

Introduction to “Starting a Ministry Team”

This manual serves as a resource not only for starting a ministry team, but also as a guide for current ministry teams at St. Matthew Lutheran Church. It will be helpful for evaluation in future years as ministry teams continue to be the way in which we grow our mission and ministry.

At St. Matthew we are structured to have a Congregation Board, made up of 4 Officers, and 5 “at large” members. Each of the “at large” members is assigned to one of the 5 purposes of the church of evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry. These Board members are referred to as “Board Champions.” Board Champions have a passion for a particular purpose, and their role is to network with all the ministry teams assigned to that particular purpose. They are not “liaisons” that need to attend every ministry team meeting, but they are to keep their ears tuned to what’s happening in those ministry teams. In addition, each Program Staff member is also assigned to a purpose, which we refer to as the Staff Resource Person. Their responsibilities are similar to the Board Champion.

The Congregation Board has 5 “Standing” Committees: Personnel, Stewardship, Long Range Planning, Finance, and Leadership Development. Each of the Committees has a Board Liaison who regularly attends the meeting, and a staff person assigned to each of the committees. The Committees do the maintenance work of the Board. The Board may choose to designate a “Task Force” to do specific work, for instance, when a particular issue needs more attention than the Board can give during a regular meeting, a Task Force may research an issue to report back to the Board.

Committees differ from Ministry Teams. Committees are not Ministry Teams, and vice versa. Committees are structured around doing the maintenance work of the Board to keep things running smoothly.

At St. Matthew we limit ourselves to only 5 committees, but are structured to have unlimited Ministry Teams.

**Committees are not
Ministry Teams,
and vice versa.**

In Bill Easum’s important book, “Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Ministry Anytime Anywhere by Anyone,” he writes:

“Ministry Teams are self-organizing intraprisms within the Body of Christ. They are formed around several assumptions. (1) People closest to the ministry know what is best for that ministry. (2) Most laity want to “own” their ministry and be free to contribute to its effectiveness. (3) Teamwork develops people better than individual roles or offices.”¹

¹ “Sacred Cows”, page 119

In addition, Ministry Teams have the following characteristics:

- Ministry Teams have affinity either for each other or the ministry.
- Ministry Team members are competent in what they want to accomplish.
- Ministry Teams understand and support the church's corporate culture.
- Ministry Team meetings are a top priority on each person's calendar.
- Ministry Teams have a single issue to work on, which gives them a built in agenda even before they meet.
- Ministry Teams are not launched in a vacuum with little or no training or support.
- Ministry Teams require team players.
- Ministry Teams are autonomous as long as they stay within the boundaries of the Mission, Vision, and Value Statements of the congregation.²

Ministry Teams consist of people wanting to do specific tasks in a team setting. At St. Matthew we have several core convictions that help us organize our permission giving culture around ministry teams:

- In a permission giving culture, doing ministry is more important than controlling who does ministry.
- Ministry is more important than maintenance.
- Those who are doing ministry should be able to make the decisions about the ministry.

Jesus was clear about God's Vision.

When Jesus started his ministry, he was clear about God's vision and direction for what he needed to do. In Luke 4, before Jesus had called any of his disciples, he said to people that he was teaching, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns also, because that is what God sent me to do.

Jesus was very clear about the vision and direction of his life. He must preach the Good News because that's what how God created him, and that's what God called him to do.

In order to accomplish that vision and direction for his life, Jesus formed ministry teams. He did so because when you form a team, you involve more people, and the result is that you get more resources, ideas, creativity, and energy.

When you form a team, you maximize your potential and strength, and you minimize your weakness and limits.

Ministry teams were how Jesus did ministry.

In order to accomplish God's Vision, Jesus formed Ministry Teams.

In a sermon on the *Leadership Vision of Jesus*, Pastor Burtness laid out how Jesus formed ministry teams in order to do ministry.

² "Sacred Cows," page 121-122.

Jesus formed a Leadership Team, a Core Ministry Team, and a Missions Team.

Jesus surrounded himself a Leadership Team (Peter, James, and John), a Core Ministry Team (the 12 disciples) and a Missions Team (of 70 that he sent out to “get the job done”).

