

CONDUCTING THE NCD CHURCH SURVEY

Thank you for registering to conduct the annual NCD Survey in your church. Please take the time to read the following instructions carefully before proceeding. Following these instructions is essential for the church to receive reliable results. **Please do not hesitate to contact us at NCD Canada if you have any questions.**

1. What you need to download

To conduct your NCD Survey you will need both of the following forms:

- The *NCD Survey – Facilitator’s Form*. This collects basic information about the church for identification and general statistical purposes.
- The *NCD Survey Form*. This is the main questionnaire.

2. Preparing to conduct the Survey

2.1 Ensure you have read the foundational resources

It is important that you have an initial understanding of the basic elements of NCD before you conduct the Survey. This includes the Trinitarian Compass, 8 Quality Characteristics, organic (all-by-itself) growth principles, and the NCD Cycle process.

A free PDF document called *Natural Church Development: An Introduction for Churches* is available on our website, www.ncdcanada.com. The site provides basic information on NCD and the NCD Survey process.

In addition, we recommend two resources by Christian A. Schwarz, the Founder and head of NCD International, which can be ordered either through our website (click on the Books tab) or by calling toll free on 1-866-945-8741. They are:

- *Color Your World with Natural Church Development* – published in 2005, this book explains the quality characteristics, growth forces, Trinitarian Compass, some of the NCD tools including the NCD Survey, and the impact of NCD on churches internationally over the past ten years.
- *The ABCs of Natural Church Development* – this small booklet of 28 pages is ideal for introducing some of the main concepts to your congregation. It asks why church growth can seem so hard, then looks at the eight quality characteristics, the minimum factor approach, and “all by itself” growth.

2.2 Discuss NCD in overview with your leadership team

It is important that your leadership team is committed not just to conducting the initial Survey but to the ongoing NCD process of continuous improvement. If you have not discussed this with your team, it is wise to do so before conducting the Survey.

It is often sufficient to give them a copy of *The ABCs of NCD* and then explore the issues raised in *Color Your World*.

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It is important to stress that NCD is best learned by working on actual results rather than trying to master the theory beforehand. Provided people have an understanding of NCD as an ongoing process of growing the church to greater health and are committed to working consistently on the issues raised in successive Survey results, then it is fine to proceed with the Survey.

2.3 Select and invite Survey participants

The *NCD Survey – Facilitator’s Form* is completed by the senior leader or delegate.

The *NCD Survey Form* is given to thirty people who meet **all** the following criteria:

- member of a group (for example, choir, worship group, teens, or home groups)
- actively involved in ministry and performing a regular task
- committed to the life and growth of the congregation

The senior leader of the church would be an automatic selection. There may be other members of pastoral staff whom you wish to include in the thirty however it is not essential to do this.

If you have more than thirty people in your congregation, you select thirty people from those who fit all three criteria. Consider a broad and representative range of people in the life of the church (tenure, age, gender) who fit the criteria. Leaders of larger congregations sometimes ask if they can survey more than 30 people. It is possible, but is not advised because no more are required to produce a statistically accurate result. We recommend leaders take the time to reduce their list to the 30 people fitting the criteria whose opinion they value most or those they consider to have the greatest influence on church life. It takes valuable time from a staff-member to input the Survey results, so keeping the number to 30 is highly advised.

Those not invited to complete the Survey this year may be invited in subsequent years. You may wish to advise these people that they will experience opportunities to discuss the outcomes and subsequent action plans after the Survey results have been received.

If you have a congregation of less than 30 people, you survey everyone as long as they fit all three criteria. If you have a congregation of say 40 people and only 27 people meet the criteria, only include the 27 people who meet the criteria. You are effectively taking a biopsy of the heart of the organism, and these 27 people are not a sample, but the entire heart.

Once the people have been selected to participate in the Survey, invite them to a meeting to complete the Survey. Setting aside a time after a church service is usually the most effective. The meeting usually lasts about an hour, with a 10-15 minute introduction to NCD and 40 minutes to complete the Survey. If anyone is particularly interested in NCD beforehand, give them a copy of *The ABCs of NCD*.

Do not mail out or hand out the NCD Survey Form for people to take home as it is very difficult to retrieve them. It is also better that people offer their “gut” responses to the questions rather than spend time mulling over the answers.

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2.4 Prepare for the meeting

There are three things you need to do to prepare for the meeting.

- Prepare a short presentation to explain the purpose of the meeting (15 minutes maximum). You can download a sample presentation from the NCD Canada site.
- Prepare copies of the NCD Survey Form (with some spares) and pens for people to write with.
- Be clear about the instructions on the front of the NCD Survey Form so that you can take participants through them on the day. These cover what to consider when the Survey refers to leaders, groups, small groups, worship services, and churches.

3. Conducting the Survey

3.1 Completing the NCD Survey – Pastor’s Form

The instructions for completing this form are on the front of the form itself.

The *NCD Survey – Facilitator’s Form* must be completed by the church pastor or delegate. The person completing this form may or may not complete the NCD Survey Form as well.

When naming your Church, please include the town or city, especially if your church’s name is fairly common, like Trinity Church, St Andrew’s or Grace.

If the church has conducted a Survey or Surveys previously but you are unsure how many Surveys you have conducted, please let us know at NCD Canada so we can check our records for you.

If your church has changed its name since the last survey, please let us know. Please note: when you input the answer for Q31, you will find an extensive list of denominations, some of which are distinctly Canadian. Please review this list carefully and ensure that you select your exact denomination. If your denomination is not listed, please choose ‘Other’.

3.2 Completing the NCD Survey Form

The instructions for completing this form are on the front of the form itself. At the meeting, guide participants through the instructions and answer any questions that they have. Invite them to read the instructions through again for themselves if at any point while completing the questionnaire they have forgotten what was said earlier. Be firm about ticking a response for every question to ensure the accuracy of the results.

All forms should be collected at one time. No one should be allowed to take them home. The Survey facilitator should scan the responses to ensure every person has marked an answer for every question. Blank answers distort results.

For instructions on inputting the result, creating the survey profile, and producing the report-guides, please download the PDF document “NCD Church Survey account- Online Processing Instructions” also available at www.ncdcanada.com/account.request.htm.