

TEAM Work: A Primer *(Updated 3-7-18)*

This primer is designed to serve as an introduction to Bethany Baptist Church's Theological Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Work program. It will explain the mission, purpose, values, terms, tracks, and procedures of the program. Though this program is still in its infancy and very fluid by nature, this paper will attempt to provide clarity as to how a person can participate in the program.

Mission and Core Values:

Mission Statement:

"The mission of the Theological Education And Mentoring Work Program is to glorify God by enabling Bethany Baptist Church to effectively train men in a church-based context for Great Commission ministry, local church leadership, Christian service, and multi-generational impact."

Core Values:

- Because the local church is God's discipleship mechanism, Christian education should be church-based, not merely church-housed.
- We desire to train the heart as well as inform the head, fostering ordinate affections as well as imparting accurate information.
- Our goal is to pass on truth in such a way that others can further passed it on to other people and generations.
- The goal is to foster lifelong learning and wisdom, rather than just knowledge.
- The program must include hands-on learning that participates in authentic ministry.
- Mentoring from pastors and experienced Christians is an essential part of Christian education.
- Comprehensive assessments that focuses on character and giftedness, in addition to academic knowledge.

Terminology:

The terms used for the TEAM program are quite different from ones used in a traditional college or seminary setting. As such they will require some definition. It may also be profitable to explain why these terms are used.

The labels for TEAM's tracks (apprenticeship, journeymanship, and mastership) harken back to the old "guild system". In that system a young man would **apprentice** with a master craftsman and learn in the context of working. Then he would become a **journeyman** and continue to advance in skills in his trade through practical involvement. After completing a great work (masterpiece), he would become a **master**, and be qualified to teach others. These terms

emphasize both the practical, hands-on training and the mentoring aspect of education. Thus, it seems to be a more accurate representation of what we offer.

In the TEAM tracks, an apprentice is mentored by a pastor while learning in the local church context. This is an approach to education known as “situated learning”¹ “which essentially means that educators pay attention to the context as well as the content to make sure that they match in a manner to optimize development.”² A technical term used to describe the student in this context is “legitimate peripheral participation”³. Our apprentices have a “legitimate” place in the church ministry and can therefore rightly “participate” in that ministry. At the same time they are still “peripheral”, that is, not a part of the core leadership team.

Our journeyman programs are longer and more advanced than our apprenticeship programs. Like journeymen of the past, there’s also an emphasis in putting knowledge into action. Each journeyman candidate will regularly record how they are applying the information they learn and are required to fulfill and ministry-related practicum.

Our mastership program is still in development. However, we can already envision a skeletal structure for these programs. Master candidates will be required to complete some kind of *magnum opus* (masterpiece), similar to a dissertation. There will also be a large emphasis on equipping masters to pass on truths to others.

These terms are actually designed to make you think of something other than a traditional Bible college program. I’ve found that using traditional terminology locks us into that paradigm. Using more unique terminology frees us to create our own *ethos*.

Below I show (very roughly) how these terms relate to the traditional terms. It must be emphasized though that it’s unfair to compare the TEAM program to Bible college or seminary education. All parallels eventually breakdown and students starting TEAM Work with traditional education in mind will be disappointed. To work, the TEAM program must be allow to stand on its own merits, without being compared to other paradigms.

TEAM Terminology:	Rough traditional equivalent:
Apprenticeship	Associates degree
Journeyman	Masters of arts degree
Mastership	Masters of divinity degree

¹Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York: Cambridge, 1991)

²“[Practicum Manual](#)” (Ames: BILD International, 2016) p. 6

³Ibid.

You will notice that we actually have no equivalent to a traditional, four-year bachelor's degree. This is because we offer very specialized training that doesn't include general education or liberal arts. Our focus is strictly on church-based leadership development. In that respect, we're closer to a seminary than a Bible college.

List of tracks

Below is a list of tracks offered by the TEAM Work program. More details can be found in the "TEAM Work Tracks" article.

