with a specific issue.

Setting up an Advisory Team is a useful step in bringing together people who are committed to seeing the process through. It is also the opportunity to bring in external help if need be. (See People to Speak to in Resource 1)

If the Team are new to AI then it is important that some **training** takes place to equip them for the task ahead. The best training is to take at least two hours to let people experience the AI approach themselves by interviewing each other using the four basic AI questions around the area that you are wanting to develop (see Box 5).

Box 5 The Four Basic AI Questions

1. What was a peak experience or “high point”?
2. What are the things valued most about... (the following points may change depending on what areas you specifically want to explore)
 - Yourself?
 - Your Church?
 - Your membership of the Church?
3. What are the core factors that “give life” to your Church?
4. Given 3 wishes what would the Church look like in 10 years time (in as much detail as possible)

Committing to a positive approach is the key decision to be made by the group as it shapes everything else that takes place. It affects the way questions are phrased, the way issues are viewed and the way people are treated. It requires a role-modelling that in itself becomes part of the change

process. A commitment to the positive essentially means understanding and incorporating the Eight AI principles into the change process. This in turns helps to answer the questions that need to be answered at this stage regarding who should be included, how people will be included and how the process will be introduced to the church/organisation.

The next thing to be tackled is the choice of Affirmative Topic. This determines the focus of the research –it’s about what you want to change and therefore what you will ask questions about. The Topic is selected from a number of themes that are generated by a series of mini-interviews/story gatherings. As many people as possible who will be affected by the change should be involved. Guidelines to choosing an Affirmative Topic are given Resource 3 while an example of choosing one is given in Box 6.

Box 6

Example: Affirmative Topic Choice in Pastoral Care

A church wants to develop its provision of pastoral care to reach a wider and, in some cases hitherto, excluded group of people. It gathers together the current pastoral care team, members of the Kirk Session, recipients of care and various members of the congregation. In pairs they take turns asking each other the four basic AI questions shaped to address the pastoral care issue:

- 1. Best Experience:** Looking back what is your best experience of pastoral care? Describe it in detail. What made it such a positive experience? Who was involved? How did it make you feel? What were the results?
- 2. Value:**
 - a) What are the best things that are currently happening in Pastoral care? What makes them good?
 - b) What can you offer to Pastoral Care? What do people say you are good at? (Delivering effective Pastoral care requires many skills apart from the frontline caring work e.g. people with good organisation and administration skills are needed as well as a good communication network and links with Elder visitations.)
- 3. Core Values:** What is it that ‘gives life’ to this church that enables it to be a caring church? Have you seen other examples, outside of this church, of really good Pastoral Care in action? Can you tell me about it? What made it so good?
- 4. Three wishes:** If you had three wishes for pastoral care in this church, what would they be?

These questions provide an opportunity for people to reflect on things that have been important for them thus helping them to engage with the process. Everything is focused on the positive and draws out the best of what is in the present.

For the purposes of generating themes the wishes from Q4 are written or drawn on cards or sheets of paper and displayed on the wall for everyone to see. From these a number of themes will be generated e.g. greater cooperation with outside agencies, new provision for care issues not being currently addressed (such as the effects of divorce), seeing Pastoral care as the responsibility of all members of the congregation not just a small team.

As an example the Affirmative Topics that the above church may choose to research once it has looked at the themes could include: Being a totally caring congregation, reaching the ‘hidden’ people in our community, witnessing through healing .

Box 7

Example Affirmative Topic Choice - Tackling a 'thorny' issue in a new union

Two congregations are in the process of coming together in a union, with a degree of suspicion and apprehension on both sides. One has a proud history of traditional worship, following the liturgical year and using the pipe organ. The robed choir contribute an introit and an anthem each Sunday. The other congregation has had a more informal style of worship, with prayers led by members of the congregation and a praise band made up of folk of different ages who practice and play each week.

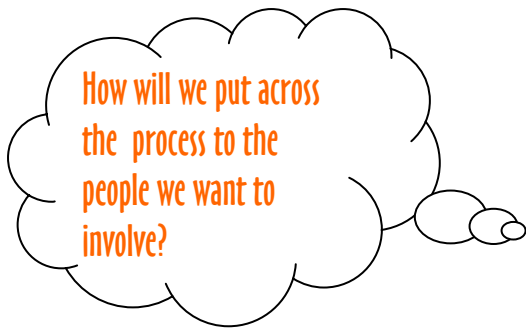
As part of the process of working towards union a worship working group has been formed, with equal representation from both congregations. The group was asked to listen in pairs to someone from the other congregation, and then to join with another pair and tell their partner's story.

1. **Best experience** What was a best or memorable worship experience for you? Try to describe it in detail. Where? When? Who was involved? What made it such a memorable experience? How did it make you feel?
2. **Values** What do you value most about your current experiences of worship? What makes these things good? What do you contribute?
3. **Core Values** What do you think lies at the heart of worship in your congregation? Have you seen other good examples in other places? Can you describe it?
4. **3 wishes** If you had three wishes for worship in the new union of New Town Parish Church what would they be?

These wishes are written on card or flip chart and grouped together (and, we hope, the origins of the wish lists will become obscured so that there are clear shared values).

The group together would then try to shape an affirmative topic which they will explore together over the months leading up to the union and introduce to the congregations through a conference day.

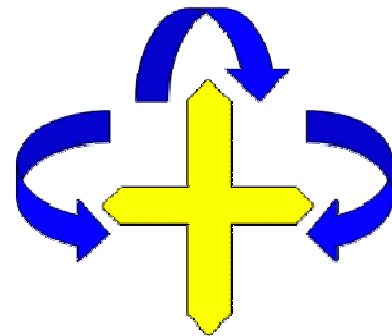
The affirmative statement might be something like: 'Worship in New Town Parish Church brings together the best of traditional and contemporary worship styles where engagement with Scripture is relevant and lively, encouraging the congregation in prayer and service, and where each is encouraged to share gifts and talents, to the glory of God.'



