



How to Build a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

with Robby Angle



workbook

Building a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

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How to Build a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

session 1: A Leadership Shortage



A Leadership Shortage *video transcript*



If you are tuning into this, you most likely either have a problem, or you are looking for an opportunity. The problem might be that you don't have enough solid leaders to help serve to fulfill the potential of your church, whereas the opportunity is the potential kingdom impact that could be realized if you had more amazing men and women to lead in your church. Either way, well done taking time to dig into this critical component of our local churches.

We understand that you're busy, so we want this to be a great use of your time. Our goal is for it to be extremely clear, practical, and helpful. So we'll be giving you free resources throughout this series and tools to help you not only hear good ideas, but also have the handles you need to put them into action immediately.

Our hope is to help you develop great leaders. The type leaders that have kingdom impact. That love Jesus and love others differently. This is what we hope for in our churches, and what our communities desperately need.

My name is Robby Angle, and I serve as the President and CEO of Trueface. Our mission at Trueface is to serve the church by providing grace-based relational discipleship resources. Prior to serving at Trueface, I spent eight years at North Point Community Church in Georgia, tackling this problem of not having enough strong volunteer leaders in our adult ministry. I made a lot of mistakes as I tried to figure out how in the world to develop healthy, passionate, and committed leaders in our church. But over time, through an amazing team of wise individuals, and trial and error, a few principles started to become clear.

And then things really started to roll, picking up speed. We ended up having a new problem. We had too many leaders and not enough people to fill their groups. And they were some of the healthiest leaders in our church after going through a nine-month development initiative. It was

amazing. We were hearing stories of life change. We heard from spouses about the change they were seeing in their husband or wife. We started to feel the culture of the church shift, from the ground up. We started sharing what we learned with other churches and saw the same thing happen. Through that time, there were some specific things we learned to do—and some specific things we learned not to do. In this series, I want to share with you what I learned, and how to do it yourself.

If you're watching this, you most likely understand that **the overall health of a church is connected to its volunteers**. Healthy volunteers, healthy church. Churches function because of their **volunteers**. Kids care volunteers, small group hosts and leaders, greeters, clean-up crew. Men and women pulling together to serve people inside and outside of the church is how we participate in the Body of Christ. So, thriving volunteers, thriving church.

Here is where it gets tricky though. We need men and women stepping up, taking responsibility, and helping to spearhead the mission. But solving the quantity of leaders alone isn't enough. It is the *quality* of the leaders - the maturity, the health, the intentionality of the leaders - who change the culture of the church, increase the impact on the community, and love those inside and outside the church well. The impact of your church will be correlated to the quantity, and the quality of the volunteer leaders.

We are in the business of transformation in our churches. Helping people see God and themselves differently. And this spiritual formation, becoming more like Christ, always spills over, and transformation is always evidenced in how we love those around us differently. This is the discipleship that Jesus both modeled and told us about. Imagine the impact on our congregations and our communities if we had more fully alive and fired up men and women to serve and to love and to partner with us to fulfill the hope of our churches. With those leaders, men and women who are mature, others-focused, and ready to serve others, that's where the multiplication really starts to happen.

Now, some of you might be thinking, are we talking about getting more and better volunteer leaders or are we talking about discipleship and spiritual formation? Yes. Both. You and I know that the health of the leader is contingent upon his or her spiritual maturity. Therefore, what we learned was that this leader development program could equally be called a disciple development program, or whatever other term you wanted to use. Because in order to get quality leaders, we need leaders who have matured as disciples of Christ.

I will assume that you know this because you are watching this series, but with all the other pressures of pastoral ministry, the long, arduous task of developing a pipeline for quality leaders can sometimes fall by the wayside. It's too easy to not focus on it with the tyranny of the urgent. And it's hard to know where to start, or what to focus on. This is difficult work.

So here is what most of us do. We try different approaches, but they seem to be putting a short term fix over a long term problem, leaving us always needing more volunteers. Then, because we don't have enough volunteers, we end up settling for anyone with a heartbeat who we can coerce with a free meal to serve and invest in others.

Feel familiar?

We know that the health of any leader has a massive impact on the culture and outcomes of the team or environment they lead. But when it comes to our ministry environments, we can sometimes feel boxed into a corner. We feel like we have to settle with whoever we have, and then lower our expectations of the impact of those environments.

But listen to me:

It doesn't have to be that way.

And I'll cut to the chase: the best way to develop wise, healthy, passionate volunteer leaders in your church is through a smaller, life-changing community for people to connect relationally and grow spiritually. A leader development pipeline for men and women to have a model of an exceptional leader, and an experience of authentic community.

Not passionate pleas from the pulpit. Not free meal offers or guilt trips. Not new ninety-minute leader trainings. Not even the book I wrote for small group leaders.

So, story time. About ten years ago I had the opportunity to oversee the men's ministry at North Point Community Church. Andy Stanley, my boss and the founder of North Point Community Church often said that small groups were the foundation of the health of the church. In his book, *Deep and Wide*, Sunday services were to have wide reach, but small groups were to have a depth of impact. Small groups were supposed to be where people could be more fully known and fully loved, not a Sunday morning.

I was working as a Licensed Professional Counselor at the time, with a passion for helping people experience authentic relationships, so when I heard about the opportunity to help foster environments where this would happen in a whole megachurch—let's just say I was stoked.

