

Claiming Our Voices House Meeting Tool-Kit

Materials:

- Title Sheet (Materials List and Check-list)
- Overview of Our Path Through 2018
- House Meeting Captain Worksheet
- Facilitator Guide and Conversation Agenda
- Sign-In Sheet
- Commitment Sheets (10 forms)
- Training Schedule

Claiming Our Voices: House Meeting Lead Check-List:

As Soon As Possible:

- Choose a date for your house meeting
- Send out an email to your invitees to save the date

At Least 3 Weeks Before Your House Meeting:

- Make all of your personal invitations to your house meeting.

At Least 2 Weeks Before Your House Meeting:

- Follow up with anyone you haven't got a yes or no from

Before Your House Meeting:

- Review your house meeting materials and prepare yourself to lead the conversation
 - Prepare to share a short story (2-3 min max) about your pain connected to incarceration, immigration or the economy that is connected to the lies of the dominant narrative (see agenda).
- Print sign-in sheets and commitment sheets!
- Pray and ground yourself!

After Your House Meeting:

- As soon as possible, complete your House Meeting Report Form online at www.tinyurl.com/claimourvoice or send photos of sign in sheets and commitment sheets to Amity Foster at afoster@isaiahmn.org

Claiming Our Voices: Leading a Faith Movement Through 2018 for a Just and Whole MN

The Reality We Are Facing

We are living in a time of unprecedented threats to our lives, families and communities at the state and federal level. At the state and federal level, we are facing the consolidation of power of those advancing an agenda of corporate power and structural racism. This consolidation of power was made possible by a strategic and intentional narrative campaign about who we are and who we are to each other.

Our mission now is not to simply fight bad policies. We are in a bigger campaign for the future and soul of Minnesota and our country. The Gubernatorial campaign through 2018 is not about one candidate versus another. The path to 2018 is, at its heart, a titanic struggle for the future of Minnesota—for the story of who we are, who we are becoming and for the future of our state.

There has been a lot of analysis about how we got here and where we go from here. The temptation is to pit our interests against one another: It's about this policy issue or that one! It's about this demographic or that one! The truth is this is the same way of thinking that got us in this mess, and when we think this way we are actually perpetuating the dominant story of Minnesota.

The Dominant Story of Minnesota Right Now

The dominant story of Minnesota exploits our pain and isolation and teaches us a set of lies about why we are suffering.

We are told there is not enough for all of us to thrive and that we must compete with one another to survive. We are told that our pain is the fault of someone else who is “other”: Urban vs. Rural, People of Color vs. White People.

The Truth

Everyone has a struggle, and we are all being harmed by decision makers driving an agenda grounded in corporate power and structural racism. The pain and isolation we feel is being weaponized and turned into a politics of scarcity, fear and ultimately, hate. Our struggles are not individual and they are not our fault. Our pain is the result of systems that are interconnected and were designed. If we unite together around both our pain and our vision of what is possible, we can build the power we need to co-govern—to be deciders—to build a new system grounded in our faith and commitment to love and justice.

Our Story About Ourselves and About Minnesota

We are all made in God's image. We are called to love one another as ourselves, and we are called to bear one another's burdens. Our struggles are the result of systems that were designed. If we unite and lead together, we can build the power we need to transform our lives and what is possible in Minnesota.

Our Mission Through 2018

Rather than a public figure, our primary “target” through 2018 is the public—the people of Minnesota-- because they/we are the deciders about the future of Minnesota.

All of our work (issue campaigns, congregational forums, house meetings, etc.) through 2018 must be first about impacting the broader public—evangelizing our story that we belong to each other and that if we work together, we can transform Minnesota together.

In order to build to scale to impact the broader public, we need a season of spiritual and political formation for leaders within our congregations and communities through January of 2018.

This will happen through congregational conversations, house meetings with friends, family and neighbors, one on one conversations and engagement in campaigns and actions that advance our story about who we are to each other and what is possible.