- Apprenticeship in Diaconate Studies
- Apprenticeship in Eldership Studies
- Apprenticeship in Church Planting
- Apprenticeship in Bible Study
- Journeymanhood in Pastoral Studies
- Journeymanhood in Theology
- Mastership in Pastoral Apologetics (in progress)
- Mastership in Missions and Church Planting (in progress)

Procedures:

While many of the details are still in development, we know that the local church will be heavily involved in the entire education process, not just in theory but in fact. Therefore, here's a proposal for how the process will work:

- Candidate is interviewed by a pastor or pastors. The Elder Board will have the final call as to whether a candidate is admitted into the program.
- Pastor(s) and student do an initial assessment(s) according to the guidelines of the track.
- Student takes the academic courses, do the practicum, and complete the projects while serving in local church ministry.
- Pastor(s) and student do a final assessment(s) per track guidelines.
- The student is interviewed by the Elder Board in a process similar to an ordination council.
- The student is recommended to the church for examination.
- If all goes well, the church confers upon the student the respective title and his certificate is signed by the church leadership.

How it works:

How does a student actually go through a TEAM Work track? A student must begin by selecting a track. We recommend that this decision be made after seeking the advice of a pastor and/or mentor. A student cannot earn a journeymanhood until he has completed an apprenticeship.

However, he can begin to take journeyman courses before he completes an apprenticeship track.

Each student will be given a spreadsheet to help him track his progress. Because TEAM is built around the organic needs of Bethany Baptist Church, classes will not always be given in a consistent order. This will require both the students and overseers to keep track of what work has been done and what work still needs to be done.

One of the first things that will happen is that the student will complete a series of assessments. Each track requires different assessments. The student will complete each assessment on himself. A pastor and/or mentor will also complete an assessment on the student. These assessments will be compared and discussed. Follow-up assessments will be completed annually or as needed.

The actual academic courses will be taken throughout the week, either in an evening class or as a Sunday school elective. Again, the order in which these courses are taken will vary depending on the needs and requirements of church ministry.

In each course, the student will be required to demonstrate an understanding of certain concepts pertaining to the course. For example, the "Biblical Theology of Eldership" course requires students to "Demonstrate a biblical understanding of the role of elders and how it integrates into the overall ministry of the church." A student can prove his understanding of this concept through a written essay. This paper will be graded by the pastors of Bethany Baptist Church or other instructors in the TEAM program.

These papers will be graded on the following criteria: Clarity, Thoroughness, Comprehension, Accuracy, and Substantiveness. The program instructors will grade the paper by each of these criteria on a 1 to 5 scale. A 4 or higher is necessary to pass. If the instructors find the essay to be in any way unsatisfactory, they will suggest changes and ask that the student make appropriate modifications. Once the student proves the appropriate level competency, he will be "passed".

Journeymanship tracks also require a practicum. This is "learning by doing". The student will perform a needed function in the church, often preaching or teaching. As he engages in this ministry, he will receive counsel from those in the church. He's also be responsible to keep track of what is learned through the practical experience.

Toward the end of the track, students will complete a series of projects. These projects are designed to take all the information from the track and put it into practice. These projects will be presented to the Elders during the oral finals.

These oral finals will take place after a student completes all the necessary requirements for the track. The Elders will question the student on his projects and ask him to defend the positions found in them. If satisfied, the Elders will recommend him to the church.

This is not so much to see if the student is allowed to “graduate” as it is the last exercise in developing his character. In being commended to the church, a student goes through a similar process as a perspective elder or deacon would. Church members will be invited to assess the student’s qualifications and make that assessment known to the Elders.

After satisfactorily completing all the requirements and going through the necessary steps, the student will awarded a certificate of completion. This certificate will have be signed by the church leadership and have the backing of Bethany Baptist Church.

Example certificate:

Under the authority of

Bethany Baptist Church, Des Moines, Iowa

The Council of Elders, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures of the

Theological Education And Mentoring Work Program,

Has conferred upon

John A. Doe

The Certificate of

Apprenticeship in Example

To testify thereof we have affixed our signatures in the City of Des Moines in the State of Iowa on the _____th Day of the month of _____, A.D. 20____

Signatures