Although the full AI model (Box 1) and principles needs to be kept in mind it can be put across in different ways without using the term 'Appreciative Inquiry'!

The Forth Churches Group puts it across as follows:

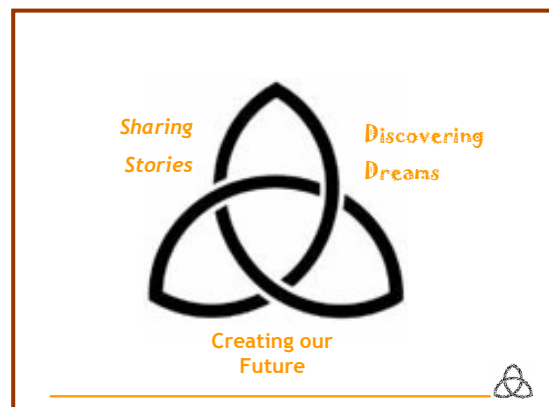
Celebrating what is good...
Sharing Stories, Discovering Dreams
& Creating Community



The 4 city centre churches in Edinburgh City Centre Churches TOGETHER are in the early stages of a STORYGATHERING Project as a first step in using the AI approach. The 4 churches have a covenant and have set up TOGETHER Trust to promote shared outreach. The Churches hope that the STORYGATHERING Project will lead a) to getting to know each other (and ourselves) better ... the process also allows the important 'voices from the edges' to be heard b) sharing these stories in creative ways c) then starting to 'fly kites' of new possibilities based on the best experiences ... leading on to d) people choosing which kites they want to develop in forward looking ideas. So far 7 people have been recruited from each of the congregations.

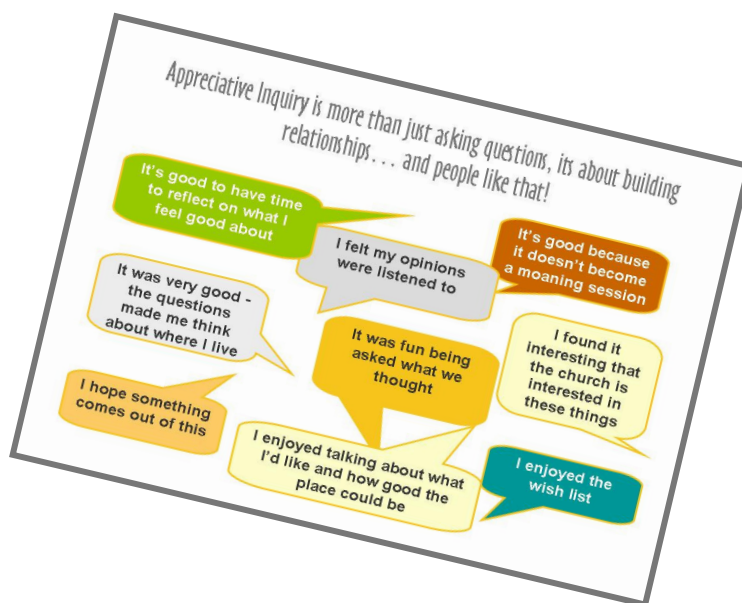


The Edinburgh Road Grouping used the celtic triquetra to represent the 3 main areas of activity – sharing stories, dreaming dreams and creating our future. The triquetra also represented the working together of the 3 churches in the Parish Grouping.



Stage 2: DISCOVER

Once the Affirmative Topic has been chosen the Interview Guide is developed around the 4 key AI questions. Although the word 'interview' is used it is really an opportunity for people to share their story in relation to the topic being explored. Initial scepticism about 'another interview' soon gives way to enthusiasm when people experience the difference. When people start listening to each other in this way relationships are built up which lay the foundation for future change.



An example of a Story Gathering Guide used by 3 churches who had chosen the Affirmative Topics of 'bringing out the best in people' and 'working in partnership' is shown in Resource 7.

Information can be collected in a number of ways (interviews, focus groups, observation) and by

Box 8 Collecting Information	
Methods of collection	Interviews Focus Groups Observation AI Summit
Who collects the information	Core team or steering committee Everyone – have an interview chain Employ an external consultant to help
Information that is meaningful to collect	Best quotes and wishes Best stories and practices Great examples Illustrations of the 'positive core'
The AI Report	Rich narratives Exemplary stories Description of the positive core

Source: Cooperrider et al: Appreciative Inquiry Handbook, p92

different types of people (leaders, congregation, external consultant). Keeping the questioning in-house allows more people to take part in the process and to be 'energised' by the process while using external people usually allows more interviews to be done of a higher quality. (See Box 9). Training people to carry out Appreciative story gathering is an important aspect of the Discover stage. It is through the sharing of stories that the 'positive life giving core' of the organisation or community is tapped into and both interviewee and interviewer become enthused about the possibility of change. To enable this to happen story gatherers must be able to listen to other people well, to help them to explore their 'best' experiences and to re-phrase negative statements into positive ones. The biggest tendency to overcome is the need to problem-solve. (See Resource 4 for Story Gathering Guidelines).

Holding an AI summit when a large number of people are gathered together can be a fun but effective way of introducing the process and providing a creative atmosphere for dreaming about the future. (See the resources section for websites with suggested programmes).

The number of interviewers will depend on the type of inquiry being undertaken. For a small initiative a handful of people may be enough but for one which involves working with the community larger numbers will be needed.

For most churches and faith-based organisations there will be a trade-off between the time people are prepared to give and the quality of the interviews. The more training that can be given the better the quality of the interviews. There is a real challenge in training interviewers who will only give an hour or so of time. However, it is important to appreciate the benefits that people gain when they conduct an Appreciative interview which leads to greater understanding between people and to the dreaming of a shared future.