The Heart of the “Pain to Power” Conversation

- 1) Sharing How We Are Struggling
- 2) What is the lie/ story that gets told about your struggle
- 3) What do we say as people of faith instead?
- 4) These struggles and pain is a part of a designed system and story that we can change if we lead together
- 5) Invitations to Take Action
 - a. Some activity in their political context (ex. Invitation to a public meeting)
 - b. Commit to lead a House Meeting in your own community and have the same conversation
 - c. Commit to attend the Caucuses on February 6, 2018 to claim your vision for MN.
 - d. Invest financially in this Path

Scale of Our Path and Timeline

- Now- December 2017: 1,000 Leaders Across ISAI AH Participating in Claiming Our Voices Conversation Training
- October 2017: Additional Regional House Meeting Trainings
- November 28, 2017: ISAI AH Faith Agenda Drafting Session
- December 3, 2017: Independent Political Power Collective Convening Launching Aligned 2018 Path (100 ISAI AH Leaders)
- January 18, 2018: Public Launch of ISAI AH’s Faith Agenda
- By January 31, 2018: 6,000 people have participated in “Pain to Power” Conversations, House Meetings, etc.
- February 6, 2018: 4,000 Leaders in Caucuses Across MN Advancing Our Agenda

House Meeting Leader Worksheet and Planning Guide

Name: _____ Congregation: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of My House Meeting: _____ (Before 10/31)

Making Your Invitations:

- You are not only inviting people to a house meeting. You are inviting them into a path towards power and liberation for them and for all of us. People are hungry for this. Bring them in.
- Your turnout goal should be ambitious. This is our moment to powerfully invite members of our community to get involved in order to build the movement we need to transform Minnesota.
- Consider inviting friends, extended family, and neighbors, as well as members of your faith community who are not currently involved with ISAIAH. We are trying to reach out beyond our existing network and base of leaders and relationships.
- Making the invitations alone is part of the risk and leadership of this path! We are taking the risk of making disciples!

Who I Will Invite:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

I will make all of my invitations by _____ (date).

**This should be at least 3 weeks before your house meeting.

Sample Generic Turnout Script:

Hi _____. I am calling to invite you to a gathering at my home on _____ (date) from ___ to ___ time for a conversation about how we are being impacted by what is happening around immigration, incarceration, and economic injustice, and what our faith/ values say about this. We will also spend time discussing how we can work together to lead a movement of people of faith to transform our politics, to build relationships with one another and to build the power we need to ensure that the next Governor of Minnesota is committed to an agenda grounded in love and justice. This conversation is part of the Claiming Our Voices program with ISAIAH, an organization of people of faith working on racial and economic justice. Thousands of Minnesotans will be having similar gatherings throughout the fall, and I hope you will join me for ours. Will you join me on _____ ?

Notes on Powerful Invitations to Your House Meeting:

While you may want to send out a bigger email to get people to “Save the date”, you are strongly encouraged to make personal invitations (ideally by phone or in person).

Reflect on and answer the following questions as you prepare to invite people:

- What excites me about this path?

- Why do I think the person I am inviting would be interested in this conversation?
 - Examples:
 - They are deeply concerned about what is happening in politics at the State or Federal level
 - They might be looking for a way to get more deeply connected to other people who share their values and concerns
 - They may be hungry for a vehicle to “do something”.

Preparing to Lead a Powerful Conversation:

The hardest parts of the conversation are those places where you take a risk. These moments are when you share your story, and when you ask people to take the next steps: committing to lead and contributing to ISAIAH. Reviewing the Facilitator Guide, Conversation Agenda and Commitment Sheet and practicing will make this much easier. You are leading by example as you invite others to take risks they may be afraid of. Also—re-ground yourself in why you are excited about this path. It’s the fuel to keep moving forward.

Claiming Our Voices Conversation: Facilitator's Guide

A Note for the Facilitator:

Thank you for your commitment to lead this conversation within your community. Thank you for inviting your community to join you. As the leader of this conversation, you are responsible for modeling vulnerability and a willingness to share and wrestle. You will also invite your friend and family to walk this path with you and to take action. Together we can lead a movement to transform Minnesota, but this will only happen if we powerfully invite others to join us in this path. You are walking as a disciple and you are making disciples. This is holy work. Thank you.