But . . . this was a new role. They decided to peel off the fifty or so men's groups, place them under my care, and allow me to experiment.

My favorite place to be.

I jumped in feet first and started by pulling together the smartest men I could find in the church to be an advisory team. For three months we wrestled with how to use a small group ministry to shape the culture of the men in our church.

Our hope was to see a community of men who were fully alive—which meant rooted in Jesus, fully known by a few, and engaged in their unique calling.

By the way, this is what I want for my daughters as well.

Now, we believed—and still do—that the environment that would be most conducive for being rooted, known, and engaged is a small group. A group that meets together with intentionality and consistency to connect relationally to grow spiritually. And since we had about fifty groups, we asked, "Is this happening or not? How do we know? How do we help?"

Now, lots of variables make up a small group. What you study, how the time is used, frequency, group cohesion, and more. However, the greatest factor in any small group being boring or transformational is the small group leader. I would say this is about 65% of the equation.

That's a lot.

Realizing this, our advisory team said, "Okay, if an exceptional leader is the most important part of the discipleship happening in our church, we have a problem. We have a bunch of mediocre leaders leading a bunch of mediocre groups, and then we hope they multiply and new leaders come from those groups to make more mediocre groups. Doesn't seem like a great plan."

So we dove deep. We wrestled. And we did three things.

- First, we had to define what a healthy leader looked like. We'll talk about that in the next video.
- Second, we chose to spend more time with fewer people for greater kingdom impact. We'll get to that too.
- Third, we executed a replicable group framework for relational, grace-based discipleship to develop leaders and unlock the potential power of the ministry we were stewarding. And yes, we're going to hand that to you as well.

God has designed us to grow through relationships. We see that from Genesis to Revelation. But relationships that lead to spiritual growth are hard to come by. They take time, commitment, and investment. You can't do it all. But you can equip some of your best leaders to develop future leaders. You can equip these leaders to partner with you, changing the health, maturity, and culture of your church from the ground up.

We knew that if we could develop a relational framework that fostered spiritual transformation and maturity, we would begin to see healthy, wise, passionate leaders spilling out of these groups. These individuals would then become the leaders we needed for our ministries for kids, students, service, home visits, small groups, and more. We'd begin to see the church multiply.

And that's exactly what happened.



reflect

1. How did your current volunteer leaders get involved in serving at your church?

2. What did your church do to develop those leaders?

notes

additional resources

The next page contains a free resource, *Four Questions For Potential Leaders*, to help you talk with potential leaders.

Four Questions For Potential Leaders

Trueface Journey (TJ) Leaders are the most important component of this initiative. Because of that, we believe leaders should be nominated or invited to lead a group. The leaders you are looking for are men and women who love and follow Jesus. Men and women who have a desire to fulfill the great commission of going and making disciples. Men and women who understand and experience this amazing gospel of grace.

It is likely that the ideal leaders will already be investing in discipling/mentoring relationships and groups. In the Trueface Journey, we value relationships with others and protecting group members' space to process incredibly important topics. Effective group leaders often possess a different skill set than ministry leaders who excel in teaching environments. This is not a teaching based environment, but a process oriented one. Our hope is that this journey follows the example of Jesus' highly relational and question driven discipleship model.

It's important to discern whether or not a potential leader has the capacity to lead a group. Clearly communicate that leading a TJ is a significant commitment. Be prepared to ask the hard questions. If a leader is not a culture or chemistry fit, don't invite them to lead. Remember to use the Leader Description as a reference of discussion during your communication about the opportunity. Lead pastors, church staff and elders are a great resource for leader recommendations.

QUESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL LEADERS

1. Tell me the 15-minute version of your story. Ask enough questions to confidently answer the following:
 - Does he/she model a grace-oriented faith?
 - Does he/she model authenticity and vulnerability
 - Do their biblically rooted values align with their lifestyle choices?
 - Would this be someone you would want your son or daughter to follow?
2. Why would you want to become a mentor?
 - Does he/she have the emotional intelligence to ask questions rather than teach?
 - Does he/she model vulnerability?
3. What is your band-width for this investment—on your calendar and relationally?
 - Where is he/she currently leading?
 - Do the leader's relationships with others: spouse, children, family seem healthy?
4. Who are the people in your life that you are doing life with and trusting on a more vulnerable level?
 - Do they prioritize high trust relationships with others?
 - Do they have intentional and consistent relationships with others that they are known by?

How to Build a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

session 2:

What is a Healthy Leader?



workbook

What is a Healthy Leader? *video transcript*



To recap the last session, one of the primary things a church should focus on is developing the quality and quantity of the leaders. Focusing on developing a pipeline of leaders is difficult and takes time, but has the potential to change the church and your local community. Jesus decided to change the world through a small group of committed friends—so I’m pretty sure it will work for your church, too.

I am really tempted to jump into some how-to, practical stuff, but we have done too many things at a lot of our churches without taking the time to slow down and evaluate the why, which shapes the what, providing clarity for the appropriate how. So if the last discussion focused on the why, these next two discussions will hone in on “what” makes a great leader, before wrapping up with the how.

Back to the conversations the advisory team had about overhauling the ministry to adults at North Point . . . We realized that a thriving small group is hugely influenced by a healthy leader. The only problem was, we weren’t sure how to define that. What do we mean by a healthy leader? What does that look like? What differentiates my great leaders from my mediocre ones? And how can we intentionally develop them?