Box 9
Inquiry creates change!
Members of Carntyne Parish Church experienced AI principles in action when leaders of their Mother & Toddler Group interviewed users of the service who suggested the need for a widening of the ages catered for during school holidays. Within weeks a new service was provided, relationships with the community and individual families were strengthened and one woman was so impressed by the churches attitude that she started attending services. The people doing the interviewing were also enthused about their role in bringing about positive change in the community.



In the Edinburgh Road Grouping two levels of training were offered: one evening to those who only wanted to do one or two interviews with people that they knew and two evenings of training to those who were prepared to do interviews in the community with people they didn't necessarily know. (Resource 5). An external consultant was used to do the training and to carry out some of the community interviews.

Collating information from the interviews can be a huge task if large numbers of interviews are undertaken. Training interviewers to summarise key points and document them on the summary sheet can save a lot of time at this stage.

Stage 3: DREAM

Dreaming can take place in many different ways and the more creative this stage is the better. Time may be limited in interviews and verbalising dreams may be the only option. In groups, however, there is the opportunity to use artwork, drama, storytelling and even video.

The main aim at this stage is to get people to think creatively and out of the box. Encouraging detail in dreams helps to get a fuller picture of what people want to happen.

Since we will spend the rest of our lives in the future we need to ensure that the future we imagine is one we would prefer to live in.

What will people be doing?

Who will be involved?

What will people feel?

What sort of facilities will be needed?

What sort of staff/volunteers will be needed?

What training will people have?

Who will you be working with?

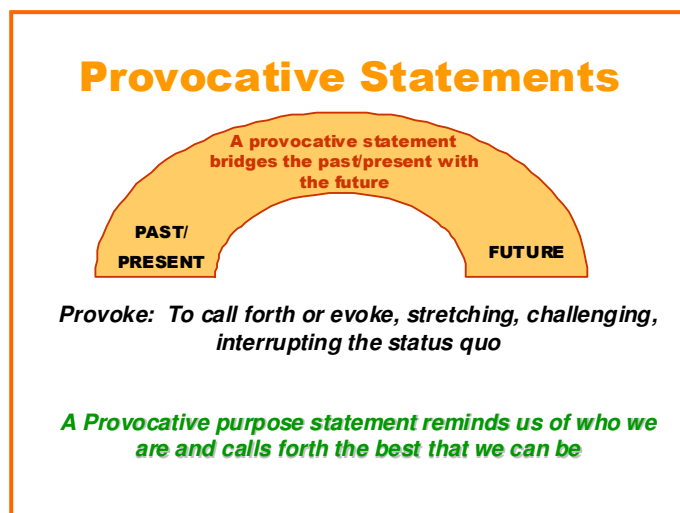
What changes will you see?

What will people be talking about?

Grouping the dreams into different themes around the focus of your inquiry – e.g. organisational change, youth, elderly, inter-generational, creative, health focused, discipleship, etc – allows a number of different possibilities to be fleshed out.

A key element in the process at this stage is framing provocative

statements. These act as a bridge between the past, present and future reminding us of who we are and calling forth the BEST that we can be. They describe a church or organisation at its very best. They are written as though the desired future is reality of whatever is being dreamed about whether it is worship, the nature of the church or even its structures. (See Resource 10)



‘We are a welcoming, vibrant, loving community
of followers of Jesus’

‘Our living Lord meets us in worship – in word and
sacrament, in praise and prayer – and that Sabbath
encounter spills out into our daily lives’

‘We open doors for children to fall in love with Jesus’

The decision-making process will depend on how big the decision is and how many competing dreams there. A small decision may be arrived at through discussion. Larger decisions such as choices between different dreams or areas of work may need more background work. In the ERG four areas of future action arose from the story-sharing and after an evening of presentation, discussion and elimination voting it was decided to pursue two areas – one focused on youth (a dream of many and building with existing links with Scripture Union) and one with befriending (arising from obvious opportunities to match church resources of friendship, time and buildings with the expressed needs of people in the area).

Stage 4: DESIGN

Once an initiative or a group of initiatives have been selected they need to be shaped into a framework that is understood by everyone. Future plans will also incorporate the values and best ways of being and doing that people have mentioned while sharing their stories. All this has to be brought together in a way that allows the Provocative Statements of the Dream stage to be translated into a working document which takes the Church forward. This means thinking through the real difference that the initiative will make. What is the real change that is desired and how will you realistically make it happen based on the best of what already exists and the resources that are available.

Looking at what people have to offer can be easily overlooked. An important part of the story-telling is getting people to identify what they are good at. This then provides the basis for developing realistic initiatives and can lead to some very simple activities

Box 10 Putting dreams and resources together...

Providing something for young people was the most popular dream. Lots of examples were given of what people wanted to see. But many elderly people in the congregation felt their gifts or energy levels did not lie in directly engaging in young people.

However, when put together with the resources that they did have – of helping, cooking, being available to open up buildings – an initiative was developed with an existing youth organisation which used the gifts and resources of older people while enhancing the activities available to young people.

Experiences of ERG

starting with the minimum of organisation as the ERG found when members of the congregation found when they started asking people who brought their children to the Mother and Toddler group.

There are many resources available to guide the formation of a project structure or plan of action.

There are generally three areas which need to be clearly defined:

1. The overall VISION of any future change or action. Within the AI process this will be summed up in the Provocative statement.
2. The specific OBJECTIVES or MISSION which identify the target group e.g. Kirk Session, ATM, congregation, community, etc – and the change or improvement that the initiative will bring about in them. (No more than three objectives or it becomes unmanageable). This states broadly how you will go about working towards the vision.
3. The GOALS related to each of the objectives. These identify in practical terms what the initiative will actually do in more detail.

An example of the Project framework used by the ERG in designing their Youth initiative is shown in Resource 9. This was developed through a series of meetings with a small group of delegated people.

