

Interfaith—troubling discrepancies

Planting seeds: INTERFAITH RELATIONS



Which other faith traditions are present in your local community?

| | |
|----------|-----|
| Jewish | 71% |
| Muslim | 62% |
| Buddhist | 40% |
| Hindu | 36% |
| Sikh | 19% |
| Other | 17% |
| None | 17% |

94% of leaders of 100+ person congregations say it is important for Christians to learn about other faith traditions.

Surveying church leaders: What is the goal of interfaith activity?

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Education | 73% |
| Relationship building | 72% |
| Social activism | 26% |

Kinds of interaction with other faith traditions

- 46%** Involved together in a social service activity
- 34%** Held an educational event
- 33%** Active in an interfaith organization
- 22%** Sponsored an interfaith event for youth
- 21%** Hosted a speaker from another faith
- 20%** Held an interfaith social event
- 16%** Hosted interfaith worship or prayer service

Main reasons that congregations don't practice interfaith activity

- We don't know where to start.**
- We don't have the resources to develop a program.**

A recent survey reveals a concerning discrepancy in interfaith relationships. While most leaders of Presbyterian congregations think it's important to learn about other faith traditions, many congregations have little interfaith contact. The majority of respondents had not interacted with another faith tradition in the last two years.

They said that's mostly because they don't know how to get started or don't have the resources. Another big reason: many of these congregations are in small, sometimes rural communities and don't have (or know of) neighboring congregations from other faith traditions.

The good news, however, is that when this interaction does take place, lives are often transformed. Almost half of the leaders of small congregations said that, when they formed personal relationships during community activities, their opinion of other faith traditions shifted dramatically.

Here's how you can get started.

- Partner with a leader of another faith tradition to host a panel discussion or course.
- Join a local or national interfaith organization.
- Look in the phone book and on the Internet to find houses of worship belonging to different faith traditions and invite them to join you in a meal or social service activity. Or ask to join them in one of their projects.
- Help congregants better understand their own faith and what's nonnegotiable for them.
- Download the PC(USA) Interfaith Toolkit: pcusa.org/interfaith.

» Other findings: pcusa.org/research