

General Statement

The Formation Plan is a mutually agreed upon learning contract between the Pastor/Mentor and candidate that guides the candidate through the discernment process while at the same time initiates the development of core competencies and character that are necessary for Godly competent leaders. The Formation Plan will be used in conjunction with the LMC Checklist so as to fulfill Free Methodist Church USA requirements and provide for holistic development within the Outcomes Based Ordination Process (OBO).

Purpose

The Formation plan establishes the proper expectations for both the local ministerial candidate and the Pastor/Mentor; Local Board of Administration, and Regional MEG Board. The rMEG's involvement at this point is to support and resource as needed/requested.

Goal

To initiate a discernment and developmental process which will guide a person sensing a call to vocational ministry to clarify their calling. This process takes place within the Body of Christ through the Free Methodist Church. The end result will be to learn how the candidate's gifting and graces are best fulfilled within the Church. This fulfillment could be expressed through ministry as an empowered lay minister, Licensed Local Minister (Consecrated Deacon) or by moving forward in the Ordination process for the vocational Itinerate Ministry as a Conference Ministerial Candidate. All of these outcomes are valued and affirmed. The desire is to steward well the gifts and graces Christ shares with His church.

Duration and Frequency

A Formation Plan will be revisited every six months throughout the LMC process. The LMC process will take anywhere from 18 months to 3 years depending on the individual candidate's needs and progress. The goal is not to gain a "certificate" but it is to align with God and His specific calling on the individual and their role within the Body of Christ.

The mentoring meetings will take place a minimum of once a month and will focus on the development of the candidate. Not only will the candidate be developed but also the mentor will gain enough insight so as to be able to offer suggestions as to the ongoing development at the end of the LMC Candidacy. A written evaluation in the form of the "Request for OBO Assessment Interview" will be filled out by the mentor.

Scope

Once a candidate has been found, it is the job of the local church, pastor, and Board of Administration to form them into what God has called them to be. The following Formation Plan is designed to discern the call on the LMC's life.

The formation plan establishes the proper expectations for both the local ministerial candidate and the Pastor/Mentor. This formation plan covers four areas:

- ⇒ **DISCERNMENT** CENTRAL INTEGRATION QUESTION
- ⇒ **HEART** SPIRITUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
- ⇒ **HEAD** THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
- ⇒ **HANDS** MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

DISCERNMENT INITIAL CENTRAL INTEGRATION QUESTION

By establishing this formation plan the Local Ministerial Candidate (LMC) and the Pastor/Mentor agree to discern the call upon a candidate according to Outcomes Based Ordination (OBO) framework of the Free Methodist Church USA (FMCUSA). The Formation Plan begins and ends with a central integration question:

“**At this point in your ordination process, how do you envision your call to God’s mission within the Free Methodist Church?”**

This question is a way to clarify for the candidate, in fellowship with a mentor and the local church, the nature and extent of the stirring that is taking place. The candidate comes to this place of exploration either due to a recognition by others of potential leadership capacities or due to promptings of their own spirit that is drawing them to another level of commitment. All followers are called to serve the Mission of Jesus and some are uniquely gifted for vocational ministry.

This discernment phase will help the LMC and Pastor/Mentor discern if the ordinand is called to serve as an empowered lay person, as a Licensed Local Minister, or Ordained Itinerant Elder. To provide the experience need to clarify this calling the LMC will develop a Formation Plan based on Spiritual Accountability, Theological Reflection, and Ministry Experience.

Agreement:

Read and discuss one book and at least two articles on the call to pastoral ministry:

Title and Author of Book _____

Articles to read _____

Completion Date _____

Discuss reading and other processing questions.

HEART SPIRITUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The goal is to develop godly competent leaders whose character is able to keep pace with their gifting. The OBO states that we desire leaders characterized by spiritual mature, shaped by the spiritual disciplines who center their identity firmly in Christ. We want to aide in that identity formation. Refer to the Heart section of the OBO chart to aide in development.

Agreement:

Write out on a separate piece of paper a plan for which Spiritual Practices/Disciplines you will engage in over the next six months. Make note of frequency and specific practices. These will be discussed in our meetings.

Read and discuss one book and explore 4 blogs/web sites that deal with Personal Spiritual Development. The book will need to be one that stretches you in a new way.

Title and Author of Book _____

Blogs/Web site _____

Completion Date _____

Discuss reading and general spiritual accountability.

HEAD THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The LMC and Mentor will commit to theologically reflect on the LMC's call to ministry. The OBO process is committed to the development of critical and theological reflection and integration of life and ministry. As such the LMC will engage in reading and classes that will enhance those skills and insights.

For Section One the LMC is to read The Radical Wesley by Howard Snyder as an introduction to Wesleyan thought. The mentor may suggest another introduction to Wesleyan thought. Also during this time, the LMC should read the articles and view videos posted on the FMCUSA web site. Explore other Wesleyan resources online (Wesleyan articles and YouTube at 7 Minute Seminary)

In the first year the Book of Discipline is to be read and discussed.

Completion Date of above assignments _____

When Section 2 is engaged the required classes will require reading and reflection

See discussion questions. Mentor is to engage with the LMC in discussion of class content. There needs to be integration of theology and practice along with embracing our distinct Free Methodist Heritage.

HANDS MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

The OBO process embraces not only godly leaders who live holy healthy lives but also competent leaders who demonstrate fruitfulness in ministry. There needs to be a track record of transformation and intentional preaching, teaching, and leading. Those who move on must be able to build and maintain healthy and diverse faith communities. Therefore, the candidate will be involved in leading and serving in one or more areas of ministry according to your local church's mission.

Area of Ministry _____

Goal _____

Objectives _____

Ministry Responsibilities _____

Specific Tasks _____

Hours per week _____ Start Date _____ End Date _____

EVALUATION BY PASTOR, LBOA, AND CORE LEADERS

By God's grace and mercy, the LMC and Pastor/Mentor agree to abide by and fulfill the details of this Learning Contract as outlined above

The pastor, LBOA, and/or core leaders of _____ (insert church name) will observe the LMC according to these three categories and in light of the central integration question. After 6 months of observation, the LMC will be formally evaluated by the Pastor/Mentor and/or the LBOA and core leaders of your local church to encourage the LMC in areas of progress and growing proficiency while addressing areas that need development or redirection.

One final evaluation will be completed prior to recommending the LMC to the Ministerial Education Guidance Board (MEG).

The date of the 6 month evaluation is: _____

The date the next Formation Plan begins is: _____

Copy of 6-Month Evaluation must be submitted to the **Conference Administrator** and rMEG Chair. Mentor and LMC retain copies

