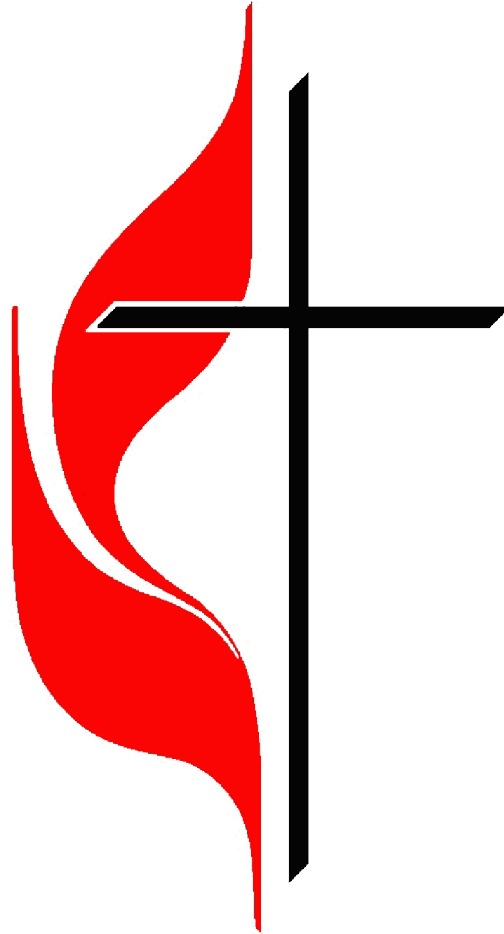


Leading Ministry Projects:

Project Management Basics for (New) Ministers



A Resource of *Genesis Equipping Ministries*

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Leading Ministry Projects: Project Management Basics for (New) Ministers

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Introduction

Much work today is accomplished through projects. Effective project leadership is key to productivity. Even in God's work, maybe especially in God's work, we need to do our best to accomplish God's mission in the world. This guide is an attempt to familiarize ministers with the basic tools and techniques of project leadership, in a way that complements other ministry skills to produce fruit for the Kingdom of God.

What is a Project?

A Project is a temporary endeavor to create a unique product or service (Project Management Institute definition). It has a defined start and end date, defined scope, finite budget, specific results and assigned/defined resources (a team). It is a unique body of work in some sense. It is NOT routine work, support or maintenance operations. It is not "ministry as usual" but a chunk of work designed on purpose to make a difference. Today, we often find it easier to engage volunteers in work with a defined start and end to the commitment.

Why a Guide for Ministry Projects?

Each minister brings a different set of strengths to the ministry but we all need to use them effectively (Romans 12: 6-8). We are to use the gifts we have to the best of our ability (Matt 13:12; Luke 19:20-27) but let's face it – not everyone called into ministry has a gift for project leadership. Of all the spiritual gifts, none is specifically called "project leadership". Romans 12:8-9 says of a person's gifts, "If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; *if it is leadership, let him govern diligently*; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (NIV, italics added). Even this reference to "leadership" seems to apply more directly to leading of ongoing work, and not specific projects with a defined objective. Nehemiah is a great example of a project leader, in how he returned to Jerusalem and engaged many to rebuild the wall around the temple. He led by example, stayed close to the work and the needs of the people, encouraged and maintained integrity. These are good characteristics of a project leader, but one also needs a sense of how to tackle work in an organized way. That is what this guide hopes to outline.

The 2012 *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* requires that each Provisional Member (Commissioned Deacons and Commissioned Elders) must "*present a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church's mission of "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World" (Para 330 and 335)*. This guide is a tool for helping them complete this requirement in a way that teaches the discipline of running successful projects, yet recognizes that this is ministry. Hopefully, if this is the first ministry project attempted by the minister, it will not be their last.

Three types of Projects

Projects come in all shapes and sizes, from the creation of the world to the rebuilding of the temple wall; from starting a new contemporary worship service to planning a youth conference. For the sake of guidance, it is useful to consider three categories of projects: new ministry development, event planning and projects that improve or increase some aspect of an already existing ministry. If a ministry already exists, and a project is focusing on it, the intent is likely improvement of some sort. If a ministry does not exist, and a project is started, then the aim is either to do something once or begin to do it repeatedly. The former is more like planning an event and the latter is creating an ongoing ministry. From the standpoint of illustrating useful project management principles, most ministry projects can be placed in one of these three buckets.

