

## **Tool #35: Creative Supplemental Presentations**

To really grasp the heart of your ministry community you have to get beyond data. Humans are not reducible to mere facts. And charts and graphs rarely inspire anyone to throw themselves into ministry. You will need to find creative ways of communicating what you are learning about the community—of putting names and faces to the facts—to help move your congregation toward a dynamic, informed response.

Here are a few exercises of a more "right-brained" nature:

- Make a video of old-timers telling stories about their memories of life in the neighborhood, along with people of all ages talking about their hopes and dreams for the future.
- Choose a city block (the block where your church is located, or a block that represents the focus of your ministry) as a case study of the history and characteristics of the larger community. Create a timeline representing major events, changes or social forces affecting the people who have lived or worked there.
- Interview residents representing each of the major key demographic groupings in the community (e.g. seniors, young married couples, Hispanics). Ask permission to record their reflections on life in the community, or about a particular issue that has emerged as a major concern. Make a video of the highlights from their interviews to share with the congregation. You can also include footage from interviews with key leaders and community servants (school principal, police officer, business leader, social worker, etc.).
- Make a collage of photos, newspaper articles (the local library might have archives of old papers), drawings, and other illustrative material that captures the essence of the community. Also include images that represent your hopeful vision for the community.
- Ask a group of neighborhood residents to help you design a web page about the neighborhood. You don't have to have the computer skills to actually create it (though that would be a bonus!) — just plan what would be on it if you did. Include items such as a neighborhood emblem, slogan, the "go-to" person for information, landmarks, and a directory of services, churches, and favorite hang-out spots.
- Create a video or photo essay of "a day in the life of our community" that illustrates the rhythms of neighborhood life. Highlight key institutions, gathering places, recreational activities, problem areas. Weave in stories of real people who live, work and worship in the community (with their permission, or else with changed names).
- Get your youth or young adult group involved. Give them the basics of the report, and set them loose to create an artistic complement to the information and analysis.