

LEADER GUIDE FOR

**Leadership That Fits Your Church:
What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Congregation**

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U.S. Congregations
www.USCongregations.org

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Leadership That Fits Your Church Leader Guide

To accompany *Leadership That Fits Your Church: What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Church* by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce (Chalice Press, © 2012)

Preface: Using the Leader Guide

Welcome to the Leader’s Guide for *Leadership That Fits Your Church: What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Church*, by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce (Chalice Press, 2012). The purpose of this guide is to help your congregation unpack the wealth of learning contained in *Leadership That Fits Your Church* and determine how to best use that information to enhance your effectiveness as a church. All of us involved in congregational life, whether as lay leaders or clergy, know that “even a strong pastorate is not enough if it is not coupled with a strong lay leadership.”¹ This quote, noted in the final chapter of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*, sums up the central idea for the book. Congregational vitality depends on its ability to foster strong lay and pastoral leadership that match the church’s culture, mission, and ministry.

By using this guide, your congregation will be able to:

- process the information contained in *Leadership That Fits Your Church: What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Church* in a way that is useful for your congregation;
- gain new insights into pastor-congregation dynamics;
- understand where some tweaks might be needed to improve or fix issues in this crucial relationship; and
- learn to care for each other in fresh ways.

The material in this study guide is

- organized into six, ninety-minute sessions;
- filled with interactive exercises and discussion questions for small groups; and
- set up so that each session builds on the previous sessions. Participants should be present at all sessions to get the most out of the experience.

Although the study guide presents the material in a six-week, small-group format, you can adapt it to whatever format is most helpful to your congregation. You could use it for a weekend leadership retreat, in a pastoral search or clergy relations committee, as an entire congregational self-study, and much more. The important thing is to look the guide over before using it and decide what method will work best for your congregation and its needs.

The study leader and all participants will benefit the most from the guide if they read the book. The leader may wish to assign the suggested chapter readings listed in the homework section of each session. At a minimum, the study leader should read the entire book and be prepared to answer questions and provide relevant chapter summaries.

¹ Penny Edgell Becker, *Congregations in Conflict: Cultural Models of Local Religious Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 225.

Should the pastor participate? The guide is designed for diverse settings—congregations currently without a pastor whose members are engaged in a pastoral search process, congregations with an interim minister, or congregations with a full-time or part-time pastor currently serving the church. Depending on the circumstances, the current pastor or interim pastor can, but is by no means required, be a full participant in all sessions. The study process is **not** designed as a pastoral performance evaluation. Readers interested in evaluation processes should consult the additional resources listed on pages 159–60 of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*.

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Introduction: Big Shoes

Ah, big shoes indeed. The pastor's role has never been easy, but it is even more daunting in this time of changing economics, demographics, and expectations. Likewise, it's never been more difficult (well, not since the days of the martyrs) to be a congregational leader. Finding just the right fit between pastor and congregation is one of the prime challenges facing churches today.

It's an age-old challenge. When I was leaving a pastorate a few years back, one of my congregation members sent me a list of biblical characters who had supposedly interviewed for the open pastoral position. Here are some of the search committee's notes on them:

- Adam: Good man but one reference told of how he and his wife enjoy walking nude in the woods.
- Noah: Former pastorate of 120 years with not even one convert. Prone to unrealistic building projects.
- Joseph: A big thinker but a braggart. He also believes in dream interpreting and has a prison record.
- Elijah: Prone to depression. Collapses under pressure.
- Timothy: Too young!
- Methuselah: Too old . . . WAY too old!
- Jesus: Has had popular times. But one time his church grew to five thousand and he managed to offend them all. Then the congregation dwindled to twelve people. Seldom stays in one place very long. And he's single.

Not one of these heroes of Scripture made the cut. Well, except for one. Judas: His references are solid. A steady plodder. Good connections. Knows how to handle money. We're inviting him to preach this Sunday. Possibilities here.

Maybe you've seen the list above. But what you probably haven't seen are one pastor's comments on some prospective lay leaders for the church's governing board.

- Job: Has had a rough life of late, but is constantly whining to the pastoral care committee about it.
- Thomas: Talk about negative. He doubts everything.
- Ananias and Sapphira: Successful realtors, but very, very stingy.
- Eutychus: Young, but tends to fall asleep during the sermon.
- Stephen: Zealous, but has a martyr complex.
- Bathsheba: Comes from a good family, father is a high-ranking political advisor, and husband is a leading military officer. Her connections could benefit the church.

Well, of course, the above is all very much tongue in cheek.

This study guide will help congregational leaders explore your congregation's connection with your pastor. Building on the insights in *Leadership That Fits Your Church: What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Church*, the guide and exercises provide a framework for understanding how to make the most of this important relationship. To that end, several assumptions guide this study:

- The connection between pastoral leadership and lay leadership is key, but it is often neglected until there are problems or some event prompts the need for pastoral change.
- What works for other congregations and their pastors may provide a church with new tools for strengthening and deepening the relationship between pastor and people.
- Talking about this relationship, though it may be difficult at times, will make a congregation stronger, more vital, and higher functioning.

I come to those conclusions based on the many years I've spent as a pastor, as a congregational consultant, and as a member of a number of congregations. In all those roles I have witnessed just how important the match between pastor and congregation are to long-term congregational vitality and pastoral satisfaction. This study provides an opportunity to explore that relationship more deeply through the lens of the information presented in *Leadership That Fits Your Church*. It's a lens that can help your congregation, and this crucial relationship, to flourish and thrive. When you have finished, it is my hope that both your clergy and lay leaders will be able to easily fill both pairs—clergy and lay leaders—of those big shoes.



OF ALL LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES,
THE ONE VALUED MOST AT ST. JUDE'S
WAS RAW PHYSICAL STRENGTH

Session 1—If the Pastor/Congregation Fits

Introduction

Every congregation is looking for the ideal pastor. Every pastor is looking for the ideal congregation. While neither exists in reality, there has been at least an attempt made to describe the ideal pastor. The ideal pastor:

- is 29 years old
- has 30+ years of experience
- loves the older folks of the church, visiting them regularly
- spends all of his/her time with the young people of the church
- is always available to anyone who drops by for a friendly conversation
- gives all her/his attention to the ill and shut-in
- is always in the church office when you need to find him/her
- is always at the hospital seeking to comfort the sick and afflicted
- never misses any church activity

and on and on.

Hmmm, I wonder how a prospective pastor would describe her or his ideal congregation. My guess is the list would be just as unrealistic.

And how might a pastor describe the ideal church member? The member:

- is 29 years old
- has degrees in law, accounting, business, personnel management, and vocal performance
- has a high-paying career and pledges 25 percent of income to the congregation
- sings in the choir, but has no need to solo
- respects the pastor's knowledge and never questions the pastor's wisdom
- pays attention during sermons and laughs at the right places, nods sagely at the right places, and goes home remembering all three points and applies them during the week
- gives all her/his attention to the elderly, ill, and shut-in
- never needs a pastoral call for sickness, spiritual counseling, or personal problems
- always says yes to serving on committees when asked
- never misses any church activity

and on and on.

What a wonderful congregational world that would be if the ideal pastor and ideal church member could ever get together. Since that probably won't happen, this first session will help your congregation understand the keys to making the match between pastor and congregation as ideal as it can be.

Exercise 1.1—Welcome and Getting Acquainted Exercise: Spiritual Interviews (45 minutes)

Even though many of us attend a congregation for a number of years, go to Sunday school, and sit on committees, there's still a very good chance that we don't really know (or have forgotten) each other's spiritual stories. The following exercise is both an introduction (or reintroduction) to each other and a way to gather people's feelings and thoughts about pastoral strengths and things that attract people to your congregation.

Distribute copies of the "Spiritual Interviews" page in the appendices and a pen or pencil to each participant. Then give them these directions:

Pair off with another person, preferably someone you don't know very well. One of you will do the first interview; the other the second. Each interviewer will have fifteen minutes to ask the three questions below to the other person. Time will be called after fifteen minutes and the roles will be reversed. Please stick to the three questions. You may ask clarifying questions or questions that will help you flesh out the respondent's answers. Please try to refrain from expressing your opinion as you listen. Your task is to listen carefully and really hear the other person's spiritual story.

If there are an odd number of people in your group, you should take part in an interview. However, if there is already an even number of people, feel free to provide your answers when you are recording everyone's answers at the end of the activity. If you are involved in an interview, make sure that you are still paying attention to time management. Give the group five minutes to find partners. Then begin. When there is two minutes left in the first interview, give the group a heads up that they have two minutes remaining and need to wrap up. At the end of fifteen minutes, call time. Have the group start the second interviews. Again, let them know when there's two minutes left in the interview and call time at the end of fifteen minutes.

Bring the group back together and review what they discovered from the interviews. Set up an easel with chart paper and prepare to record some of the answers. You'll only have fifteen minutes for this part of the exercise so you'll need to keep track of time.

First ask the participants what it was like to interview each other. How did it feel to hear another's spiritual story? Then ask the participants to share the responses that they got to the three questions. Record the answers on separate pieces of paper for each question.

- What brought you to this congregation?
- What is the main strength of the pastor that you remember most (don't name the pastor)?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge facing our congregation today?