Outline of this Guide

Not all ministers are “idea people”. But for some, once the idea is put forth, they can take it and run with it. This guide will begin with a brief discussion of project ideas, but move quickly to the Ten Steps to Completing a Project. The purpose of discussing ideas is to spark the thinking of a Provisional Member toward something that might be fitting for their ministry climate. The list of ideas is very brief, but of more use might be the mention of some activities that can generate ministry ideas suitable for your ministry setting.

The bulk of this document describes the ten basic steps of project management, from planning, through execution to closure and measuring the fruit. The last two sections discuss roles and responsibilities of people involved with projects and communicating for success. Provisional Members need to interact with the Board of Ordained Ministry concerning their project, but all project leaders have someone to whom they are accountable. Managing these relationships can enhance or cripple project execution. Finally, some concluding remarks will suggest how to become better as ministry project leaders.

Developing this guide is a project of importance to me, so as you use this and see potential for improvement, please feel free to send me your ideas. I won't act on all of them, for sure, but I value every piece of input. My prayer for you is that your project is in response to a call of God, that it be blessed through your unswerving obedience to God, and that it may bear fruit for the Kingdom. Have fun!

Ministry Project Ideas

Recall the definition of a project. *A Project is a temporary endeavor to create a unique product or service (Project Management Institute definition). It has a defined start and end date, It is NOT routine work, support or maintenance operations. It is not "ministry as usual" but a chunk of work designed on purpose to make a difference.*

In order to meet the requirements for ordination, it is wise to work on a project that is within your normal scope of ministry. For example, suppose a Provisional Deacon is appointed as the Network Congregational Coordinator for Family Promise (a ministry working with homeless families), some project ideas might include those on List A.

LIST A

- ❖ Recruiting and training five support congregations to pair with host congregations
- ❖ Renovating the attic for storage of household items, engaging volunteers.
- ❖ Researching, negotiating price, purchasing and distributing beds to all host congregations
- ❖ Finding a storage facility and creating a donation procedure for furniture and household items
- ❖ Planning and carrying out a major fundraising event.
- ❖ Designing and teaching sensitivity training

If a Provisional Elder is appointed as the pastor in a local church, some ideas might include those on List B.

LIST B

- ❖ Begin a new contemporary worship service
- ❖ Start a prayer ministry
- ❖ Create and teach an ecumenical Bible Study in your area (not the same as the one already required for Ordination)
- ❖ Begin a new ministry to the homeless
- ❖ Start a soup kitchen or a food closet
- ❖ Establish a youth group
- ❖ Start a Stephen's Ministry program
- ❖ Run the *Alpha* program.
- ❖ Establish a small group ministry
- ❖ Improve hospitality function
- ❖ How might your church retain connections with College Students and young adults?

The list could go on. The point is, to do something that needs to be done. Do something important, that can benefit from the additional focus it will get with this approach.

Here are some other ideas that might help spark even more ideas.

LIST C

- ❖ Plan and hold an interchurch ministry fair to share ideas
- ❖ Start a “help with homework” ministry in a needy neighborhood
- ❖ Hold an Easter egg hunt for the community
- ❖ Create a safe space for GLTG persons to worship the Lord
- ❖ Lead a mission trip
- ❖ Start an Angel Tree (Prison Fellowship) ministry
- ❖ Find ways to turn families of pre-school children into church members
- ❖ Collaborate with other local churches on a ministry to young adults
- ❖ Start a health ministry
- ❖ Establish and execute a plan for reaching out to the unchurched in your area
- ❖ Hold a Contemporary Christian Music Concert outside
- ❖ Establish a summer service schedule at a campsite nearby

It will be important to reflect on and document how the project links to making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Generating new Ideas

This list may seem long, but it only scratches the surface! One way to find a good idea is to generate a lot of them. Talk to people you work with and ask what they think needs to get done. Ask something like “if we had the time to work on just one thing to make it better or to start one new thing, what would it be?” If your church has developed a vision or strategic plan, take a look at it and see if any ideas come to mind. Hold a brainstorming session with a wide variety of people in your church. Ask the Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Trustees and the Church Council. Walk door-to-door and ask the community what they think a good church should do. (That exercise could be a project in itself!). Talk to the youth and the kids. Talk with other church pastors in your area. List a lot of ideas without judging them before you start sifting through them. Share your list with other ministers who might be moved to do something new as well.

