

# ***Lay Pastor Training Course Blueprint***

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## **Impetus for the Course**

To obey Christ's command to take the gospel to the world (Matthew 28:18-20), Pennsylvania Conference needs more workers. Jesus' words are still true today that "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2 NIV). The number of congregations in Pennsylvania Conference has not increased in more than 50 years. In the same period, the number of ordained pastors decreased by almost 29% (due to financial limitations). To fulfill the mission of Christ and reach new communities for God, Pennsylvania Conference needs more part-time and volunteer leaders who can lead current churches and allow full-time pastors to plant new churches. Trained lay pastors are the best solution.

Until now, there has not been an objectively developed, readily accessible, and streamlined training program available. This course was developed by asking Pennsylvania Conference pastors which skills are most important to pastoral success. Their answers were compared with the apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy and found to be the same. Thus, this course is guided by both ancient wisdom and current pastoral experience.

## **Course Objectives**

The objectives, or desired results, of this course are as follows:

To teach students the skills needed for both initial acceptance and long-term success as lay pastors of existing churches of the Pennsylvania Conference.

To help students legitimize their calling in a tangible way by earning a certificate of completion.

## **Educational Philosophy**

The educational philosophy that guides this course includes three related principles. The first is the belief that each student already has certain elements of knowledge, experience, and natural skill that can be applied to the ministry task. The second is the belief that each pastoral competency has basic foundational elements that, if taught and practiced, will guide a natural and personalized development in that competency. The third is the belief that these competencies are best developed through practice in real ministry settings. These principles are applied by (1) teaching the most essential principles that underlie each competency without requiring the student to do excessive reading or non-ministry

productive busywork, and (2) assigning the student a practical ministry application exercise for each set of principles learned.

## **Class Modules**

The five class modules are based on the five pastoral competencies rated highest among Pennsylvania Conference pastors (which are also present in Paul's instruction to Timothy). They are spiritual vitality, biblical preaching, people skills, spiritual leadership, and team building. The more specific class sessions are based on these modules. The amount of time given to each module corresponds to the ranking given it by the pastors surveyed. The order of presentation constitutes a natural progression of ministry development. See class descriptions below for details:

### **Course Introduction:**

This session outlines the rationale, educational approach, end results, and expectations for the course.

### **Spiritual vitality:**

*Spiritual Development for Ministry*—This session explores the role of personal spirituality in effective ministry. It offers insights for developing a stronger personal bond with God and for fostering spiritual growth in others.

### **Biblical preaching:**

*Biblical Foundations of Preaching*—This session establishes the biblical mandate, scope, and purpose of preaching and develops the student's ability to study the Bible for the purpose of preaching.

*A Framework for Biblical Preaching*—This session presents a framework for sermon development. It takes the mystery out of sermon formation by helping students identify the basic building blocks of sermon creation.

*Mastering Sermon Delivery*—This session teaches advanced skills for expanding sermon impact. It identifies keys to improved sermon delivery and audience reception.

### **People skills:**

*Emotional Intelligence in Ministry*—This session explores how to develop the people skills necessary to thrive in ministry. It identifies the often sensed but usually unnamed skills of pastors who win the hearts of parishioners.

*Pastoral Counseling*—This session provides tools to meaningfully counsel those in crisis. It also helps students know when to refer a person to a professional counselor.

*Managing Conflict*—This session teaches skills for defusing and resolving conflicts in the church. It provides principles and models for managing conflict.

### **Spiritual leadership:**

*Spiritual Leaders of History*—This session offers a survey of past spiritual leaders who accomplished great change against the odds. Special attention is given to the leadership traits and spiritual dedication that drove them.

*Spiritual Servant Leadership*—This session outlines both biblical perspectives and recent thinking on leadership theory. It provides principles and tools that help leaders lead in godly ways and godly directions.

### **Team building:**

*A Theology of Church*—This session develops a biblical understanding of church function and structure, providing a framework for building the church into a biblical team.

*Becoming a Ministry Mentor*—This session presents methods for developing others into ministry. It gives principles of approach and suggests a process to be applied.

### **Requirements and Student Rating**

*Class Attendance*—The student is expected to be present at each class session. In the event that this is truly impossible, arrangements may be made to make up for the session missed.

*Ministry Application*—The student will complete an in-ministry assignment in the month following each class session. Most of these assignments are practical rather than academic and are designed to require the minimum time investment needed to learn the skills intended (more information for each assignment will be given in class). A report is required for each, simply describing the ministry performed and the most significant lessons learned. In most cases, these reports should take no more than 10-15 minutes to prepare. Submitting reports via email is preferred.

**Doctrinal Studies**—The student will write their own ten-part Bible study series, covering the basic doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Each study should be designed to take 20-30 minutes to present. These studies will later serve as a tool for introducing others to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The doctrinal content of each study is included below. The numbers in parentheses are the numerals assigned the doctrines to be covered by that study (see <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html> or any official listing of the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs).

1. The Composition of Scripture (1)
2. The Godhead (2-5)
3. Creation and the Nature of Man (6-7)
4. Sin, Salvation, and Spiritual Growth (8-11, 22)
5. The Church as Body and Remnant (12-14, 21)
6. Christian Rituals (15-16)
7. Spiritual Gifts and Prophecy (17-18)
8. The Law of God and the Sabbath (19-20)
9. Marriage and the Family (23)
10. The End of Sin and the Restoration (24-28)

**Student Rating**—The student will be given a rating at the end of the course that reflects the percentage of coursework completed. This rating is calculated according to the following criteria:

|                      |         |                     |
|----------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Class attendance     | 10 x 35 | 350 points          |
| Ministry application | 10 x 55 | 550 points          |
| Doctrinal studies    | 10 x 10 | 100 points          |
| <b>Total</b>         |         | <b>1,000 points</b> |

*Note: Student ratings will be made available to the Pennsylvania Conference President, and otherwise kept confidential. If the student wishes their rating not to be made available to the Conference President, their request will be respected if submitted in writing.*

### **Class and Assignment Schedule**

Following is the complete schedule of course activities, including class sessions and assignments due. On each date listed below, classes will be two hours long, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

- February 10
  - Course Introduction
  - Class: Spiritual Development in Ministry
- March 2
  - Class: Biblical Foundations of Preaching

- Assignment due: The Composition of Scripture (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Spiritual development plan (half page)
- April 6
  - Class: A Framework for Biblical Preaching
  - Assignment due: The Godhead (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Preaching text summary (half page)
- May 11
  - Class: Mastering Sermon Delivery
  - Assignment due: Creation and the Nature of Man (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Complete sermon outline or manuscript
- June 1
  - Class: Emotional Intelligence in Ministry
  - Assignment due: Sin, Salvation, and Spiritual Growth (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Sermon report (critique of fellow student)
- July 13
  - Class: Pastoral Counseling
  - Assignment due: The Church as Body and Remnant (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Social observation report (one page)
- August 3
  - Class: Managing Conflict
  - Class: Spiritual Leaders of History
  - Assignment due: Christian Rituals (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Social participation report (one page)
- September 7
  - Class: Spiritual Servant Leadership
  - Assignment due: Spiritual Gifts and Prophecy (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Leader biography report (half page)
- October 5
  - Class: A Theology of Church
  - Assignment due: The Law of God and the Sabbath (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Personal leadership philosophy report (one page)
- November 2
  - Class: Becoming a Ministry Mentor
  - Assignment due: Marriage and the Family (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Biblical leadership plan (one page)
- December 12
  - Assignment due: The End of Sin and the Restoration (study guide)
  - Assignment due: Mentorship agreement (one page)