*Because we are building a faith movement that depends on reaching thousands of Minnesotans, and powerfully inviting them to lead with us, **it is very important that you ensure that everyone completes sign-in and commitment sheets and that you report on that information as soon as possible.** We will help follow up with people who committed to take action, but we need their information to do that.*

Why are we doing this?

We know that our politics, our relationships and our spirits have been infected with a story of division and fear that alienates us from each other and leaves us feeling powerless.

Through these conversations, we are seeking to build transformative power together. We are seeking to be and make disciples through engaging one another about who we are to each other and the transformation that is possible if we lead together.

We are grounding each other in our values and vision, and we are being invited to lead together to transform Minnesota, but this starts with us here tonight.

Conversation Guidelines:

- Practicing courageous vulnerability around our struggles and our faith is the only way to fully see ourselves and each other.
- We are seeking to truly hear and understand each other. Everyone has a story. Resist the urge to pass judgment on people's stories or perspectives.
- We are invited to take risks together, both in this conversation and in the invitation before us to lead together in the coming months.
- We have set aside 90 minutes for this conversation.

Notes to Prepare:

- You will be inviting House Meeting guests to make a contribution to ISAIAH. The easiest way to do this is to have your computer open on our Donation page. That way people can sign up electronically on the spot: <https://isaiahmn.org/donate/>

House Meeting Conversation Agenda

Opening and Welcome (7 min)

*** Make Sure Everyone Signs In!

- Welcome Everyone
- Share why you are excited they are there for this conversation (1 min)
- Ask others to share a sentence about why they came. (3 min)
- Consider leading a prayer (1 min)
- Read Aloud “Why We Are Doing This” and Conversation Guidelines (above) (2 min)

Sharing Our Stories (20 min)

- *“Each of us has a story around how we or someone we love is harmed by unjust systems, systems that are designed: the criminal justice system, the immigration system or the economy (whether that’s about healthcare costs, wages, housing or debt)”.*
- *“In a moment I’m going to ask you to share your own personal stakes—how you or someone you love is being hurting because of incarceration, deportation, or economic struggle, but first I’m going to share my stakes- my story”*
- Share your own story around how you/ your family is hurting connected to these systems. Choose a story about your pain that is often dismissed/ compounded by a story that there is not enough or that it’s your fault. **(Take 2-3 min max)**
- *“All of us are hurting in some way because of systems that have been designed for us, but sometimes we don’t talk about it because we think it’s not that bad or because we feel ashamed. Tonight we are starting by grounding ourselves in the truth of what’s at stake for each of us.”*
- Ask people to share: “What is your story (for you or someone you love) of pain connected to the systems of immigration, incarceration, healthcare or the economy?” **(10-15 minutes)**
- *“Our pain is caused because these systems were designed, but not by us, and they are not designed to benefit us.”*

The Dominant Story We Are Told About Our Pain (22 min)

- We are told a set of lies—a dominant story—about our pain and about the systems that harm us and about each other. There are 3 primary lies that have infected how we see ourselves, each other and the systems we live in.
- Name the lies (and ideally write them up)
 - 1) *“There is not enough. This is a zero-sum game, and we are all against each other for resources, power, wealth or even dignity or belonging. This logic says ‘If you get something, I lose something’.*
 - 2) *“We are divided—Some people are deserving and others are undeserving. Some people are disposable.”*
 - 3) *“Our problems are because of our own individual choices or our character, rather than systemic problems.”*
- Discussion:
 - 1st Question: How are these lies connected to the stories you shared earlier? (5 min)
 - 2nd Question: What are some examples of other places you see these lies in our politics right now? (5 min)
 - 3rd Question: Who benefits from us believe these lies? (the people who design these systems--- often politicians or CEO’s) (5 min)
 - 4th Question: What happens to us when we let ourselves believe these stories? (5 min)

Lesson to Draw Out: We are alienated, isolated, lonely, ashamed and we are less powerful to confront those who built and benefit from the systems that are harming us.