Hang the sheets with the answers on the wall where everyone can see them.

Review the sheets and ask, What common themes emerge from each question? You'll want to especially focus on the question, What is the main strength of the pastor that you remember most?

Exercise 1.2—Why Effective Congregational Leadership Is More Difficult Than Ever (30 minutes)

As the group leader you'll want to do a bit of study regarding the findings from "Why Effective Congregational Leadership is More Difficult Than Ever" in *Leadership That Fits Your Church* (pages 2–6). You may want to make a copy of the "Why Effective Congregational Leadership is More Difficult Than Ever" page from the appendices and make additional notes for yourself on it. There's quite a bit of information in that section of the book, so don't try to cover it in depth with participants. Instead, distribute a copy of the "Why Effective Congregational Leadership is More Difficult Than Ever" page to each of the participants and give some summary information regarding each point.

After going through the items on the sheet, invite all the participants to read their sheet quietly and put a check mark to the left of each item that, in their opinion, is true for their congregation. Then ask them to put a plus or minus to the right of each of the items indicating whether it has (again, in their opinion) had an impact on the congregation positively or negatively.

While they are doing the worksheet, post a large copy of “Why Effective Congregational Leadership is More Difficult Than Ever” on an easel or a wall. You can have a poster-sized copy of this made at a local copy store or you can recreate the chart on newsprint.

When the participants are finished marking their own sheets, have them come up and chart their answers on the sheet posted on the wall. Then spend some time answering the following questions:

- 1) Is there agreement around any of the issues?
- 2) Where is there disparity in the answers?
- 3) How might such disparities affect the pastor-parish working relationship?
- 4) Which of these ten will be the congregation’s greatest challenge in the near future?
- 5) How do the answers here compare with the answers from the spiritual interviews?

Homework (10 minutes)

You’ll want to make a copy of the “Franklin Downtown Church” story from the appendices for everyone in the group. Ask them to take the story home with them and spend some time before the next session reading the story and then writing down answers to the questions on the sheet.

Ideally, all participants should be asked to read chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pages 1–36) of *Leadership That Fits Your Church* before the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Spend just a few minutes reflecting on how attendees felt the meeting went. Did they learn anything new? Were there any surprises? Then close with the prayer below or use one of your own choosing.

Gracious God, thank you for the time today to learn about each other’s spiritual journeys. Help us to keep this information in mind as we work our way through this study. Give us patience as we decide on changes that will improve our (current or future) pastor-parish relationship. Amen.



THE REVEREND BOBTM LEADERSHIP FRANCHISE, BACKED BY AGGRESSIVE ADVERTISING AND A "CHURCH GROWTH GUARANTEE"[®], GREW RAPIDLY. WITHIN FIVE YEARS, NEARLY ONE IN FOUR CHURCH LEADERS, NATIONALLY, WAS A "BOB"TM

Session 2—A Rev. Bob Kind of Pastor/A Rev. Bob Kind of Church

Introduction

One great thing about eating at a McDonalds is that you know almost exactly what you're going to get and how it's going to taste. One of the really bad things about eating at a McDonalds is that you know almost exactly what you're going to get and how it's going to taste.

Still, maybe the Reverend Bob Leadership Franchise folks have a good idea; if we could develop a bevy of "Bobs" to send out to congregations, every church would be certain of just what it's getting in a pastor. Certainly that would be better than dealing with the wide variety of people with all their various backgrounds and differing gifts who enter pastoral ministry. Or can we, as congregations, come to see how this very diversity can be a source of strength for our churches? Being aware of the wide variety of people who serve as pastors can help a church find the best leader for their congregation. "The Reverend Bob" may work well for the church down the street, but most of us want a pastor that is uniquely ours.

Pastors, too, may wish that there was a franchised type of church. Oh, we may think we're franchised—United Methodist, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, and so on—but the fact is that there is huge diversity among congregations of the same

denomination. They differ in size, location, economics, level of conflict, facilities, racial composition, and more.

Yes, pastors and congregations are each unique. We need to thank God, literally, for that uniqueness. It can be liberating and empowering. We need to look at our various ministry strengths so that we can build on them and avoid the cookie cutter, generic Reverend Bob approach. Unless you want to have a cookie cutter, generic congregation.

Opening—Homework Review (15 minutes)

Ask everyone to take out their copy of the “Franklin Downtown Church” story and their answers to the two homework questions. Begin with the **second question**. Go around the group and have each person share her or his answer. As the leader, listen for the common themes (you might want to jot them down on your copy of the church story).

Next, ask the participants to list their top ten most desired pastoral traits (**first question** from the homework). Using a flip chart and marker, list the traits that people state. Group similar traits together. Then look at the list—are there seven that rise to the top, as in the story of Franklin Downtown Church?

Now take a look at the “Rev Bob” cartoon that begins this chapter. You can either reproduce a copy for everyone or go to a print shop and have them make a poster-sized version for you to hang somewhere that everyone in the group can see. Ask the group the following questions (go slowly enough that everyone has a chance to answer, if even they choose not to):

- What kind of pastoral traits would “Reverend Bob” have?
- How would those traits match or not match with the ones your congregation desires?

Exercise 2.1—Demographic Profile of Pastors: Mainline Protestant, Conservative Protestant, and Catholic (20 minutes)

Make a copy of the “Demographic Profile of Pastors” sheet from the appendices that is appropriate for your congregation (Catholic, Mainline Protestant, or Conservative Protestant) for each participant. You’ll also want to make a large copy to post and work on.

Now invite the attendees to review the chart together. After reviewing the national survey results in the middle column, record information regarding your pastor in the “Ours” column. If you have more than one pastor, chose the senior/lead pastor. When you’re done going through the list, ask:

- How do we compare in these categories to the national average?
- Which qualities do people think are most important for our congregation?
- What are the implications of the national survey and our findings for our congregation?

Exercise 2.2—Our Size (20 minutes)

Have a poster-sized copy of exercise 2.2, titled “Our Size,” made. Prior to the meeting, you will have to gather statistical information regarding your congregation size ten years ago and today. Mount the poster somewhere that that is easily accessible. Give everyone a marker (all of the same color if possible) and provide them with the instructions that are at the top of exercise 2.2. After every person has had an opportunity to mark his or her answers, insert the correct statistical answers that you have already looked up in a different color. In a third color, mark the researched median numbers (see chart from book below) for your type of congregation in the row of today’s figures.

Figure 3.1. Sizes of U.S. congregations

What are the sizes of U.S. congregations?				
<i>Number of people (median):</i>	All Congregations	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
Associated in any way with the congregation	277	2,322	168	249
Regularly participating in the congregation	130	831	117	120
Adults (over age 18) regularly participating	85	678	70	80
Average worship attendance	95	650	82	90

Once you have finished filling in these numbers, ask:

- Are we growing, stable, or declining in number of participants, members, and worship attendance?
- How do our numbers for today compare to congregations of our type nationally?

- If there are changes between ten years ago and now, what are the reasons for the changes?
- Are there any surprises?
- What can we learn from these numbers?

Exercise 2.3—Our Strengths (20 minutes)

Give everyone a copy of exercise 2.3, titled “Our Strengths.” Have everyone review the ten strengths of vital congregations. Invite them to mark the strengths that the congregation possesses. Write the list on a piece of flip chart paper and see which ones get the most agreement. Discuss why these seemed to rise to the top and why people chose them.

Next, break into groups of three. Ask them to use the blank backside of the “Our Strengths” paper, and provide them with a pen or pencil. Using the top four desired pastoral traits from the homework exercise and top four congregational strengths from this exercise, have them write a personal ad related to “Congregation Seeking Pastor.” An example might be: “Spiritually growing, worshipful congregation is seeking a young, youth-oriented” Invite them to have fun with this.

Homework (10 minutes)

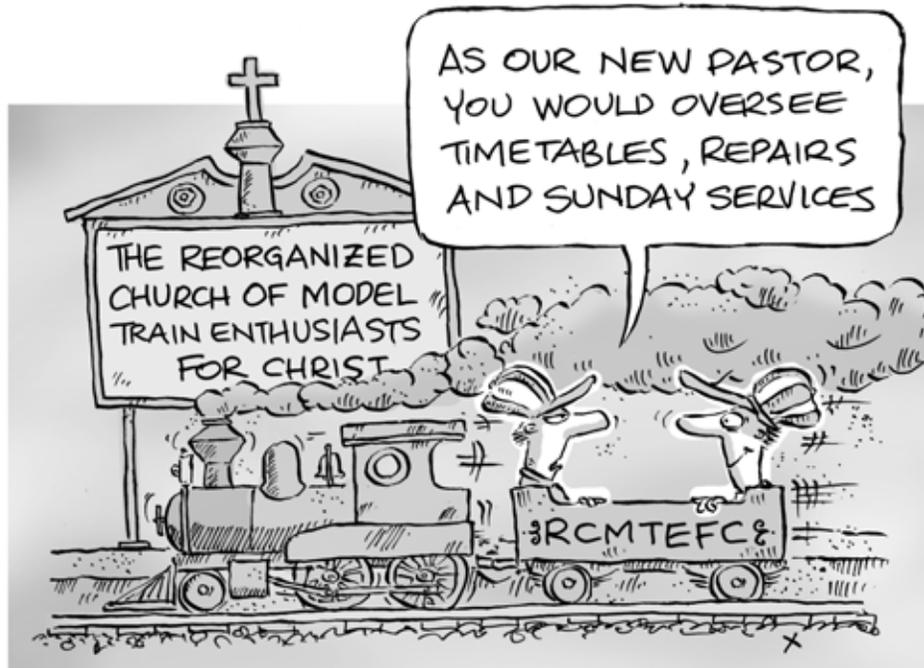
You’ll want to make a copy of the “Pines Community Church” story from the appendices for everyone in the group. Ask them to take the story home and spend some time before the next session reading the story and writing down their answers to the questions provided on the sheet.

