

Segment **P61: Humble Beginnings**

Singles and single parent households with modest incomes in city apartments

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *God is good, and life will get better*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feelings of loneliness, anxieties about displacement and abandonment*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group P Cultural Connections	Frequent Neighbors
O55 Family Troopers	P56 Mid-Scale Medley	O52 Urban Ambition
R67 Hope for Tomorrow	P57 Modest Metro Means	R66 Dare to Dream
S68 Small Town Shallow Pockets	P58 Heritage Heights	S69 Urban Survivors
S71 Tough Times	P59 Expanding Horizons	S70 Tight Money
	P60 Striving Forward	
	P61 Humble Beginnings	

General Comments

Faith and church are important to *Humble Beginnings*. One reason they go to church regularly is to set a good example for their children, and receive a religious and moral upbringing that is difficult to accomplish at home. The church helps them keep perspective and life in some kind of balance. They can meet and make friends, and find some extra food and practical help to make ends meet. Despite their preoccupation to make money, people in this segment will volunteer for a good cause. Their liberal attitudes motivate them to join a protest movement or support important economic reforms.

Experian suggests that these single and single parent households are among the poorest in the country. About two-thirds speak Spanish, and many others are African-American. They are unhappy with their current status, and even though family is important they will sacrifice family time to get ahead. They work hard at whatever jobs they can find, and are all about economic success. Affluence is a way to gain the respect they crave. The boundary between “theology of material success” and “theology of unconditional grace” can become blurred, but their intention is to always be faithful to God.

General Comments

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do I, as a leader, perceive the spiritual expectations of people in our community?

How can we, as a board, research and understand our community better?

How can we, as a church, build closer relationships with this lifestyle segment?

Color Key

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
---------------	-----------------	--------------

Leadership Preferences

Resource: *Spiritual Leadership* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

THE CONSTANT LEADERS		THE ORGANIC LEADERS		THE EXTREME LEADERS	
	Caregiver		Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Humble Beginnings look for pastors or priests who offer strong personal support to individuals and families. They are sensitive to the life cycles of birth, adolescence, adulthood, and death and are very sincere in all sacramental acts. They are frequently counselors and advisors. Pastors and priests do not need to be great preachers or expert teachers, but they are good communicators person-to-person or leader-to-group. They are role models for spiritual life and moral behavior. Pastors and priests often get extra training to understand the legal and social stresses for new immigrants, and may be an advocate to support human rights.

These churches may be relatively small or medium-sized, but surprisingly complex. The pastor or priest needs to have strong administrative and fund-raising skills. They manage various programs or non-profit agencies that are hosted or directed by the church, and they maintain strong networks with the church hierarchy and social services. The bottom line, however, is that the pastor or priest has a big heart, and great empathy, for the people in the neighborhood.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your pastor now?

How might your pastor adapt to be more empathic in the future?

How can you equip, train, and/or support your pastor in any transition?

Hospitality Preferences

Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
x	The Basics		Multiple Choices	x	Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

Church attendance is a priority for *Humble Beginnings*. They may have to adjust for shift work and multiple part time jobs to attend, but sometime over the weekend they will worship. Greeters should be trained to be bilingual ... or at the very least able to greet and provide basic directions in both Spanish and English. Nurseries and play areas should be safe and secure and away from entrances and exits. Whenever possible, nurseries are located upstairs and out of damp basements, and relatively close to the worship and refreshment areas.

The refreshment center, therefore, is usually a very pleasant environment with good lighting, colorful images, and even background music (contemporary Christian). Refreshments may be basic, but they are very hot or very cold, with flavored creamers and lots of food. Bulk food may be supplemented with occasional day-old delights from the bakery. Go further, and serve food with real plates, cups, and tableware rather than paper, Styrofoam, and plastic. Servers should be trained to be very friendly and generally encouraging. People may linger, so provide refreshments before, during, and after worship. Go further and create teams who can cook hot and healthy meals to supplement their usual diets.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your hospitality ministries now?

How should hospitality ministries change to be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What additional training do greeters, ushers, and servers need to be more empathic?

Worship Preferences

Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
x	Care-giving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connectional Worship
	Educational Worship	x	Transformational Worship		Coaching Worship
x	Healing Worship				

Humble Beginnings worship as a family, although young children will probably leave worship for a Sunday school or children's activity. Since many in this segment are Roman Catholic, a traditional Mass will be celebrated. However, the Mass tends to be quite intimate and personal. Different Masses (or worship services) over the weekend may be less formal, and might be designed for or by different generations.