Selecting a Project

Chances are, by now you are already thinking of something and wondering if it is a good candidate. Pray. Take the list into your prayer closet and pray over it. Do this for a week while you work through some of these other exercises.

Here are some checks to use as an initial screen. These might be some of the questions the Board of Ordained Ministry might ask about your project.

- ❖ Does it meet the definition of a “project”? Does it have a beginning and an end and stand apart from the normal routine?
- ❖ What will change as a result of doing this piece of work?
- ❖ How does this fit with the vision / mission or your organization/church?
- ❖ How does it make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?
- ❖ How will you get the community to embrace this work?

- ❖ Who will be involved in the work?
- ❖ Who will be impacted by the work?
- ❖ How will you know when you are finished?
- ❖ In your wildest dreams, what would “success” look like?
- ❖ If this doesn’t work out, what is at risk?
- ❖ How will you evaluate its effectiveness?
- ❖ How will it challenge you as a leader?
- ❖ How long will this take?
- ❖ If it’s too big, can it be broken down into smaller chunks so that one can be selected to start?
- ❖ Do you have passion for this kind of work?
- ❖ Is this central to your ministry?
- ❖ Does it connect the church with the community in some way?
- ❖ How will this use your gifts and strengths?

Praying and pondering these questions should narrow your list quite a bit. If something doesn’t jump out as a winner, you might start asking folks who would get involved and see which ideas on your short list are easiest to resource. Once you have picked your project, draft your project proposal for the Board of Ordained Ministry to approve. Test this with your mentor and project sponsor if there is one (see Roles & Responsibilities section) and send it in. (Project Proposal Form is Appendix A.)

Projects in Five Phases

A five-phase project process with a total of ten steps was adapted from methods used in the secular corporate environment for development work to serve as a process for starting new ministries.¹ It is equally applicable for improving existing ministries and planning events. Depending on the complexity of the project, the five phases may be enough structure, but for most, the full complement of ten steps will be useful. Having phases and steps enables us to track progress, but it should not be too prescriptive that it cramps the style or sense of call of the church leader. The first four phases are really planning stages while the last is execution and follow-up. Careful planning increases the likelihood of success for any project!

Integral to such a phased process, are post-phase review meetings. These are good times for the project leader to meet with a coach or mentor to review the work of the previous phase and the plans for the upcoming phase. This enables the coach to provide expert feedback and input to the process without being too highly involved. Their role is to encourage, advise as needed, and to help remove barriers. Prayer must begin immediately as Phase One begins. Form a prayer support team or pick a prayer warrior for this effort. They do not have to be on the project team, but including them can focus their prayers. As a minimum, communicate regularly with them. Expect answers to prayer and be willing to wait for God’s direction.

¹ This process has been adapted by Kymm Hockman from the *Design For Growth* process developed and used at the DuPont Company, Wilmington DE 19898.

	Planning			Execution	
	Phase 1: Scope & Organization	Phase 2: Goals & Assessments	Phase 3: High Level Ministry Plan	Phase 4: Detailed Ministry Plan	Phase 5: Ministry In Action
New Ministry	What is the new ministry to be started? In what context?	What will the key features be? What are the goals & measures for “success”?	Draft Ministry Plan. How will things generally work?	Detailed ministry plan & trial runs.	New ministry is made operational.
Improved Ministry	What ministry will be improved and why?	Improved in what sense? By how much? Measured how?	What approach to improvement will be taken?	Details of changes and initial tests.	Improvements in place and ministry shows improvement.
Event Planning	Describe the event being planned – Why, why and for whom?	How big? Key features? Measures of good/bad event.	Basic outline of event – What, where, when, high-level schedule	Putting details in place and spot-testing parts.	Hold the event

Phase 1: Scope and Organization

Phase one has only one step. Step 1 is to complete a (New) Ministry Covenant Agreement, which includes the approved Project Proposal, a timeline for the project with key milestones, identification and approval of the “owner” of results, and the formation of a team/resources needed to complete the project and run the (new) ministry/event. The Project Proposal is the output of this phase. The *Project Proposal Form* is included as Appendix A. The questions on that form are:

- ❖ What is being developed or planned? Draft a clear, succinct statement of ‘what’ this project is intended to accomplish for the Kingdom and by when (Project Objective). Include measurable goals whenever possible. Give a brief statement of why this project is important to the church and what impact is expected (Motivation Statement). How will it make disciples that transform?
- ❖ Who is the new / improved ministry or event intended to serve (Target)? How will the completion of this project impact their experience of God or the church (Impact)?
- ❖ What do you expect to change as a result of this effort? What is the “fruit”? Is this connected with making disciples and transformation?
- ❖ How will you define “success”?
- ❖ What is the scope of the project? What churches or ministries are involved? What locations and timeframe, etc. What is not part of this project?