Stage 5: DESTINY

This stage is about turning the design into reality. It is when the action plans swing into operation and people within the church/session/congregation/organisation start to move into the future that has been dreamt of. AI is not just a one-off event but a way of being. It involves a change in attitudes and behaviour as people learn to look for the positive. This has organisation/congregation wide implications. The Case Study in Section 5 looks at the issues faced by ERG once they had decided to go down the AI road.

Key elements of this stage include:

- Nurturing a collective sense of purpose
- Continuous learning, sharing and adjustment
- Building an 'appreciative eye' into the church's systems, procedures and ways of working
- Constantly seeking to transform the Provocative Proposal into reality at all levels
- Developing new competences to match Provocative Proposals

At its best the Appreciative approach is reiterative and takes you back to the Discovery stage where even more possibilities open themselves up!

4. Courage to move out of the comfort zone . . .

Many individuals and organizations are comfy where they are. There is an inbuilt resistance to change (sometimes justified theologically!). It seems ironic that the Church - an organisation founded on death and resurrection - is no different. But change and transformation is what the changeless God is about. The AI process, by its very nature, helps to develop courage to move out of the comfort zone.

危
機

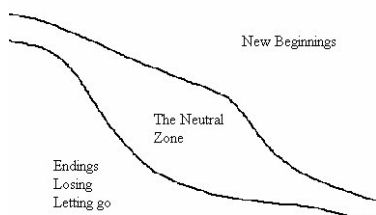
The Chinese Symbol for 'crisis' means both 'danger' and 'opportunity'..

1. Change is often demanded in response to crisis. The Chinese symbol captures not just the danger element of the need to change but the opportunity aspect of it. AI helps to identify what opportunities exist.

2. Change – moving out of comfort zones - occurs when the vision of the future and dissatisfaction with the present are greater than the resistance to change. AI helps to people to dream dreams and to build on existing resources in a way that the benefits of the future begin to outweigh the pain of loss and letting go of the present ways.

3. Change only comes about when people choose to be part of it. The AI process builds on people's stories of what they value and what gives them life. By involving people in the listening to and telling of stories they become enthused with possibilities. (See Box 6 for a practical example.)

4. The Neutral Zone is a frightening and exciting place, where the old certainties are gone but the new reality not yet clear.



The AI process allows people to journey together and to listen to the on-going story as people travel through the neutral zone.

5. Having crossed the neutral zone the journey of working towards the collective vision really begins. The element of destiny (p19) are all important here.

It's not so much that we are afraid of change or so in love with the old ways. It's the place in between we fear ... It's like being between trapezes. It's like Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to.

5. Other things to think about . . .

Becoming appreciative is an on-going process. It doesn't stop once a project, initiative or process of change has been implemented. The process needs to be nurtured, reflected on and changed if necessary. The parable of the sower reminds us that for ideas to develop into fully effective programmes of change or development a fertile environment is needed where all the right nutrients, water, sunlight, weeding, on-going care, are given. Indeed, the whole point of the Appreciative Inquiry might be to look at how to change the environment.

What sort of environment are you sowing into? What needs to change to make it the most fertile one?



THE PATH? Rock hard – unreceptive – nobody interested – ideas and plans trampled on

A ROCKY PLACE? Initial enthusiasm – some burst of energy – idea/plans soon wilt



A THORNY PLACE? – Ideas take root and grow but on-going care not given - choked by other priorities – busyness – idea dies



THE GOOD SOIL? – well prepared – weeded – ongoing nurturing and protection of idea – plans flourish!



An essential part of creating the right environment for change is being aware of the different parts of your church or organisation that might need to adapt as a result of using the appreciative approach. Any organisation, church or otherwise, is made up of different parts which, ideally, should all work together. At the core are the values and central reason for existing. Most churches and organisations will have a Vision or Mission statement and the basic structure of Minister and Kirk Session will be known. Some may be aware of a 'plan' or 'strategy' that is being pursued. When it

comes to processes the awareness and interest tends to be more limited. By the time it comes to personnel most people feel that these are a given over which there is little control. The culture of a particular church is generally so deeply engrained that many aspects of the way things are and work are not questioned. This includes leadership style which sets the tone for how things are done and the possibility, or not, for change. The following case study shows how all these aspects are deeply inter-related

CASE STUDY

Once the Edinburgh Road Grouping had carried out the Appreciative Inquiry and had planned what they wanted to do they realised that these plans would have implications on how they worked together in a whole range of ways throwing up new questions and challenges for the ERG as grouping. This section looks at some the issues which arose. (This section is based on the Seven 'S' framework which is used as an Organisational Development tool. It can be applied to any church or organisation and very quickly provides useful insights into how the different parts of the organisation are fitting together. An overview of the Seven 'S' model can be found in Resource 8)

Shared Values

As the ERG started to enter into partnerships with others the issue of what the core aims and values of the ERG was raised. With three churches coming from different backgrounds and histories it is not surprising that different priorities and outlooks have emerged. Dialogue and active listening will be needed to help carve out a set of values that the three churches can say they share in common. The AI process itself helped to identify the principles of involvement, inclusion and innovation as being valued by a wide range of people and these, in addition to others, are ones that the ERG may decide to hold in common in order to shape their future work together.

Values and the 'culture' of an organisation – church or otherwise – are what drive actions. Without changes in this area changes in structure and systems (discussed below) will have no meaning.



Agreed Strategy

Becoming a Parish Grouping arose out of the wider strategy of the Glasgow Presbytery Plan. Further decisions regarding strategy emerged through the AI process as the member churches become more committed to working together.

