

PLANNING FALL TRAINING

It's not even officially summer, pools have just opened, VBS is coming, camps and mission trips lie ahead. So why would you begin to plan for the fall training of your ministry volunteers?

Training is a response to scripture. Ephesians 4:12 calls us "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," the church. We are equipping those who will equip others in faith formation. This is how we build "the priesthood of all believers." Training ministry volunteers is core to effective ministry, not optional.

FOR TRAINING, CONSIDER:

- **WHY** are you doing the training? You want your ministry volunteers to be successful, to teach, lead, facilitate, or mentor well. Trust me, it makes recruiting volunteers is so much easier, if you can assure them that they will be well trained and supported in their ministry. It gives them confidence, as well as the skills and knowledge and attitudes that you want their ministry to reflect.
- **WHO** are you training? Let your training be person-specific (even if you do it for a group). Consider personality, gifts, and previous experience ... or, lack thereof.
- **FOR WHAT** are you training these volunteers in ministry? Your training should be ministry-specific. What are the skills they will need? What is the content that is to be covered? How will they know what is most important? How much do they already know? Is it safe to ask "dumb questions"? What information do they need about the people for whom (or with whom) they will do this ministry? What are the challenges, obstacles and rewards they should expect? Why does the congregation believe this is an essential ministry?
- **FRAME** all that they do as relational ministry. They need to understand that building relationships with those they serve is the essential first step to sharing God's story, to transforming lives, rather than just mastering cognitive material. All will appreciate building skills to engage those they teach and serve.
- **ONGOING** training is vitally important. Otherwise we forget what we need when we get to that part. How will you plan (and let your volunteers know the plan) for ongoing training?
- **TIMELY** training is crucial. Make sure you have equipped the saints before you send them out.

- **FRAME WHAT THEY WILL DO AS MINISTRY.** Help them understand their part in the body of Christ. They are doing ministry, not babysitting or busy work. They are using the gifts God gave them to serve others. They are doing faith formation. They are being the Church! It will make them stand tall and do it for all of the right reasons.
- **INCLUDE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES** for the ministers, as well as those to whom they will minister. Feed your flock with prayer, worship and some Sabbath. Model spiritual caring and they will replicate it for those to whom they minister.
- **BUILD COMMUNITY** with fellowship and time to know one another and care for and about one another. Remember, Jesus spent a great deal of time on small group ministry, then sent them out two by two.

NEED A PARTNER IN TRAINING?

This is the time to schedule Marilyn to help with training your ministry volunteers in children, youth, and family ministry. She can coach you to plan and execute the training, or do the training for your ministry volunteers. Fall schedules fill quickly. Contact her soon.