This is a critically important step for you to wrestle with. You can’t find and develop healthy leaders if you don’t have a clear vision of what that looks like.

What do you consider a healthy leader? Does it mean they can exegete scripture better? Have a servant’s heart? Are they hospitable? Are they great question askers? Do they hold people accountable well? Do they model vulnerability? Do they teach well? Which ones do you want and not want? Which ones are most important to you?

We need to wrestle with “what” a healthy leader is before we can discern “how” to develop them.

So let’s jump in.

First, it’s helpful to differentiate the internal and external dynamics of a healthy group leader. The internal attributes and health of the person, and the external practices and actions that they exhibit. Said another way, **are they inwardly sound and externally equipped?**

You might be hoping I’m going to tell you all about the externally equipped part. Maybe give you a workbook of tools and best practices. A 20% off code for a new book.

Nope. Because whether those are actually helpful or not largely depends on the first factor, the inwardly sound part. Most of us have had unhealthy bosses who go to a manager training . . . doesn’t really solve the problem, does it?

The internal dynamics of a leader are much harder to develop and discern. Afterall, it’s *internal*—it can’t be measured and taught like a tool. That is why discipleship, or learning to live and love like Jesus, is a lifelong journey of growing in our experience of God’s love, loving others and being loved by them, and gaining greater self-awareness and emotional intelligence. And while it’s a lifelong journey, we *can* go through seasons of intentional discipleship to hone in and accelerate some of the growth process.

Today I want to propose two primary principles of leader development that can serve as a foundation for your leader development initiatives.

First, **the foundation of a healthy leader is found in his or her theology and identity.** In how they see God and how they see themselves.

And second, **leadership is better caught than taught.** We can only transfer what we have experienced.

Let’s jump into the first one. A leader’s identity, how they see themselves, and their theology, how they see God, are core. How we see God affects how we view ourselves and how we view

ourselves affects how we treat others. So how we help our leaders mature in their understanding of God and themselves couldn't be more important.

Let's start with theology. How do you see God? Think about this. If you see God as a judge with a clipboard, keeping track of the good stuff and bad stuff you do, then that's what you are going to portray to other people, and especially the people you are leading. You will probably carry a low level of anxiety and need other people to do the right thing, so that it looks good to God. People's messy issues might be hard for you to sit with, because you kind of need them to shape up.

On the other hand, if you see God as a benevolent grandfather—to borrow C.S. Lewis's analogy—who just wants us all to be happy and do what feels good, then that's going to affect how you see yourself, as well as how you lead others. You won't call them into the sacrificial, challenging, wondrous life of following Jesus. You probably won't be willing to have hard conversations in love because, well - they're happy.

Do you see how our theology - our view of God - affects what kind of leader we are? This is at the heartbeat of healthy leaders who develop healthy disciples.

Our view of God is also connected to our view of ourselves, our identity. This is the other side of the coin. Because of Jesus, what is my identity? Am I a sinner, who through diligent and sincere effort will one day become a saint? Or am I a saint maturing into the righteousness of Christ that has been imparted to me? Our identity changes how we lead others. It affects our motives of leading a group, our shame, our willingness to be vulnerable, and the way we interact with others. We all believe some lies about our identity, and God will take a lifetime slowly pulling at those threads. But these lies affect how we see ourselves and how we see others, and that affects how we lead others.

Now, many of our Sunday morning teaching has taught on these principles dozens of times, so why do so many men and women in our church feel stuck and have difficulty trusting them? That's because **only trusted truth transforms**, and trust is a relational word. Discipleship is always relational because in relational environments we practice trusting these truths with others. That is why a strong

relationally-driven leader development intensive has the potential to accelerate spiritual growth. To help leaders move the eighteen inches from their head to their heart. To trust the truths, process them in the safety of others, and then lead environments to help others do the same. That's the potential you have in the ministry to adults outside of the Sunday morning environment.

OK, obviously I get a little fired up about this, but we need to keep going.

Principle number two: Leadership is caught, not taught.

I'll say that again. Leadership is caught, not taught.

You see this in kids. They may have been *taught* a lot in their home, but most often it's what they pick up from watching their parents that has the most impact. This is why the actual person and character of a leader is so much more important than their techniques or giving them good teaching resources. The people in your church will pick up and start to model what your leaders show them—*that's how a church culture forms.*

Here are a couple examples. One of the most important aspects of your adult ministry culture is found in the level of authenticity and vulnerability. And it's not fair of you to expect a leader to create an authentic high trust environment if they haven't experienced it themselves, because they don't know what it looks like or the value of it. You can't provide training about how the freedom of being fully known is worth the vulnerability and investment. It has to be experienced first to understand the value of it. It has to be caught, not taught.

Here is another example. One of the greatest discipleship tools we have is our ability to ask questions. Jesus was the ultimate example of a discipler of others, helping them form, or transform, into his likeness. And his go-to tool to help others? Asking them questions. Now, you could put together the best powerpoint or training in the world about the importance of active listening and the art of asking good open-ended reflective questions. But how much will that really move the needle? The trickle down effects of your volunteers facilitating their groups differently would be minimal.