- ❖ Who will you involve in developing this new or improved ministry or planning this event?
- ❖ When will the first fruits be observable; when will the event be held?

Project scope should be carefully considered. As important as listing what is included within the boundaries of the project is a list of what is not part of the work. This sets clear expectations that can be communicated and used to gain agreement and alignment among all involved. As the project progresses, it is important to revisit the scope and make sure it hasn't expanded too much. Sometimes as knowledge is gained, the tendency is to want to expand the scope, but this can cause a project drag on too long. A better approach is to take notes, and plan for a follow up project to address the added needs after the original objectives have been met. Occasionally, something so significant will be uncovered that the scope of the project must change, but this should be deliberate.

The project scope can be communicated as part of the Project Proposal for the BOOM. It should be expected that scope will change a bit with project progression, but major changes should be communicated with a coach. The coach can help assess the impact on project completion of making such a scope change.

After Phase 1 work is completed, it is advised to submit the Project Proposal to the Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM) for approval. Once that approval is gained, move on to Phase 2. Continue in prayer and fasting. Communicate project challenges to the prayer warrior(s). Continue to seek God's affirmation or redirection. Take time to reflect on what God seems to be trying to do through this work.

Phase 2: Goals and Assessments

The key steps in this phase are to

- 2) gather input on needs for prioritizing work, and
- 3) clearly articulate specific goals for the metrics you define as key for success.

Seek input. If you are doing a project to improve a ministry, find out how and how much it needs to be improved. If it's a new ministry or event you are planning, then get ask about unmet needs or ways to connect with the community. Search the Scriptures for theological principles that may apply. Pray and discuss with your prayer warriors their sense of direction. Talk to representatives of the population you expect to impact and ask what they'd like to see result from the effort. This is perhaps the most critical piece of work in the project. Do not rush collecting input, or push your ideas at this point. Let the input guide your plan and direction. Is there anybody who has tried something like this before? If so, talk with them and learn from them. Ask about the features of the ministry or event that would maximize its positive impact.

From all this input establish the basic needs for the project to be considered a success. What will need to be developed or what specifically needs to be changed and by how much? If it is an event you are planning, what will a "great event" look like, versus a flop? These are your design or improvement goals. How will you measure progress toward these goals? What guideposts can you look for to affirm your direction or to indicate a need to adjust your course? Prioritize your efforts based in the input,

since compromises are often needed to meet timing or cost constraints. What is critical versus what is nice to have? When and how will you know you are finished?

Assessing the “fruit” is sometimes difficult. Often a primary metric is rather obvious, but there are secondary metrics that can be important as well. Below are some of the project ideas from lists above, with suggestions for how we might measure the fruit. The most obvious and perhaps the most direct measures are listed first. This is only illustrative, and is by no means intended to be exhaustive.

LIST A Metrics

- ❖ Recruiting and training five support congregations to pair with host congregations
 - Number of support congregations committed
 - Number of churches approached and informed about the ministry
 - Number of presentations made
 - Number of new volunteers engaged in the ministry
 - Number of additional recruiters trained
 - Number of families served in a year

- ❖ Renovating the attic for storage of household items, engaging volunteers.
 - Number of volunteers engaged in the work
 - Space made available for storage (cubic feet)
 - Number of clients receiving household goods from the storage area in a given time.