The three characteristics of the teams that Jesus formed were: a unity of vision, a diversity of gifts, and full participation in the outcome.

And, Jesus gave his team the authority of his name, the power of his presence, and his life as an example. Jesus gave his ministry teams the Leadership Insight that servant leaders multiply their leadership by empowering others to lead.

This manual will assist you in starting a ministry team. It identifies twelve questions to ask when putting together a ministry team, and will guide the process by which you identify a Leadership Team to guide your ministry team. This manual relies heavily on two resources. First, Doug Slaybaugh and Dan Holden’s “12 Planning Questions for Defining Your New Ministry,” © 1997., and second, Bill Easum’s “Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Ministry Anytime Anywhere by Anyone.”

The four page “12 Questions for Starting a Ministry Team” is explained in the following section, which serves as a working guide to the 12 Questions, which is the core of this resource guide.

Starting a Ministry Team Worksheet

In order to utilize Jesus' methods for starting a ministry team, think of these things before setting up your ministry team:

Who is your Leadership Team? (like Peter, James, and John)

Who is your Core Ministry Team? (like the 12 disciples)

Who is your Missions Team? (like the 70 that he sent out to "get the job done").

How does your ministry team reflect the teams of Jesus, having a:

unity of vision,

a diversity of gifts,

and full participation in the outcome.

How does your leadership on your ministry team give them:

the authority of your name (to speak for you),

the power of your presence (to act for you),

and your life as an example (to support the integrity of your leadership).

Finally, how does your ministry follow Jesus' Leadership Insight that servant leaders multiply their leadership by empowering others to lead? How are you mentoring new leadership on your ministry team?

A Guide to “12 Questions for Starting a Ministry Team”

In working through the “12 Questions for Starting a Ministry Team” it’s important to remember that a foundational commitment of St. Matthew is that we see our members and friends as a sacred trust that God has given us in order to help them discover their gifts for ministry, and then provide opportunities for that ministry to come to fruition.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, “...there are a variety of services, but the same Lord...Now you are the Body of Christ, and individually members of it.” And in Ephesians 4:11-13 he writes, “The gifts he 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, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”

**...to equip the saints
for the work of
ministry....**

These key verses tell us of a variety of services, the diversity of gifts, the importance of equipping, and the goal of spiritual maturity.

In order to do that, we organize our Ministry Teams around twelve questions:

1. What is the purpose of our ministry team?
2. Whom do we intend to serve?
3. What are the needs we are meeting with our ministry team?
4. How do we provide ministry services?
5. Who will lead our ministry team?
6. What kind of ministry team is required?
7. What kind of ministry training is needed?
8. What kind of support is needed for our ministry team?
9. How will our ministry team communicate?
10. How will we receive feedback for evaluation?
11. How will the team be shepherded?
12. What is our vision for growth?

These 12 Questions can be broken down into three categories:

1

2

3

| FOUNDATION | LEADERSHIP | CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT |
|--|--|--|
| <p><u>Question</u> 1. Purpose 2. Target 3. Needs 4. How</p> | <p><u>Question</u> 5. Leadership 6. Team 7. Training</p> | <p><u>Question</u> 8. Support 9. Communication 10. Evaluation 11. Spiritual 12. Growth</p> |

A Ministry Team grows out of a ministry need, and is led by a Ministry Team Leader in coordination with the Board Champion and the Staff Resource Person. These three people make up the “Leadership Team” of each Ministry Team. Communication may only be through email or brief phone messages, or it may be meeting to vision, plan, and coordinate. Beyond that, the “Core Ministry Team” consists of as many people as it needs to get the “job” done. If it takes more people, a “Missions Team” can be deployed. For instance, the SCAT ministry team depends on a large delivery system for Christmas boxes, which involved many people in a one-time ministry.

In most cases, the “Core Ministry Team” is simply referred to as the “Ministry Team.”

