



What a difference a leader can make...

"Whatever leadership may be, for the Christian church it always remains a gift from God."

Lovett H. Weems

planning for leader development



6

Affirmations about an effective program of leader development.

When the congregation is committed to mission and ministry, the need for leader development is seen as critical.

1

*Which of these understandings of leadership does your congregation affirm?

- Our images of leadership have their source in the teachings and example of Jesus.
- Leaders are not born; they are made.
- Leader development begins with the models provided by ministers, elders, and diaconate.
- Leader development begins with member training.
- If the church is to accomplish its mission, the "gifts" of all the members are needed.
- Leading is a shared responsibility.
- Persons need not be experts to begin leading; they may learn to lead as they lead.

It is important that the congregation establish some guidelines which describe what the congregation values in designated leaders.

2

*Which of these characteristics of church leaders does your congregation consider important?

- Is willing to learn.
- Is committed to Jesus Christ.
- Gives time and energy to train for leadership.
- Is flexible, open and helps a group establish a climate of trust, openness, frankness.
- Has a good understanding of one's own faith.
- Has a growing knowledge and appreciation of persons.
- Knows how to listen to others.
- Is a careful interpreter of the Scriptures.
- Knows how to use a variety of leadership skills.

3 One group should be given specific responsibility to coordinate the selection and recruitment of leaders.

*Who is on the enlistment/recruitment committee in your congregation?

- A representative of the nominating committee.
- The church school superintendent or department chair person.
- Persons representing all age levels
- Someone skilled in leader training
- Representatives of groups requiring leaders (study groups, etc.)
- Someone who is aware of all the administrative leadership needed.

4 The invitation to lead is extended by persons who can best present the opportunity to the prospective leader.

*How many of the following guidelines do you use in recruiting leaders?

- Choose a time and place convenient to the person being invited.

- Have two or more persons make the call.
- Share the church's criteria for leaders so the person will know why he or she was selected
- Indicate the opportunity to serve and to grow
- Listen sensitively to the feelings, hopes, and needs of the person. Take a written task description. Explain what is expected and what support is available.
- Seek a thoughtful, unhurried and free answer.

The gifts (Christ) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Eph. 4:11-12

A program of leader development can take many

5

different forms and is unique to each

congregation.

*What are the various forms your congregation is providing for leaders?

- Workshops on skills, methods, understanding group process, handling conflict, etc.
- Spiritual retreats at the beginning of the leaders' terms
- Self-study kits to be used at home to learn a new skill
- Seminars to study an issue
- Providing a library of books

Jesus' kind of leadership is the kind of servant leadership needed in our time.... Much is at stake. God is calling you, and God is calling me to something quite beyond what we have ever been or ever done before.

N. Gordon Cosby

Support of leaders

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requires planning and imagination. Support is both personal and institutional.

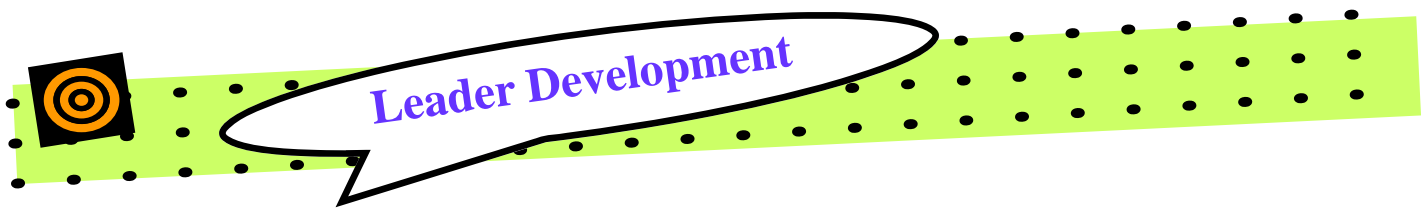
*What support does your congregation provide for leaders?