- ❖ Planning and carrying out a major fundraising event.
 - Money raised
 - Number of people attending the event
 - Number of people who knew about the event (number of marketing outstses?)
 - Number of people on the planning team
 - New partnerships forged
 - Did the event occur?
 - Survey responses from attendees

LIST B Metrics

- ❖ Begin a new contemporary worship service
 - Number in attendance at the worship service
 - Number of formerly unchurched people attending
 - Number of people praying for the new worship service
 - Number of people participating in leadership of the service (new?)
 - Number of houses receiving fliers about the new service
 - Number and breadth of email blasts about the new service.
 - Feedback from those who attended (survey)

- ❖ Start a prayer ministry
 - Number of people participating in the prayer ministry
 - Number of requests to be put on the prayer list

- Number of responses reflecting answered prayer
- ❖ Establish a youth group
 - How many youth come to each event?
 - How many different youth are touched by the ministry in a month?
 - How many youth bring their friends?
 - Number of connects made with the community to reach the youth
 - Number of expressions of faith from the youth
 - Number of new ideas for ministry or activities coming from youth. Number of youth making the suggestions.
 - Number of people involved in trying to start the new ministry.

LIST C Metrics

- ❖ Plan and hold an interchurch ministry fair to share ideas
 - Number of churches interested in participating
 - Number of ministries highlighted from each church
 - Number of people attending the fair
 - Number of fliers distributed and people contacted by email about the event
 - Number of new actionable ideas resulting from the fair across the collection of participating congregations.
 - Number of people engaged in the planning and execution of the event.
- ❖ Hold an Easter egg hunt for the community
 - Number of eggs hidden and found by kids
 - Number of kids participating
 - Number of kids outside out church participating
 - Number of new families attending the event (who don't normally attend church)
 - Number of volunteers engaged in the preparation and execution of the hunt.
- ❖ Lead a short-term mission trip
 - Number of people going along on the mission trip
 - Number of people praying for them while they are gone
 - Number of people served by the mission
 - Number of people otherwise not connected with the church supporting the trip
 - Money raised/spent

Phase 2 is complete when the goals are clear and based on broad input, and metrics for success are defined. This is a good time to meet with the coach, results owner and prayer warriors for updates. Continue in prayer and fasting.

Phase 3: High Level Ministry / Event Plan & Evaluation

While the previous phases answered a lot of “what will we do and why” questions, this phase will begin to answer “how will we do it”, at least at a high level. Consider the input collected in Phase 2 closely and outline a plan for the ministry that will meet the needs identified and produce fruit as you intend to measure it. Don’t just list one way the ministry could go and do it, but consider different ways and weigh the pros and cons of each. The key here is to plan by considering lots of creative options and selecting those that match the mission and objectives from the previous phase best. Think outside the box and have fun.

For example, suppose you are planning a Christian music concert targeted toward youth in your area – churched, and especially unchurched. Some questions you might answer here include the following, along with some options for each that you might consider. Again, the list is far from exhaustive.

Where will you hold the concert?

Inside or outside

At a church or in a more secular location

Which church or secular location? (long list of options here)

Who will be performing?

Praise teams from local churches by invitation

Any Christian band who wants to, by application

“open mike” style

A mix of the above

A professional feature band or not? Which one?

When will this be?

A summer evening

An all-day event

Fall, Christmas? Easter? – with a holiday?

These are not the details like how will you manage sound equipment or how will you advertise and handle registrations. These are the high level design points. Get these set before putting details in place in the next phase.

Consider outlining a couple or three complete options and asking a group of youth what they think will be best? Ask the ministry team and some random unchurched youth. Perhaps have a youth do this gathering of initial feedback. This is called your Initial Assessment or Test of Concept. Get a healthy dose of feedback before plowing ahead, or you risk putting a lot of work into a bad idea. Get feedback while you can still change things rather easily. Plus it begins advertising the event a bit.

Phase three is complete when you have alignment on the ministry or event’s high-level plan (after considering various alternatives), and initial feedback on that plan from your target community. Plan the next phase of work by gathering the resources you will need to pull all the details together and execute. Check in with your coach, and the prayer team with updates. Continue in prayer and fasting.

Phase 4: Detailed Ministry Roadmap / Event Plan and Test Runs

There are three steps in this phase.

6. Ministry Roadmap: Put together the all the pieces needed to pull it off
7. Pilot Plan: Initial trial run and feedback
8. Plan to Sustain: How will this continue and/or improve? Will this be repeated?