Agreed Structure

Working in new and different ways also raises questions about the different parties involved and how these new relationships are formalised into a recognised structure. At present the ERG is informally structured through the Joint Kirk Session, the Steering Group and Executive group. The balance of power still remains with individual Kirk Sessions. As the ERG enters into relationships and partnerships with other organisations there will be a need for scope to act in its own right. Indeed, from a legal point of view the ERG is now required to constitute itself as a separate entity raising issues such as:

- The scope of decision-making, management and leadership. Who will have the power to do what?
- The relationship between ERG and individual churches
- The powers that the ERG will have to enter into partnerships in its own right e.g most immediately with Junction12 and social work
- The financial responsibilities of the ERG
- The relationship with Ministries Council
- The relationship with the Church of Scotland's Priority Areas Committee which implements the policy of the Ministries Council in developing, encouraging and overseeing strategy within priority area parishes.

Workable and Distinct Systems

New structures require new systems. As new structures come into place new systems will need to be developed to accommodate the changes. Decision-making systems, communication channels, financial management and reporting, health and safety, CRBS compliance, reviewing achievements and progress – all the systems that already exist within individual churches will need to be put in place for the ERG. There is a danger that these become 'add-ons' to already existing congregational systems – in these circumstances resources and decisions can be hijacked by non-ERG agendas and priorities. Careful thought needs to be given to this aspect of the ERG.

In addition to the more functional and internal aspects of the organisation awareness raising and external communication will require some thought. Public perceptions are important and the church has quite a bit of ground to make up in different ways. Communication is necessary to keep relationships going both internally and externally. Incorporating this into systems at the outset helps to keep people up to date and included along the way.

Skills and Attitudes

New ways of doing things requires new skills and attitudes. One of the things that people talked about in their stories was the sense of achievement when they stepped out of their comfort zone. With the right support systems people can be encouraged to explore new ways of being and doing that working with the youth and community organisations will require. To some extent the individual projects will address specific skills and attitudes but each congregation will also be called on to support volunteers and wider ERG initiatives.

Staffing

Another significant impact of the AI process was the decision to reallocate the time different people spent on things. Out of the staff allocation provided for by the Presbytery Plan one person was designated to work across the 3 churches and with a specific remit of community involvement with the projects that had been identified. Following the AI process it was decided that funding for a 4th ministerial role should be given over to employing a befriending coordinator to work with the congregations in the grouping. (The position for this was recently advertised in Life and Work).

Leadership Style

New ways of working led to thinking about the leadership style needed to take the ERG initiatives forward. A more collaborative leadership model requires skills in facilitation and coordination. As the Parish Grouping developed through the AI process the way meetings were conducted subtly changed as the awareness grew that working collaboratively has to be reflected in relations within the church and the community. This change requires a cultural shift in the way congregations view the role of the minister and themselves. For ministers and Kirk Sessions it leads to a re-evaluation of expectations and lays the basis for a different way of working.

RESOURCES

1	Useful Books, Websites, Contacts	25
2	Overview of Decisions to be made at Each Stage of the AI Process	27
3	Affirmative Topic Guidelines	28
4	Story Gathering Guidelines	29
5	Volunteer Job Descriptions	30
6	AI Guide for Congregations	31
7	AI Guide for Community	32
8	The 7S Framework	34
9	Sample Project Framework	35
10	Provocative Proposals	36
11	Ways of communicating	37

RESOURCE 1 Useful Books and Websites

Books

Appreciative Inquiry Handbook. By Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros. ISBN 1-57675-269-0. *A comprehensive guide to using the AI approach by the founders of AI. Generally takes examples from larger organisations and usually within a business context but the principles are still the same. Lots of diagrams and checklists if you like that sort of thing.*

The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change. By Whitney and Trosten-Bloom. ISBN 1-57675-226-7. *Another useful basic 'how-to' book written more from an 'organisational change' rather than a 'business transformation' point of view.*

Appreciative Team Building: Positive Questions to Bring Out the Best in Your Team. By Whitney et al. ISBN 0-595-33503-9 *A very useful little book with lots of ideas which can be used with any type of team including Kirk Sessions, Parish Groupings, Leadership Teams and Project Management Teams.*

Memories, Hopes & Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change. By Mark Lau Branson. ISBN 1-56699-288-5. *An example of how AI has been applied in a church setting. A series of 19 Appendices with lots of examples and guidance on the different stages. A good purchase.*

Reports

Report on the Appreciative Inquiry in Carntyne, Cranhill & Riddrie. By Sheena Orr for the Edinburgh Road Grouping. January 2008. *A practical example of AI being used in a Parish grouping within a Scottish context.*

Imagine Chicago: Ten Years of Imagination in Action By Bliss W Browne & Shilpa Jain. Available to download from: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/bookReviewDetail.cfm?coid=1970> . *A highly informative account of how AI was used city wide in Chicago through inter generational listening.*

Websites

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>
The main portal for all things to do with Appreciative Inquiry.

<http://www.clergyleadership.com>
Website of the Clergy Leadership Institute which trains people in using AI in a church setting. Various AI resources and ideas. They also produce a manual for training in AI: 'Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry'.

<http://www.ai.forthchurchesgroup.org.uk/AI@ForthChurches.html>
Website of the Forth Churches Group which is using AI to

<http://www.nickheap.co.uk>
Various articles and resources to do with AI including sample programme for an initial AI workshop

People to contact for more information about AI

Rev Donald McCorkindale – using it in an Area Team Ministry context in Fife.
donald@forthchurchesgroup.org.uk

Rev Muriel Pearson – trained in AI and involved in ERG, Glasgow which used the AI process
murielpearson@btinternet.com

Rev John Collard – trained in AI and involved in ERG process.
jkcollard@blueyonder.co.uk

Sheena Orr – Consultant who helped the Edinburgh Road Grouping to carry out their AI process.
sheena.orr@virgin.net

Rev Russell McLarty – using AI in the context of Interim Ministry in Edinburgh.
russellmclarty@yahoo.co.uk

Other resources

JUST LISTEN. Available from: <http://acornchristian.org/> . A basic listening course to help prepare people for carrying out appreciative interviews. Contains a CD and booklets for a training a small group of people.