Ideally, all participants should be asked to read chapters 4, 5, and 6 (pages 38–74) of *Leadership That Fits Your Church* before the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Spend just a few minutes reflecting on how attendees felt the session went. How will what they’ve discussed be helpful to their understanding of a good pastor-congregation match? Then close with the prayer below or use one of your choosing.

Gracious God, thank you for the unique ministry gifts of all the pastors who have served our congregation. Thank you for the unique ministry strengths of this church today. Help us discern what you are calling our congregation to be and do—at this time and in this place. Amen.



EVEN IN HIS WILDEST DREAMS,
REV. THOMAS HAD NEVER IMAGINED
SUCH A PERFECT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Session 3—I Can't Get No Satisfaction and Well-Being

Introduction

I've known some pastors and congregations who felt that they got railroaded, but not many, like Rev. Thomas above, who wanted to *run* a railroad. For him, this fit is perfect. Such a fit makes for feelings of deep satisfaction and well-being in ministry.

But chances are that being the pastor for The Reorganized Church of Model Train Enthusiasts for Christ won't be everyone's cup of pastoral satisfaction. *Leadership That Fits Your Church* reveals that other things are important to those feelings as well—personal time, adequate compensation, and spending time on core ministry tasks like preaching and worship leadership (instead of administration) gives pastors feelings of satisfaction and well-being in their ministry. Doing what we can to enable such feelings may be more important than we realize. Research shows that when feelings of satisfaction and well-being wane, pastors are more likely to think about leaving the church for another position.

Likewise, pastors who are encouraged to practice self-care activities—participating in a clergy study or support group, spending time with family or friends, or taking some personal time—feel better about their lives and ministry. They are also more content in the congregation that they are currently serving.

Opening—Homework Review (10 minutes)

Ask everyone to take out their copy of the “Pines Community Church” story and their answers to the two homework questions. Using a flip chart to record the group’s responses, ask What information about the congregation would Ted have found helpful? List keywords from their responses on the chart paper. Tear that paper off the chart and post it on a wall or somewhere that everybody can see it.

Next, ask What information, beyond a resume, about Ted would the congregation need? Again, list keywords from the attendee’s responses. Post it next to the list of keywords from the first question.

Now discuss the following.

- How do the two lists compare?
- How can this information help our pastor and congregation to better communicate right now?
- How can it help us communicate our expectations in the future?

Exercise 3.1—Factors of Satisfaction and Well-Being (25 minutes)

Reproduce a copy for each participant of exercise 3.1, titled “Factors of Satisfaction and Well-Being,” from the appendices. You’ll also want to have a poster-sized copy of this made to hang on a flip chart, easel, or wall where everyone can see it. Lead a quick review of the factors that *Leadership That Fits Your Church* says lead to pastoral well-being and satisfaction. (See chapters 4, 5, and 6, pages 38–74.) Next, have the attendees work on their own sheets and place a “C” in the column that best reflects who, in their opinion, has **control** over that item. Then have them place an “I” in the column that best reflects who, in their opinion, has **influence** over that item.

When everyone has finished marking his or her sheet, review their responses. Do this *without* using the poster-sized sheet. Just go down the list and invite the participants to share what they wrote down and why.

Then, using the poster-sized sheet, see if the group can reach a consensus about which of these items a congregation can control. Next, look at the items that the group feels the congregation can influence. Then, using a blank piece of flip chart paper, list one or two actions steps that could be taken for each item. You’ll also want to assign responsibility for these action steps—who should implement them? A person, a committee, or the congregation as a whole?

Exercise 3.2—Design a Pastoral Satisfaction and Care Plan (40 minutes)

Make enough copies of exercise 3.2, titled “Design a Pastoral Satisfaction and Care Plan,” for however many small groups (no fewer than three in a group) you need to break the participants into. You’ll also want to make a poster-sized copy of the chart from the exercise. Divide the attendees into groups of three or more.

Once the groups have gathered, give each group a copy of the exercise. Tell them that their assignment is to spend the next twenty minutes using the sheet to come up with some actions in each category that will help facilitate self-care for your (current or future) pastor. Each group will need to appoint a recorder to note the group's ideas.

Give the groups twenty minutes and then call time. Bring the groups back together into one large group and then ask each recorder to share his or her group's ideas. After each group has shared, use the poster-sized copy of the sheet and look at each item on it. Of all the action plans shared by the groups for each item (do these one at time), were there any that stood out as being especially good to the participants? Put those on the poster-sized sheet. Then look at what the group has come up with. Ask:

- Is this an ideal or realistic pastoral self-care plan?
- What, if anything, would keep it from becoming real?
- How does it compare to the control/influence chart that we worked on earlier?

Homework (10 minutes)

Make a copy of the continuation of the “Franklin Downtown Church” story for every group member. Instruct them to take the story home, read it, and then write their answers to the questions provided.

Ideally, all participants should be asked to read chapters 7 and 8 (pages 76–99) of *Leadership That Fits Your Church* before the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Spend just a few minutes reflecting on how the session went. Ask each person to quickly say one word that pops into his or her mind about the gathering. Then close with the prayer below or use one of your choosing.

Gracious God, we recognize that all of us are charged to carry out our congregation's mission and your work in the world. Help us to more fully realize how our prayers, spoken words, and actions contribute to the church's ministry and to your work in the world. Teach us fresh ways to be partners in ministry.
Amen.



Session 4—Numbers . . . or Depth . . . or Both?

Introduction

So what can you do to grow this congregation? That's a question that almost every pastoral candidate dreads hearing. "It all depends" is probably the best answer to the church growth question. It all depends on congregational involvement and the pastor's own particular profile. And it all depends on the definition of growth.

Too many times congregations only measure growth in terms of the number of people in the pew. But perhaps it's time to expand our understanding of "significant growth." Surely, getting more people of the congregation involved would be significant. As would a congregation that was achieving greater spiritual growth.

So what can a pastor do to grow a congregation? As *Leadership That Fits Your Church* shows, things such as the pastor's gender, age, and how he or she spends ministry time play a big role in developing various congregational strengths. The way one pastor helps grow a congregation will be unique to him or her.

So let us, like the pastor above, continue to pray for significant growth, but let's expand our definition a bit. And we should also understand that it all depends on many factors, including the congregation!

Opening—Review Homework (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to review participant’s impressions of the continuation of the Franklin Downtown Church story. Post the self-care chart for your pastor that the group devised at the last session (exercise 3.2). Have participants provide their answers to the question about how that congregation and pastor made sure that Chris practiced self-care. How does this compare to the self-care chart that you created last session? Can you add any new action steps to the chart after reading this story?

Also discuss what Chris and his congregation could have done better regarding worship and preaching expectations. Has your congregation gone through a similar experience? How can you respond to these types of situations?

Exercise 4.1—Church Growth and Vitality (35 minutes)

Divide into two groups. Give each group a blank piece of paper and pencil. Ask each group to name a recorder. Then have one group write a definition of “Growth.” Have the other group develop a definition of “Vitality.” Give them ten minutes to come up with a definition that their group can agree on. Then bring the groups back together and have them share their definitions.

Ask the following questions.

- How are growth and vitality, based on their definitions, different?
- How are vitality and growth similar?

Next post a poster-sized copy of exercise 4.1, titled “Church Growth and Vitality,” where everyone can see it. Then invite the Vitality group to come up with as many synonyms for Growth as possible in five minutes, and then have them write them on the chart. At the same time, have the Growth group name synonyms for Vitality and record them on the chart. Review both lists. Are there any of the same words on both lists? If so, draw connecting lines between them.

Of all the words on either side of the sheet, ask the entire group to decide which five words are the most important to your congregation and give their reasons for these decisions. Ask how these words will likely influence how they approach the topic of church growth with the pastor and with the congregation.

Exercise 4.2—Congregational Strengths in Our Church Setting (30 minutes)

Make everyone a copy of exercise 4.2, titled “Congregational Strengths in Our Church Setting.” Ask them to list the five synonyms for church growth and the five synonyms for church vitality in the column on the left that they feel are most important to your congregation (from exercise 4.1). Next, ask them to think of one or two actions that will promote that quality in the column on the right.

Review and present to the group the data in *Leadership That Fits Your Church* regarding pastoral and congregational profiles (pages 90–98).

Review together the action suggestions that the group generated. Which of these relies on pastoral efforts or gifts, lay leadership or members' gifts or efforts, or on the contributions of both the pastor and members? Identify the three actions that the group would like to pursue. Assign responsibility for each to a congregational group or committee to pursue.

