



## **Expectations of Professional Organizers participating in ELCA Vital Congregations – Just Communities 3-day training events**

Each 3-day event has four sessions designed for professional organizers to deliver trainings on four key organizing fundamentals: power, self-interest, relational meetings (1-1's), and going public. The intent is for organizers to, for the most part, take their content for each of these sessions from their organizing network's training manual or "playbook". However, it will work best if these sessions are coordinated with the work that theologian/practitioners will do in setting the framework for each. So when rostered leaders (pastors, AIMs, diaconal ministers) work closely with organizers to connect their materials to each others' presentations, the events will have a much more cohesive feel and likely a more effective outcome.

What follow are basic outlines of what ought to be included in the organizers' sessions on each of the aforementioned topics. In a separate document, session-starters have been provided for the practitioner/theologian sessions that correspond to each of these. Organizers are welcome to add to or adjust what is laid out here, to fit their own style or preferences or to adapt to fit the needs of the particular event at which they are presenting. However, it is understood that these are the basic materials to be conveyed.

It is also understood that trainers will *use a modified agitational style* in their trainings, in order to move participants and to expose them to the organizing model. The agitational style should be modified (i.e., toned down) because (a) this will be the first exposure for most participants to this approach, (b) the participants will likely not be as well prepped (by an organizer or colleague) as they might be if they were attending a full-blown national training session, and (c) we do not have the benefit of a full week of training, debriefing and community building that trainees usually have during which to process their experience of agitation with peers and trainers.

### **POWER**

This session provides an opportunity for people of faith to reclaim the concept of power in a positive sense. It should challenge people to reject their ambivalence toward power and to embrace power as the only way to get things done in this world that reflects their faith values and forwards God's reign of justice.

#### Components of the training on Power

- Unmask people's attitudes about power.
- Unpack and challenge their ambivalence toward power.
- Reveal the basic definition of power: the ability to act, to have capacity, to be able.
- Contrast the perceived evil and corruptibility of power with the true evils of powerlessness.
- Expose the ways those in power use others' ambivalence toward power to their advantage.
- Instill in participants a hunger for the power it takes to get anything of value done.
- Recall how often (and positively) power is mentioned in Scripture.
- Reclaim power as a God-given aptitude and tool.
- Introduce the organizing formula: Power = organized people + organized money.
- Identify the organizing pyramid:
  - People of faith have values
  - To act on those values we need power
  - To get power we need organized people and organized money

## **SELF-INTEREST**

This session is designed to get people in touch with what motivates them and others to do the things they do, feel the way they feel, value the things they value. It should also lead to an understanding that one's place in the world is enhanced by being in relationship with others, all kinds of others. In order to be in relationships that lead to fulfillment and purpose, we must acknowledge that our own and others' self-interests are always at play, and that self-interest, rightly understood and harnessed, can be a force for good. The more we understand our own and others' self-interest, the more effective we can be in all we do.

### Components of the training on Self-interest

- Discuss characteristics of selfishness vs. selflessness; point out that neither is very relational.
- Challenge opinions about both of the above; point out the costs of living in either camp.
- Propose that being consciously self-interested is a better choice than either of the above.
- Discuss the ways we often are recruited to participate: coercion, flattery, guilt, bribery, etc.
- Suggest the better way to invite people to participate: by appealing to their self-interest.
- Define self-interest: self + interest (from the Latin "inter esse") = self-among others.
- Compare characteristics and outcomes of self-interest to selfishness and selflessness.
- Provide time for people to use an imaginative tool to discover their own self-interests (stick person, self-mapping, pivotal-story-telling, answering a set of probing questions, etc.)
- Several people share their results; trainer agitates them to become clearer about self-interest.
- Distinguish between short-term and long-term self-interest. Note that self-interest, especially short-term self-interest, changes with one's circumstance.
- Affirm the question "What's in it for me?" When asked in the context of community, this question can be very clarifying, motivating, and can lead to powerful positive results.