However, when you are in the presence of someone who listens differently and more intently, and you feel the focus, attention, and love of that person, you experience the power and the gift of a good listener. You don't have to be told it's important, because you experience it. You begin to watch how you can lead and love through listening and asking good questions with greater intentionality because someone did that for you. Because leadership is better caught than taught. Jesus knew this, and modeled it with his disciples. We have the opportunity to develop environments to do the same.

I want to wrap up this session by challenging you.

The culture you are impacting starts with you.

It's nice, talking about these leadership principles. They're good. But these principles apply to you, too. If you want your leaders to be healthy, vulnerable people, guess what—that starts with you. Do you want them in an authentic community, the kind where they can share their last 10% and *truly* be known? Where they are consistently being encouraged and challenged in relationships of trust? Have *you* experienced that? Are you experiencing that?

If you are, *awesome*. I'm so glad. And if you aren't, we have some resources and guidance, some of which are in these videos, but start really praying about where God is inviting you to experience for yourself what you hope your leaders encounter. He seems to really love those prayers.

So:

1. Theology and identity are foundational.
2. Leadership is caught, not taught.

We hope you enjoy the supplemental resources and questions, and well done for continuing to lean into these difficult but important conversations.



reflect

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the *volunteer leader culture* in your church?
Why did you give it that score?

2. If you had more quality leaders, what kind of impact would that have on
your church and community?

notes

additional resources

Use the *Ask Me Anything* tool on the next page to build trust and practice listening well with one or two other people –important skills in the life of a healthy leader.

Ask Me Anything

So how do I find people I can trust? This is the question we've been asked more than any other. Our most successful solution is also one of our most simplistic.

We use this tool, "Ask Me Anything", to allow people the freedom to dip their toes in the water. With this tool, we get to practice trusting another person with pieces of our life. This tool is very flexible and can easily serve as either a "get to know you" icebreaker or as a powerfully deep immersion into the story of your life.

Long story short, you can use this tool to find out if you want to go further in relationship with others. You will learn more about them in the process of answering their questions than you have in 10 years working on the same team. There is also a safety outlet built right into the tool. The people who are doing this tool with you will each come up with just five questions for you. And out of the total of everyone's questions, you will pick two to answer – just two.



There are many important purposes for this tool.

This tool gives us the opportunity to ask questions that we never take the time to ask.

This tool opens the door to new understanding in your relationships.

This tool can greatly accelerate the trust in any relationship.

This tool teaches us how important it is to be listened to and cared for.

Most importantly, this tool gives us an opportunity to experience grace and truth, easing us into the very real gift of trusting others with ourselves.

Instructions:

1. Both you and your partner for this tool should take a few minutes to write five questions you would like your partner to answer. Please focus on open-ended, clarifying and affirming types of questions. Avoid questions that force a simple "yes" or "no" answer, as you will miss the opportunity to discover wonderful new insights.
2. Read your five questions to your partner.
3. Your partner can choose two of your five questions to answer. It is entirely their choice as to which of the five questions will be answered.
4. Take notes of his/her answers on the back of this sheet.
5. After the questions are answered, tell your partner what you learned and pray together.

My Five Questions:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

How to Build a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

session 3: **More Time With Fewer People**



workbook

More Time With Fewer People *video transcript*



So when we are talking about developing the leader as a person, and specifically around his or her theology, we're really just talking about discipleship. Right?

Right. A leadership development pipeline for your church should actually be a discipleship initiative. You can call it whatever fits the culture or needs of your church. Today, on this video, we will wrestle with another "why" a great leader is a great leader.

In doing that, think about your own journey in being discipled. What really made the difference? There's a lot of good information out there, plenty of incredible books and studies. But for most of us, the answer is simple. It was a person. It was a relationship or a small group of relationships that have impacted us. Someone or someones who intentionally and consistently poured into us and walked alongside us. A good definition of leadership is someone a step ahead pointing us in the right direction. Isn't that pretty similar to the man or woman who has discipled us or impacted us spiritually?

That is relational discipleship, and Jesus is the one who shows it to us best.

Don't hear me wrong. Teaching and knowledge is important, but it's typically not the missing dynamic in our discipleship process.

See, God designed us to grow in the context of relationships. Remember, it is not good for Man to be alone. This is in our very DNA. We are made for relationships. Look at Jesus. How did he spend the majority of his time in ministry? In relationships, pouring into other people. And Jesus had a lot of followers, but He chose twelve to really dig in with. Do life with. Support, encourage, confront, teach. He then told us to go and do likewise. This is the master plan of evangelism—relational discipleship.

Jesus models the primary principle I want to drive home in this video. **More time, with fewer people, equals greater kingdom impact.** More time, with fewer people, equals greater kingdom impact. And before you move onto the next video, slow down because whether or not you agree with this principle will change the approach of how you develop leaders.

Most of you should be feeling, yeah, that's great. But we need a lot of leaders in our churches, and I am feeling pretty stretched.

I get that. Again, the church where I started nerding out on this was North Point, and it's huge. We ran into the same problem. How do we prioritize relational discipleship when we need a lot more healthy leaders, like yesterday.

There were eight people on my advisory team, and we all sat with this problem for a while. You see, at a megachurch you can get a few thousand people in a room and put on an awesome program and feel pretty good about yourself, not to mention feel pretty energized. That's a very tempting road, and it looks good. But it does very little to actually shape the *culture* of the church. So we decided that we would start focusing on the small instead of the big. I'll tell you, that wasn't an easy shift.