Since Ministry Teams grow out of a specific ministry need, we have several convictions:

- We don’t start a Ministry Team without a Ministry Team Leader.
- Those doing the ministry should make the decisions about the ministry.
- We don’t “raise funds” outside the budget for special ministries.
- Each ministry must be theologically sound, and in line with the mission, vision, and values of the congregation.
- Since Ministry Team Leaders play such an important role in the congregations overall ministry, a standard background check is done before the ministry team begins to function.

FOUNDATION

Question

1. Purpose
2. Target
3. Needs
4. How

The Foundation Stage identifies important questions that provide the groundwork for all the other questions.

Question # 1: What is our purpose?

This question begins with asking each Ministry Team to identify a mission statement. A resource for this is included as an addendum to this planning guide. An example of a good mission statement comes from our Children's Ministry Team: *To Empower and Equip Families to Walk with Christ!*

This question directs us to ask:

- What is God calling us to do?
- What is God blessing?
- What will happen if we don't respond to God's call?

Since St. Matthew is organized around God's 5 purposes of the church, each ministry team is asked to identify their primary purpose, and their secondary purpose. Part of this is done for administrative reasons so that we can "assign" each ministry team with a Board Champion and Staff Resource Person for guidance and support. But it's also because each ministry team has a primary focus that it intends to fulfill.

Question # 2: Whom do we intend to serve?

The second question identifies the target audience of the ministry team. A ministry team is stronger in vision and direction if it identifies a specific target, rather than targeting all 5 groups.

Jesus used a targeted approach when he sent out his disciples with the following instructions: "Do not go along the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5-6)

The clearer the focus on a target, the more the Ministry Leadership Team can concentrate their efforts on accomplishing the goals of the ministry team. Identify the primary target, and the secondary target.

As the focus becomes clear, the effort becomes more concentrated.

Question # 3: What are the needs we are meeting with our ministry team?

This question helps a ministry team be specific in responding to needs. Are the needs primarily spiritual, physical, emotional, or intellectual? Will the ministry team provide meals for the homeless, or will it develop internet teaching tools? This is generally an easy question that flows out of the mission statement for the ministry team.

Question # 4: How do we provide ministry services?

This question addresses the strategy question of how ministry services are provided. It begins the process of building a step-by-step process for taking the vision to reality. It may require an additional page for a ministry plan, but it begins with identifying a path by which the ministry is guided.

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| LEADERSHIP |
| <u>Question</u> 5. Leadership 6. Team 7. Training |

In the Leadership Stage we see the importance of the Leadership Team that gives vision and direction to the ministry team.

Question # 5: Who will lead our ministry team?

Not every person is qualified to be a ministry team leader. It is our hope that each ministry team leader will have completed our 201 and 301 classes, and will lead the ministry team from a position of spiritual maturity and giftedness. In addition, an entrepreneurial leadership style might be very helpful in starting a ministry team, but perhaps not in ongoing or sustaining leadership over a long period.

The Staff Resource Person and Board Champion will be very helpful in identifying leadership qualities and skills.

Additionally, each ministry team leader should identify ways in which a co-leader is mentored in order to provide on-going leadership training and development. Finally, each ministry team should always be looking for training for new ministry team members and leaders. St. Matthew's Leadership Development Committee will provide resources for this kind of mentoring and training.

Question # 6: What kind of ministry team is required?

The dream of a ministry team is placed in someone's heart long before a ministry team is brought together to develop that dream. Many ministry teams begin their germination after a conversation with a pastor or leader in the church. In a permission giving culture, it's important to develop a ministry team to be fluid and agile, rather than getting bogged down and buried.

In coordination with the Staff Resource Person and the Board Champion, the ministry team leader can identify the kinds of roles and responsibilities are needed to fill the ministry team. A ministry team might be very small and agile, but might include a great number of people in who they reach with their ministry team, for instance, a Singles Ministry Team might be led by a small team to organize events that bring in a lot of people. This question addresses the minimum and maximum numbers of people needed on the ministry team.

It's important to define the categories of people that are needed on a ministry team. Skills in leadership, shepherding, administrating, communicating, promoting, training, orienting, and fellowship and spiritual growth should be a part of each ministry team. A ministry team leader can't assume all of those responsibilities, but can be sure that each one is addressed in the ministry team.