Worship is intended to communicate strength and hope. People want to leave with light hearts and optimistic attitudes. Healing and Recovery worship are both options that may be offered during the week. These may include divine unction or healing prayer, but are often quite informal. Lay leaders may assist the priest or pastor. Music is often traditional and even old fashioned (in the way of their homeland). Occasionally it may be more upbeat with more contemporary rhythms. Ushers, liturgists, and musicians need not be experts, but they should be sincere and clearly give their best effort. Musicians are often perceived as role models for younger generations.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your worship service(s) now?

How should you customize one or more worship services to be relevant to this segment?

What additional training do preachers, musicians, readers need to meet expectations?

Education Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

FORM		CONTENT		GROUPING	
	Curricular		Biblical		Generational
	Experiential		Topical	x	Peer Group

Children's Sunday school is important to *Humble Beginnings*. Single parents need a break from work and child care in order to worship as an adult, with other adults. Sunday school provides basic Bible understanding and moral teaching that may be difficult to do at home. Single parents like to see children come home with crafts or drawings related to Bible stories, and they want children to behave with civility and respect. The teacher can be just as important as the curriculum. Parents usually like to meet with the teacher, and expect the teacher to be a moral example. Discipline in the classroom is a good thing, provided that it is even handed and gently given.

Older youth may begin to drop out of Sunday school because they may not see their parents participating. Therefore, youth groups and youth ministries are important. Youth groups often meet in traditional ways (e.g. Sunday evening fellowship, recreation, Bible study and prayer). Since older youth may also be working, churches may develop a youth drop-in center. If the church can afford a second minister, it will probably be a Youth Pastor.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe children, youth, and adult education in your church now?

How would education strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership selection and training would make education more effective?

Small Group Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

LEADERSHIP		CONTENT	
	Trained Leaders		Curriculum Study
	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Humble Beginnings are more likely to participate in small groups if they include child care. Adults may find time for midweek small groups if the affinity is urgent, the location is flexible, and the time lines are limited. Topics might include any number of family, career, health, legal, or housing issues. These are often led by an expert from a local social service agency or church network. They may meet at the church or some other public location, but are less likely to meet in a home or private apartment.

Life is a struggle and work schedules can be daunting. Small group affinities often relate to lifestyle priorities like diet and cooking, parenting, health, crime prevention and safety, and also recreational priorities like basketball or baseball. Small groups always include prayer, Scripture, and sharing life struggles and spiritual victories.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe the Small Group strategy in your church now?

How would Small Group strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership and content would make Small Groups more effective?

Outreach Preferences

Resource: Strategic Thinking by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

	PERSONAL NEED	READINESS TO VOLUNTEER
Basic Survival	X	X
Health and Wellness	X	X
Quality of Life	X	X
Addiction Intervention	X	X
Interpersonal Relationships	X	
Human Potential	X	X
Salvation and Human Destiny		X

Churches that bless *Humble Beginnings* are often heavily engaged in forms of outreach. These people are ambitious and want to get ahead, but struggle with low educations and poor training. Therefore, they appreciate any outreach that encourages personal development. Continuing education that builds life skills, or expands work capabilities and helps people get ahead are welcome. Programs for English as a Second Language (ESL) are common. Churches may provide tutoring to complete High School diplomas. Churches may build partnerships with non-profit, government, and business agencies to locate training opportunities in the church building. Churches often organize and lead advocacies for justice, equality, job opportunity, etc.

Humble Beginnings may look on the church as a gathering place for all ages. Churches may provide coffee houses, internet cafes, and other kinds of drop-in facilities for adults and older youth, and recreational activities for children. The church tends to function as a community center with programs seven days a week. These might especially include Christian day care, after school care, tutoring, and parenting support; and also legal aid, financial aid, and housing information. Many churches provide distribution centers for food, winter clothing, used work boots, kitchen appliances, etc. They are often very concerned about health issues. Churches often provide clinics, vaccination centers, and Parish Nurse Programs, and often partner with addiction recovery groups that use the building.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What outreach categories does your church emphasize now?

What outreach categories would be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What outreach priorities and tactics should change for the church to bless this segment?