Regi Campbell is one of the most impactful men on my life, and as a mentor, he was on that advisory team. Regi is the one that taught me, and modeled, this principle that more time with fewer people equals greater kingdom impact. As he grew to trust this principle, he reorganized his time, talents, and treasures to align with it. He was fully bought in. And after witnessing the impact and legacy of his life at his funeral a few years ago . . . well let's just say he was definitely onto something.

Under his wisdom, the advisory team agreed that we would slow down and each deeply invest in a smaller group of people over the next year. That we would work together to learn from others, learn from each other, share best practices, and figure out what worked and didn't work. We would gather people in the church who weren't leading—but who showed a personal faith and a hunger to

grow in their faith—and pour into them as future or potential leaders in our church. We would help each other intentionally invest in them over the next year with three goals in mind:

1. That they would have time to wrestle with their view of God and themselves.
2. That they would have a model of an exceptional leader.
3. And that they would have an experience of authentic community.

So with these three goals in mind, we started with the men at the church before moving to women and couples in order to test this out. We each gathered a group of six to eight men a season behind us, and the transformation we saw was amazing. Within a year we had a problem. The men's team at North Point Church had a first in the 20+ years of men's, women's, and married groups at five different campuses—we had too many leaders and not enough people to fill their groups! And they were the most intentionally developed leaders in our church. I got calls from the student ministries and the married team asking what we were doing differently.

This was just beyond cool for me. I'm a huge research and development nerd, and here I was, getting to read through over 500 surveys of participants and their spouses to understand what had worked and not worked. I got to work with over fifty of the most impressive leaders I have ever met, who I got to learn from and understand what differentiated their groups compared to others. And, as if that wasn't enough, I was able to work with church leaders across the country as they rolled out this initiative to help develop the quality and quantity of leaders in their churches. Beyond amazing for me.

After years of seeing the impact, as well as leading eight groups myself, I am all in. I will be leading a group most years the rest of my life. My wife and I are leading a group with four younger couples right now, opening our lives and our homes to walk with them deeply over the course of nine months.

So why am I spending one of these videos on this “why” of this principle of more time with fewer people to have greater kingdom impact, before going onto the “how”? Because if you are like

me, you will be tempted to shortcut this principle because of urgency and needs. You will be tempted to do some type of leader initiative that is shorter in duration and larger in size.

You want to increase the quality and quantity of leaders in your church? Commit to and prioritize a plan that really changes the core of the future and potential leaders in your church. Culture changing takes time. So spend more time, intentional time, with a smaller group of people. Really pour in, be present, model the life and leadership you're inviting them into. I say it often, but Jesus decided to change the world through a small group of committed friends. I don't think he ever changed his plan.



reflect

1. What is your current process for recruiting and developing leaders?

2. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate that process? Why did you give it that score?

notes

additional resources

Create a visual representation of all your relationships by using the free tool, *The Circles Exercise*, on the next page.

CIRCLES EXERCISE

PART ONE |

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35

God is relational in his nature as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is a god of love, and love is relationally experienced. The “body of Christ,” the Church (*ecclesia*), is the gathering of believers. Relationships are very important to God and a key part of our maturing process. The health of our relationships should therefore be a significant indicator of our spiritual maturity.

John 13:35 indicates discipleship is most evident in our love for one another. Embedded in that verse is the truth that we can love well because he first loved us. In trusting God, we let him love us. In receiving his love, we are able to love others. It is by his grace and through his grace that we are able to grow and mature spiritually in love.

One of our primary designed desires is to be able to be loved. We are made to give and receive love. Loving relationships are one of the greatest innate human desires that God designed in us.

A key question for reflection based on these truths is, “Do I prioritize relationships accordingly in my life?”

Most of us desire deeper relationships with others, we just haven’t prioritized nurturing them. Jesus set a precedent for this by prioritizing select close relationships. He had relationships with various groups at various degrees of intentionality and depth like his family and his disciples (the three, the twelve, and the seventy).

This exercise will help you create a visual representation of your relationships.

CIRCLES EXERCISE

PART TWO

In the graphic below, please fill out the different sections of the pie with names of some of the people you have relationships with. Place names of those you are closest with towards the center of the pie. Move further out as the relational depth gets more shallow.



CIRCLES EXERCISE

PART THREE |

Based on the diagram on the previous page, what area of relationship needs more focus?

What is a fear that prevents you from trusting others more deeply, has kept the level of relationships where they are, and prevented them from going deeper?

Describe what it would look like to take a step to increase the depth of trusting others with the real you.

With whom would you like to prioritize a deeper relationship of trust? What would that look like?

How to Build a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

session 4: **Executing the Plan**



workbook

Executing the Plan *video transcript*



Hopefully by now I've convinced you that you need to be looking at intentionally developing a small group of leaders, and then releasing them to go develop more leaders. I hope that you're seeing why small groups are the perfect vehicle for this kind of relational discipleship, and that they allow you to model the kind of leadership you want your volunteer leaders to exhibit.

But, if you're like me, you might be wondering—so what do I actually do?