Homework (10 minutes)

Make a copy of the “St. Mary’s Catholic Parish” story for every group member. Instruct them to take the story home, read it, and then write their answers to the questions provided.

Ideally, each participant should be asked to read chapter 9 (pages 100–112) in *Leadership That Fits Your Church* before the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Spend just a few minutes reflecting on how the session went. Then close with the prayer below or use one of your choosing.

Gracious God, give us new insight into our congregation’s greatest strengths and challenges. Help us deepen our commitment to each other, to our individual spiritual growth, and to the needs of our community. Renew our passion and joy for serving you and others. Amen.



CHOICE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE,
AND MATCHING ACCESSORIES,
WERE DAILY CHALLENGES
FOR REV DIMAGGIO

Session 5—Leadership Approaches: Transforming, Serving, or Inspiring

Introduction

“Do you think,” Kruppenbach at last interrupts, “do you think this is your job, to meddle in these people’s lives? I know what they teach you at seminary now: the psychology and that. But I don’t agree with it. You think now your job is to be an unpaid doctor, to run around and plug up the holes and make everything smooth. I don’t think that. I don’t think that’s your job.”

—From *Rabbit, Run* by John Updike

Ah, leadership approaches. That’s the essence of the vehement conversation between two pastors from which the paragraph above is excerpted. John Updike’s novel *Rabbit, Run* is the setting for this argument—and it’s a discussion that continues more than fifty years later. What is the pastor’s role? How should he or she (though Kruppenbach wouldn’t be able to fathom a female pastor) lead? What leadership styles work in what kind of congregation?

Today we’re all aware that there are a variety of leadership approaches that pastors employ depending on their personalities and life experiences. Worshipers and pastors do not always recognize these differences or describe the approaches in the same way. That’s why it’s good to know and understand some of these approaches—and to know what works best in your church.

Opening—Review Homework (15 minutes)

Review the “St. Mary’s Catholic Parish” story. What did the participants think about this story? Did they learn anything new from reading it? Focus especially on the question, When the pastor’s joy and the congregation’s joy or needs don’t match, what positive steps can the church take?

Next, switch gears and look at the question about whether (and why or why not) it was Father John’s fault that people left the parish. How might his pastoral leadership style have influenced the decision for some to leave? Could a different leadership style have kept the disaffected in the parish?

Finally, reflect on the following questions.

- What else came to mind while reading this story?
- Are there any comparisons to our congregation?
- What lessons does it offer to us?

Exercise 5.1—Features of Leadership (30 minutes)

Make a copy of exercise 5.1, titled “Features of Leadership,” for each participant. After you’ve distributed the sheets to the participants, review the instructions provided at the top of the sheet.

Have a poster-sized copy of the exercise sheet hung where everyone can see it. Call the group back together when you sense most everyone is finished with their definitions. Then have them share their definitions of Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, and Inspiring Leadership. After the sharing, ask the group if there is one that most of the group agrees with. If so, put it on the poster under the proper category. If not, have the group come up with a joint definition that they can agree on. Now ask which one of these is most needed at our congregation? Why?

Exercise 5.2—Leadership Styles (30 minutes)

Distribute copies of exercise 5.2, titled “Leadership Styles.” Make one copy of the pastor’s version for the pastor and enough copies of the “For Lay Leaders and Members” for the rest of the group. Then have all the participants take the survey. Note: It is up to the discretion of the pastor and study leader for the current pastor to participate in this exercise. If the current pastor participates in this session, his or her responses to this exercise need not be shared with the group. If you do not have a permanent pastor or your pastor has not been involved throughout the study, you will want to provide the pastor’s version and the tally of participant’s responses to him or her after the meeting.

You’ll also need to create a poster-sized copy of exercise 5.2. Tally all participant responses to the first and second questions on the poster-sized copy. How did the majority of participants describe the *current* pastoral leadership? How do participants describe the *ideal* pastoral leadership style for the congregation?

Is there a difference between how members' view the pastor's current leadership style and their view of the ideal leadership style for the congregation? If so, what are the implications for the congregation's ability to do effective ministry?

Homework (10 minutes)

Make a copy of the continuation of the “Pines Community Church” story for every group member. Instruct them to take the story home, read it, and then write their answers to the questions provided.

Ideally, each participant should be asked to read chapters 10 and 11 (pages 114–32) in *Leadership That Fits Your Church* before the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Spend just a few minutes reflecting on how the session went. What did the group learn about leadership styles that will help them understand the pastor-congregation dynamic better? Close with the following prayer or use one of your own choosing.

Gracious God, we know you have called the most unlikely people to be your servants. Help us to discover the leadership gifts each of us have been given. Show us the many ways we can use those gifts to further our church's ministries. Teach us to recognize and support the leadership gifts of others. Amen.



Session 6—Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Us a Match

Introduction

*“Here I come to save the day!”
That means that Mighty Mouse is on the way!*

Judging by cartoon captions above, this congregation would prefer a church mouse to a Mighty Mouse. Super Pastor obviously isn't going to find a good match here, which is something that's better to find out before hiring a pastor than after. Understanding what makes for a good match helps ensure that a congregation gets the pastor they want and that a pastor gets the congregation that brings him or her a deep sense of purpose.

The cartoon also shows that pastors and worshipers understand what constitutes a good match differently. Super Pastor thinks he'll fit in this congregation—he's flown in to save the day. The search committee knows that he's not what they need. Now, they may well have too low a standard for what they need, but they have a clear understanding of what they don't. What is most important is for both the pastor and the congregation to have a similar understanding of what will make for a match and how the gifts and skills of the pastor match the needs and styles of the congregation. When such a match is made, pastors are more satisfied and the congregation increases its vitality.

Opening—Homework Review (15 Minutes)

Ask everyone to take out their copy of the continuation of the “Pines Community Church” story and their answers to the two homework questions. Have participants explain their answers to the two questions. Then take a few minutes to discuss what Pastor Ted and the congregation could have done individually and together to determine, from the beginning, if this would be a good pastor-congregation fit.

Exercise 6.1—Qualities of a Good Match (30 minutes)

Make a poster-sized copy of exercise 6.1, titled “Qualities of a Good Match,” which features Figure 10.1 about pastors’ and worshipers’ perception of the leadership match. Post this where everyone can see it. Now have the participants look at the section of the graph that most closely defines your congregation (Catholic, Mainline Protestant, or Conservative Protestant). How do they think your (current or former) pastor and congregation would score the leadership match? Is it a good one? Do your church and (current or former) pastor reflect the national profiles of satisfaction for your type of congregation?

Next, take some time to look at and discuss the things that indicate a high probability of a good match between the pastor and congregation. *Leadership That Fits Your Church* reveals research by the U.S. Congregational Life Survey showing that there are five things that make for a good pastor-congregation fit. Write each of these on a piece of chart paper.

- The pastor has served the congregation longer than average
- The pastor devotes less time than average to teaching and more to other ministry tasks such as preaching and visitation
- The congregation has experienced low levels of, or no, conflict
- The congregation has experienced few pastoral turnovers
- The church finances are in a good and stable place

Then, as a group, discuss which of these are true for your congregation. Then ask:

- Who’s responsible for making a good pastor and congregation match?
- Which of the five things need attention?
- Whose responsibility is it to address them?
- What can we, as a congregation, do to make our current match as strong as possible?

Exercise 6.2—Learning from the Past (35 minutes)

We know that individuals learn from their successes and their mistakes. That can be true for congregations as well. Make a poster-sized copy of exercise 6.2, titled “Learning from the Past,” and post it where it is visible to all the participants. Then distribute individual copies of the exercise sheet to everyone. Give them fifteen minutes to read and answer the questions on the sheet.

After fifteen minutes, invite the group to share some of their answers (not everyone needs to answer every question). Write summary words of their answers on the poster-sized sheet. Then focus on two specific questions. Ask everyone to share about these:

- How closely did these pastors and congregational leaders work together?
- What did the congregation do, as a whole, to encourage and support these pastors?

Then ask three new questions. Record the responses on a piece of chart paper. Based on what we've learned from our past and from these sessions,

- How closely *should* our pastor and congregational leaders work together?
- What can the congregation do *now*, as a whole, to encourage and support our pastor(s)?
- What can the pastor do to encourage and support our congregation?

Closing (10 minutes)

Spend just a few minutes reflecting on how the six sessions went. Ask each person to name one key finding or understanding that they gained. Close with a prayer for your congregation and pastor, asking for God's assistance in making the match as good as it can be. You can use the prayer below or one of your own choosing.

Gracious God, we now have a better appreciation for the phrase "a match made in heaven"! Grant us wisdom to make the best possible pastoral match for our congregation. We know you will lead us in the right direction. Amen.

Exercise 1.1—Spiritual Interviews

Instructions

Pair off with another person, preferably someone you don't know very well. One of you will do the first interview; the other the second. Each interviewer will have fifteen minutes to ask the three questions below to the other person. Time will be called after fifteen minutes and the roles will be reversed. Please stick to the three questions. You may ask clarifying questions or questions that will help you flesh out the respondent's answers. Please try to refrain from expressing your opinion as you listen. Your task is to listen carefully and really hear the other person's spiritual story.