Fill in the details to the high level plans you made in the previous phase. For the concert example, we would decide how to advertise, how to manage the stage, sound equipment and any chairs that might be needed, registration process, security, payment, bathrooms, T-shirts, vendors, and all the other details. The idea is to create a rather detailed plan, but be willing to depart from the plan as the Spirit leads. Gather your team together and look at your plan. Ask what can go wrong and take action to prevent such things. Ask if it improves whatever you set out to improve in Phase 1. Keep it as simple as you can, and focus on the input you heard in Phase 2. You can always follow up later with another project to either repeat or enhance the ministry plan from this one. If you hit any major roadblocks, you may need to go back to Phase 3 and look at the other alternatives you identified there to see if one of those may help you around the roadblock.

If it's possible, run some test runs. For the concert plan, you may need to test the on-line registration process. You may need to go listen to some of the bands ahead of time. You probably need to test the sound system with the most complex set-up it will need, or specify exactly what your sound system can handle to the bands well ahead of concert day. Test what you can. Have back-up plans for risks you cannot test. If you plan an outdoor concert, what will you do if it rains?

If the project is to plan and execute an event, then the plan to sustain is really the plan of activities after the event. Will there be any plans to repeat and do we need to plan for that now? Perhaps you might announce next year's concert date if you plan to repeat it. Or maybe you plan to scale back and hold monthly coffee houses of the same type of music and this is the kick-off. What will be the plan surrounding the future, ongoing nature of this ministry? Establish a process for collecting and responding to feedback on an ongoing basis. For all types of projects, there should be a plan for on-the-fly decision making during the execution phase. If X happens, we will do Y. If Z happens, then we will do P, etc.

This phase ends with the actual launch of the new/improved ministry or with the event. Make a big deal of it. Advertise! The planning is coming to an end and execution is around the corner. Kick up the prayer a notch!

Phase 5: Ministry in Action

Four phases went into planning and it is now time to execute and reap the harvest! There are two steps in this final Phase.

9. Ministry In Action: Measuring the fruit
10. Project Closure : Sharing/communicating the effort and results with others.

The (new) ministry is occurring. Revisit the Phase 2 metrics and begin keeping track for a time. There is no need to burden the ministry with keeping a lot of statistics, but do take time to measure the fruit you intended to harvest with this ministry. Are things unfolding as you expected? If not, it does not imply failure. Learn from it. What would you repeat the next time (or recommend to someone else trying a similar project) and what would you change? If this is a new, ongoing ministry, perhaps you can respond to the metrics and make adjustments to the ministry plan to improve the results going forward. Take time to measure fruit initially, and then on occasion look at them again at some appropriate frequency.

Document what you learned and communicate what you experienced through the planning and execution of this project. Provisional clergy members will prepare their project report for BoOM at this point. You should prepare brief (one-paragraph) answers to the following questions in your written project description.

*Relate an experience of project leadership in your ministry that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Document what you learned and communicate what you experienced through the planning and execution of this project. **INCLUDE a copy of your approved "Ordination Project Proposal"**. Add to it short, one-paragraph answers to the following questions. The additional written work should not exceed about 3 pages.*

- a. *State the project objective and the degree to which you think you achieved it.*
- b. *Restate how you believe this project makes disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, along with brief theological reflection. (Either include the statements right from the Proposal or change it to what you believe now if your understanding has changed.)*
- c. *Describe your resourcing approach. Did you use a team or do most of the work yourself? How did the community come to embrace your plan for this project? (Those who helped with planning, those needed for execution and/or those impacted by this work.)*
- d. *Leading and Equipping: How did you provide leadership during this project? Who did you lead? How did you equip others during this project? Who did you equip?*
- e. *Share your assessment of the fruitfulness of this project.*
- f. *What did you learn from this process, from both what went well and from what did not go as planned?*

The project is complete, and documented. Ministry is either continuing as planned and is now part of the fabric of the church, or the event is over. Even projects that did not go as well as planned are valuable learning experiences that bear fruit in our lives and for the Kingdom. Focus on the positive. Congratulations! You've completed a ministry project!

Ministry Project 10-Step Process



Roles & Responsibilities

The **Project Leader** (Provisional clergy member) has primary responsibility for planning and executing the project plan, including goal-setting, budget, schedule, staffing / resources and communications. The project leader provides status updates to their supervision and mentor/coach on a regular basis. He or she prepares the project proposal and post-project report for the BoOM. Finally, the project leader resolves conflicts as needed.