Glad you asked. In this video I'm going to walk you through the details of what we began at North Point. My goal in doing that is to help provide practical ideas of how to respond to the “why” and “what” that we have previously discussed. We spent years discerning what worked and didn't work for men, women, and couples groups, for various ages and denominations in different churches. We distilled what we learned into a module-based journey that captured the secret sauce and the best practices. And in addition, we will be providing links to training videos, details of our nine month framework, and everything else you need for ideas in developing an initiative.

After my time leading the adult ministry environments at North Point Community Church, I transitioned to a 27-year-old ministry called Trueface. Trueface equips churches to help their people experience deeper relationships with God and others. That is why we have spent the past few years packaging all of what I learned at North Point into an initiative called the Trueface Journey to help more and more churches develop a pipeline of leaders.

In case you are now thinking, “OK here is the bait and switch,” everything we are offering is completely free. We thought the best way we can equip you to develop your leadership or discipleship initiative is to provide our example as a baseline to learn from, use, or re-build in your own context. We have helped churches white label it and call it something connected to their church.

We don't care, as long as more men and women are falling in love with Jesus, and more men and women are investing intentionally in others.

Our team is available to help you understand the reasons or learnings underpinning these elements in greater detail, but I will provide an overview of some of the pieces of what we built. This is to help you start putting meat on the bones of your own leader development pipeline. Feel free to develop your own, use ours as a starting point to adapt, or implement the Trueface Journey in your church.

To begin, we are going to jump into the group structure. While I was at North Point, we wanted our leader development format to model what we hoped would be replicated through our normal small groups, which is one of the important design elements of developing leaders in a small group setting.

Our groups had two co-leaders, with six to eight group members. Men, womens, and couples groups. I am co-leading a group now with my wife Emily and we have four couples in our group. The co-leader thing is important. It allows you to do a few things. They allow you to model healthy authentic friendship, or a healthy marriage. They allow us to divide and conquer in order to increase the quality of group facilitation as well as share the burden. Our small group leaders who had a co-leader showed greater longevity and commitment. And since we wanted all of our small groups to have co-leaders or co-facilitators, we modeled that in our leader development groups. In my case, for my men's groups, I somehow convinced my lead pastor, Clay Scroggins, to try this out with me and co-lead multiple years of groups with me.

Next, we had to figure out how to fill these groups with future and potential leaders. In my situation, I went to the fifty small group leaders, other church staff, and key volunteers with this pitch: Will you nominate someone who you think is a future or potential leader of our church, to be invited to apply to a nine-month intensive led by some of the best leaders in our church? This was a

game changer. They felt valued and honored to be able to nominate someone. They provided the list of future and potential leaders. That will get you leaders and a list of potential group members.

Next, we need to talk about the design elements of the content, or teaching. The intentionality and progression of the underlying content is really important. The nine-month initiative guides the members through a content framework with three primary parts.

The first few months help members explore their past and present to help them discern what has impacted who they are. To help them identify areas of their life where they are hoping change will occur, because only the sick need a doctor, right? This is also the critical time for trust to be built among the group members.

The middle months, four to six, hone in and help members explore their views of God and self in order to replace lies with truth, processing these things in the context of these high-trust environments.

Then, only after a healthy foundation of a theology of grace is built, can they explore what it looks like to trust God with their time, talents, treasures, character, relationships, and gifts. All through a lens of grace.

Said more simply, the three, three-month areas of focus are on: Do I need God? Can I trust God? and What would it look like to trust God in various areas of my life?

Now, this isn't intuitive. We went too quickly to the truth in earlier versions and lost people to their head and "learning" more without it leading to change. Further, if you go to application too early, we have the temptation to implement changes because we "should," not from a foundation of grace. Last, if we don't have the right components to build trust early, then people won't trust enough to process some of the lies that have them stuck.

Finally, let's look at some logistics. The group meeting, the content, extra meetings, and the retreat.

First, the group meeting. We found the best cadence was for groups to meet once a month, for three hours. This gives us enough time for reflection, reading, and assignments in between sessions, and then enough time while we're together to really dig in and share. It also allows space for socials and one-on-ones with leaders and between members. Further, since we implemented this initiative as a leader development pipeline, one of the important parts of the meetings being once a month is so that the group members could stay in their current weekly small groups. This monthly group can serve as a supplemental leader development initiative, and not compete with the normal small group. We have template agendas to give you an idea of the three-hour breakdown.

Second, the content. Each month, between sessions, we have introspective and relational assignments. This means that every month we spend time reflecting personally about an area, and then engaging in an assignment that requires us to relationally connect with someone else. These lay counseling type assignments help us apply truth where it matters, not just learn about truth in our heads. Over the nine months we also read five to six books, pulling in wisdom from other people that touch on the core themes we're exploring that month, giving us a deeper resource to wrestle with and reflect on. You can see the overview we found to be the most effective in the attached documents.

Third, extra meetings. We ask group leaders to commit to having one or two one-on-ones with each member of their group. Group members also go through an eight-conversation guide with one other member to experience the power and fruit of a one-on-one relationship. This helps to deepen our relationships and models intentionally pursuing others. We also gather for socials to connect relationally in between the heavy monthly meetings.

Fourth, the retreat. We do an overnight retreat together in month three. This is far enough out to build trust in the group, but early enough to really set the stage for this to be a different kind of group, a different kind of community. At this retreat each person shares their story with the group. We have a framework to help the member prepare to share their story. This is after the leader

shares their story in month two to model vulnerability and “go there,” setting the precedent for the members to follow the next month.