Facility Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

PROPERTY		TECHNOLOGY		SYMBOLISM	
x	Ecclesiastical	x	Modern	x	Classic Christendom
	Utilitarian		Postmodern		Contemporary Post–Christendom

Humble Beginnings may not have strong preferences about the architecture or interior design of a building. Their background may predispose them to prefer churches that look like churches, but their experience of hard knocks may also cause them to be wary of structures that look too forbidding or judgmental. Programs are more important than structures. Whatever the building looks like, it should allow lots of different kinds of activities in the space available. They do want to see classically Christian symbols outside and inside, including crosses, pictures of Biblical events, open Bibles, praying hands, and so on.

These churches are rarely high tech. At best they rely on older audio systems. Furnishings tend to be well used. They might provide a computer center with high speed internet access. These people can't afford it at home, and access it only at the public library. In the church, computer and online capabilities may be used for tutoring, adult education, job hunting, and health research. Church buildings tend to be in a chronic need of fresh paint and repair, but they keep up with major maintenance and safety codes. They do pay special attention to security, particularly around classrooms and nurseries.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What renovations and/or upgrades need to be made in our church facility?

What symbols of faith would be most relevant to this lifestyle segment?

If we started another site of ministry for this segment, how should we design it?

Financial Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

GIVING TARGET		GIVING METHOD	
x	Unified Budgets and General Funds		Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects	x	Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Humble Beginnings are financially challenged. They have low incomes and few investments, and little insurance. They may have car loans. Those with credit cards are tempted to live beyond their means, and may carry credit card debts. It is often difficult to make ends meet.

This may make it difficult to participate in a traditional church stewardship campaign. They trust the church with money for a unified budget, but may not be interested in the financial details. If they pledge, they will likely make conservative pledges, and "walk a second mile" to give additional money to urgent missions as they feel motivated. People in this segment are more likely to express their generosity through in-kind gifts of food or personal service in the children or outreach programs, or in maintaining the property. Their churches are not likely to amass large reserve funds, but they may receive government or church grants for outreach ministries.

Humble Beginnings often feel financially insecure, and do not have much experience in managing money or planning a financial future. They will respond to a church that offers solid financial advice to develop an overall personal financial plan based on Christian values and generosity, but which also helps them get out of debt, develop some investments, and establish good credit.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What options in giving methods and giving targets do we offer now?

How do we design our annual stewardship campaign(s) now?

How should we revise our financial strategy to be more relevant to this segment?

Communication

Resource: Mosaic E–Handbook by Experian

CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC COMMUNICATION					TRADITIONAL CHURCH COMMUNICATION						
	Direct Mail Receptive		Mobile Telephone	x	Online Computer		Newspaper		Corded Telephone	x	Verbal Announcements
x	Email Receptive		Broadcast Cable TV		Internet Radio	x	Print		AM/FM Radio		Personal Visits

Email and word of mouth are probably the best ways to communicate with *Heritage Heights*. They usually pay attention to verbal announcements in worship, large and small gatherings, and pass on information by phone and conversation to others. Posters in local shops, bars, restaurants, health centers, sports arenas, and bus stops may be helpful, although these people may be unresponsive to advertising in general. Printed information from the church can be helpful, but keep the information in short bursts rather than long messages ... and use images or graphics to speed interpretation.

Despite low incomes, they try to be early adopters for technology and pay attention to email. *Heritage Heights* are more likely to listen to the radio than watch TV. Churches can broadcast worship services or make community announcements, and denominationally funded advertising on major networks can also be effective (particularly emphasizing social services and outreach ministries).

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do we communicate among church participants now?

How do we communicate beyond our church to the community now?

How should we adapt communication strategies to be more effective for this segment?

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

Lifestyle Compatibility	Daily behavioral habits overlap with common activities and similar priorities
Family Group	Grouping by key demographic factors like age, income, culture, family status, etc.
Frequent Neighbors	Often live near each other with shared recreational, health, or emergency services

LEADERSHIP

Constant Leaders	Traditional clergy focused on sustaining ministries & increasing members
Organic Leaders	Innovative leaders focused on church growth, new starts & multiplying followers
Extreme Leaders	Non-Institutional leaders focused on spiritual disciplines, high accountability, and pursuing perfection
Caregiver	Focus on visitation, counseling, pastoral prayer
Enabler	Focus on facilitating meetings, lay empowerment, mediation, liturgy
CEO	Focus on staff development, administration, fund raising, expository preaching
Discipler	Focus on seeker sensitivity, adult faith formation, guidance for Christian living
Guru	Focus on religious insight, holistic personal growth, spirituality, enlightenment
Visionary	Focus on big picture, major social change, motivational speaking
Mentor	Focus on self-awareness, individual meaning and purpose, vocational clarity
Pilgrim	Focus on cross-cultural sensitivity, inter-religious dialogue, strict spiritual discipline

