FAITHFUL PATH COMMUNITY

Church Leadership Training: A Six-Week Plan for New Leaders

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The full guide, with the biblical background to this plan:
faithfulpathcommunity.com/articles/christian-leadership-training

Here is a practical plan any church can begin this month. It is written for people who are new to leading: a first small group, a ministry team, a youth or children's role, or a volunteer team.

How it works. Meet once a week for about 90 minutes with a group of two to twelve trainees. Open in prayer, review last week's practice (15 minutes), teach from the week's Scripture (30 minutes), discuss it together using the two discussion questions (30 minutes), then set this week's practice and pray. Between sessions, each trainee meets for about 30 minutes with a mentor, an experienced leader in your church, using that week's mentor prompts.

This is a suggested framework for churches to adapt. It is not the same as the *Lead Before You're Ready* course for members, though both follow the same biblical principles.

Trainee

Mentor

Start date and meeting time

Why I want to serve, and who I want to serve (Week 1 practice)

WEEK 1

What a Christian leader is

Scripture: Mark 10:42–45; 1 Timothy 3:1–7

Jesus told His disciples, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43, ESV). Christian leadership begins here: not with a title, but with a servant's heart and a life others can trust. Paul is describing qualifications for overseers. His emphasis on character, maturity and a trustworthy life gives every ministry trainee something to learn.

Group discussion

- Why does Jesus measure greatness by service?
- What kinds of leadership have you seen that looked more like the rulers in Mark 10:42 than like Jesus?

Practice this week

Write a one-paragraph leadership commitment: why you want to serve, and who you want to serve.

Mentor prompts

What first drew you into serving?

Which quality in 1 Timothy 3 comes most easily to you, and which needs the most growth?

What would you like people to say about how you lead?

Notes from this week

WEEK 2

Leading from your walk with God

Scripture: John 15:4–5; Mark 1:35

"Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5, ESV). Leaders who stop praying do not stop leading; they lead from their own strength, and it runs out. Even on His busiest days, Jesus went out early to a desolate place to pray (Mark 1:35).

Group discussion

- Why do you think Jesus prayed before a busy day rather than after it?
- What does abiding in Christ look like on an ordinary weekday?

Practice this week

Set a simple daily rhythm of Bible reading and prayer, and keep it for the rest of the six weeks.

Mentor prompts

When do you pray most naturally?

What usually crowds it out?

How will you keep going on a week when serving feels dry?

Notes from this week

WEEK 3

Caring for people

Scripture: James 1:19; 1 Peter 5:2–3

James tells us to be "quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19, ESV). Peter tells leaders to shepherd God's flock "not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3, ESV). People follow a leader who listens before they follow one who talks.

Group discussion

- What makes a person feel truly listened to?
- What is the difference between shepherding and domineering in practice?

Practice this week

Have one ordinary conversation with someone in your church where you mostly listen and ask questions. Then pray for that person by name for the rest of the week.

Mentor prompts

What did you learn by listening?

When is it hard for you to listen without fixing?

Who in your group might be overlooked?

Notes from this week

WEEK 4

Handling God's Word with care

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:15; Nehemiah 8:8

Paul urged Timothy to be "a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, ESV). In Nehemiah 8:8 the leaders read from the Law clearly and gave the sense, so the people understood. A new leader does not need to preach a sermon, but they do need to read a passage carefully, explain it simply and point people to Christ.

Group discussion

- In Nehemiah 8:8, what did the leaders do to help the people understand?
- What are some ways we can make a passage say more than it says?

Practice this week

Prepare a five-minute reflection on a short passage: what it says, what it meant to its first readers, and one way to live it this week. Practise your reflection with your mentor. At the next meeting, share it in groups of three during the opening review.

Mentor prompts

How did you prepare?

Where were you tempted to say more than the passage says?

What would make it clearer for someone new to the Bible?

Notes from this week

WEEK 5

Leading a team through decisions and disagreement

Scripture: Acts 6:1–7; Matthew 18:15; James 1:5

When a complaint arose in the early church, the apostles listened and asked the congregation to choose seven people "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3, ESV). The congregation chose them, the apostles appointed them, and the word of God kept spreading. Good leaders share the load and ask God for wisdom (James 1:5). When it is safe, address personal conflict directly and privately first (Matthew 18:15), not through gossip. If someone discloses abuse, threats or harm, follow your church's safeguarding and reporting procedures and contact the designated safeguarding lead. If someone is in immediate danger, contact local emergency services.

Group discussion

- Whose needs were being overlooked in Acts 6?
- What responsibility could your team share more wisely this month?

Practice this week

With the agreement of the leader responsible for your ministry, hand one small, real task to someone else, explain it clearly, and follow up afterwards.

Mentor prompts

What did it feel like to let someone else do it?

How do you usually respond when someone disagrees with you?

Talk through one realistic disagreement in your ministry and how you would handle it.

Notes from this week

WEEK 6

Raising others and being sent

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 13:2–3

Paul told Timothy to entrust what he had learned "to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2, ESV). Every leader is also training the next one. In Acts 13 the church in Antioch fasted, prayed and laid hands on Barnabas and Saul before sending them out.

Group discussion

- Who invested in you, and what did they do that helped?
- What would it look like for our church to send leaders out, not only keep them?

Practice this week

Write a one-page plan for your next three months of serving: your role, your prayer rhythm, your mentor, and one person you will begin to encourage.

Mentor prompts

What has changed in you over these six weeks?

Where do you still need support?

When will we meet next, and how often after this?

Notes from this week

Close the six weeks by praying over each trainee in front of the church. This prayer is an encouragement, not an ordination. Completing the training does not automatically appoint anyone as an elder, pastor or other church officer; those appointments follow your church's own process.

AFTER SIX WEEKS

My next three months of serving

My role

My daily prayer rhythm

My mentor, and when we will meet

One person I will begin to encourage

Where I still need support

For the leader running the plan

• **Pair every trainee with a mentor before week 1.** Between sessions, trainees should serve alongside an experienced leader. This is the "be with" step.

• **Give real responsibility early.** Small, real tasks teach more than long lectures.

• **Start every session with review.** Ask, "What did you try this week, and what did you learn?" This is the "review" step.

• **Keep going after week 6.** Six weeks starts the habits. Ongoing mentoring is what builds a leader. For the longer process, see Christian Leadership Development: How to Train New Leaders Who Last.

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