

Matthew 25 Congregations - Discernment

How to listen to God's call to support immigrants... together.

Perhaps you have several people in your congregation who are excited about supporting and accompanying vulnerable immigrants -- but not everyone is on board. This resource may help a whole congregation work together to better understand the call to join the movement, and discern together how to be involved.

1. In a congregational meeting or worship service, watch [this](#) recorded webinar which explains what Sanctuary is and why it's needed. Explain that the congregation will go through a process of learning more so that you might together decide if you want to be involved.
2. Offer an educational opportunity (Adult Sunday school, small group session, book study, etc.) to learn together about why the system needs to be challenged. For suggested resources, visit www.faithrootedorganizing.net.
3. Have a congregational meeting that gathers members in small (6-ish person) circles - an opportunity for everyone to voice their fears, excitement, etc. Each circle has a note-taker (and notes are shared with the group and then with the leadership team who has the final "say" in the congregation's involvement), and follows the guidelines of a [Listening Circle](#) to answer these questions:
 - a. What excites you about participating in the Sanctuary Movement?
 - b. What are your fears?
 - c. What do you need more clarity about?
 - d. What are you willing to do now?
4. If needed, the congregation commits to 40 days of prayer using the I Was an Immigrant challenge bookmark.
5. Church leaders set up meetings with leader of a local coalition (or, if a coalition doesn't exist, with lawyers, pastors who are experienced in offering Sanctuary, national Sanctuary Movement leaders, etc) so that they can get their questions answered by experts.
6. Relationship-building opportunities are pursued between immigrant congregations and your congregation (Do a joint potluck, have a team volunteer at an ESL program, offer to pay for and provide nursery for a Know Your Rights training).
7. Leadership of the church set up a skype date / attend a webinar with a congregation that is doing sanctuary right now.
8. Make an announcement to the congregation about the results of your discernment process by a specified date, or when called upon by the local Sanctuary movement to respond to an immediate request.