Name of Interviewee: _____

What brought you to this congregation?

What is the main strength of the pastor that you remember most (*don't name the pastor*)?

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing our congregation today?

Exercise 1.2—Why Effective Congregational Leadership Is More Difficult Than Ever

Factor	Positive	Negative
_____ More member mobility	_____	_____
_____ Minority viewpoints collide with majority votes	_____	_____
_____ Many styles of leadership	_____	_____
_____ Major redefinition of the pastoral role	_____	_____
_____ More small churches and fewer full-time pastors	_____	_____
_____ More demands on smaller budgets	_____	_____
_____ Increasing pastoral stress/negative health impact	_____	_____
_____ National debates deflate local ministry	_____	_____
_____ Disappearing generations in congregations	_____	_____
_____ Communication and media use diversifies	_____	_____

Session 1 Homework—Franklin Downtown Church

The Story

After serving faithfully for 17 years, the congregation's much-loved pastor retired. An interim pastor began helping the church prepare for a new pastor. The lay leaders formed a search committee that represented the congregation's diversity: newcomers, youth, seniors, and parents. The search committee used an every-member survey to identify the skills and traits they wanted in their next pastor. The interim pastor challenged them to think about not only what current members wanted but also about the kind of pastor the church needed in the future. The committee decided that they would seriously consider calling someone who met seven of their ten most-desired pastoral traits. Using these criteria, they selected from more than 50 pastors who were interested in the call.

Chris was one of the pastors who caught their attention. After serving six years as an associate pastor in another state, he and his wife sensed that it was time to consider a move. Chris felt called to be a solo pastor and saw his associate pastor experience as good preparation. Franklin Downtown Church seemed to be a theologically moderate and healthy congregation that offered all that he and his wife had hoped for in a new call. Located in Chris's home state, the church would make it possible to be closer to family, a plus given their young children. The church's location was desirable for other reasons, too—in a college community with many professionals and cultural events. Finally, as a financially secure church, it offered a good salary.

As the search committee begins interviewing pastors, will they be able to hold to the skills and traits they committed to in the beginning? Or as they interview potential candidates face-to-face, will they modify that list if a candidate interviews well and captures their hearts? What do Chris and the committee need to know to determine if this congregation is a good fit for his leadership gifts?

Whether the Franklin Downtown Church or Pastor Chris realize it or not, new realities profoundly shape their choices and future decisions. A new call will test Chris's leadership skills in more ways than he can anticipate. Lay leaders likely hold unrealistic expectations about the congregation's membership growth and its long-term financial sustainability. Now more than ever, pastors and church leaders need strong partnerships based on clear expectations and mutual respect. (Story found in pages 1–2 and 6 of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*.)

Homework Questions

What are my top ten most-desired pastoral traits?

How would I answer the question in the story—What do Chris and the congregation need to know to determine if this congregation is a good fit for his leadership gifts?

Exercise 2.1—Demographic Profile of Pastors: Mainline Protestant

Demographic	Survey	Ours
Gender	72% male	
Marital status	62% first marriage 20% remarried 9% divorced/ separated 4% single (never married)	
Family composition	64% no children at home	
Age	46% between 50–59	
Religious background	56% the same as raised	
Theological education	98% seminary degree	
Ordination for ministry	92% are ordained	
Second-career pastors	45% are second-career pastors	
Number of parish ministry positions	4 is national average	
First-call pastors	13% serving their first call	
More than one church or more than one job	12% serve more than 1 church 6% have another job	
Senior or solo pastor	31% are senior/solo	
Full- or part-time employment	85% are full-time employees	
Total compensation (salary plus housing allowance)	\$54,530	
Housing provisions	40% live in parsonage 65% receive housing allowance	
Health insurance (for pastor)	78% receive health insurance	
Contributions to a retirement plan	84% receive retirement contributions	
Educational debt	33% have educational debt	

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Exercise 2.1—Demographic Profile of Pastors: Catholic

Demographic	Survey	Ours
Age	59 years old is median age	
Religious background	96% raised Catholic	
Theological education	94% have an advanced degree	
Ordination for ministry	98% are ordained	
Second-career pastors	22% are second-career pastors	
Number of parish ministry positions	5 is national average	
First-call pastors	5% serving their first call	
More than one church or more than one job	25% serve more than 1 parish	
Senior or solo pastor	51% are senior/solo	
Full- or part-time employment	96% are full-time	
Total compensation (salary plus housing allowance)	\$35,220	
Housing provisions	94% receive housing allowance	
Health insurance (for pastor)	96% receive health insurance	
Contributions to a retirement plan	78% receive retirement contributions	
Educational debt	26% have educational debt	

Exercise 2.1—Demographic Profile of Pastors: Conservative Protestant

Demographic	Survey	Ours
Gender	100% male	
Marital status	85% first marriage 10% remarried 2% divorced/ separated 0% single (never married)	
Family composition	51% no children at home	
Age	32% between 40–49	
Religious background	59% different than raised	
Theological education	53% advanced degree	
Ordination for ministry	97% ordained	
Second-career pastors	47% are second-career pastors	
Number of parish ministry positions	3 is national average	
First-call pastors	25% serving their first call	
More than one church or more than one job	6% serve more than 1 church 30% have another job	
Senior or solo pastor	70% are senior/solo	
Full- or part-time employment	83% are full-time employees	
Total compensation (salary plus housing allowance)	\$49,758	
Housing provisions	26% live in parsonage 61% receive housing allowance	
Health insurance (for pastor)	54% receive health insurance	
Contributions to a retirement plan	47% receive retirement contributions	
Educational debt	18% have educational debt	

Exercise 2.2—Our Size

Thinking of your congregation, fill in each cell of the chart.

Number of People:	Associated in any way with the congregation	Regularly participating in the congregation	Adults (over age 18) regularly participating	Average worship attendance
Ten Years Ago				
Today				

Exercise 2.3—Our Strengths

As Bruce and Woolever note in *Leadership That Fits Your Church*, “Congregations are like snowflakes; no two are alike.” Your congregation is uniquely itself. Although what *Leadership That Fits Your Church* says is true, it is equally true that vital congregations share some important traits that make them strong. Which of the following, revealed by the U.S. Congregational Life Survey research as factors of church vitality, are strengths of your congregation?

- **Growing spiritually.** Many worshipers are growing in their faith and feel that the congregation meets their spiritual needs.
- **Providing meaningful worship.** Many worshipers experience God’s presence, joy, inspiration, and awe in worship services and feel that worship helps them with everyday life.
- **Participating in the congregation.** Many worshipers attend services weekly and are involved in the congregation in other ways.
- **Giving a sense of belonging.** Many worshipers have a strong sense of belonging and say that most of their closest friends attend the same congregation.
- **Caring for children and youth.** Many worshipers are satisfied with the offerings for children and youth and have children living at home who also attend.
- **Focusing on the community.** Many worshipers are involved in social service or advocacy activities and work to make their community a better place to live.
- **Sharing faith.** Many worshipers are involved in evangelism activities and invite friends or relatives to worship.
- **Welcoming new people.** Many worshipers began attending in the past five years.
- **Empowering leadership.** Many worshipers feel that the congregation’s leaders inspire others to action and take into account worshipers’ ideas.

Session 2 Homework—Pines Community Church

The Story

The congregation prided itself on being a community anchor. Previous pastors were involved in the town's many activities. Because that is all the members had ever known, they assumed all pastors were church leaders *and* community leaders. The pastoral search committee was eager to get started on their task of finding a new pastor. Any step that might delay them seemed a waste of precious time. They feared the months between pastors could deplete resources and members' energy. Ed, the congregation's patriarch, insisted that the lay leaders produce a document that described the church's current circumstances—their membership, church school, adult education, and finances. Some leaders resisted Ed's advice. Susan believed that if they were too honest about what was really going in the church, they would not be able to convince a good pastor to come. Her argument that "showing our warts" was detrimental to the church's quest for a new pastor was persuasive to many. After a great deal of discussion, the committee compromised on a written summary of the church's mission and needs—a description that highlighted the congregation's most positive features.

Ted was not looking for a new call. He and his family enjoyed their church, their friends in the community, and the kids' activities and schools. One day Ted received an e-mail from Allen, an old family friend. The e-mail began with memories of Ted's father, but ended with a surprising question: Would Ted consider serving in another congregation? Allen believed Ted had all the pastoral gifts and qualities that were needed at the church where Allen currently attended—Pines Community Church. Receiving this unexpected request from someone who knew him so well was hard to ignore. After discussion with his wife, he answered Allen's e-mail with a request for more information. Perhaps this congregation really needed him.

