

# **Attitudes of the Community**

Developed by Rev. Mark Hartburg

It is not enough just to know facts about community but also how the community thinks and feels. For example, is there something that has caused a negative image toward the church that you need to be aware of? If you remain oblivious to it then a campaign to invite community people to the church will be hindered.

Sometimes it helps to hear people's attitudes toward God or the Bible. Actually, most times we are surprised at the receptiveness people show when we expect hostility. It is important to hear how people in your community are hurting or are open to knowing more about God.

## ***Community Survey***

The questionnaire is designed to test receptivity to the gospel, attitudes toward the church, and offers possible side-door ministries that the church could do. The survey may need to be modified to offer realistic possibilities for your individual church. They do not have to be actual things you are doing now but what your church could do if you had enough response from the community. In fact, you could use this survey as the grounds for going to the community with a particular program. Adapt this to fit any program you may be considering, such as a preschool, day care, after school program, food bank, parenting classes, etc.

This sample provides an opening to invite people to a Bible study or church program, or even to share the gospel. If you need a survey that solely tests attitudes then you will need to omit question # 8. A question to ask if you sense that there could be negative feelings toward the church would be: "If you could tell the pastor of our church anything that you wanted, what would you say?" Again, if you know your objectives you can modify your questions to obtain that needed information.

## **Field Test**

Before implementing a full survey, field test your questionnaire for potential problems people have in answering. Is there any question respondents do not understand? Are their answers leading you to the needed information or should you ask a follow-up question?

For a community survey, a minimum of ten trial interviews is necessary to detect problems.

## **Train Interviewers**

Be sure to train those conducting the survey to obtain uniform and accurate results. How do you complete the survey? How do you greet people at the door to create a greater willingness to respond? What do you do if they show interest in the church? How should you share the gospel if they ask? Should you try to direct the conversation to a gospel presentation or just obtain the requested information?

## **Recommendations for the polling process:**

1. Be sure each survey has a section number of the community (divide the community into various homogeneous sections), address, and researcher's name or initials.
2. Greet people with a smile and a planned opening: "Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm conducting a survey in the community for our church (give name). I am wondering if you would be so kind as to give me five minutes to answer these questions which can help us develop a better service to our community."
3. Have an Interviewee Copy of the survey to put into their hands at this point. This lets them see the questions to facilitate their thinking as well as disarm their fears that this is really some kind of promotion or proselytizing.
4. Instruct the researchers that the survey has great value in understanding the community even if there is no interest in church programs or the gospel.
5. Do not see the main purpose of this as a witnessing tool but as an information gathering tool. If interest is shown in the gospel, be prepared how to answer.
6. If information is desired, follow-up or give a brochure of the church. Do not leave literature unless they request it, otherwise they will question the motive of your survey.
7. Always thank people for their assistance and be as brief and respectful of their time as possible.
8. Expect some people to refuse to answer. They are not mad at you or God, but suspicious of solicitors.
9. After completing the Questionnaire, rate the potentiality of interviewee as a prospect on the scale of 1-5 at the bottom.
  - 1 – Does not seem to be an active prospect
  - 2 – Might be an active prospect
  - 3 – Appears to be good prospect
  - 4 – Appears to be an excellent prospect
  - 5 – Needs immediate follow-up

**File your data for follow-up! Commend to God in prayer!  
Follow up in the boldness and power of the Holy Spirit!**



# Community Questionnaire

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Surveyed (*Optional*) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you an active member of a local church? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think is the greatest need that people have in our community?

3. Why do you think most people don't attend church?

4. What kinds of things should the church be doing to make this a better community?

5. Would you consider enrolling your children in a Family Sunday School program?

\_\_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_\_ Mild interest \_\_\_\_ Open to consider  
\_\_\_\_ Very interested \_\_\_\_ N/A (do not have children at home)

6. What time would be best?

\_\_\_\_ Sunday Morning \_\_\_\_ Mid week evening

7. What would best express what reasons you may have for wanting to know about God and the Bible? (Indicate 1st and 2nd choices).

\_\_\_\_ Gain needed guidelines on how to live a better life  
\_\_\_\_ Find answers for having a happy home  
\_\_\_\_ Help find a purpose for living  
\_\_\_\_ Know God in a personal way  
\_\_\_\_ Find forgiveness of sin and its guilt  
\_\_\_\_ Answer questions about life after death  
\_\_\_\_ Fill a loneliness felt inside

8. Would you be interested in studying the Bible with other adults in your area?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

9. Would you like a brochure about \_\_\_\_\_ congregation?

10. Would you like a visit from our pastor or someone else from our congregation?

# Community Questionnaire

Researcher

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Surveyed (*Optional*) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you an active member of a local church? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think is the greatest need that people have in our community?

3. Why do you think most people don't attend church?

4. What kinds of things should the church be doing to make this a better community?

5. Would you consider enrolling your children in a Family Sunday School program?

\_\_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_\_ Mild interest \_\_\_\_ Open to consider  
\_\_\_\_ Very interested \_\_\_\_ N/A (do not have children at home)

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\_\_\_\_ Help find a purpose for living  
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\_\_\_\_ Find forgiveness of sin and its guilt  
\_\_\_\_ Answer questions about life after death  
\_\_\_\_ Fill a loneliness felt inside

8. Would you be interested in studying the Bible with other adults in your area?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

9. Would you like a brochure about \_\_\_\_\_ congregation?

10. Would you like a visit from our pastor or someone else from our congregation?

Researcher: 1 2 3 4 5 (*circle one*)