



## CHURCH to CHURCH: GROWING as DISCIPLES



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### *Living the Network Life*

#### Six Common Sessions for Networks

##### Intended Outcomes:

- All networks are encouraged to use the same “curriculum” which:
  - - Begins to create a GPC culture at the local church level that helps us fulfill our mission
    - Guides each Network in conversation using scripture, Wesleyan theology and *The Book of Discipline* for sharing about the life of the churches of the Network.
    - Guides each Network (using resources such as Ezra year-end reports and Mission Insite) to understand their recent past and the current mission field.
    - Provides an opportunity to build relationships among the Network participants to strengthen the connection of churches in a region by providing a place for the question to be asked: “How is it with the soul of our churches?”
    - Begins to develop a process for sharing resources among the participants of the Network.
    - Provide a base for the participants to lead their congregations in developing a meaningful path forward that catalyzes sustainable change that encourages Christ-like discipleship for the transformation of the world.



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### Session 1 Introduction to the Network

Why are we here, where do we begin and where are we headed?

Time frame: 2 hours

#### ■ **30 Minutes - Introduction of Participants**

**Network Leaders:** Introduce yourself and share the following

**Clergy Leader:**

- Why did you say yes to your DS when asked to lead the Network?
- Introduce your Laity Network leader sharing why you asked this person to lead with you.

**Laity Leader:**

- Why did you say yes to your pastor when asked to lead the Network?

**Network Pastors and Assigned Laity**

- Invite Network Pastors to introduce themselves.
- Invite the Network Pastor to introduce the Assigned Laity and share with the group why they invited this person to participate with them.
- Invite the Assigned Laity to share anything else about themselves in way of an introduction and to share why they said yes when their pastor invited them to participate.

#### ■ **5 Minutes - Time of Prayer**

- Network Leader or Leaders, please offer a prayer for the beginning of this journey.



## ■ **60 minutes - The Great Plains Network Model**

- **Bishop Saenz Video (on thumb drive, on-line or contact your DS)**
- **Network PowerPoint or Network overview sheet (If either is needed contact your DS)**
- **Ask the following questions.**

### **Objective Questions**

- What specific words, phrases, images still linger in your mind?
- What information stood out for you?

### **Reflective Questions**

- Where were you intrigued or excited by what you heard?
- Where did you feel most challenge?

### **Interpretive Questions**

- What were some of the key points made?
- How did it challenge or affirm the way we work?

### **Decisional Questions**

- What does this tell us about where we are now and where we need to go in the future?

★ Questions in this section come from *The Art of Focused Conversation*

## ■ **25 Minutes - Closing Affirmations and Worship**

### **Network Leaders:**

- Share what your hopes are for the Networks, its process and its outcomes.
- Invite Network Pastors and Assigned Laity to share the same.
- Share anything you would like about next gatherings.
- Set your times together.
- How often and how long you meet? This decision will be up to your Network.



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## ■ Time of Worship

Perhaps light a candle in the space as we acknowledge Christ's presence with us through the Holy Spirit.)

- **Lectio Divina**, John 15:1-8
  - *3 different readings*
    - **1<sup>st</sup> reading:** What word or phrase pops out for you? Speaks to you? (No commentary. Just share words and let them sit in the space with the group)
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> reading:** What might God be saying to you through this word, phrase, or passage of scripture? (Have people share as they are willing)
    - **3<sup>rd</sup> reading:** What might God be calling to change or learn in your life through your learnings from the scripture and the voices in the room today? (Share as people are willing)
  - Joys and Concerns followed by the Lord's Prayer
  - *Suggested hymn or one of your choice*  
*Taizé* chorus: "O Lord, Hear Our Prayer"  
Hymn: Here I Am, Lord UMH 593

## Close with communion

### Supplies needed:

- Thumb drive with video/powerpoint
- Technology to show Bishop's video and Network powerpoint
- Network Church Pastor and Network Church Laity handouts. Copies of Choosing the Faithful Path.
- Communion elements
- Lyrics and music for hymn selection
- Chart paper and markers could be helpful for each gathering – in case there is conversation the Network wants to keep for the group. – Also, if not everyone is being allowed to speak or is not being heard equally, charting conversation can help equalize all that is said.



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**Resource:** *Choosing the Faithful Path: A Bible Study for Discerning a Faithful Future*  
by Beth M. Crissman and Nancy B. Rankin

**Sessions 2 through 6: Follow *Choosing the Faithful Path* as outlined below.**

\* **Chapter 1: Setting Clear Expectations**

Please note pages 23 & 24 focus on the study as used with a local congregation. For our purposes we will use the common focused conversations to bring to the Network information about their church.

### **Chapters 2 through 5: Assessing Ourselves**

\* **Chapter 2: How We Follow As Leaders**

\* **Chapter 3: At the Heart of Ministry**

Ezra 10-year reports are produced for each church in the Network. Each Network Leader, Network Church Pastor and Network Church Laity have this resource for this chapter in particular. If you do not have these already, please contact your District office.

\* **Chapter 4: Making Disciples Who Make Disciples**

\* **Chapter 5: Serving Our Neighbors in Need**

Mission Insite reports are produced for each church in the Network. Each Network Church Pastor and Network Church Laity have this resource. If you do not have these already, please contact your District office.

- Optional but encouraged: ***Choosing the Faithful Path Part Two: Assessing our Neighbors***  
**Chapter 6: Who are Our Neighbors?**

Provided Mission Insite information needed for this chapter.

### **Chapter 7: Being the Body of Christ**

## **NEXT STEPS**

**At the conclusion of these first 6 sessions Network Leaders should lead their Network in the following questions to discern where the Network might head next. Your DS will assist you in resourcing or giving you ideas. We recognize the need for direction but also recognize the need for congregational development to be contextual.**

1. What did you learn about yourself, each other, your churches, your region, your context of ministry?
2. What is your need and plan for future learning and ministry together? How will this learning and ministry directly increase vitality and make disciples in the communities and congregations involved? For example: Continue in *Choosing the Faithful Path*, complete the Mission Insite study (see Mission Insite study included in church pastor and church laity folders), read a book together such as *Canoeing the Mountains*, *Fresh Expressions*, etc. or other avenues of learning and congregational development.
3. With what areas of ministry can congregations assist each other to fulfill their plan?  
For example: stewardship campaigns, *Choosing the Faithful Path* on individual church level, sharing ideas that are working.
4. Is there a common area of ministry do you want to concentrate as a network?  
For example: Evangelism, Children's Ministry, Worship, Ministry with the poor, continue *Choosing the Faithful Path Assessing Our Neighbors*.

5. With what areas of ministry and for further learning do the individual churches or the churches as a Network need more resourcing from the DS, Conference staff, other Networks, et
  
6. How can Network participants lead their congregations to determine the “Faithful Path” for their particular context?