The **Project Sponsor** is the person who will be responsible for the ongoing work of the ministry after the project to establish it is complete. They are responsible for the ministry context within which the project occurs. If the project is a mission project for the church, then perhaps the Missions Committee Chair or Council Chair is the sponsor. If the project is an event, this is the person who is responsible for the context within which the ministry event occurs. This could be the Senior Pastor at a church (not the Provisional Member) or it could be a head of Trustees, Council chair, the District Superintendent, etc. The role of this person is to communicate the vision of the broader ministry area, support the project leader in their efforts and remove any barriers they have the authority to remove. They are to stay in contact with the project leader throughout the project and help with whatever linkages and networking might be needed to facilitate the work. If they manage the ministry finances, they will work with the project leader to manage the project budget.

The **Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM)** only has a role in the project if it is being completed by a Provision Member in order to meet the requirements for ordination, as found in the Book of Discipline 2012. When the BoOM commissions a new member, they should include a note about this new requirement in the letter of recommendations and requirements sent to the newly Commissioned person right after Commissioning. Recommended wording for this notification has been provided. Members of the BoOM are then responsible to receive and review Project Proposals within a month of their submission. They are responsible to communicate approval or rejection of the proposal with appropriate explanation within that month. They are to suggest ways to adjust and encourage the Provisional Member to adjust the proposal in any way needed to gain approval. There is a guideline for the BoOM to follow in assessing Project Proposals. The BoOM is also responsible for assessing the completed and documented project as part of the Ordination packet. The hope is that they would be instructive, rather than critical in their review of projects for the first few years that this requirement is being implemented.

The **Provisional Member's Mentor** is to stay close to the project and provide instructive feedback after each Phase of work. It is best if the Mentor ask open questions that will guide the Provisional Member to find answers to the important questions, rather than dictate to the project leader how to run the project. The mentor is a cheerleader and encourager. But if redirection is needed, they can help facilitate a quick redirect.

The **Provisional Group** plays a peer review role. They can listen to a description of the project plan at one of the monthly meetings and provide feedback as the Provisional Member/Project Leader requests. They can be used to brainstorm solutions to challenges or to test out new ministry ideas.

The **District Committee on Ministry (dCOM)** should be aware of the requirement of all commissioned clergy following the 2012 Book of Discipline to complete a project and should inform them of that requirement prior to Commissioning. This will enable the new Provisional Member to start thinking about the project right away, as it can take some time to complete before Ordination.

Communications

Effective communication is one of the keys to successful projects. The project leader should engender the mindset of bringing as many others into the “circle of the informed” as possible and practical. Networking is great for gathering support and resources; sometimes just talking about a piece of work enables a key connection to be made that simplifies the overall effort.

If this project is being completed to satisfy the ordination requirement for a Provisional Clergy Member, it is recommended to communicate with **the BoOM** early and to check in again before the final paper is due. Make sure the Project Proposal is well thought out, and clear to ensure that the BoOM understands what work is being done to complete the requirement. This greatly improves the chances that the BoOM will be satisfied with the project work at the time of Ordination interviews. The BoOM has responsibility to communicate to the Provisional Member any concerns they might have about the Project Proposal within a month of receiving it. Once this initial concern is voiced, the Provisional Member’s Mentor can help work through those concerns on an ongoing basis. It is up to the Provisional Member to meet the requirements, but the BoOM should make clear their concerns, especially if they anticipate withholding approval of the project work.

NOTE: The project requirement write-up is submitted as part of the total Ordination packet and is not a separate go/no-go decision for BoOM. It contributes or takes away from the overall strength of the Ordination package. BoOM’s should be looking for strong leadership and organization skills, as evidenced by this project work, and Provisional Members should be selecting projects that allow them to use and show their capabilities. Can the Provisional Member clearly articulate how their work on this project relates to making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world? The candidate’s affinity for risk-taking is also evidenced in the work. Are they willing to take risks? How do they manage them? How do they react to set-backs or even project “failure”? This project is simply another way for a Provisional Member to reveal their gifts for ministry as well as their growth areas. This is not a pass/fail evaluation, but a different opportunity to assess the provisional member’s skills in ministry.

The **District Superintendent** is perhaps the best informed about what is going on across the connection and can help point the project leader toward those who can be helpful. Make sure he or she is kept informed of the project status at key points. Ask deliberately if anyone else has attempted something similar that you should speak with; does he or she see any potential barriers to the project's success? Tap into this wealth of wisdom. The DS should be informing candidates just prior to Commissioning of the requirements for Ordination they can anticipate. A mention of the requirement to successfully complete a project as early as possible allows the candidate to take ample time to find a suitable piece of work to attempt over the next 18 months.