Some of you might be thinking, “That’s a high bar of commitment! I am not sure I can get people to commit to that. Five to six books? Homework each month?” Yeah, this takes commitment both logistically and emotionally. But don’t we prioritize what we value? If we provide value, people will prioritize it, and thank you for it. So many of us are hungry to grow, but don’t know where and who will take the time to invest in helping us. This group is so valuable and intentional that members don’t miss, most leaders come back to lead, and group members end up being your greatest recruiting tool.

We have all kinds of best practices and lessons learned which you can access by reaching out or by the supplemental resources, but I want to leave you with one. It’s an extra step that we used at North Point, and that we suggest here at Trueface to churches who want to use these kinds of groups for their leader development.

Like I said earlier, I asked the small group leaders, staff and volunteers, “Can you provide the name and email of anyone who comes to mind who loves Jesus and is hungry to grow in their faith that you think would be a good leader?” I gathered 150 names, and then I got Clay as the lead pastor to shoot a quick two-minute video. He said something like, “Congratulations, I was given your name by someone who thinks you are a future or potential leader of our church. They nominated you to be invited to apply to an invitation-only group led by some of the strongest leaders in our church.” He followed up with some details, a link to a simple application due by a certain date, and then sent a follow up email forty-eight hours before the application was due.

Imagine getting that email from your pastor. No matter what you decide, it’s an honor. The nomination and invitation were all intentional to differentiate and clearly communicate the level of commitment and expectation of this initiative compared to some other groups. And the application differentiated the level of expectation and commitment to this group compared to other group

environments. To our surprise, about fifty percent of the people who received the invitation committed to groups. It turned out, people were hungry to be intentionally developed and disciplined. They wanted the high bar.

We played matchmaker between applicants and group leaders to get a good mix. Each group had two leaders and six to eight group members, and then we picked a launch date and it was off to the races. Like I said, soon we had too many leaders and not enough people to fill the groups. I would love to see that happen in all of our churches. How cool would that be?

As I mentioned, we give this all away for free. We have examples of those emails and the application. We can send you our outlines and plans, and we're happy to walk alongside you and help you launch groups like this for your church. We have included free resources to serve you in developing or implementing your leadership development initiative. In fact, we have attached a resource that gives you the vital questions to ask once you gather as an advisory team. This resource will help you move the needle forward at a rapid pace!

Here at Trueface, our passion is to help people experience deeper relationships with God and others, and so far, this is the best way we've found. So jump in, give it a try. Spend more time with fewer people, and remember that you can't model what you haven't actually experienced. And more than anything, trust God. Trust him with your people, your future leaders, your church. Trust him with you, your weaknesses, your strengths. Trust that *he's* working, and all this is just the fun we get to have as he takes us along.



reflect

1. What has worked in the past-and what is currently working-to help people in your church develop spiritually? What is the evidence that they're growing and maturing?

2. What do you hope participants say at the end of a leader development initiative?

What do you hope participants do at the end of a leader development initiative?

notes

additional resource

The *Trueface Journey* infographic on the next page will guide you to additional free links and resources to help you as you build your framework for developing a Leadership Pipeline.

TRUEFACE JOURNEY

where relationships of grace
and discipleship meet

5 STEPS TO LAUNCH

3-6 months out

get prepared

1

SHOULD YOU LEAD?

- Watch the [overview video](#) and view the [resources](#)
- Pray about leading a group.

2

GET EQUIPPED

- Join the [Trueface App](#) and explore the Trueface Journey for Leader Training
- Watch the training videos and view the resources

2-4 months out

FIND A CO-LEADER

- Pray and invite someone to co-lead
- Decide if you will lead men, women, couples, or a co-ed group
- Pick a start date

3

1-3 months out

INVITE MEMBERS

- Check out our resources to help you build your group

4

build your group

0-1 months out

5

LAUNCH

- Email the group preparation info and prepare for Launch night
- WATCH God work!

trueface.org

How to Build a Leader Development Pipeline in Your Church

Getting Practical

supplemental resource



Let's start with the big questions. Any environment that you create in your church should be filtered through these two questions:

1. Is the focus of this environment helping people see God and themselves in a more mature and biblically-sound way?
2. Are people experiencing authentic community in this environment?

Think about communicating truth on a Sunday morning. The communicator is a guide to help people move toward understanding and applying truth. Developing a leader isn't much different. **We have to ask, "Does our leader development process help people wrestle with the questions, 'Do I need God? Can I trust God? And what would it look for me to trust God in my life?'"**

When you develop leaders in a group setting, there are best practices in discerning the progression of the content and relational experiences. There are sequential dynamics of a transformational experience, and the questions in the blue box will help you incorporate them into your discipleship pathway.

- Does this group build connection and trust out of the gate?
- Does it provide space for people to identify that something isn't working in their faith journey the way they hoped?
- Are you helping them connect what feels off to an inaccurate view of God or themselves?
- Once they personalize the problem or tension, are they ready to wrestle with truth in order to pursue a more mature (or adjusted) view of God or themselves?
- Are you inviting them to take a step of faith by applying this truth into their lives and relationships?

Whatever leader development or spiritual formation environment you develop, look at the overall structure of the emotional, relational, and mental journey you're asking people to participate in. Then, evaluate its overall effectiveness.

