

Training Leaders:

Learning aim:

By the end of this session, you will understand why we train leaders, what we are training them in – in the most general terms – why your attitude to training is important, how we train people and some specific things about vision and call that will come in handy over the next part of the course.

We're focusing on the initial training period here, and it's loaded a bit towards the church plant leader. We think this will still be useful for team members. We hope it will create a good environment for you to talk about what your vision is, how you're going to learn and what your expectations are.

Why do we train leaders?

As you will have heard in REAP session 1, the reason that we train leaders of church plants is that it makes a really big difference. Church planting is tough, disappointments are all part of the package, and while we are all going to make mistakes, some of those mistakes will be costly, and we'd rather you and your church didn't suffer more than you need to. We'd also rather you enjoyed the journey, and that you saw as much fruit as possible.

It's true that God is very good and very powerful. It's true that the heart attitude is more important than the head. Hence the E and A of REAP. But training is connected to the heart. One leader said he looked for people who were **FAT**. Meaning that they were **f**aithful, **a**vailable and **t**eachable. Training is actually part of worship – being open to seeing things with different eyes, considering things that we've never seen before is good for us. So training isn't just a technical project. It's also a spiritual exercise.

Do we train leaders only, or the whole team?

Although we obviously do train more than just the main plant leaders, we tend to concentrate our more time-intensive training, like coaching and accountability (see below) on the main plant leaders, helping them to develop their teams. That doesn't mean that network leaders aren't happy to have a coffee with people in the network church teams, as I hope you know by now! It does mean that we're likely to be more proactive about coaching and accountability with the church leaders though.



What do we train leaders in?

You might think that this was covered, again, pretty much by REAP 1 – the church planting loop, but as we pointed out there, there are some things that are somewhat skated over – particularly what makes a church grow. Obviously, some churches thrive and some don't, and the REAP course doesn't go too deeply into that.

Are leaders born or made?

Some people aren't leaders (again, in the narrow sense we described session 2, rather than the broader sense), some people are, and some people could be. One defining feature of good leaders is that they work on their weaknesses. Training helps us identify not only our gifts, but where we need to grow. One of my (John's) weaknesses is distraction and disorganisation. It's great to have more organised people around, but just knowing this as a weakness and getting help with it can turn us into better leaders. This ability to learn and correct where we're not being as effective as we could be is again, part of teachability or humility. It's a very powerful part of being a leader in a plant.

Training and learning styles

There are four main ways we train leaders in Antioch – as pretty much anywhere else. As a leader, you'll probably need a mix of all four, although the balance will change through time.

1. **Walking with** – This is where you do things alongside another church planter. You might do outreach, help them gather their team, pray with them. Often the things we learn most deeply are the things we do.
2. **Teaching** – This means delivering information. You can get this from books (starting with the Bible!), videos, podcasts and even the REAP course. There is so much content available that it's often hard to filter it. We've tried to do this to some extent by suggesting reading and listening for the REAP course, but a nod to CCM Manchester and Broadcast church planting website, and the Redeemer City to City website, as well as others on the Antioch web page.
3. **Coaching /mentoring** – Having people you can bounce ideas off, get advice from, encourage you and bring wisdom into your situation is very, very important. You should have a coach in the network if you're leading a church plant. If you don't, speak to your network leader and/or get a coach from outside.
4. **Accountability** – This is the least fun of the four, but it's crucial. Antioch has some non-negotiables, but we want to leave as much scope as we can for adaptation to context, creativity and trying things out. That is best expressed by the idea of low control and high accountability. You, as the leader, define to some extent what you want to achieve and how you will do it. But your network leader will be asking you – did you do it? Of course we don't always achieve what we want, and no-one is perfect, but someone should be asking you "How did that go? What happened with that?"

We strongly encourage people to get training outside our network. We can help them to do this.

Question time – For Group Discussion #1:

1. What are some of the best training facilities that you know of?
2. What is your preferred learning style?
3. How will you get the teaching, coaching, and accountability you need? Who can you spend time with working in God's Kingdom?

Vision

This isn't strictly part of the training bit, but if you think of part of training as honing your vision, it kind of fits. Vision, as we noted earlier used to be pretty simple. Jesus is coming back, make peace with Jesus, live with Jesus. We're here to help. But then somewhere along the way, life got more complicated. Your church had to have a specific purpose. You had to identify a specific demographic. You had to write a mission statement and a vision statement. You could not repeat the vision of the church often enough. As you, the leader, made choices and chose priorities, you had to do them against the basic vision and mission of the church. The classic text on this is Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church. It's actually well worth a read.