It is with the **Project Sponsor** and the **Mentor** that the Provisional Member should be communicating most with on a regular basis. Touch base after the completion of each Phase and give an update on progress and plans. Revisit how fruit will be measured, timing and scope. The Sponsor and Mentor should help as much as possible to remove barriers or suggest how to get around them. It is the responsibility of the Provisional Member to initiate these conversations.

All project leaders, whether or not they are required to complete the project, should be communicating clearly and often to the **project stakeholders**. These are those people who will be impacted by the project in any way. In addition to those listed above, stakeholders may include leadership of the local church, agency representatives, community leaders, other ministry leaders, etc. Make sure anyone who will be touched by this project and/or ministry knows about the effort under way. Continually listen to their input and make any adjustments to plan that are needed. Engage as many as possible to be champions of the work you are leading.

Closing Comments

What minister doesn't want to become more effective in ministry? Looking at ministry as "projects" can be useful as a means of gaging our growth. Setting goals for a specific objective and then purposely moving toward that, is a way to manage work and show progress. It also allows opportunities for others to become engaged in short-term commitment work, rather than signing up to be on a committee for some unspecified period of time. People are more willing to engage for a specific purpose for a specified time. Becoming better ministry project leaders can make us more effective in engaging others in ministry. If we model good project leadership for others, we can also eventually groom them to take on leadership of ministry projects. Don't misunderstand - some ministries are by nature on-going and are not conducive to the project approach. But where we can, let's organize our work in a way that engages as many others as possible in Kingdom Work.



If this guide has helped you in leading your project, let me know. If you see ways this needs to be improved and you care enough to tell me so, please let me know that too. I can be contacted through the Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the UMC. Use the on-line clergy locator.

Appendix A: The Project Proposal Form



Ordination Project Proposal

Provisional Member Name: _____

Deacon ____ / Elder ____ (Check one)

District/Conference: _____

Date of Proposal submission: _____

Anticipated Ordination Year: _____

Title of Project: _____

Address each of the following with just a few sentences. The length of this proposal should be about three pages or less.

1. **OBJECTIVE:** What is being developed, improved or planned? In just a sentence or two, describe what this project is about.
2. **WHO BENEFITS?** Who is the (new) ministry intended to serve? That is, who will benefit from this project and in what way? (Could be more than one group, but be specific.)
3. **MOTIVATING CONTEXT:** Describe the ministry context that addresses why this should be done here and why now?
4. **SCOPE:** What is the scope of the project? When will it start, end? Name the major steps or major activities are part of this project.
5. **TEAM:** Who did you involve in the selection of this project and how? Who will be involved in planning and executing this project?
6. **THEOLOGICAL BASIS:** Provide some theological basis for this project in the form of a statement that explicitly expresses how this project will make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Be as specific as possible.
7. **FRUIT:** What methods do you expect to use to assess the "fruit" of this project? (Connect this with making disciples of Jesus Christ and/or transforming the world.)
8. **CHECK POINTS:** When will the first fruits be observable? What will you look for as a sign to reconsider or change direction?

Submit this Project Proposal to the Board of Ordained Ministry's Ordination Project Subcommittee Chairperson within about six months of Commissioning (assuming 2 years between Commissioning and Ordination). Either electronic or hard copy submission is fine. (Electronic is preferred.)

Peninsula-Delaware Ordination Project Proposal Form: July 2017



"Let's start something together!"



Ordination Project Proposal

The Board of Ordained Ministry will review this proposal and respond within a month. Approval of this proposal implies that the successful completion of a project like the one described here seems like an appropriate way for this Provisional Member to demonstrate fruitfulness in ministry. The completion of this project will be documented and assessed as part of the Ordination Process. If the Provisional Member decides to change projects, or if the goals or plans for this project change significantly from what is documented here, a new Project Proposal should be submitted. Minor changes are expected, and can be discussed with the Provisional Group Leader or Mentor. When in doubt, ask the BOOM's representative.

Signature of Provisional Member:

Board of Ordained Ministry: Approved _____ / Not Approved* _____ (Check One)

Signature of ~~BoOM~~ Representative:

*If not approved, please provide an explanation and guidance on what adjustments are needed. Attach these comments to this form and return within one month of submission date.