A group of lay leaders at Pines Community Church began reviewing candidates. Their pool was quite diverse—some pastors nearing retirement, others seeking their first call. Some were second-career pastors and others had experience as associate pastor. A few made theological statements far outside the lay leaders' comfort zone. After a lengthy discussion, they came up with criteria to shorten the list. They promised to pray about it and bring the names of their top three choices for pastors when they met again. At their next meeting, the group tallied the votes. To their surprise, two pastors received a large number of votes. Both pastors looked promising—one pastor's recommendations said that he was a strong preacher with an outgoing personality; the other pastor's recommendations said that she was second-generation clergy, strong in preaching and teaching, and recognized widely in the denomination for her leadership skills. The committee was thrilled to have two good choices. Then, Allen, Ted's family friend, suggested a third candidate. He argued that because the group had not identified a third candidate, he would like to recommend Ted as a possibility. After Allen told them about Ted's background, the group agreed that making Ted the third option was a good idea. Allen notified Ted that the church wanted him to come for an interview. He confided in Ted that two other strong candidates had been invited to talk with church leaders as well. When Ted reviewed the church's materials, he didn't find them helpful. He thought they left so much out, he couldn't even read between the lines. He wondered, "Surely the church can't be that perfect!" (Story found in pages 9–10 and 20–21 of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*.)

Homework Questions

What information about the congregation would Ted have found helpful?

What information—beyond a resume—about Ted would the congregation need?

Exercise 3.1—Factors of Satisfaction and Well-Being

Which of these factors do you think congregation members can either control (place a “C” in the appropriate column) or influence (place an “I” in the appropriate column)?

Factor	Pastor’s Responsibility	Congregation’s Responsibility	Responsibility of Both
Sense of overall effectiveness in ministry			
Satisfaction with work in ministry			
Satisfaction with lay relationships			
Satisfaction with support from denominational officials			
Satisfaction with relationships with other clergy			
Satisfaction with personal life			
Satisfaction with relationships with family or friends			
Satisfaction with life as a whole			
Objectively measured physical health			
Self-reported physical health			
Self-reported emotional health			
Pastor’s experiences with job stress			
Ministry role disrupting personal life			
Taking time off weekly			
Finding personal time			
Participating in pastoral support groups			
Pursuing continuing education			
Taking a sabbatical			

Exercise 3.2—Design a Pastoral Satisfaction and Care Plan

What can we do to help our pastor experience more ministry and person satisfaction? How can we show that we feel that pastoral self-care is important?

Topic	Actions
Satisfaction in Ministry	
Satisfaction with Lay Relationships	
Satisfaction with Personal Life	
Physical Health	
Emotional Health	
Lowering Stress	
Disruptions to Personal Life	
Regular Time Off	
Finding Personal Time	
Pastoral Support Group Participation	
Pursuing Continuing Education	
Taking a Sabbatical	

Session 3 Homework—Franklin Downtown Church, Continued**The Story**

Chris accepted the congregation's call to serve as their pastor. His wife, Elena, a physician's assistant, quickly found a position at the community clinic and their children adapted well to the church's day-care program. Chris and Elena regularly worked out separately during the week but on Saturdays they planned some kind of physical activity for the whole family. Chris had previously talked with the personnel committee about a plan for days off, vacations, office hours, and home/hospital visitations. Together they agreed that Friday afternoon and Saturday would be Chris's time off unless an emergency arose. Chris planned to be in the church office Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. until noon. He would use the afternoons for study, community meetings, and visitation. With the church's permission, Chris contacted a retired pastor and asked him to serve as an unpaid parish associate. This parish associate would step in when Chris was out of town or unavailable. The many conversations Chris had with the search and personnel committees about his expectations and theirs made for smooth sailing in his first six months. Even pastors and churches enjoy a honeymoon period.

"Chris is a really nice guy and I love his family, but I don't know if I can sit through another one of his sermons!" Others made similar remarks before the grumblings reached Marvin, who chaired the church board. Marvin insisted that Paul, chair of the personnel committee, deal with it—and quickly! Paul reluctantly asked Chris to meet with the personnel committee. Paul began the meeting with prayer before explaining to Chris that many members were unhappy with his sermons. Paul reassured Chris that the meeting's purpose was to give him sermon feedback and to support his response to worshipers' criticism. Paul asked each committee member to list three positive words or phrases to describe Chris's sermons and then to list phrases suggesting positive changes. Paul gathered the sheets and read the positive lists aloud. They described Chris's sermons as comforting, focused on current topics, and short. The suggestion list ran much longer—the sermons needed to be more coherent and thought provoking, more focused on the Bible, and more relevant to spiritual growth. Chris listened carefully and took the time to consider what he heard; he did not want to answer defensively. When he finally spoke, he agreed that preaching was not one of his strengths. He admitted that as a first-time solo pastor he had not been ready for the rigor of weekly sermon preparation. Committee members stressed the congregation's long history of excellent preaching—a tradition they wanted to maintain. Paul suggested that Chris join a local pastors' group that meets weekly for lectionary study. Chris felt that support from his peers would be of great help with this issue and others. Chris committed to take their suggestions to heart and spend more time each week in study, sermon preparation, and prayer. Committee members pledged to pray for Chris and his worship leadership. Everyone agreed to meet again in three months to assess progress. (Story found in pages 51–52 and 64 of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*.)

Homework Questions

What did Chris and the congregation do well to make sure that he could practice self-care?

Why was Paul hesitant to meet with Chris to discuss the criticism of his preaching? How could this have been handled better? Are there steps that could have been taken earlier that would have addressed this issue?

Exercise 4.1—Church Growth and Vitality

Synonyms for Church Growth

Synonyms for Church Vitality

Session 4 Homework—St. Mary’s Catholic Parish

The Story

St. Mary’s religious education program stood out among the parish’s many strengths. With Elizabeth’s steady leadership, the school attracted talented teachers who built an innovative, effective curriculum. However, when Father John asked Elizabeth one day, “What gives you joy?” he learned that her passion for religious education had shifted. She was increasingly drawn to bereavement ministries because of several recent family deaths. He encouraged her to learn all that she could about these ministries and develop a first-rate ministry for their parish. To relieve Elizabeth of some religious education responsibilities, the parish recruited Martha, a young and enthusiastic newcomer to the community, to serve as the parish’s associate director of religious education. Martha and Elizabeth worked together to cultivate stronger parental leadership in the program.

When Father John answered the question, “What gives me joy?” he knew it was the beauty of Catholic worship and liturgy. Father John strongly believed that in worship people encounter God. He presided over Mass in an increasingly thoughtful manner, providing a breath of fresh air to worshipers. With a local architect’s help, the worship space was renovated and artfully redesigned. Several decades of neglect had diminished the opportunities for spiritual growth in the parish. Father John began implementing contemporary methods to connect all four adult generations to spiritual growth and formation ministries.

Father John met most members’ expectations for a “good” priest. They recognized his strength as a spiritual leader and his generous trust of others’ spiritual gifts. Yet not everyone was happy with the new priest. A handful of longtime members missed the special attention that they received from the former priest, Father Thomas. He was truly *their* priest—their exclusive chaplain. They resented the new programs, renewed energy, and newcomers. For them, it just wasn’t the same parish anymore. Eventually, a few longtime members slipped away to attend a more traditional neighboring parish. (Story found in pages 90 and 98 of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*.)

Homework Questions

When the pastor’s joy and the congregation’s joy or needs don’t match, what positive steps can the church take?

Is it Father’s John’s fault that people left the parish? Why or why not?

Exercise 5.1—Features of Leadership

Write, in your own words, a definition of each of these styles. What, to you, are the key features (such as values or behaviors) of each? What are some specific examples of things a *pastor* would say or do if he or she was practicing that leadership approach? What are some specific examples of things a *member* or *lay leader* would say or do if he or she was practicing that leadership approach?

Transformational Leadership (offers new approaches to problems, points others to the vision of the church’s mission, and promotes ownership and involvement in that vision)

Servant Leadership (places emphasis on serving others and the church’s mission)

Inspiring Leadership (encourages members to make decisions and take action)

Exercise 5.2—Leadership Styles

For the Pastor

I. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your *current* leadership style in this congregation? Circle only one answer.

- A. I make most of the decisions here; lay members generally follow my lead.
- B. I try to inspire and encourage lay members to make decisions and take action, although I will take action alone if I believe that it is needed.
- C. Lay leaders come up with most of the initiatives in the congregation, although I try to exert a strong influence on their decisions.
- D. Lay leaders make most of the decisions about the congregation's directions and programs; my role is to empower them to implement their decisions.

II. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what you believe to be the *ideal* leadership style for this congregation? Circle only one answer.

- A. I make most of the decisions here; lay members generally follow my lead.
- B. I try to inspire and encourage lay members to make decisions and take action, although I will take action alone if I believe that it is needed.
- C. Lay leaders come up with most of the initiatives in the congregation, although I try to exert a strong influence on their decisions.
- D. Lay leaders make most of the decisions about the congregation's directions and programs; my role is to empower them to implement their decisions.

III. If your description of your *current* leadership style is different from what you believe is the *ideal* leadership style for the congregation, what does it mean for your ministry at this church?

How closely does your description of your current leadership style match how the majority of your members view your leadership style (see participant responses on tally page of their responses)? If their views about leadership are different from your own, what does it mean for your ministry at this church?

For Lay Leaders and Members

I. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your pastor's *current* leadership style? Circle only one answer.

- A.** The pastor makes most of the decisions here; lay leaders and members generally follow the pastor's lead.
- B.** The pastor tries to inspire and encourage members to make decisions and take action, although the pastor will take action alone if he or she believes that it is needed.
- C.** Lay leaders and members come up with most of the initiatives in the congregation, although the pastor tries to exert a strong influence on our decisions.
- D.** Lay leaders and members make most of the decisions about the congregation's directions and programs; the pastor's role is to empower us to implement our decisions.

II. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what you believe is the *ideal* pastoral leadership style for this congregation? Circle only one answer.

- A.** The pastor needs to make most of the decisions here; lay leaders and members generally should follow the pastor's lead.
- B.** The pastor should try to inspire and encourage members to make decisions and take action, although the pastor should take action alone if he or she believes that it is needed.
- C.** Lay leaders and members need to come up with most of the initiatives in the congregation, although the pastor can exert a strong influence on our decisions.
- D.** Lay leaders and members should make most of the decisions about the congregation's directions and programs; the pastor's role should be to empower us to implement our decisions.

III. If your personal view of your pastor's *current* leadership style is different from what you believe is the *ideal* leadership style for the congregation, what does it mean for how you support the ministry of this church?

Session 5 Homework—Pines Community Church, Continued

The Story

Ed called an emergency meeting of the church board. No one had to ask the reason for the special meeting—their pastor had to go! Ed let everyone express their negative opinions about Pastor Ted before making an announcement. Ed told the board members that he had contacted a denominational official who specialized in helping congregations work through personnel conflicts. The board members reluctantly agreed to work with this outside mediator, although they weren't optimistic that anything would make a difference.

Ted had become increasingly discouraged about his ministry. He listened carefully to every member criticism and every suggestion. He tried to respond to their requests. Each day seemed longer than the day before as he slogged through his duties. He didn't feel like he was very good at the things the church wanted him to do. Ted's wife noticed he was sleeping more and showing other signs of depression. When he heard that the board had voted unanimously to bring in a denominational official, he felt only relief. One thing was clear—this painful time was going to be over soon, one way or another.

The members of Pines Community Church loved their church and were people of good will. They found the conflict surrounding Pastor Ted agonizing. They wanted to make it work. Ted wanted to be a good pastor and the right pastor for the church. But daily, he felt like a square peg being pounded into a round hole. After multiple meetings with the denominational official, Ted realized that he just didn't fit. He submitted his resignation. A few months later, Ted entered a training program for military chaplaincy.

The members at Pines Community Church did not realize that they did not know much about leadership. In reality, different factions held different views on leadership. Some members wanted a transformational leader—a pastor who would bring exciting ideas and a common vision to the congregation. Another group wanted an inspiring leader—a pastor who would encourage lay leaders' gifts and share the leadership role with them. A third group in the congregation felt they could do just fine without a pastor. This group shared a tribe mentality—the pastor is not one of us, and we simply have to tolerate him. Pastor Ted, the compromise candidate, satisfied none of these groups. His leadership approach came closest to a servant leader model—for example, he excelled in one-on-one pastoral care. He managed the church assuming that if he took care of members' emotional and spiritual needs, then lay leaders would take the initiative on organizational matters and big-picture decision making. The resulting leadership vacuum allowed various individuals to take the church in opposite directions. In the end, blind spots on both sides led to inevitable church conflict. (Story found in pages 101–02 and 110 of *Leadership That Fits Your Church*.)

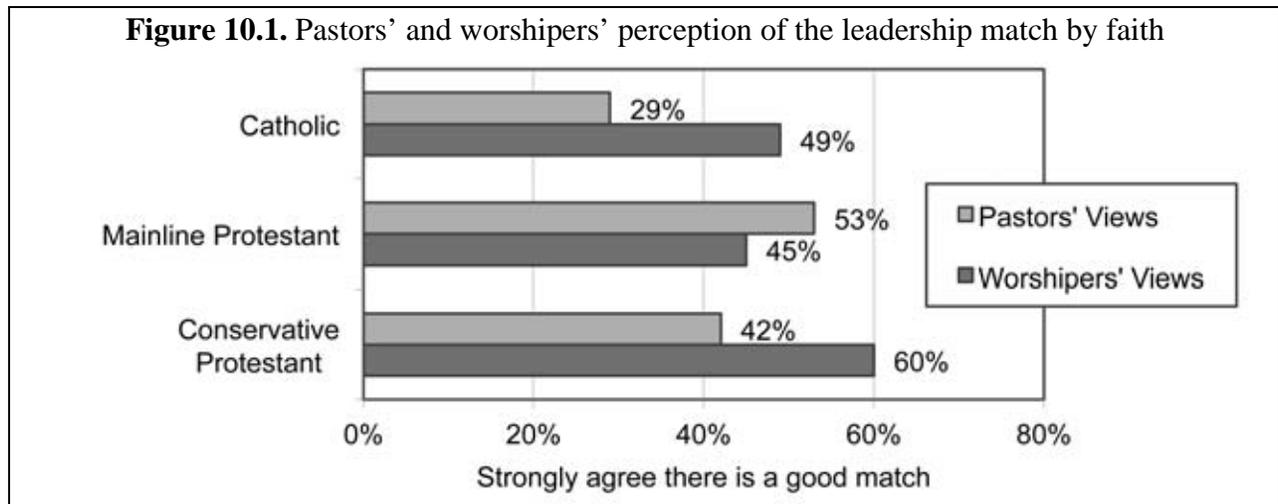
Homework Questions

What three questions should the members of Pines Community Church have asked about leadership styles prior to calling Pastor Ted?

How could they have come to an agreement about what sort of leadership was needed for their congregation before looking for a pastor?

Exercise 6.1—Qualities of a Good Match

Figure 10.1. Pastors' and worshipers' perception of the leadership match by faith



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Exercise 6.2—Learning from the Past

What did your last two pastors do extremely well?

How were they most effective?

What gaps did you observe in their ministries?

What activities or programs did they start that you would not like to give up?

What changes did they make that you would like to continue?

What activities or programs did they start that most of the members would be willing to let go?

What did the congregation, as a whole, do to encourage and support these pastors?

What things happened in the congregation that may have harmed the sense of a good fit?

How closely did these pastors and congregational leaders work together?

Going Deeper

This study guide has hopefully whetted your appetite to go even deeper into the topics in *Leadership That Fits Your Church*. Below you'll find the questions that ended each chapter in the book, arranged in the same format as this study guide. You can use them for personal reflection or perhaps you'll want to use them to continue your dialogue on this topic in appropriate meetings, such as pastor-parish committees and so forth. You could get creative and ask the pastor(s) to answer the congregation's questions and vice versa. What new knowledge might that empower you with?

Questions for Session 1 (Chapter 1 of Book)—If the Pastor/Congregation Fits

Questions for Pastors

- Looking back over your years in pastoral ministry, which one or two trends (out of the ten broad issues outlined in this chapter) have had the most impact on your ministry?
- As you reflect on your current situation, what do you see as the trends most affecting the congregation's ministry effectiveness?

Questions for Lay Leaders

- Looking back over the past ten years, what trends have had the most impact on the congregation's ministry effectiveness?
- As you reflect on the congregation's future, what trends do you see as presenting the greatest challenges and opportunities?

Questions for Session 2 (Chapters 2 and 3 of Book)—A Rev. Bob Kind of Pastor/A Rev. Bob Kind of Church

Questions for Pastors

- How do your religious background, theological education, work experiences prior to entering ministry, or various ministry experiences relate to your leadership strengths? How would you describe these linkages in conversations about a potential new church call?
- If you were candid with leaders in the new congregation, what personal factors (such as family or compensation needs, health or retirement issues) does the church need to hear about early in the process?
- How does your current congregation compare to the churches you have previously served in terms of their size, resources, lay leadership, setting (urban, suburban, rural), region of the country, or theology? How do you see these factors shaping your ministry and leadership?
- What skills do you feel are most important for a pastor leading this type of congregation? How can you sharpen your skills in these areas?

Questions for Lay Leaders

- Looking back over the years, what previous pastors were exceptionally capable and what did they do best? Do you know the source of their strengths?
- Be candid: Are there some pastors you would prefer not to consider because of their age, gender, marital or family profile, educational background, theology, or something else? Based on your experiences, why do such characteristics detract from potential

candidates? What personality traits or previous experiences would a pastor need to have for you to overlook these undesirable factors?

- During the past five years, what are some of the best things that have happened in your church? What are some of the best things that you see happening in your congregation right *now*?
- What are some of your hopes and dreams for your church's future?

Questions for Session 3 (Chapters 4–6 of Book)—I Can't Get No Satisfaction and Well-Being

Questions for Pastors

- What one or two ministry tasks occupy the bulk of your time? What things do you find yourself doing that make you wonder whether they are a waste of time?
- Over the past several years has there been any conflict in this congregation? What was the conflict about and how was it handled? What did church leaders and you learn from these experiences?
- How often in the past two years has poor physical health, emotional problems, or family demands interfered with your ministry effectiveness? How do you cope in such situations?
- What practices do you regularly engage in that sustain you physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Are additional efforts needed to support your well-being and reduce stress?
- If married, how would your spouse answer these questions?
- Is there something that you're doing in your current congregation that you shouldn't be doing? Is this responsibility a wasted effort or an opportunity for someone else to be involved in ministry?
- Do you allow a few vocal people who resist change to derail the congregation's future? Can you listen courteously, pray for them, and respond wisely yet resist their efforts to stop positive change?