RESOURCE 2 Overview of decisions to be made at each stage of the AI process

	Stage of Inquiry	Decision to be made
Committing to the Positive	<p>DEFINE <i>Involves introducing leaders/decision makers to Appreciative Inquiry as a process for change, establishing a supportive structure and engaging participants in the process. Above all there must be a commitment to the positive.</i></p> <p><i>Affirmative Topic Choice</i> <i>involves selecting the topics that establish the organisations course for learning and transformation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Appreciative Inquiry appropriate for us? • What is our change agenda? • Who will serve on the Advisory Team? • What training does our Advisory Team need? • What form of engagement will we use? • What will our inquiry strategy be? • How and when will we introduce the process through the church? • Who will we carry out mini-interviews with to generate themes? • Who will select the topics? • Which topics will we study?
Valuing the Best of What is	<p>DISCOVER <i>What in God's name is going on in the church? Involves crafting the Appreciative Inquiry interview Guide(s), conducting interviews and making meaning of what is learned.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will craft the questions for the interview guides • Who will we interview? • Who will conduct interviews? How many each? • What training will our interviewers need? • Who will make meaning of the data? How? • How will we communicate stories and best practices?
Dreaming of the future	<p>DREAM <i>What is the God and the community calling us to be? Involves individual and collective visioning, group dialogues and enactments of positive images of the church/organisations future.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whom should we involve • What experiential/creative activity will we use to reveal our images of the future? (art, drama, video, storytelling....) • What will be the outcome of our dreams?
Planning how to turn dreams reality	<p>DESIGN <i>Involves aligning values, structures and mission with the ideal. Developing achievable plans and steps to make the vision a reality.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we designing? • Who needs to be involved? • How do we describe our ideal church/organisation?
Creating what will be	<p>DESTINY/DELIVER <i>Involves unleashing self-organised innovation through which the future will be made real</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we gather stories about what we have achieved? • How will we celebrate? • What are our parameters for self-organised action? • How shall we self-organise? • How shall we support on-going success?

Adapted from: Whitney and Trostem-Bloom: The Power of Appreciative Inquiry (p48-49). Clergy Leadership Institute: Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry (p11).

Main Points

Topic choice is a fateful act (in the sense that it affects outcomes)

Organisations move in the direction of their inquiry

Vocabulary is not “just semantics”; words create worlds

People commit to topics they have helped to develop

- Wide participation is encouraged
- Diversity is essential

Critical Choice

Decide who needs to be involved – different groups may be involved at different times:

A representative steering committee

Or

The Board or Kirk Session

Or

The whole congregation to whatever extent possible (could part of the Sunday service be used?)

Rules of Thumb

No more than five topics selected to choose the final one from

Topics are phrased in affirmative terms, they are desirable, they stimulate learning and they stimulate conversations about the direction in which the church wants to go.

RESOURCE 4 Story Gathering Guidelines

EDINBURGH ROAD GROUPING
Community Audit

1. Be POSITIVE. Read Philippians 4:6-9 before you go out:

'...You'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.'

The aim of the story gathering is to find out the BEST experiences that people have had and what made them good.

People may mention negative things but try and get to the positive in a situation
e.g. 'the young people are a problem round here' to 'what examples of good youth work have you seen?' or 'are there any times when young people have helped you in any way?'

If people do have real complaints then do take a note of them but don't focus on them. Move onto the positives.

2. Be prepared to actively LISTEN to people's stories.

This means being:

- △ focused on the person speaking
- △ genuinely interested in what they are saying
- △ patient
- △ listening all the time

It is important that people feel listened to and accepted, that their story is of value.

3. Ask OPEN QUESTIONS that help people to tell more of their story

e.g. 'can you tell me more about that?'

'that sounds like something you really enjoyed – what made it so good?'

'please can you explain a bit more about what you mean when you said.....'

4. PREPARE for each story gathering.

Think about who you are story gathering from. Are they part of the church, the community or a specific organisation? Focus on the group they belong to.

RESOURCE 5 Volunteer Job Descriptions

ERG Volunteers - The Cascade Approach

Volunteers are free to undertake as few or as many interviews as they like. They ask people they have interviewed in the ERG if they would like to do two or three interviews and so the cascade begins.

Task:

- To listen to the stories of other people in their congregation or in one of the other ERG congregations.
- To keep a simple record of conversations
- To attend a summary workshop of the Community Audit

Training: 2 x 1½ hour training session in how to use the interview schedule with guided questions. The main focus is on listening and drawing out the elements of the stories which highlight the best.

Community Volunteers

A core team of trained interviewers who would carry out a designated number of interviews and focus groups with previously identified organisations and individuals

Task:

- To listen to the stories of organisations and individuals in the wider community.
- To keep a more systematic record of conversations
- To attend Dream and Design workshops

Training: 2 x 1½ hour training session plus 'in-community' interviews in how to use the interview schedule with guided questions. (i.e. training for ERG volunteers plus half a day practical work in the community including a de-brief) As well as developing listening skills and drawing out the elements of the stories which highlight the best this group will be trained in group interviews and how to record the data more systematically in order to draw out best quotes and wishes, stories and practices, etc.

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE SHOULD STORY GATHERERS BE?

Friendly

Open-minded

Interested in finding out what others think

Careful listener: good at asking questions to draw people out

Good at keeping the focus

RESOURCE 6 Appreciative Interview Guide For Congregations

The Four Initial Questions

Instructions: In pairs take time to interview one another using the following questions. Be a generous listener. Do not dialogue, rather take turns to actually conduct an interview. If you need more information or clarification ask additional follow-up questions. Use this sheet to record the results of your interview. When your interviews are completed you will present the results to the wider group.

Before you conduct the interview take a minute to read the questions and decide how you will personally answer the question and make a mental note of your response. Now proceed with the interviews, paying full attention to the interviewee rather than to your story.