Question # 7: What kind of training is needed?

This question answers the question of training. There might be internal training, or on-the-job training, or classes that are directed toward the ministry team. The Leadership

Development Committee will offer SALT (St. Matthew Advanced Leadership Training) classes several times each year, along with Ministry Summits which help in training.

| Continuous Improvement |
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| <u>Question</u> 8. Support 9. Communication 10. Evaluation 11. Spiritual 12. Growth |

Ministry Teams always need to be aware of ways in which they can be supported and improved.

Question # 8: What kind of support is needed for our ministry team?

This question is an important “functional” question to address in terms of rooms or space in the church that is needed, or computer access, or mailboxes for the ministry team. This requires coordination, since our building is used almost to its capacity on a regular basis.

One of the commitments of starting a ministry team is that we don’t “raise funds” outside the budget for special ministries. If there are budget implications in starting a new ministry team, this needs to be coordinated with, and approved by the Staff Resource Person and Board Champion. If it is an addition to the budget, it needs approval by the Congregation Board.

Board approval for starting a ministry team is not required; though starting a ministry team requires coordination with the Staff Resource Person and Board Champion. A new ministry team may be “commissioned” at a Sunday morning worship service, where there is a description of the ministry team, the names of those involved, and the mission statement of what drives the ministry team. If there are “Ministry Team Action Items” that need Board approval, they can be brought by the Board Champion to a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Question # 9: How will our ministry team communicate?

Communication always takes more time than we think, but it is very important.

Each ministry team should determine how they would communicate with one another and with staff and Board leadership. Ministry Summits and SALT will be another form of coordination and communication. The weekly Parish News and Messenger are ways to communicate with the congregation. And “In Touch” on our web site is a very good way to keep communication open and flowing.

Question # 10: How will we receive feedback for evaluation?

Part of continuous improvement is regular feedback. Each ministry team should determine a methodology for receiving feedback. The ministry team’s mission statement (and the four page “12 Questions”) is an important reference in evaluating the effectiveness of the ministry team.

The Ministry Team Leader should consult at least annually with the Board Champion and Staff Resource Person to evaluate how well the ministry team is strategically meeting the needs of the target ministry group.

Question # 11: How will the team be shepherded?

This question answers the care question for the ministry team. How will the team care for one another?

Remember that part of the responsibility of a ministry team leader is to give the ministry team the authority of your name, the power of your presence, and your life as an example. How does the leader ensure the spiritual growth and health of the team? How will prayer under gird the entire ministry team?

Question # 12: What is our vision for growth?

This question helps the ministry team plan for the future. If it’s true that each ministry team began with the dream that God has placed in someone’s heart, what is that dream? What will the ministry look like 2 years from now, and what specific steps can be taken to accomplish that goal? How will the ministry be grown?

Because of our commitment to continuous improvement, these visions for growth will be revisited on an annual basis so that we can ensure growth in ministry.

12 Questions for Starting a Ministry Team³

1. What is the purpose of our ministry team?

In less than 20 words, what is our Ministry Team's mission statement?⁴

Which of the five purposes⁵ does our ministry team fulfill?

- Evangelism: To Communicate God's Word
- Worship: To Celebrate God's presence
- Fellowship: To Incorporate God's family
- Discipleship: To Educate God's people
- Ministry: To Demonstrate God's love

Primary Purpose:

Secondary Purpose:

2. Whom do we intend to serve?

What is our target audience? Of the Five Circles of Commitment⁶, which group will our ministry team serve most?