- Adequate resources
- Adequate equipment and supplies
- Congregational support of their ministry
- Feedback, especially "strokes"
- Time off to prevent "burnout"
- Someone to turn to who listens
- Recognition for jobs well done
- Commitment services as a part of worship
- Respect for new ideas
- Notes of appreciation and recognition
- Providing special support groups for listening, sharing hopes and dreams
- Displays, exhibits, and reports of activities



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A Word to the Leaders of our Congregation

**We have chosen you for a future that is God's.

** Lead us beyond what we are already doing.

** Help us make a difference

Our congratulations, best wishes, and continuing support to you! We appreciate your willingness to take on important tasks. As fellow members of our congregation, we have chosen you for a leadership responsibility because we have confidence in you. We trust you to seek the challenges and opportunities that will make a difference — in our community and in our congregation. We know you will seek to discover God's will for your work — and that you will act to make a difference all can see.

How do you feel about your new responsibility? You may be uncertain about what to do. Or you may feel qualified for the tasks ahead. We all have such feelings sometimes. But we have confidence that you will seek resources and training to help you do your best. We will hold you in our prayers and work with you.

You are joining many others who through the centuries have sought to express through leadership their commitment to Christ's ministry and mission. Who do you remember for their leadership, their ministry? In their times and places, what they contributed was important and made a difference; but what you do as a leader is because you are you. Each leader acts using his or her own mix of styles and skills, blending them to fit particular places, needs and resources. What you do will be different from previous leaders with similar responsibilities. And those who come after you will act still differently.





Leader Development

What difference can you make?

Do you wonder what you can accomplish through your leadership? You could do only the minimum — have a few meetings, continue a few ongoing projects, maybe begin some new ones, just do what you are told, what is expected. OR ...you can use your time, energy and gifts to change things that should be changed. You can act to make a difference in your community, so God's love can break through. It's up to you.


How could your leadership make a difference?


 In one congregation the chairperson of the Board used her influence to change building -use policy. Now nonprofit community groups are using the church facilities every week-day and evening.

 In another congregation, the committee on worship, under the leadership of its chairperson, polled persons with disabilities in the community. Based on their findings, they made large-print Bibles available in the narthex and added a ramp up to the lectern area. Now more people can participate in worship-and they do.

One coordinator of youth ministries has recruited volunteers so that the congregation can sponsor Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops for children and youth in the neighborhood.

Choose and Act

 Take some time to imagine what life would be like if God's will were done in your community. As a leader, your first responsibility is to clarify your vision.

 Describe your vision in words that bring vivid pictures to the minds of others. Use positive terms in outlining the future. Describe what is possible and achievable — and not just the easy answers. Reach out to connect with the aspirations of others in your community, including people in other organizations. Invite others to join you in working to fulfill the promise of your vision.

If you don't know what to do, here are some questions to consider. Or if you think you are ready to act, use these to test your plans. In answering these questions, take time to pray, to look around you, to talk with others. These are not easy questions; the temptation to give simplistic answers or to rationalize is great.

 What do you hope for and dream about for your community?

- What are the hopes and dreams of your neighbors? Of people you meet at work, school, or play? Of people you never meet because you don't go where they are?
- Of all of these, which hope or dream stirs you the most?
- What would our community look like if this hope were to become real?
- Is your hope big enough to create a difference—but not so big that it is impossible?
- What is *God's* will for your actions and this dream?
- How could you act on this hope or dream through your new responsibility in your congregation?
- Whom can you invite to share in deciding and acting? How does your area of responsibility relate to this dream? How could a group with which you work help make it come true?
- Once you decide, take some small first steps toward making a difference. You may succeed! And these small successes will encourage you to take larger steps. If you make a mistake or even fail, that's okay—as long as you learn from your mistakes and don't let the failure defeat you.

And, when you waiver — as we all do sometimes — you may gain strength through ...

- Praying.
- Reading.
- Trying a different approach.
- Talking things over with your pastor or a fellow worker.
- Participating in workshops.
- Finding a friend who can be supportive, open, and honest.
- Creating a small group for training and support—or using an existing group.



Leader Development

Make a difference
Become a Leader!

Leaders Develop Leaders

As you lead, think about the time when you will want to pass your torch of leadership along to someone else. Provide opportunities for others to practice their leadership skills, to grow in ministry. Support them — whether they succeed or fail — so that they will continue in ministry. Help them grow in commitment to God's will, compassion for others, and competence in their tasks.

We are all called:

To bring good news to the poor, ...to
proclaim release to the captives and
recovery of sight to the blind, to let the
oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of
the Lord's favor.

(Luke 4:18-19)

What a difference a leader makes!
What differences will you make?

—based on "You Can Make a Difference", Discipleship Resources