So, let's break down this journey.

First, create a connection at the beginning of the group in order to build a high-trust environment. Cast vision for the peace, freedom, and design for which we are built—connecting relationally and growing spiritually. We aren't meant to grow or go at it alone. We need each other!

In casting that vision, often we set the bar of expectation too low. We value what we prioritize, and we prioritize what we value, so don't be afraid to cast a compelling vision of our longing for connection—and our design to grow and mature—in the context of those relationships of trust. This takes commitment and prioritization. Relationships get squeezed out of our calendars, so cast a vision for a high level of commitment to each other.

Once a high bar or higher level of expectations is set, modeling vulnerability is critical. It's hard to find a better way to build an authentic community than through the process of sharing stories. Have someone share their story and model vulnerability to set a precedence of authentic community. For example, in the *Trueface Journey*, the leaders share their stories in month two to set a precedent for vulnerability that the group members can follow in month three at the overnight retreat.

We all share a common desire to be known. We have an innate desire to be seen, understood, and known in order to be loved. We have a hard time trusting people that do not know us, and trust is an essential element in experiencing an environment that is conducive for spiritual growth. So, it's really important for the design elements of our leader development initiatives to emphasize building trust and authenticity early.

I mentioned the *Trueface Journey* in our last video. It's a nine-month initiative that has groups meeting together once a month for three hours. We do this for a few reasons. First, many of the

future or potential leaders in the church are volunteering in various small groups. We don't want them to have to stop doing that in order to engage in a supplemental development initiative. Three hours is enough time to do some heavy lifting relationally, and a month in between is ample time to process and learn through supplemental materials outside of the group. Second, having the duration over nine months provides enough time for difficulty or changes in lives that the group can experience and navigate together—babies being born, sicknesses, jobs being lost, and the natural pros and cons that come with life and various seasons that are important in any community as a catalyst for connection and depth.

A group has to meet the needs or longings of people in order for them to want to do it, which is how we get the quantity of leaders that we need, not just the quality. **What we are hearing time and again is that what people are longing for is more intentional mentorship.** Mentorship and discipleship are cousins. That's why whatever you design needs to be something that people would say, "Please let me join!" Making it with limited spots, joined by invitation only, or after an application is accepted, are all practical ways that you can develop a value that people will pursue and prioritize.

The most important of any of these factors is the quality of the leader who will facilitate these groups. As the leader of these groups at North Point, I was responsible for recruiting leaders for our groups. **I wouldn't invite any man or woman to lead a group who I wouldn't personally want to invest in or mentor me. Go after the men and women who people want to learn from, and get them to lead.** They are made to lead—and they want to lead—but most likely your church hasn't offered an option as to who they can lead and how they can do it in a compelling and honoring way.

Now it's time to gather together with the key people of your church, roll up your sleeves, and prioritize developing and launching an environment to increase the quality and quantity of leaders in your church. The goal is to change the culture of the relational discipleship environments that are

already being implemented, or that you would like to grow in the future. The leader or facilitator is going to be the key, so focus the pipeline on the quality and quantity of those leaders.

In order to have realistic expectations, know that real change will take time. From my experience, culture change that's worth it takes at least 3 years. So set the expectations of the church leadership—as well as your own leadership—that creating a culture of the church that will actually see the needle of discipleship move will be a multi-year development. Patience and support will be needed to do this the right way. I recommend starting with the following two steps:

1. **Build your own advisory team.** Who (on staff or off) is passionate about relational discipleship? Who needs to be a part in order for you to have the authority, wisdom, and ability needed to implement a new initiative—or adjust a current one—in a way that moves the needle?
2. **Go through the questions on the next page.** This will be a multi-meeting process to do it justice. We have tried to practice what we preach by creating environments that will help you transfer what you experience. The fact that you just went through these videos was part of your equipping. You now get to lead an advisory team through a similar process.

This journey couldn't be more important, which means that there couldn't be a better use of your time. We're here to support you in any way that we can! Email us any time at

journey@trueface.org if you have questions or want to learn more about the *Trueface Journey*!



Questions for your Advisory Team

- *What would be evidence of spiritual formation or discipleship being more effective and normal in our church in 5 years?*
- *What has worked in the past and what is currently working the most effectively in helping people's spiritual development?*
- *Do we agree or disagree that a smaller relational environment is the most conducive environment for spiritual growth? Why?*
- *Do we agree or disagree that a facilitator/leader is one of the most important components to whether a smaller group is mediocre or transformational? Why?*
- *What attributes of a leader are most important to us?*
- *What is the quality and quantity of leaders in our church right now?*
- *Where did our current leaders come from?*
- *What led to their health?*
- *How are they currently engaging with our church?*
- *What did we do that helped in the development of those leaders?*
- *What do we hope participants SAY at the end of a leader development initiative?*
- *What do we hope participants DO at the end of a leader development initiative?*
- *What are the best leaders that we could recruit to facilitate groups where leadership can be caught instead of taught.*
- *What is the structure of your environment for leader development? How long will the initiative last, and how frequently will you meet?*
- *What is the content structure that is conducive for guiding people on the journey of processing their views of God and themselves? (books, studies, teachings, questions, etc.)*
- *How do we attract leaders into this development process?*
- *How do we develop and support leaders who will invest in developing leaders?*