

Basic Training for Church Planters - Overview

Basic Training for Church Planters will cover 15 units in an intensive time of study. The study normally takes place in a three or four day format with fellow church planters, their spouses, and other team members if available. There are some other schedules available.

Each unit has three parts: church planting concepts, spiritual transformation and skills to learn. The fifteen units are listed and summarized below.

UNIT ONE: Foundations for Church Planting

Basic Training defines two foundational concepts, the kingdom of God and the church, and details their significance to church planting. The church planter will learn to minister in light of these foundations.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will identify key foundational issues in church planting.

UNIT TWO: Priority of Prayer for Church Planting

Prayer is primary in planting a new church. God is building His church, communicating with the church planting team through the prayer link.

Basic Training details the church planter's prayer life – personally, with spouse and with family. The church planter/team will select a prayer partner and build an intercessory prayer team. The church planter/team also will strategize to develop a praying church.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will start an intercessory prayer team, including a team member list, an invitational piece, a covenant agreement and an ongoing communications plan.

UNIT THREE: Vision

Basic Training defines the concept of a Bible-based vision, with examples to clarify vision and its application to leadership and the church.

The church planter/team will examine common characteristics of a vision statement. Study activities will probe the impact of vision on a church plant, and factors hindering vision.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will develop a clearly written vision statement for the new church.

UNIT FOUR: Core Values

This unit helps the church planter/team define core values that become the DNA of the growing church.

The church planter/team will determine what core values are significant for their new church and write a first draft of these values. All the Basic Training participants will help the team evaluate their core values and measure them by the Bible.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will formulate three to seven core values for the new church.

UNIT FIVE: Understanding Culture and Ministry Focus Group

The church planter/team must develop an accurate grasp of the community's culture and determine what people group to reach.

This unit provides principles and tools for the church planter/team to explore the community in which the new church is started. This process will enable the church planter/team to develop an accurate summary of the culture and people group to be reached. This summary will allow the team to choose appropriate ministry opportunities.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will use demographics and lifestyle studies to develop a community silhouette. They will then develop a "Saddleback-Sam" model for the people group on which to focus.

UNIT SIX: Mission Statement

A mission statement answers the question, "According to the Bible, what should we be doing?" This unit stresses the importance and content of a good mission statement.

The church planter/team will learn the benefit of a focused mission statement and formulate the new church's unique mission. Learning activities will guide the team to develop a mission statement and test it for clarity.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will write and evaluate their mission statement for the new church.

UNIT SEVEN: Building Relationships

Church planting rises or falls on relationships. *“The Bible is first and foremost a book about relationships,”* says Henry Blackaby. This unit stresses the importance of making Jesus the starting point for all relationships.

The church planter/team will examine the different persons and partnerships they expect to connect with. They will detail the various relationships the church planter must develop in order to see a church grow.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will

- write a covenant agreement with his mentor.
- recruit a potential church planting team and define their roles.
- identify partnerships needed for a successful new church start.

UNIT EIGHT: Evangelism – People Strategies

This unit examines ten evangelism assumptions influencing the church planter/team and the new church. These assumptions for impacting people with the gospel enable the team to accomplish their vision and mission statement.

The planter/team will develop a strategy, enabling the new church to reach unsaved and unchurched people.

Learning Outcome: The team will

- develop an evangelism strategy to penetrate the new community, using such models as servant evangelism and friendship evangelism.
- identify lost people to pray for and witness to.

UNIT NINE: Developing a Core Group

A core group is the new church in embryo, a distinct collection of persons drawn by God into His vision for a new church. This unit addresses the question, “How do we gather a core group?”

The church planter/team will study core group formation and its significance to the public launch of the new church. They will formulate the guiding principles for a healthy core group.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will list potential core group members and assess the level of commitment of each member.

UNIT TEN: Leadership Development

This unit examines the discipling process that helps a Christian grow from infancy to effective ministry. The unit also gives leadership models in areas of evangelism, follow-up, discipling and mentoring.

The church planter/team will develop a strategy to mature newborn Christians, in order to develop capable kingdom workers.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will accept the role as leadership trainers and set a strategy for discovering and developing leaders in the new church.

UNIT ELEVEN: Worship Celebration

This unit expands on two dimensions of authentic worship: believers worshipping in spirit and truth, and nonbelievers seeking to become true worshippers. Elements of worship, effective worship formats, and evaluating criteria are examined.

The church planter/team will consider worship principles and style suitable to the focus group they seek to reach

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will define the style of worship complimenting their vision, values, mission and ministry focus group.

UNIT TWELVE: Small Groups

Small groups close the church's 'backdoor', enabling the new congregation to retain and involve Christians. This unit probes small group dynamics and will consider the small group model that best fits the new church.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will choose a small group structure to use in the new church start.

UNIT THIRTEEN: The Master Plan

This unit provides an organizational system to effectively keep and involve persons coming into the congregation. It includes a snapshot of the church at a given point in time, and explores the implications of the system on the future growth of the church.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will design a church system, showing the inter-relationship of different aspects of the church.

UNIT FOURTEEN: Administrative, Financial and Legal Issues for the New Church

This unit gives the “nuts and bolts” details of planting a church in Louisiana. The issues include financial management, postal requirements, insurance, tax policies and incorporation. This is a critical, often-neglected component of church planting.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will identify key administrative issues to be considered in starting a new church.

UNIT FIFTEEN: Mileposts

This unit helps the church planter/team list “mileposts” (progress indicators) as the church develops. The mileposts will stretch into the future 12 to 18 months from the basic training date.

The church planter/team will brainstorm the mileposts they deem necessary to launch the new church.

Learning Outcome: The church planter/team will plot the new church’s development using a strategic planning process called Mileposts.

GLOSSARY:

Basic Training uses a distinct vocabulary. The glossary below defines some of the terms used more frequently.

Church Plant: *the birth of a brand new congregation in a specific place, primarily comprised of persons presently unconnected to an existing church*

Church Planting Team: *a group of leaders who come together to start a new congregation. The team may be made up of a variety of combinations of vocational and volunteer ministers.*

Core Group: *the small group that forms the nucleus of the new congregation, that believes in and supports the vision of the new church.*

Core Value: *an essential principle and/or conviction on which the church will be formed; a key conviction of the leaders and the new congregation*

Demographics: *the statistical study of a community, leading to an understanding of the culture – who are these people, and why do they act like they do?*

Discipling: *the intentional process of assisting a new Christian to become more and more like Jesus Christ*

Launch/public launch: *the time when a new church has full visibility in the community, enabling persons to participate in worship, study and ministry activities*

Lead Church Planter: *the person called by God to give leadership to forming the church plant*

Master Plan: *the connecting system of ministries that enables a church to function effectively (eg. a flow chart)*

Milepost: *a goal or event the new church must accomplish in order to start and grow (eg: secured a location for public worship)*

Ministry Focus Group: *a people group, community or segment of a community the new church will concentrate on, seeking to bring them to Jesus*

Mission Statement: *a brief biblical statement of what the new church is to be doing to fulfill God's mandate (the Great Commission and the Great Commandment) in its setting for the next few years.*

Partnerships: *the persons and groups that assist the new church in starting and becoming self-sufficient; includes Christians and churches, as well as non-Christians*

Pre-Launch: *the momentum-building stage of a new church, before the general public is invited to worship, study and minister with the congregation*

Vision Statement: *a clear and challenging picture of the future derived from God that the leadership believes can and must be.*

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