

Training Conference

Guidelines for Execution and Adaptation

This is a training conference. Training cannot be accomplished by sloppy execution. As a Christian ministry we want to conduct ourselves as Christ, and that means gentleness with conviction.

Following are guidelines that are essential to fulfilling the aim of this conference. Ignoring these guidelines will compromise the integrity of the training and degrade the learning experience.

However, they must be applied with wisdom in light of the immediate situation and personnel.

General Guidelines

1. Everyone must register by the deadline. We are training students to be mature Christians.
2. There must be a registration fee. This will cover the cost of materials, and also create buy-in on the part of the participants.
3. Everyone attending, including staff, must complete the pre-course assignment.
4. Participants must attend the whole conference. If someone cannot attend all sessions, he should be directed to attend the conference at another time or location.
5. We have found that learning is affected by the size of the group. The number of students in each track must fall within these limits:

	Max Total Students	Small Group Size (excl. leader)	
		ideal	max
Bible Survey	50	5-6	7
Knowing and Growing in Grace	50	5-6	7
How to Study the Bible	40	4-5	6
How to Share Your Faith	40	4-5	6
Leading Bible Studies	40	4-5	6
Training Disciples	20	4-5	6
Foundations of Ministry	20	4-5	6

6. If the number of registrations for any track exceeds the limit, another section of that track should be organized. Failing that, the students should be encouraged to take another track for which they are eligible, go to a different conference location, or register for the next conference.
7. Good quality food and drink should be provided for breaks, according to local custom. Drinks might be coffee, tea, or hot chocolate - served with sugar, honey, and cream. Snacks might be fruit or pastries. Care should be taken not to cause a sugar high.

Content Guidelines

These tracks represent the fruit of six decades of training students. That does not make them perfect, and conditions change over time and from place to place, but it should make us hesitate before changing the material. Everything here: the topics, the format, the schedule, has been rigorously tested and honed to produce maximum learning. (How to Share Your Faith and Foundations of Ministry are the least developed and need some improvement.) Here are some of the principles which govern these tracks:

1. Topics for change. The topics are carefully selected and integrated within each track and among the tracks to produce the change required. Every minister will have his own style and approach to teaching, so these tracks will be presented a bit differently each time they are offered. Be yourself in teaching, but stick to the curriculum.
2. Topics for training. Do not introduce sessions or tracks on important subjects. This is a training conference, not a Bible or theology class. Important subjects must be taught, but they must be taught elsewhere.
3. Use all three arenas of ministry: individual reflection, small group discussion, and large group instruction.
4. Interweave these three arenas throughout the conference.
5. Avoid back-to-back lectures.
6. Provide breaks throughout the day, with drinks and snacks. Keep them brief and on-schedule. The purpose of the breaks is not to provide an opportunity for fellowship, but to recharge for further learning.

The alert reader will notice that one or two of these principles have been violated in a few instances in the standard curriculum. No curriculum is perfect! Adaptations have to be made in every new situation. The goal is to preserve and enhance the learning environment by doing our best to adhere to these guidelines.

Someone unacquainted with training may be surprised by these guidelines. These are normal expectations for a training experience. Significant deviation from them will result in weak training. No doubt situations will arise in which some of these guidelines cannot be met. One option would be to wait until the ministry is ready to train properly. Another option would be to begin as well as possible, and steadily bring the training up to standards.