

## Leading with Vitality Council Reflection: Building a Team

**How to use the Leading with Vitality Council Reflection:** Share this document with the Council members prior to the Council meeting and add 15 minutes to the beginning of the agenda for shared reflection. Prior to the meeting, invite one member of the Council to lead the discussion. Here's a simple outline for how the shared reflection might go.

First, the reflection leader reads the scripture passage aloud. Second, the reflection leader highlights one idea from the reflection that the reflection leader found meaningful or challenging. Third, the reflection leader uses one or more of the reflection questions below to encourage discussion. When the discussion draws to a close, the reflection leader closes the time with the prayer using the prayer below or another prayer they create.

### Scripture Reading

#### Romans 12:3-8 (NRSV)

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

### Building a Team

In his 2001 book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins offered the following advice on building a team.

*“First Who, Then What—get the right people on the bus—is a concept developed in the book Good to Great. Those who build great organizations make sure they have the right people on the bus and the right people in the key seats before they figure out where to drive the bus. They always think first about who and then about what. When facing chaos and uncertainty, and you cannot possibly predict what’s coming around the corner, your best “strategy” is to have a busload of people who can adapt to and perform brilliantly no matter what comes next. Great vision without great people is irrelevant.” (1)*

Contrast Collins’ advice to what happens in many congregations where the bus can quickly be filled by the folks who are most willing to join the team and their seats on the bus can be determined by longevity, eagerness, or personal connection.

*It’s time to launch a new ministry team, but instead of specifically asking passionate and gifted leaders to be on the team, we create a bulletin blurb to ask for volunteers and accept anyone who offers their time.*

*It’s time to elect a Council President. The call for nominations is met by silence from around the table. Finally, someone volunteers to be the next Council President, not necessarily because they are necessarily the most gifted or passionate person for the role, but because they can’t stand the awkward silence in the room any longer.*

*It's time to pick a leader for the new feeding ministry. One individual has helped with the ministry from the beginning and would love to run the organization. Instead of doing a search and interviews to determine who would be the best leader, the long-time volunteer is selected as the new leader without stopping to determine if the individual has the gifts for leadership.*

Ministry is a journey that is filled with unpredictable twists and turns. While as Christians, we know where we are ultimately going, we don't necessarily know how we are going to get there. Your best chance for having a healthy, safe, and faithful journey is to have a group of people on the bus with you who love God, who love the ministry of the congregation, and who care about their community. The question of course is "How do you get those people on the bus?"

Here are five suggestions for getting people on the bus and building a healthy team.

1. **Determine the general focus of the team.** Knowing whether this is a team focused on feeding ministry or a team focused on updating the constitution will help you identify who might be a good fit for the team.
2. **Create a list of people in the congregation and community who are passionate about the team's general focus.** Once you know the general focus, then develop a list of individuals who are gifted, creative, and passionate. Don't limit yourself to people in the congregation. In today's world, people are happy to help with a project that has integrity and makes a difference even if they aren't a formal part of an organization.
3. **Ask one or two people from your list to join the team.** Don't simply solicit volunteers, but instead seek out people who are gifted, creative, and passionate. Explain the opportunity to them and invite them to join the team.
4. **Gather with your new team members and expand the list of people who are passionate about the team's general focus.** Invite the new members of the team to share their wisdom on who could be a good fit for the team. Focus on passion and giftedness. Look for diverse voices and different gifts to help you see the spectrum of possibilities.
5. **As a team of two or three, ask new members to join the team.** Having multiple people ask the remaining members of the team to join helps highlight the momentum and passion for the ministry which the team will accomplish.

*Reflection by Pastor John Wertz, Jr.*

(1) Quotation from <https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/first-who-then-what.html#:~:text=First%20Who%2C%20Then%20What%E2%80%94get,where%20to%20drive%20the%20bus>. Accessed 2/24/21

### Questions for Reflection:

1. Think about an effective team. How would you describe what makes the team effective?
2. What are the most effective teams connected to your congregation?
3. What characteristics or behaviors make those teams effective?
4. Where might this approach to 'team building' be used in your congregation or community?

### Prayer:

Generous God, you equip each of us with gifts. Inspire each of us to claim the gifts you provide and to combine those gifts with the gifts of others to accomplish your ministry in the world. Amen.