

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Submitted by: **Rev. Mary Murray Shelton**

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I had an extremely successful membership class program in Huntington Beach that was developed from materials we used when being coached by CrossRoads Church Growth and Development. It is a seven week program designed to create bonding among classmates, introduce people to practitioners, staff, and board members in a very real way, and thoroughly familiarize participants with the church itself and what makes it tick. It wasn't an intro to SOM, that was handled in other ways. When participants completed the series, they were not required to become members, but everyone that completed the class had new friends; was thoroughly familiar with the vision and mission of the church; knew where to go to volunteer; how to get announcements into the bulletin and articles into the monthly church newsletter; experienced a great introduction to tithing; had class time with several Board members (and personal time with one of our Board members if the participant was choosing to join officially); was introduced to practitioners, how they work and how to engage them, as well as getting to know some of them; and had fun! When the class was completed, people had others they now knew to go to sit with in services and go to lunch with afterward. We ended up with new members who were more committed, grounded, and ready to jump in and take ownership of their church than ever before in my experience. It was great! You should be aware, though, that it is very involving for the practitioners and Board members, not just the minister.