1. Best Experience: Reflect on your entire experience with your congregation. Recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, spiritually touched, or most excited about your involvement. Tell me about this memorable experience that you have had with your church. Describe the event in detail. What made it an exciting experience? Who was involved? Describe how you felt? Describe what you did as a result of the experience?

2. Values: What are the things you value deeply: specifically, the things you value about yourself, being a parishioner, and your church:

(i) Yourself: What do you value most about yourself- for example; as a human being, or employee, or a friend, parent, citizen, and so on? *(note – we found people answered better when we asked what others said they were good at or valued most in them)*

(ii) Being a parishioner: When you feel best about being a parishioner at your church, what about yourself do you value?

(iii) Your church: What is it about your church that you value? What is the single most important thing that your church has contributed to your life?

(iv) Your Denomination: What is it about being a member of your denomination that you value? What is the single most important thing that being from your denomination has contributed to your life?

3. Core Value: What do you think is the core value of your church? What values give life to your congregation. What is it that, if it did not exist, would make your church totally different than it currently is?

4. Three Wishes: If you had three wishes for your church, what would they be?

SOURCE: www.clergyleadership.com Clergy Leadership Institute

RESOURCE 7 Appreciative Interview Guide for Community

Date _____

Interviewer _____

Your Telephone number _____

Which community?
Carntyne / Cranhill / Riddrie

(circle the community the person you
are interviewing lives or works in)

Name of person being interviewed _____ Age _____

Are they Male or Female? _____ M / F _____ (circle M if male, F if female)

Tel _____ (optional - so we can follow up on issues raised if necessary)

Organisation _____ Position _____

FOR COMPLETION AFTER THE INTERVIEW HAS TAKEN PLACE:

1. What were the best quotes that came out of this interview?
2. What were the best stories that came out of this interview?
3. What were the best wishes that you heard from this interview?
4. What were the best practices and specific recommendations that you heard reflected in your conversation?

Length of interview _____

EDINBURGH ROAD GROUPING
Community Audit

Introduce yourself and thank the person for meeting with you.

Explain you are asking a few questions to explore ways in which the churches in ERG can work together with the community. Check if the person has any questions before starting.

1. Thinking about the present

Thinking about your organisation/community - what is it that first attracted you to this organisation/community and what keeps you involved? What is special about it?

2. Thinking about the past

Think about a specific time or incident when you have been really proud to be a part of your organisation/community? What was the situation? What made it so good? What was your role in it? What role did others play? What lessons can be learnt about being effective as an organisation/community?

What particular gifts and skills do you think you have? (could also ask ‘what do other people say you are good at?’)

3. *Thinking about involvement and buildings*

3.1 An active involvement is necessary if different organisations and partners are going to work together. As the Edinburgh Road Grouping we are keen to identify the very best practices in partnership working and to see how we can be effectively involved with different organisations in the future and how they can be involved with us.

Can you tell me about the best examples of partnership working that you have been involved in? What did it feel like for you personally? What made it so good? What made it happen? What lessons do you think can be learnt for the future?

3.2 Buildings are part of what the churches can offer the community.

We have 3 building complexes which are used by a wide range of community groups. There is also spare land around some of the churches? What potential do you see for the way in which the buildings and land could be used as a community resource?

4. *Thinking about the future*

If you had three wishes what would your wish list be to make this area one which brings out the best in people? (Encourage people to give as much detail as possible - who would be involved, where would it take place, how would people behave)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

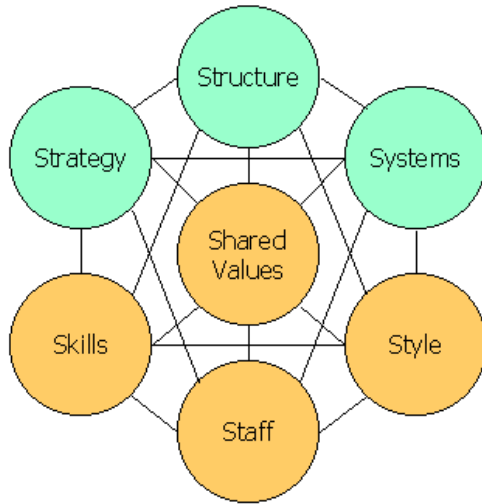
Reflections on the interview

1. What did you like best about this interview?
2. Would you like to ask someone else in your organisation these questions? (if yes give them a questionnaire and tell them who to return it to and by when).



RESOURCE 8 The 7s Framework

The framework is based around seven key elements that exist in any organisation/church. These seven elements are distinguished in so called hard S's and soft S's. The hard elements (Strategy, structure and systems) are usually easy to identify. They can usually be found in planning documents, organisational charts and other documentations.



The four soft S's however, are less visible. They are difficult to describe since capabilities, values and elements of organisational culture are continuously developing and changing. They are highly determined by the people at work in the organisation. Therefore it is much more difficult to plan or to influence the characteristics of the soft elements. Although the soft factors are below the surface, they can have a great impact on the hard Structures, Strategies and Systems of the organisation.

Description

The Hard S's	
Strategy	These are the actions a church plans in response to its vision.
Structure	Basis for co-ordination influenced primarily by strategy and by the congregation's size and diversity. In the Church of Scotland the Kirk Session forms the primary structure but many different committees can also develop to carry out work.
Systems	Formal and informal procedures that support the strategy and structure. (Systems are more powerful than they are given credit). This includes decision-making systems, the way people communicate, the way things are recorded and how things are done.
The Soft S's	
Style / Culture	The culture of the congregation, consisting of two components: 1. Congregational Culture: the dominant values and beliefs, and norms, which develop over time and become relatively enduring features of congregational life. 2. Leadership Style: more a matter of what leaders do than what they say; How do leaders spend their time? What are they focusing attention on? Are they team players?
Staff	The people/human resource management – processes used to develop people, socialization processes, ways of shaping basic values of the leadership
Skills	The sort of skills that are needed in order to pursue the vision and promote the style and culture
Shared Values and Vision	Guiding concepts, fundamental ideas around which an congregation is built – these must be simple and have great meaning for the congregation even though outsiders may not fully understand them.

