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GUIDE FOR TRAINEES

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Most Christians would agree that the most significant times of spiritual growth as believers involved another individual personally investing in them. Most *leaders* would also agree that their greatest impact on others in ministry has occurred when they have taken time to invest personally in the life of another. Doesn't it make sense that the same dynamic is in effect with regard to ministry training? As you will see in the following pages, relational, mentor-based training finds its imperative in Scripture and is desperately needed for effective ministry training. The following materials have been developed (and been developing!) over the course of more than ten years to assist those who are committed to relational ministry training. The bulk of the materials have been time-tested as hundreds of students have been required to be involved in Mentored Ministry training as students at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. I am deeply grateful to them and to their mentors, from whom I continue to learn.

More recently, I was invited by my dear friend, Dr. Mark Sarracino, to write the mentoring materials for a training program for urban leaders in Philadelphia.¹ This gave me the opportunity to expand the materials and contextualize them to this new setting. This new collaboration led to the development of the GLEE (Guided Learning Experience and Evaluation) which is very helpful in providing accountability throughout the mentoring process.² I am deeply appreciative of Dr. Sarracino's heart for training others and for his encouragement to make these materials accessible to a wider audience.

In addition to my former students and their mentors, my gratitude is also extended to the administration of Westminster Seminary who not only granted permission but encouraged me to participate in and share my resources and expertise in the development of these materials. Acknowledgement is due to Jerry McFarland for permission to use his "Spiritual Life" and "Family Life" Inventories. My greatest thanks is due to our Chief Shepherd who has called us and given us the privilege of partnering in the Advance of His Kingdom by equipping others for His service.

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¹ Now known as LAMPhilly.

² The GLEE is the accountability tool used in these materials. Feel free to use this or develop your own accountability tool for your context. Dr. Sarracino's sample goals for GLEES (pp. 79ff) are particularly helpful. Special thanks also to Susan Disston for her valuable input particularly in the format of the GLEE Proposals.

How to Access and Use These Materials

The value of these materials to presbyteries and others engaged in ministry training has been recognized by Christian Education and Publications of the Presbyterian Church in America. After considering how best to make them available, it was determined that it would be most effective to provide electronic access. Rather than publishing individual manuals for purchase, in consultation with and permission of the author, a single user fee will provide access to the manuals which can then be reproduced for use in each respective presbytery. The author has also granted permission for the materials to be edited and contextualized to your respective ministry settings (with appropriate credit). For example, timetables for training in this manual reflect a particular approach in a particular place.³ You may choose to use a different timetable. Accountability forms used here (GLEE) may be adjusted to your respective students and ministerial candidates. This can be easily accomplished as you download the documents onto your computer. The electronic availability of these materials will also make forms and worksheets easily accessible to download.

³ Some of the following materials reflect Dr. Sarracino's approach in Philadelphia where GLEES run concurrent and coordinated with classroom training.

GUIDE FOR TRAINEES

I. INTRODUCTION

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. 1 Timothy 3:1

One of the greatest responsibilities and privileges of every Christian is to identify his gifts and calling. There are some among God's people whom He is calling to the remarkable responsibility of servant-leadership among His people. If you are reading these words you are undoubtedly entering a phase of your life in which you are looking to Him to confirm whether this is the calling that He has placed upon your life.

This guide is designed to help you test your gifts and calling under the guidance of a mentor. It will introduce you not only to the biblical principles but also to the practical dimensions of mentor-based training. Our prayer is that the Lord will use your involvement to enable you to identify your place of maximum usefulness in the advance of His Kingdom!

A. WHY "MENTOR-BASED TRAINING?"

The mentor-trainee relationship focuses not merely on knowledge, but also on five pillars including *calling, character, competence, content, and credentialing*. This holistic approach is crucial in effective equipping for ministry. For this reason, the most effective ministry training has always been *relational*. It is an *incarnational* approach as you see the very principles of servant leadership modeled in the life of your mentor. There are several roles in which your mentor will serve you.

Teacher: Your mentor will be serving you as a teacher in the best sense of the word. As indicated above, the mentoring experience is designed to provide holistic equipping for the student who is preparing for Kingdom leadership.

Model: Your mentor will strive to model not only ministry skills, but attitudes toward His work and His people. In 2 Thessalonians 3:9, Paul described himself as a "model" for the believers to imitate. The word translated "model" (*tu, poj*) originally referred to the "visible impression of a stroke or pressure."³ Undoubtedly, you will carry a deep impression from your mentor into your life and ministry.

Trainer: One of the most important commitments of your mentor is to train you in practical ministry experience. Your mentor has had years of experience in ministry and he will strive to share godly *wisdom* he has gained through that ministry experience. This approach is designed to move you from being a mere observer to being a fruitful participant in ministry. This is training and equipping at its best!

Discipler: Ultimately, what your mentor is providing for you is discipleship in the context of a ministry setting. Your mentor is committed to encourage your growth in Christ, ministry skills, and confirmation of gifts and calling. All of these are important elements of what it means for you to follow Christ.

B. QUALIFICATIONS AND COMMITMENTS OF A TRAINEE

1. FAITHFUL *“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)*

a. In your life and ministry. In order to be maximize your ministerial development, it is crucial that your life reflect faithfulness to the Lord, your family, and your ministry. You must seek the Lord’s strength to be faithful with all of the gifts entrusted to you and faithful to all the commitments you have made including those you have made to complete this training.

b. To your mentor and the equipping process. Your mentor has made an extraordinary commitment to you. It is important that you respect his guidance in order to make the most of your experience. Your mentor will remain your constant source of guidance, encouragement, and support.

2. AVAILABLE In order to maintain the integrity of the relationship with your mentor and the integrity of the training process, you are asked to be willing to do the following:

a. Attend classes and complete assignments We are striving to bring the best instructors and practitioners available to guide you in your training. In order to gain the greatest benefit it is crucial that you strive to attend each class and keep up with your assignments. Your classroom instructor will be available should you have questions about the classroom material. Your mentor will also serve as a resource to you.

b. Meet with your mentor for 60-90 minutes These regular times of interaction are the heartbeat of the mentor-trainee relationship. This is when you will receive the training, teaching, and encouragement from your mentor. A detailed outline of mentoring sessions is found below on pages 6-12.

c. Work with your mentor through each GLEE (Guided Learning Experience and Evaluation) The Guided Learning Experience and Evaluation provides markers for you along the path of growth. These progressive learning units are drafted jointly by mentor and trainee within guidelines described later in this manual. A step-by-step guide to the GLEE is found on pages 5-6.