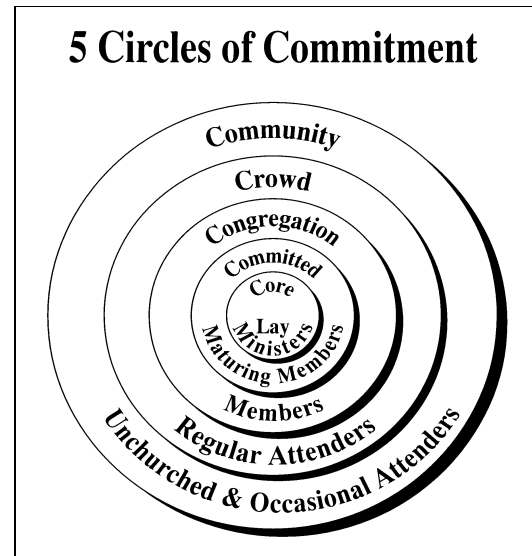
³ This Planning Guide is based on Doug Slaybaugh and Don Holden's "12 Planning Questions For Defining Your New Ministry." © 1997 Permission granted to use at St. Matthew.

⁴ For help with your Ministry Team's Mission Statement, refer to the guide that is provided.

⁵ The Five Ministry Purposes were developed by Rick Warren. More information can be seen at www.pastors.com and www.saddleback.com

⁶ These Five Circles of Commitment were developed by Rick Warren.

- ❑ Community (occasional attenders at Christmas and Easter)
- ❑ Crowd (weekend attenders)
- ❑ Congregation (those committed to membership)
- ❑ Committed (those committed to maturity)
- ❑ Core (those committed to ministry)



Primary Target:

Secondary Target:

3. What are the needs we are meeting with our ministry team?

What kinds of needs are there in the target group that we wish to serve?

Spiritual needs?

Physical needs?

Emotional needs?

Intellectual needs?

Relational needs?

Which need is the primary focus of our ministry team?

4. How do we provide ministry services?

What is our ministry strategy?

What is our step-by-step process for taking our vision for our ministry team and making it into a reality?

5. Who will lead our ministry team?

These are the leadership qualities and skills that will be required of our ministry team leader:

This is the way that we will mentor a co-leader in our ministry team:

This is the way that we will identify ways in which we assimilate new ministry team leaders:

6. What kind of ministry team is required?

After identifying a ministry team leader, and consultation with the staff resource person and Board champion, what kinds of other roles and responsibilities are needed to fill our ministry team?

What is the minimum and maximum numbers of people we need on our ministry team?

7. What kind of ministry training is needed?

What kind of training will you offer for team members?

How and when will this training be offered?

8. What kind of support is needed for our ministry team?

What kind of support is needed from the church office?

Are there budget implications, and have the staff resource person and the Board champion approved this?

9. How will our ministry team communicate?

- With one another?
- With our leadership?
- With St. Matthew's Ministry Summit?
- With the general congregation
- With our ministry target constituents?

10. How will we receive feedback for evaluation?

How will we receive feedback from:

Those we serve?

The staff resource person and Board champion?

The ministry team?

Will the feedback be received monthly? Quarterly? Annually?

11. How will the team be shepherded?

How do we ensure the spiritual growth and health of our team? How will prayer, devotions, and fellowship be a part of our ministry team?

12. What is our vision for growth?

What will our ministry team look like 2 years from now?

How will we grow our ministry?

New groups?

New ministries?

New activities?

Addendum # 1

Writing a Mission Statement for your Ministry Team

Writing a mission statement is the key to starting a ministry team. It adds clarity and vision, and gives direction and focus for what you are called to accomplish. A mission statement creates energy, and captures and maximizes the effectiveness of what you are doing.

Here are some benefits of a good mission statement:

- It clarifies your focus on what you do and why you do it
- It fosters a sense of unity, because you're all going in the same direction.
- It enhances creativity.
- It streamlines your effort and energy because you know what you're doing.
- It simplifies decision-making.
- It bolsters team spirit.

Some characteristics of a good mission statement are:

- It's short and to the point (no more than 20 words).
- It is easy to understand and memorize.
- It is printed and referred to often.
- It reflects the passion of the ministry team.

Seven tests of a great mission statement:

- The Bible affirms it.
- The budget supports it.
- The staff and Board reflect it.
- The ministry team matches it.
- The congregation lives up to it.
- The pastors and leadership stick to it.
- It aligns with the Long Range Vision.

Remember to use action words that reflect what you're called to do, and a target that reflects who you're called to serve.

St. Matthew's Mission Statement:

***Invite others to hear the Gospel
and together
grow as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.***