

Q: Will the information entered into the VitalSigns weekly reports be automatically updated to this year's year-end statistical tables as expected?

A: Yes

Q: What is the best way to collect data without being a pest or adding burden to others? Sunday school is easy since they keep a record book other small groups do not. In asking them each week the number it gives the impression the church/conference is more interested in numbers than people and ministries.

A: Leadership from a local church will need to determine the method for collecting data that best suits that congregation. The information being requested is not new. It is information that has been part of the year-end reports in previous years. An explanation for the recording of the number of persons participating is that it provides the impetus for follow-up with persons who are not present. The recording of this requested information provides a method for a congregation to objectively assess its vitality through its mission and ministries. The recording of persons through numbers is a biblical practice in both the Old and New Testaments.

Q: What is considered a "Christian formation group and other small group ministries"? Do these qualify: Children's and Adult choir groups? Prayer Shawl Group? Cottage Prayer Group? Emmaus Reunion Group?

A: A Christian formation group is composed of persons engaged in small groups that are part of the congregation's ministries. Small groups are groups of people who gather together on a regular basis with the goal of becoming more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, through an intentional process of learning, mutual support and accountability, and/or service to the world. Each local church will need to determine if choir groups, prayer shawl groups, and cottage prayer groups fit this definition. I do not think an Emmaus Reunion Group would fit this category since it tends to be a regional gathering of Emmaus participants.

Q: We have a clothes closet ministry (back-to-school and Christmas boxes) and Community Service Sales (yard sales). How do I count these workers? Do I count when they are working to prepare for a sale or just the day of the sale and they are interacting with the community?

A: Persons who are engaged in the preparation of a ministry as well as the actual execution of an outreach ministry of a local congregation should be included in this total. If a person is engaged in both the preparation and execution of an outreach ministry that person should only be counted once. Leadership from a local church will need to determine the method for gathering this information that best suits that congregation.

Q: Persons in missions weekly figure - even though they may glean 3 times a week do we count them only once for that week? If they do missions the next week, do we report them for that week? The end of the year statistical report seemed to ask for persons in missions counted just once for the year - no matter how many times they did missions so how should we report it weekly?

A: Persons should be counted only once per week for engagement in mission. Since this is a weekly reporting of information, it is appropriate to include the same persons from a previous weekly report in the current report as long as that person is a participant in that week's mission.

Q: We have two worship services on Sunday and one on Wednesday night and a Mon-Friday Prayer and Worship Service. Preaching is done at all of them. Some of the same folks attend 2, 3, or all of these services during the week - and sometimes they may just attend one. We have been counting attendance at all of them for a total. There really is no way to keep count of who attends which service. What should we do?

A: It is fine to continue the current practice of counting attendance at these worship service as long as they are considered primary times of worship for a congregation.