## **RELATIONAL MEETINGS (ONE-TO-ONE'S)**

This training is intended to give people the ability to utilize the most basic and necessary tool of organizing. Regular and strategic relational meetings are necessary if we want to live in a meaningful, beloved community; and, they are the only way to build the kind of power we need to get anything of value accomplished. Most one-to-ones are for the purpose of creating public relationships, and are intended to gain a deep understanding of another person's self-interest.

### Components of the training on Relational Meetings (1-1's)

- Set 1-1's in the context of the formula: power = organized people + organized money.
- Define the 1-1: A natural but uncommon conversation with someone you want to know better about their values, vision, life, and motivations. Its agenda: to get to know the person.
- Define 1-1 objectives: (1) Initiate or deepen a relationship; (2) Uncover their self-interest; (3) Give clarity to them by listening deeply and probing respectfully (4) Gain information.
- Unpack the two key characteristics required going in to a 1-1: Courage and Curiosity.
- Model a good one-to-one that goes deep and displays curiosity and true courage.
- Debrief the demo with the whole group to determine if objectives were met and to glean tips.
- Challenge people who insist that this was not a relational encounter; listening is relational!
- Have people pair up and do one-to-ones with a partner. Ideally 20 minutes each way.
- Debrief people's one-to-ones in plenary. Trainer agitates about what held people back.
- Conclude with the mechanics of 1-1's: (1) 30-45 min., (2) pre-arranged, (3) don't take notes, (4) write reflections afterwards, (5) go deep rather than broad (6) make it mostly about them, (6) follow their cues re: what to pursue, (7) stay in control of the conversation and the time.
- Name what a 1-1 IS NOT: psychoanalysis, sales job, chit chat, stewardship call, survey.
- Set an expectation that people will continue to do one-to-ones throughout this event.

## **GOING PUBLIC**

As important as it is to educate participants about the differences between our public and our private lives, and the wisdom of drawing careful boundaries between them, it will be equally important to emphasize the move for church

leaders, as well as congregations, to “go public” with their faith values, and to find or found powerful vehicles through which to express their public faith. This “Going Public” session should cover the “Public vs. Private” materials normally offered at national training, but also go beyond to challenge participants to consider the world as it is, the world as our faith and our hope tell us it could and should be, and the power and responsibility we have within our grasp to bring the two closer together. This session is the best chance to talk about organizing as more than a set of tools. Instead, it’s a social movement.

### Components of the training on Going Public

- The path so far: Power = organized people + organized money. → Organizing people means understanding your own and others’ self-interest, → SO THAT these relationships can be ordered for the sake of a greater good. → Organizing relationships requires knowing the difference between your public and your private self; otherwise, you’ll feel personally responsible for every aspect of the self-interests of everyone you meet!
- Discuss how our cultural habit is to blur the lines between our public and private lives.
- Create a chart showing the kinds of relationships we have that are private and public.
- Create another chart showing the characteristics of each type of relationship.
- Talk about how clarity re: private vs. public leads to the ability to hold people accountable.
- This also makes it easier to live with, even create, tension in order to get to something good.
- Draw out the ways that people in power use the blurring of lines to their advantage.
- List examples of how the (imposed or chosen) denial of a public life can lead to oppression.
- Declare: The path to (individual & communal) liberation is the creation of a public life!
- Creating a public life for a congregation requires challenging and replacing the prevailing world view with one that better reflects our faith values.
- To get to what the prevailing world view is, draw out and list the stories, themes, symbols, metaphors, and myths that prevail in our current culture. How did they get so powerful?
- Then draw out and list the stories, themes, symbols, metaphors, and myths that prevail in an alternate reality that better matches God’s vision & reign of justice. Why don’t these rule?
- Take time to discuss what it will take to actually realize – make real – that alternate reality. Ask: How will each of us have to change? Who will we have to move along the way? What systems or powers will need to be challenged or toppled? How badly do we want it? Enough to move out of our private realms and gathering spaces into powerful public engagement?
- This is an important moment to talk about congregations either joining or creating a power organization, getting on board with or starting a local movement as your vehicle for change.