Effective churches and organisations achieve a fit between these seven elements. In other words each element supports the others so that the whole organisation is focused on achieving the overall aim of the organisation in accordance with its values. If one element changes this will affect all the others. If a new way of working is introduced (i.e. a new strategy) this can affect the way decisions are made, the type of skills needed by staff and leaders and the whole culture of the organization.

YOUTH PROJECT: enERGise!	VERIFIABLE INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT & VALUE	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS (Risks and Conditions)
GOAL Our goal is to see young people fulfilling their potential within a supportive community	Example: Improved educational levels Improved mental health among children Older people feel safer	SIMD	Long term issues: difficult to measure and assign to specific programmes Measuring attitudes a sensitive issue
OBJECTIVES The ERG will work towards this by 1. Encouraging people of different ages to talk together and value one another 2. Partnering with local youth organisations to provide high quality opportunities for youth work	1.1 Older people's attitudes towards/understanding of young people change s for the better 1.2 Young people's attitudes towards/understanding of older people change for the better 2.1 Formal partnership agreements are entered into with local youth organisations 2.2 A range of high quality opportunities are developed	Survey of church members Survey of young people	Willingness of young and old to work together Partnership organisations available
OUTPUTS The ERG seeks to 1. Energise Youth Organisations by providing practical and organisational support 2. Energise Youth by providing opportunities for involving young people in on-going church and community life 3. Energise the ERG by building youth into existing programmes	1.1 ERG support leads to successful funding application To PDF 1.2 J12 able to run Wed night youth clubs with meals - people volunteer from the 3 churches J12 Youth leaders involved in Holiday Club 2008; Community Involvement opportunities through ERG Links into Vulnerable Adults programme Becoming more youth friendly - more young people Young people consulted and listened to through J12 Young People's Forum 3.3 Attitudes are positive and welcoming to youth	On-going monitoring Quarterly review meetings between J12/ERG to check on progress Survey of young people Review of young people's Participation in church events	ERG congregations are committed to the initiative and actively seek to become youth friendly J12 is able to identify and provide trainee leaders for Holiday Club Opportunities through the schools Community Involvement can be found Links with the Vulnerable Adults Programme made
ACTIVITIES (detailed activity plan to be developed with partners and ERG) 1. Youth Organisations 1.1 partnership agreements developed (formal and informal), 1.2 rota for shopping, cooking, cleaning up 1.3 Support for Parish Development Fund application 1.4 On-going communication with partners 2. Youth 2.1 Involvement of youth in Holiday Clubs 2.2 Community Placement opportunities developed 2.3 Links to the Vulnerable Adults Project through visiting/befriending opportunities 3. ERG 3.1 On-going communication about what is happening 3.2 Recruiting and supporting volunteers 3.3 Encouraging new ways of relating to youth - moving out of the comfort zone		Programme action plans Programme Records Financial records Minutes of meetings	Good communication between ERG and J12 Volunteers are available when required Young people are willing to be involved in ERG
INPUTS ERG Representative on J12 Board, Paid Community Worker, church buildings available for activities, liason/management, Volunteers from ERG churches Youth Project is a standing item on ERG Steering Group agenda			ERG commit to this over the longer-term Enough people volunteer from the ERG Funding can be raised for a community worker



RESOURCE 10 Essentials of Provocative Proposals

From Mark Lau Branson Appendix N,O and P of 'Memories, Hopes & Conversations'

Provocative Proposals

1. are stated in the affirmative, as if already happening
2. point to real desired possibilities
3. are based on the data
4. create new relationships, including intergenerational partnerships
5. bridge the best of “what is” toward “what might be”
6. 6. require sanctified imaginations, stretching the status quo by pushing boundaries
7. necessitate new learning
8. challenge organisational assumptions and routines

Creating Provocative Proposals

1. Focus on an area of the church’s life and mission
2. Locate peak examples
3. Analyse factors that contributed to faithfulness/goodness of the church’s life and mission in the that specific area
4. Extrapolate from the “best if what is/was” to envision “what might be”
5. Construct a proposition of what is possible expressed as if it were already true

SAMPLE PROVOCATIVE PROPOSAL

Organisational Structures

First Community Church has implemented organisational structures that enhance ministry and mission, deploy and equip members according to their gifts and passion, and nourish respect and mutual growth of all members. Structures are streamlined, responsibilities and authority are clear, leaders and participants learn from each other, and prayerful discernment grounds all decisions.



DRAMA

Drama can be a fun way of communicating findings from the story gathering need or highlighting areas that would benefit from further exploration.

**NEWSLETTER**

A Newsletter using a simple programme like 'Publisher' can be used to keep congregations up to date with what is going on, to share stories and to intimate the next steps.

WEBSITE

If your church has a website a special area can be set up for sharing information and stories.

CELEBRATION

Why not have a celebration at the end of the process to share the stories, dreams and decisions in art, drama, spoken or written form. The more creative the better!

WORD OF MOUTH

Keep people gossiping! People like telling good news and people like to hear it. Encourage people to speak to others about the appreciative approach and the good news stories coming out of it. Take any opportunity you can to mention what is going on and the good things that are happening through the process.

REPORT

It may be helpful to record the stories, dreams and way forward in a short report. This is not only a way of keeping a record of what has happened but is useful to show funders if funding is being sought or to share with potential partners if a new area of work is being considered.

ARTWORK

Put across your dreams in art or use striking visual symbols.

PHOTOS

Record the process in photos so everyone can see.

POWERPOINT Summarise themes from story in an interesting PowerPoint presentation