So what do we suggest for Antioch planters? As an aside, there are people on the course who aren't involved in Antioch churches. In this case you'll be working off a rather clearer canvas than Antioch churches. We half-cook the vision of our churches before they start. Those are our non-negotiables. But we only half-cook it.

We think of vision as the answer to a question put by a Christian who asks 'why should I join you?' Your vision should describe the call of Jesus on you as a group. It should always recognise and honour the work of other churches in the area.

Vision matters because it motivates people. It allows people to say 'this is why I do what I do'.

Vision also allows you to serve people when you invite people into your team. You're speaking of what Jesus has called you into – and they can know if they're called in the same direction. If they're not, you might do them more harm than good if they end up joining you.



Vision allows you to share leadership. If people fundamentally understand what you're trying to do, then it's a lot easier for them to suggest things, initiate things and generally contribute.

Visions makes it easier for them not to join, or leave at the right time. People joining plants often imagine what it will be like, and have high or unrealistic hopes. Being clear about your vision allows you to discourage people with the wrong expectations from getting involved.

Antioch trains people in vision in the following ways:

- We teach around our key non-negotiables
- We will ask questions about your vision, and ask you to tell us your vision.

As you gather your team, we'll ask about how you explain your vision to them.

Key question – for Group Discussion #2

1. What do you already know about your vision?
2. What are you still trying to work out?

The vision of Antioch: a background note with some big questions

When we say that the vision of each Antioch Church is half-cooked, we mean that each church sits someone within the overall vision of the Antioch Network. That obviously leads to the question: what is the network's vision. Our vision is to be a network of church planting churches.

That has some specifics in it: what do network churches look like? How do they work? We summarise the answer to that question in these points:

- They are small (20-50 adults),
- They grow by replanting, rather than expanding beyond this size.
- They are usually lay-led, and supervised by an ordained minister.
- They use highly accessible shared spaces, rather than church buildings.
- They understand and are attuned to issues of poverty and destitution.
- They include a strong element of hospitality, with attempts to live in community
- They are active in evangelising through their social networks



Some of you might be interested on one element that isn't there: why, if the Antioch Network plants in the poorer areas of Greater Manchester, isn't there a greater emphasis on social transformation?

There are two basic reasons for this. One is our mandate as the church, in general.

The church is called primarily to reflect the presence of Christ, and to offer his redemption to the world. We have a much clearer call to change our behaviours than we do to change the behaviour of those who don't know Christ. Part of loving Christ is loving our neighbours, it is true, but influencing wider social structures for say, better education, while it isn't bad, is only one kind of loving neighbours, and it isn't the easiest. There is a massive deficit of ordinary human love in modern Britain. Our education levels are rising (apparently), but so are our levels of anxiety, loneliness and depression. Our church community can serve the world, but it cannot necessarily change the world. We can affect the attitudes and behaviours of the world, but if people remain in rebellion against Christ, their attitude towards government spending, community transformation, or education practices won't solve their biggest problem.

That leads us to the second reason. That is the tools that we have at our disposal. The government has hundreds of billions in its budget. But they don't have any basic reason to love others. Our churches are designed as communities, not as organisations. If we structure our churches so that they have wider social or economic change as a direct goal, there is a significant risk that church members will either become exhausted, or the church will develop a parallel organisation to make the change happen.

For this reason we don't encourage churches to build their basic vision around wider social change. We will come back to the ways that serving the community can be done in a way that is effective and not exhausting later in the series.

The legal bits



There are quite a few structural bits to being an Antioch leader. We have expectations in certain areas:

- What you will teach (we'll come back to this in shaping a team, but you basically means you have to teach the Bible, although we're not too precise on how you do this)
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Dispute resolution
- Handling money
- How the churches should be organised.

These documents underpin the way that the Antioch Network functions. They are designed to set a middle ground between creating a series of cloned churches that don't take into account the context, the leader or the team on the one hand, and on the other hand, a free space where expectations aren't clear and churches are left to do the best they can on their own.

It's important to have some grasp of these policies, and we'll happily sit down and explain anything you need to know about them.