HOSPITALITY

The Basics	Friendly untrained greeters, basic coffee and creamer, packaged food or sugary snacks
Multiple Choices	Trained greeters, multiple serving stations, great coffee, varieties of food
Healthy Choices	Trained greeters mirroring lifestyle diversity, healthy food options, allergen alerts
Take-Out	Coffee-to-go, bagged food, exit door hospitality, text message and social media

EDUCATION

Curricular	Printed books or study guides. Passive, intellectual, classroom. Maturity measured by acquired knowledge
Experiential	Activities. More music, images, movement, interaction. Maturity measured by behavior patterns, attitudes.
Biblical	Focuses on the Old and New Testaments. Maturity means Biblical literacy
Topical	Focuses on contemporary issues. Maturity means ethical integrity and enlightened behavior
Generational	Gathers people by age or grade in separate classrooms with age-appropriate resources.
Peer Group	Gathers people sharing affinities or common interests regardless of age.

SMALL GROUPS

Rotated Leaders	Participants take turns hosting and leading the group. Requires limited expertise and training.
Designated Leaders	Single leader guides the group from start to finish. Requires significant maturity and training.
Curriculum	Focus on a book, workbook, or structured program to guide structured discussion
Affinity	Focus on shared interest, enthusiasm, or activity to inspire informal discussion.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

WORSHIP

Educational	Consistent liturgy, expository preaching, focus on doctrine, ethics, and history
Inspirational	Uplifting music, motivational speaking, focus on joy, optimism, and encouragement
Transformational	Spontaneous, expectant, personal transformations, Higher Power interventions
Coaching	Informal, dialogical, topical, practical coaching on how to live better & faithfully
Caregiving	Slow, meditative, family–feel with pastoral prayer, children’s time, senior celebrations
Healing	Quiet, prayerful, expectant of physical, mental, relational healing and hope
Mission–Connectional	Unity of action/reflection, all about outreach, volunteer empowerment

OUTREACH

Survival	Basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, jobs, basic health care
Recovery	Addiction intervention, 12 step support, and counseling services
Health	Mental and physical fitness, disease prevention, rehabilitation, therapy
Quality of Life	Social wellbeing, neighborhood safety, environment, immigration, peacemaking
Human Potential	Personal/vocational fulfillment, education, career help, human rights advocacy
Interpersonal	Intimacy, sexuality, family & marriage counseling, healthy friendships
Human Destiny	Repentance, conversion, witnessing, alignment with God’s purposes

FACILITIES

Ecclesiastical	Facility must “look like a church” with traditional architecture and furnishings
Utilitarian	Facility must be “user–friendly” and multi–purpose for public use
Christendom	Indoor/outdoor symbols associated with church history or denominational identity
Contemporary	Indoor/outdoor symbols from nature, indigenous cultures, alternative spiritualities
Modern	Technology primarily enhances print and oral communication
Postmodern	Technology primarily enhances multi–sensory interaction, internet, social media

FINANCES

Unified Budgets	Stability first. Give to a single general fund to pay staff and manage overhead costs
Designated Giving	Effectiveness first. Give to specific funds or causes by personal preference
Informed Philanthropy	Informed, independent, confidential financial commitments for a tax benefit
Lifestyle Coaching	Individual & household coaching for Christian family financial management

COMMUNICATION

Direct Mail Receptive	Pay attention to mass mailings to postal addresses.
Email Receptive	Pay attention to information delivered digitally to personal email addresses.
Mobile Telephone	Regularly rely on cell phones and smart phones for calling, texting, surfing, banking etc.
Broadcast Cable TV	Regularly rely on cable television for news, advertising, and entertainment.
Online Computer	Regularly go online by personal computer to surf websites, shop, bank, and use other services.
Internet Radio	Regularly subscribe to internet services for music, sports, and topical discussions.
Newspaper	Pay attention to printed newspapers for updates about church news or local, national, global events.
Print	Pay attention to printed church newsletters, bulletin inserts, brochures, and other handouts.
Corded Telephone	Regularly use ordinary telephones to communicate from home.
AM/FM Radio	Regularly use traditional radio to listen to music, commercials, and talk.
Verbal Announcements	Always rely on verbal announcements from the pulpit about church events or items of interest.
Personal Visits	Always expect personal visits at home by a representative of the church to share information.