

Training for Ministry – MAP

The mission of Faith Builders is to serve the conservative Anabaptist community by discipling people toward humble servant leadership for joyful, Christ-centered participation in the Kingdom of God. To pursue this mission, we offer two programs – the Teacher Apprenticeship Program and the Ministry Apprenticeship Program (MAP). In this newsletter, John Coblenz, Sr., the coordinator of Ministry Apprenticing, helps us explore the need for the Ministry Apprenticeship Program and describes the inner workings of MAP.

We live in a world that is rife with needs ... and thus, filled with opportunities. Consider the following:

- Rise of Islam
- Religious confusion
- Wars and genocide
- Consumerism of wealthy nations
- Poverty and homelessness
- AIDS
- Natural disasters

These conditions offer countless opportunities for Christians to serve—to offer help, to target specific unreached people groups with the Gospel, to articulate the pure Gospel of Jesus, and to be exemplary in seeking first Christ’s kingdom.

The Church has needs as well. There are hurting people among us, and sometimes we prefer to interact at surface levels and avoid the hard work of ministering one to another. We are sometimes unsure of our own identity (or ashamed of it), and consequently, we too often live detached from our neighbors. We are a fragmented people with countless shades of differences, and we seem helpless to stop the splintering.

These conditions cause some people to abandon faith, some to experiment with other denominations, and some to dig in their heels to preserve their peculiar traditions and judge all others as apostate.

These conditions in the church also offer opportunities. But it takes much wisdom from above to respond to these conditions without reaction. Today we need men and women who are able to differentiate between things that matter and things that don’t, who know Jesus as the living Lord, who are discerning of the times, and who have the commitment to live well in community.

MAP does not assume to offer the answers to all the needs of the world and the church. But we are attempting to bring greater clarity and direction to MAP in response to the burning question: How does Jesus want His people to serve this generation? In structuring MAP, we are committed to training servants of Jesus Christ who will take His call seriously, who have the

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understanding and the skills to do Jesus’ bidding, and who will bless their communities with their character, their compassion, and their humble service.

What is MAP?

- A two-year apprenticing program.
- Training men and women to:
 - Recognize needs.
 - Respond to needs.
 - Serve in the Spirit of Jesus.
- Hands-on experience in:
 - Teaching Sunday school.
 - Serving on Committees/Boards.
 - Leading worship.
 - Leading small groups.
 - Witnessing to the lost.
 - Organizing events and projects.

MAP is designed to enable students to return to their home communities prepared to serve the church with both zeal and vision as well as to move on to specialized areas of service in other parts of the world. We want students to emerge with skills, knowledge, and experience for effective service, whether ministering to the spiritual or material needs of people, whether living at home or in a foreign land, whether working as a mechanic or as a career missionary.

Profile of MAP Graduates

Students who graduate from MAP should emerge with attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are compelling to God’s people and that bring glory to Christ.

In the following sections, we describe the profile of a graduate—the attitudes, knowledge, and skills we intentionally seek to cultivate in MAP students.

Attitudes

An attitude is a way of thinking and feeling that guides decisions and behavior and that comes to characterize a person’s disposition and outlook on life. Our goal is that MAP students graduate with the following attitudes:

1. *Gratefulness: I am blessed and eternally indebted because of the goodness of God and the contribution of others in my life.*
2. *Servanthood: I am called to serve Jesus Christ and His people—no task is beneath me, no person I meet is unworthy of my attention and care.*
3. *Compassion: I am moved by the needs of others and am willing to make my life and resources available to meet those needs in the Spirit of Jesus.*
4. *Teachability: I am continually learning from God and others, and I yearn to keep growing in Biblical understanding as well as to stay abreast of current issues.*

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5. *Cooperation: I function in connection with the people of God and look for ways to work in teamwork, not in competition.*
6. *Loyalty: I will be true to God and His people and will support my local congregation.*
7. *Humility: I recognize my continuing need of God and others; by myself I have neither the wisdom nor the resources to live well.*

Knowledge

We seek to provide students with a base of knowledge, not to inflate their egos, but to enlarge their hearts to minister to the needs of others with understanding. To that end we offer courses and activities to expand knowledge in the following areas:

1. *Church history: a working knowledge of the story of the church from its inception to modern times, including the main church traditions and key figures, events, and eras.*
2. *Anabaptist history: an appreciative understanding of the issues, the times, and the heroes that formed the movement to re-experience early Christianity in the 16th Century.*
3. *World history: understanding major eras, kingdoms, leaders, and ideas that shaped the course of history, especially in light of the plans and purposes of God.*
4. *Systematic theology: a grasp of the major doctrines of our faith as centralized around the work of Christ in redemption.*
5. *Current issues: an awareness of worldviews, movements, values, events, ideas, and people that are shaping our times as well as a framework for responding wisely.*
6. *World awareness: an informed view of world needs, cultural progressions, people groups, evangelism opportunities, and world resources.*
7. *Current missions/ ministries: an awareness of the Christian organizations active and effective in meeting world needs through sharing the Gospel and providing aid and services.*
8. *Biblical anthropology: an understanding of man as made in the image of God, deformed by sin, and redeemed by grace; a working knowledge of the processes of grace in spiritual formation; and a framework for evaluating current understandings of man as shaped by modern thought and research.*
9. *Resources: a working knowledge of sources of information (including public libraries, reference works, and the Internet) as well as guidelines for evaluating and using those resources.*

Skills

Servants of Jesus Christ need skills that enable them actually to do the work of the kingdom. These skills relate to weekly functions of the church as well as to the organizational and operational functions of ministries and mission endeavors. We want MAP graduates to have the following skills:

1. *Writing: the ability to articulate a position and develop it to a convincing and clear conclusion.*
2. *Research: the ability to locate media on a given subject in publicly available locations and organize it for presentation.*

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3. *Public speaking: the ability to present ideas clearly and effectively to groups.*
4. *Leading worship: the ability to lead God’s people in inspirational experiences of music, testimony, readings, and prayer.*
5. *Teaching the Bible: the ability to teach the Scripture in a way that demonstrates faithfulness to the text as well as legitimate, practical application.*
6. *Sharing personal faith: the ability to find the appropriate openings to share personal faith during conversations and relationships with un-churched people.*
7. *Conducting a children’s group: the ability to organize and conduct group activities with children that guide them to understand and appreciate God and His ways.*
8. *Discipleship: the ability to listen to others with compassion, to discern their spiritual needs, and to guide them toward spiritual maturity.*
9. *Leadership: the ability to take responsibility for an assignment, to develop vision for a venture, to organize an activity, and to lead people effectively.*
10. *Teamwork: the ability to work with others cooperatively in such responsibilities as church boards and committees, utilizing member differences and harnessing the energy and power of a team.*
11. *Reading: the ability to read discerningly and also to plan reading that encourages lifelong growth.*

Experiences

In addition to course work (and often in conjunction with course work) MAP students are provided with experiences that illuminate, illustrate, and round out their training. We believe these experiences form an integral part of shaping the head, heart, and hands of servants in God’s kingdom. The groupings below do not reflect importance so much as similarity.

Experiences in spiritual formation:

1. Small-group mentoring.
2. Days of solitude.
3. Classes and chapels.
4. Prayer partners.

Experiences in expression:

5. Journaling.
6. Writing letters to pastors.
7. Praise and worship.
8. Speaking assignments—topics, devotionals, etc.

Experiences in leadership:

9. Plan a 13-lesson SS guide.
10. Teach Sunday school.
11. Lead group worship.
12. Serve on a committee.
13. Plan and lead a weekend for teens.

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14. Conduct boys and girls clubs or summer Bible school classes.
 15. Plan and organize outings for recreation, education, and spiritual renewal.
- Experiences in participation and exposure to existing ministries:*
16. Visit mission organizations.
 17. Interview experienced missionaries.
 18. Visit and observe city missions.
 19. Visit and participate in help programs—soup kitchens, rescue missions, etc.
 20. Visit boys’ and girls’ camps.
 21. Visit counseling ministries.
 22. Interview pastors and worship leaders.
 23. Participate in prison ministry.
 24. Participate in hospital ministry.
 25. Visit/participate in crisis pregnancy center.
 26. Visit/participate in AIDS ministry.

This is the purpose and vision for the Ministry Apprenticeship Program. FB seeks to form men and women who fulfill Jesus’ instructions to his disciples in Matthew 20. *Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:25-28, NIV).

John Coblentz, Sr
Ministry Apprenticing Coordinator