

Faith-Based Wellness

TIPS ON WORKING WITH FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS



UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



WORKING WITH CONGREGATION MEMBERS

- **Faith Champions:** Lead a faith-based wellness training. Engage enthusiastic congregation members to lead physical activity and nutrition education activities with their fellow congregation members.
- **Integrate Physical Activity:** Encourage faith-based organizations to integrate physical activity into their places of worship by starting a walking club or a walking challenge event. Prizes can be awarded to recognize participation or meeting personal goals. For the “how tos” on starting a walking club read the [Move Your Body: 5 Steps to Get Going](#).
- **Youth Health Ministry:** Collaborate with the youth ministry groups. Help engage youth as leaders to identify opportunities and overcome barriers for healthy changes at their places of worship. For more information on engaging youth see [Inspiring Youth as Partners](#).

Churches play an important role in the spiritual and physical health of their congregation and can make a difference by empowering people of faith to be passionate and effective leaders for creating healthier communities.

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TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- [Body & Soul](#)
- [Shape of Yoga](#)
- [MyPlate](#)
- [Champions for Change Cookbooks](#)



POLICY, SYSTEMS & ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

- **Community Garden:** Encourage faith-based organizations to sponsor a community garden. Gardens provide members a place to be active and gain nutrition education while growing fresh, culturally appropriate foods for their families and fellow congregation members. Check out the faith-based community gardens section (pgs. 10-13) of the [Overhauling the Food System with Faith-Based Initiatives Handbook](#) to get ideas on how you can create a community garden.
- **Summer Meals:** Encourage faith-based organizations to support increased access to healthy foods for people in need by becoming a site for Summer Meals. To learn more, read the [California Department of Education Summer Food Service Fact Sheet](#)
- **Faith-Based Wellness:** Promote policies and practices that increase opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods and beverages at meetings, events and social gatherings. For more ideas on what you can do check out the [Let's Move Toolkit for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations](#).

FAITH-BASED WELLNESS SUCCESS STORY

Linking Spiritual and Physical Health through Healthy Eating and Healthy Drinking Policy

Understanding the importance of providing its congregation with opportunities to take care of both their spiritual and physical health, leaders and members at Gracia y Paz Covenant Church in Chula Vista decided to develop a Healthy Eating and Healthy Drinking Policy. The policy states fruit and vegetables will be included, fried foods will not be served, and drinks will be limited to water, 100% juice and/or low-fat milk at all church activities and events.

On September 28, 2014, Pastor Jorge Garcia of Gracia y Paz introduced the policy with a special

sermon to emphasize Jesus' teachings in regards to physical health and the importance of being "good administrators of the body." Immediately following the service, the congregation was invited to attend a healthy fiesta at the church, where over 80 members were treated to healthy Latino recipes from the Champions for Change "El Sabor de Mi Cocina" cookbook.

These recipes were prepared by church members and volunteers, and all recipe selections were made taking the new policy into consideration. Members were also provided a series of nutrition education lessons in an effort to sustain healthy eating practices at home and potentially identify "Champion" congregation members willing to lead the newly formed Health and Wellness Ministry.