This session is designed to be highly customized by you in order to introduce your congregation to those in the membership process. The PowerPoint presentation serves as a guide that suggests topics you may wish to cover and each slide can be edited by you. There is more potential content in this area than might be able to be covered in a single session; if needed add an additional session.

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION

Acquaint the group with your church:
- History
- Distinctives and theology
- Structure and resources

Consider deeper involvement in the mission and ministry of your church.

SESSION OUTLINE

| Gather | a) Beginning points  
b) Discussion starter |
|--------|----------------------|
| Instruct and Interact | a) Biblical images for the local church  
b) Who we are—history and structure of [insert your church name]  
  - Our history  
  - Our mission and values  
  - Our mission and ministry  
  - Our staff and leaders  
  - Our structure  
  - Our facility  
c) Where we’re going—preview of the future |
Gather

Beginning Points

- Welcome participants back to *Mission Friends: The Meaning of Membership*.  
  
- **Explain:** The objectives for this session are to:
  - Acquaint the group with the mission of [insert your church name]:
    - History
    - Vision and mission
    - Structure and resources
  - Consider a deeper involvement in the mission and ministry of [insert your church name]

- Pray.

Discussion Starter

- Choose from one of the following options:
  - **Option 1**— Have you ever taken a behind the scenes tour of something that has always fascinated you? What was it? Perhaps it has been a stadium tour, or a tour of a movie set, or a factory tour, or a tour of a mammoth structure like a dam or skyscraper. What was it like to go behind the scenes? (Allow for discussion)
  - **Option 2**— Have you ever learned the inside scoop on a business or organization?

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**Materials for This Session**

Participant guides (one per person); Leader’s guide; pens or pencils; dry erase board or chart paper and markers; PowerPoint presentation; leader biographies; staff information; Video, slides, or PowerPoint of your church and ministry (optional); map/diagram of your church facility (optional); timeline of your church noting significant markers (optional); diagram of church ministries and organization and how they are inter-related (optional); appendix resources (optional)
Perhaps it was in training for a new job, or beginning as a volunteer, or perhaps it was through a conversation with a friend or family member. Describe what it was like to learn all about that business or organization. (Allow for discussion)

Explain: Taking a tour or learning the inside scoop gives a whole new appreciation for what that enterprise is all about and what it takes to make it run effectively. Today we are going on a behind-the-scenes tour of our congregation. We will hopefully demystify some things, and help you understand something of our history, what is important to us, how we are organized, and where we are going.

**Instruct and Interact**

**Biblical Images for the Local Church**  

- Ask the following discussion question:  

  - What are some images that come to mind when you think about the local church?  
  (Allow for discussion)

**LOOKING AT SCRIPTURE**

Explain: The Bible uses many images for the local church. Many of these you have already listed. Here’s a partial list:

- Family (Galatians 3:26, 4:6-7, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:10-18)
- Temple (2 Corinthians 5:1, 1 Peter 2:4-8)
- Priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:4-9)
- The Body (Ephesians 4:4-13, Romans 12: 1-31)

Explain: In total, these speak to us that a local church is to be:

- A place of loving devotion to God
- A relational place of protection and encouragement
- A place for developing our gifts for service to God
- A place that pursues God’s priorities in the world

**REFLECTION**

- Allow participants time to think about and answer (to the group) the following question:

  - How do you see these elements being lived out in this church?
Explain: Even though our church is far from perfect, as you have already guessed, we hope that these four elements help guide who we are and what we are trying to accomplish.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION**

- Ask the following discussion question:
  - What attracted you initially to [insert your church name] and what has encouraged you to stay here?

**Our History and Structure of Our Church**

- You may wish to sketch out a brief history of your church, using no more than four key events including the founding. These may be added as bullet points to the slide show if desired. Especially note the deep evidences of faith, commitment, and sacrifice that were present in the founding and at other key points along the way. If possible, scan and use pictures from your church archives in the PowerPoint presentation or consider a brief handout or time line of significant events.

**Our Mission and Values**

- If you have a mission and values statement, review it here.
  
  **Leader tip!** Consider emphasizing how each of the following will help fulfill the mission and values of the church.

**Our Mission and Ministry**

- Highlight the key ministries that you offer. A handout might expedite this as it allows for people to scan quickly and ask questions rather than reviewing each one. Be sure to include those areas of mission that are more important to your church.

- Ask for a quick share,

  - “What ministries have you been involved with or have touched you or your family?”

**Our Staff and Leaders**

- Give a brief biographical sketch on your staff members and/or church leaders. If the staff is large, consider a biographical introduction sheet.
Leader tip! Getting to know the key leaders is a significant benefit of the class. If feasible, have a key staff member or members come and briefly introduce themselves and their ministry to the class.

OUR STRUCTURE  3.19

- Review the key governing structures of your polity. Review the role of the congregation in decision-making. Develop a schematic to share if possible, either as a handout or as part of the PowerPoint material in this section. Have copies of your constitution and bylaws available for anyone interested. Discuss how it is that members fit into this structure.

OUR FACILITY  3.20

- If you have a facility, many newcomers are familiar with the seating area of the sanctuary and perhaps part of the educational area, but have not had a thorough tour of the facilities. Such a tour would make them feel more like an insider. If the class is meeting on the church campus, take a few minutes to lead them on a “behind the scenes” tour of the entire facility, especially those parts that do not get much traffic, such as offices, set-up areas, kitchens, etc., ending back in the class location. If your class is off-site, you might consider adding pictures to the PowerPoint.

Where We’re Going—Preview of the Future  3.21-22

- Review any known future initiatives and directions, as well as any hopes of the congregation moving forward.

Integrate

Get Connected—Pathways to Deeper Involvement  3.23-24

- Distinct from becoming a member, review the ways that people can become more connected to the church. Examples include small groups, church social events, mission projects, and more.

Leader tip! This is a good time to personally identify the helpful pathways this church has created to make involvement more accessible. Too often churches expect new people to simply figure it out.
Closing

- Ask: What is something new you learned today? Do you have a question about our church that hasn’t yet been addressed?

- Explain: Now that we have learned about what our church is, let’s take some time to envision what it could be in the future. If you could finish this sentence, what would you say: “Our church can be a place where…”

- Remind your group of the additional questions available in the “Going Deeper” section at the end of this session for those who want to reflect further on their role in the working out of the mission of the church.

Going Deeper

Pathways to Deeper Involvement in the Church’s Life

In the Going Deeper section following Session 1, you considered how God might be inviting you to join his mission in the world. The five questions may have led you to consider a means of service beyond the congregation. Now take time to reflect on the ministries of this church. Where might God be calling you to serve?

As you consider the components of GROW, what ministries of this church do you see as associated with each area?

- G—God’s Word:
- R—Relationships:
- O—Obedient living:
- W—Worship:

Which ministry or ministries are you most passionate about? Are you already serving in that area? Would you like to be serving in that area?

Talk further with a leader in your church about these reflections.

Leader tip! You may wish to take 5 minutes from the beginning of the next session to explore the Going Deeper questions; alternately, you may suggest that participants pair up and share their reflections on the questions with each other before the next session.