Our Truth: Our Story of Love and Connection (20 min)

- 1st Question: What does our faith (or values) say about who we are to one another? What does our faith say about the systems causing our pain? (10 min)

After people share, test what we have below as what we believe instead:

- 1) *Our fates are linked. We are part of the same body. No one is outside of the circle of human concern. We all have inherent dignity.*
 - 2) *The systems that cause our pain were designed by humans and can be re-designed to create the beloved community. There is enough for all of us to thrive if we lead to build the systems we need.*
- 2nd Question: What would be different around the story you shared earlier if these statements were widely accepted as truth? (5 min)
 - 3rd Question: What would our government and our economy look like if we all believed these two statements to be true? (5 min)

Imagining What Is Possible (5 min)

*“We are at a crossroads moment in our democracy and our faith. Our politics has been infected with the lies we shared earlier- that there is not enough, that some people are disposable, that there are the deserving and undeserving. People across Minnesota feel how we feel when these lies take over: alienated, alone, ashamed. These feelings turn to powerlessness and then to hate- hatred of ourselves and our neighbors. **If we do nothing**, these lies will give power to those who do not share our vision for a beloved community grounded in racial and economic justice.*

Or We can make a different choice. We can decide to lead together to Claim Our Voices— To claim our vision for the beloved community that we know is possible--- To build a democracy where every person can thrive.

As ISAIAH, we are launching a movement to transform ourselves and our state. This conversation tonight is the first step. We hope to have more than 6,000 people in conversations like the one we had tonight. Then, in February, we will bring thousands of Minnesotans to caucus on February 6 around our 2018 Faith Agenda- the issue agenda we want at the heart of the Governor’s Race in 2018 to ensure the next Governor of Minnesota is accountable to us and our vision for Minnesota. We know that this is not enough though. We need to talk with our friends and neighbors about the truth that we are all part of the same body, that we all have dignity and that we all can thrive if we lead together.”

Invitation to Take the Next Step (15 min)

- Hand Out Commitment Sheets
- Review the steps on the commitment sheet and why they matter (5 min)
 - 1) Joining 4,000 people of faith to Caucus on February 6 around our vision and agenda for Minnesota—you will be invited to attend a training and prep meeting in January.
 - 2) Holding a House Meeting yourself! There are rolling trainings, and we are counting on people like you engaging others in this conversation to reach as many Minnesotans as we can.
 - 3) Investing in ISAIAH. I hope that you will join me in contributing to ISAIAH. This is not a donation. This is an investment in our vehicle to transform Minnesota.
 - a. Note: Ideally you have set out your computer so that people can sign up to be sustainers then and there. The website is: <https://isaiahmn.org/donate/> . People can also write checks made out to ISAIAH, which you collect with their commitment sheets, and mail in. Or if they don’t have their cards or check,

they can indicate on their commitment card that they want to give, and we will follow up with them.

4) Other?

- Share what made you nervous to hold the meeting and to commit to this path, but how you decided to move forward anyway. It's good to ground people in the stakes of this moment. Encourage people to discern about where they are being called and to take a risk on their commitment sheet grounded in that place. (3 min)
- Give people time to complete the commitment cards (5 min)
- **Collect the Commitment Cards!**

Closing (3 min)

- Ask people to share something they are taking with them from the meeting.
- Thank people for attending.
- Make Sure You Collected Your Commitment Cards!!!

END

******IMPORTANT: Immediately following your House Meeting, enter the data from your sign-in sheet on this form: www.tinyurl.com/claimourvoice. You can also use your phone to take photos of your sign in sheets and commitment cards and email them to Amity Foster at isaiah@isaiahmn.org or mail it to:**

**Amity Foster, ISAIAH
2356 University Avenue West
Suite 405
Saint Paul, MN 55403**

Thank you!

Claiming Our Voices: Take the Next Step!

Name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Congregation (if applicable): _____

_____ **I will host a Claiming Our Voices House Meeting to invite others to join our movement!**
Trainings are available if you would like more support and preparation.

_____ **I will commit to caucus on February 6, 2018 and join thousands of other people of faith as we claim our voices and our agenda for Minnesota!**

_____ **I will attend ISAIAH's Faith Agenda Launch on Thursday, January 18th, 2018 from 10-11am (Location TBD).**

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