



Ordination Project Guidelines for The Board of Ordained Ministry

Introduction

Starting with the *2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* it is required that each Provisional Member (Commissioned Deacons and Commissioned Elders) “*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).* A separate guide has been developed as a tool for helping the Provisional Member 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.

This document (Guidelines for BoOM) is intended to guide members of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM) in their review of project proposals and project write-ups submitted as part of the Ordination packet.

Ordination Project Requirement Process

Step 1: BoOM communicates to the newly commissioned person the requirement to complete a project. This can be done with the other recommendations communicated after their commissioning. Suggested wording for this communication is included below.

Step 2: It is required that Provisional Members submit to BoOM a Project Proposal using a specified form, soon after Commissioning. This outlines what they intend to do to fulfill this requirement and gives the BoOM an opportunity to observe the project or to redirect the plan early on. Guidelines for reviewing these are given below.

Step 3: Provisional Member leads the project to completion and writes it up as part of the Ordination packet. Basic questions to address are provided in their guide and are shown below.

Step 4: BoOM reviews the project as part of the Ordination Packet. 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.

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.

Much work today is accomplished through projects. It could be argued that it is easier to engage volunteers on projects, with defined boundaries, than it is to convince them to join a committee. 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. These guides are 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.

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 an effective 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 needs a sense of how to tackle work in an organized way. That is what the guide hopes to outline.

The BoOM should make sure the “Leading Ministry Projects” Guide is made available to the Provisional Members just after Commissioning. (Posted on web site.)

Step 1: Communicate the Requirement

Here are some words that can be used to inform the newly commissioned of the project requirement. This can be included in the initial feedback letter with other recommendations.

“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)*. Since projects take some time to complete, we recommend that you select a project very soon and get started. Project Proposals should be submitted to BoOM for approval within the next six months and the final project work is to be documented as part of your Ordination packet. A guide to help select



and complete ministry projects and the Project Proposal Form are available on the Conference web page.”

Step 2: The Project Proposal.

The form the Provisional Member is to use to submit the Ordination Project Proposal is attached. It should be made available on the Conference web site. It is recommended that the Proposal be submitted within about six months after Commissioning, if the person expects to seek Ordination in two years following Commissioning. There are many reasons why a project might be stopped or redirected after the proposal is submitted and approved, and if this is the case, a new proposal form should be submitted. The approval of the form simply means that the BOOM believes this is a good project for demonstrating and assessing skills in project selection, planning and execution.

The Board of Ordained Ministry might consider the following in evaluating the proposal. These are not requirements, but things to consider in judging the strength of a proposal.

- ❖ Is the proposal clear and does it address all the questions adequately?
- ❖ Does it meet the definition of a “project”? Does it have a beginning and an end and stand apart from the normal routine?
- ❖ Is it of a manageable size/scope to be completed in roughly a year, along with other ministry responsibilities? Is this central to the person’s ministry appointment?
- ❖ Does it pass the “reasonableness” test? Does your gut say this will work?
- ❖ If it does not work out, can any harm result?
- ❖ Is it clear what will change as a result of doing this piece of work?
- ❖ How does this fit with the vision / mission of the organization/church?
- ❖ How likely are they to get the community to embrace this work?
- ❖ Who will be involved in the work?
- ❖ Who will be impacted by the work?
- ❖ What does “successful completion” of the project look like?
- ❖ How will the minister evaluate its effectiveness? Do you agree with this evaluation?
- ❖ How will it challenge the minister as a leader?
- ❖ Can you hear passion for this kind of work in the proposal?
- ❖ Does it connect the church with the community in some way?
- ❖ How will this use the minister’s gifts and strengths?

The BoOM should review this proposal and either approve or redirect with guidance on adjustments recommended within one month of receipt. If a significant rewrite is needed, instruct the Provisional Member to resubmit the new Proposal.

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.)



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.

Step 3: Run and Write-up the Project

The Provisional Member leads the project to completion and writes it up as part of the Ordination packet. It is recommended that the Provisional Member present the project to their Provisional Group for feedback before submitting the final write-up to BoOM. The requirements for the final project write-up are stated below.

*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?*

Step 4: BoOM reviews the project as part of the Ordination Packet.

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. BoOMs should be looking for strong leadership and organizational skills, as evidenced by this project work, and Provisional Members should be selecting projects that allow them to use and show their capabilities.

Areas to consider in the assessment are given below. (PM=Provisional Member).

- ❖ How well did the PM articulate the manner in which this work makes disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?
- ❖ How did the PM demonstrate people leadership skills?

- ❖ How did the PM demonstrate organizational skills?
- ❖ Was the work “fruitful” in some way – either the way intended by the PM or through their learning experience?
- ❖ What is the PM’s affinity for risk-taking as evidenced in the work?
- ❖ How do they react to set-backs or when a project doesn’t go as planned?
- ❖ What is the mention or role of Spiritual Disciplines in the work?
- ❖ Does the write-up illustrate a mature self-awareness of leadership capabilities and development needs?

Closing

In general, when assessing the Proposal, the BoOM is assessing WHAT work will be done. In assessing the final write-up, the BoOM is assessing HOW the project was executed. This project should enable BoOM to better assess this candidate for Ordination. I gives some candidates a new way to shine and display their gifts for ministry, unlike the others, but it can also further challenge other struggling candidates.

There are still considerations in assessing projects and candidates that are not easily addressed through documents and guides, but will require discussion in the BoOM subcommittee. For example, how will we address appointment changes in the period between commissioning and ordination, and the impact of such a change on a project? (A general recommendation is to avoid this issue by selecting small enough projects.) What if a provisional member is not ordained on their first attempt? Will a second project be required? (A general recommendation is to answer this on a case-by-case basis.) There are other issues of which we are not yet aware, as we are still learning how to benefit from this process. These documents will be updated as we learn through the use of this process.