Questions for Lay Leaders

- Do you and other leaders want your pastor to motivate, organize, and equip you for ministries, or do you want a hired hand who takes the lead in all of the ministries for you?
- Can your pastor have a new vision for the congregation, or will some of your worshipers interpret that new vision as an inappropriate agenda?
- How often does the congregation make unreasonable demands on your pastor? How often are members and leaders unreasonably critical of your pastor? What steps could be taken to limit excessive demands and criticism?
- In what ways does the congregation show acceptance for your pastor? In what ways do you make your pastor feel loved and cared for?
- Do you publicly support the pastor and other leaders during times of substantial change?
- Are you doing all you can to contribute to your church's ministry? How can you step up as a partner in your congregation's ministries?

Questions for Session 4 (Chapters 7 and 8 of Book)—Numbers . . . or Depth . . . or Both?

Questions for Pastors

- What are the congregation's actual core values (not their preferred values) that explain members' motivations and behavior?
- What process is the church using to transform desired values into the core values that drive congregational effectiveness?
- What gives you joy? How do you see your passion for ministry connecting with the greatest needs of the congregation and its members?
- How can you and lay leaders build bridges to greater spiritual growth, increased involvement, and deepening friendships?

Questions for Lay Leaders

- Does your congregation spend more time looking back at the past or more time discussing how to press on toward the future?
- What sacrifices are we willing to make as a church to ensure the congregation's future?
- In every congregation, something already works well. Can you accurately identify your congregation's strengths?
- How can your congregation build on those strengths? What will work for a congregation of your size, in your location, at this time in your history, with your members, and with the people who live in your community?

Questions for Session 5 (Chapter 9 of Book)—Leadership Approaches: Transforming, Serving, or Inspiring

Questions for Pastors

- What is the best description of your leadership approach? Ask three to five people who know you well to describe your pastoral leadership approach. Does their description match yours?
- In conversations with lay leaders, what do you learn about their assumptions regarding effective pastoral leadership? How can this information inform your leadership?

Questions for Lay Leaders

- Thinking about your current and previous pastors, did the leadership approach of one pastor seem to fit your church best? Why do you think that approach was most effective?
- What steps can your congregation take to help your pastor become a more effective leader?

Questions for Session 6 (Chapter 10 of Book)—Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Us a Match

Questions for Pastors

- What factors go into your assessment about whether your leadership is a good match for the congregation? Are your perceptions flavored by the loudly expressed views of a few members?
- Does the congregation have a group that deals with personnel issues, such as a staff-parish relations or pastoral relations committee? Do you meet regularly with this group to receive feedback and constructive evaluations? How do you use that information?

Questions for Lay Leaders

- As you think about the church's needs and your pastor's leadership gifts, do you see a good match? From your perspective, what are the key pieces for understanding the puzzle of an excellent match?
- During your current pastor's tenure, how much have the church's needs changed?
- How have your perceptions of the pastor's effectiveness changed? What's behind that change?

Charting the Congregation's History *Statistical Information and Resources on Denominational Websites*

American Baptist Churches (USA)

- Go to <http://www.abcis.org/>.
- Church profiles and statistical reports are available. Contact the ABCIS administrator for your region to access the information.

The Catholic Church

- Go to the Center for Applied Research of the Apostolate Website (<http://cara.georgetown.edu/index.html>) and make a request for trend statistics.
- You can also contact the research office of the Diocese for statistical trend data.

Church of the Nazarene

- Go to <http://www.nazareneresearch.org>. Click on the link to Congregational Statistics.
- Statistical trends are available from the year each congregation was organized and include information regarding membership, worship attendance, discipleship attendance, and total church income.

The Episcopal Church

- Go to <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/research>. Click on Studying Your Congregation and Community in the left sidebar.
- Ten-year statistical trends are shown for a congregation regarding the number of baptized members, worship attendance, and plate/pledges.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- Go to <http://www.elca.org/ELCA/Search/Find-a-Congregation.aspx>. Enter the congregation's name, zip code, state, or synod.
- Statistics are presented from 1990 to the present for the average worship attendance and number of baptized membership. Other trend statistics include the racial/ethnic composition, Christian Education ministry enrollments, the regular giving per member, total operating expenses, and budget for mission support.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- Go to <http://www.pcusa.org/search/congregations/>. Enter the congregation's name, zip code, or city and state.
- Statistics for the past ten years are graphically displayed for total membership, worship attendance, Christian Education enrollment, and total contributions. The full report is available as a PDF.

Reformed Church in America

- Go to <https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=5101>.
- Trend statistics for individual churches are graphically displayed for membership, baptisms, worship attendance, and total income.

The Southern Baptist Convention

- Go to http://www.namb.net/NAMB_Research/.
- On the North American Mission Board Website, the Research department provides demographic reports, the Missional Assessment Profile (MAP), and PeopleGroups.info for local congregations.

Unitarian Universalists

- Go to <http://www.uua.org/directory/congregations/index.php>. Under Find a Congregation, use the Review Congregational Data link.
- Information includes membership size, enrollment, pledging, and expenditure data.

The United Methodist Church

- Go to <http://research.gbgm-umc.org>.
- Contact the Research Office by email to request a two-page or nine-page church and community profile that includes membership, church school, and expense trends for the past ten years.

Appendix: Supply Checklist

Session 1—If the Pastor/Congregation Fits

- ✓ Easel and chart paper to record group responses
- ✓ Tape for mounting completed chart sheets to wall
- ✓ Marker for study leader for use on chart paper
- ✓ Pencils or pens; one for each participant
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 1.1—page 25—one for each participant
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 1.2—page 26—for wall
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 1.2—page 26—one for each participant
- ✓ Copies of Session 1 Homework—page 27—one for each participant

Session 2—A Rev. Bob Kind of Pastor/A Rev. Bob Kind of Church

- ✓ Easel and chart paper to record group responses
- ✓ Tape for mounting completed chart sheets to wall
- ✓ Pencils or pens; one for each participant
- ✓ Extra copies of Session 1 Homework—page 27—in case some participants forget to bring their copy or new participants attend this session
- ✓ Copies of appropriate profile (Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Conservative Protestant) that describes your congregation for Exercise 2.1—pages 28–30—one for each participant
- ✓ Poster-sized version of appropriate profile (Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Conservative Protestant) that describes your congregation for Exercise 2.1—pages 28–30—for wall
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 2.2—page 31—for wall
- ✓ 3 colors of markers for Exercise 2.2; one color for use by the participants; two different colors for use by the study leader
- ✓ Accurate congregational statistics for Exercise 2.2
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 2.3—page 32—one for each participant
- ✓ Copies of Session 2 Homework—pages 33–34—one for each participant

Session 3—I Can't Get No Satisfaction and Well-Being

- ✓ Easel and chart paper to record group responses
- ✓ Tape for mounting completed chart sheets to wall
- ✓ Pencils or pens; one for each participant
- ✓ Marker for study leader for use on chart paper
- ✓ Extra copies of Session 2 Homework—pages 33–34—in case some participants forget to bring their copy or new participants attend this session
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 3.1—page 35—one for each participant
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 3.1—page 35—for wall
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 3.2—page 36—one for each small group
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 3.2—page 36—for wall
- ✓ Copies of Session 3 Homework—pages 37–38—one for each participant

Session 4—Numbers . . . Depth . . . or Both?

- ✓ Easel and chart paper to record group responses
- ✓ Tape for mounting completed chart sheets to wall
- ✓ Pencils or pens; one for each participant
- ✓ Markers for participants to respond on chart paper
- ✓ Extra copies of Session 3 Homework—pages 37–38—in case some participants forget to bring their copy or new participants attend this session
- ✓ Poster-sized self-care chart for pastors completed last session (Exercise 3.2); mount to wall for use during homework review
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 4.1—page 39—for wall
- ✓ Blank paper for each group for Exercise 4.1
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 4.2—page 40—one for each participant
- ✓ Copies of Session 4 Homework—page 41—one for each participant

Session 5—Leadership Approaches: Transforming, Serving, or Inspiring

- ✓ Pencils or pens; one for each participant
- ✓ Marker for study leader
- ✓ Extra copies of Session 4 Homework—page 41—in case some participants forget to bring their copy or new participants attend this session
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 5.1—page 42—one for each participant
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 5.1—page 42—for wall
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 5.2—pages 43–44—one copy of the pastor version to provide during or after the session, and enough copies of the lay leader/member version for each participant
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 5.2—pages 43–44—for wall
- ✓ Copies of Session 5 Homework—pages 45–46—one for each participant

Session 6—Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Us a Match

- ✓ Easel and chart paper to record group responses
- ✓ Tape for mounting completed chart sheets to wall
- ✓ Pencils or pens; one for each participant
- ✓ Marker for study leader for use on chart paper
- ✓ Extra copies of Session 5 Homework—pages 45–46—in case some participants forget to bring their copy or new participants attend this session
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 6.1—page 47—for wall
- ✓ Chart paper with five statements about a good pastor-congregation fit—listed on page 23—for use during Exercise 6.1
- ✓ Copies of Exercise 6.2—page 48—one for each participant
- ✓ Poster-sized version of Exercise 6.2—page 48—for wall