



Bridge Group Leader Competency #3: Developing Others

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” – John Quincy Adams

Deepen Your Character: Hopefulness

Leaders have a confident expectation and desire to see God at work in peoples’ lives

Develop Your Competency: Developing Others

Guide and teach someone so that they move from where they are to where they could be

Objectives:

- **Define what spiritual development looks like and how you can help people assess their current areas of needed growth.**
- **Practice active listening with an individual or group so that they understand their perspective and experiences.**
- **Have an intentional conversation with someone to get to know where they are spiritually so that you can help them take a next step.**

Deepen Your Character: Hopefulness

Hopefulness simply means being full of hope about something. That’s pretty basic, right?

But hope can be a little harder to define. The primary definition of hope in Webster’s Dictionary is *“to desire with anticipation; to want something to happen or be true.”* But the Bible’s definition of hope goes beyond desiring or wanting something to happen. The Old and New Testaments’ words for hope mean *to wait for something that you desire with expectation and confidence because God has promised that it will happen and He is able to keep His promises.* In other words, Biblical hope isn’t just wishing for or wanting something to happen. Biblical hope is a reasonable expectation that is rooted in God’s character and His ability to do the things He said he would do. If God promises something, our hope that it will happen is based on who He is and what we’ve already seen Him do in the past.



So what does being full of this “confident expectation about the future” have to do with leading others? **Hopeful leaders are great leaders**, especially if their hope is rooted in who God is and what He is able to do. Hopeful leaders are able to cast vision, inspire people and persevere through challenging seasons. Businesses, schools, non-profits and churches thrive when leaders have hope that their organizations will grow and improve so they can accomplish their mission and vision.

But **hopeful leaders also are the best team leaders**. Think about it: The best teams are ones where the leaders have big hopes and expectations for the individual people they are leading. Whether it’s a soccer team or a church small group, the leader needs to have hope that each person on the team will grow and do great things. And if that growth and those accomplishments are grounded in something that God has promised, then the leader can have confidence that God will do even more in people’s lives than we can ask or imagine because of Christ’s power at work in them (Eph. 3:20).

Scripture:

Read **Philippians 1:3-11** then consider the following questions.

- Paul is writing this letter to a group of people he is leading at the church in Philippi. (See Acts 16:11-38 to learn more about who these people were.). Describe Paul’s emotions towards the Philippians. Why does he say he feels this way about them?
- What is Paul’s hope for the Philippians? How does he want them to grow? What does he want them to accomplish?
- What is Paul’s hope for the Philippians based upon?
- How do you think Paul’s past experiences and relationship with Jesus help him be a hopeful leader for the Philippians? How did his relationship with the Philippians help Paul be a hopeful leader for them?



Develop your Competency: Developing Others

Proficiency	Preassessment
Model your own growth and development in an area	
Help individuals identify and take a next step from where they are to where they want to go	
Ask good questions and listen well to grow in understanding another person	
Give people both challenging goals for their growth and provide resources and opportunities for them to meet them	

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever been intentionally developed by someone else?
 - Who developed you?
 - What was their approach?

- Have you ever developed someone else?
 - Whom have you developed?
 - Did you have a plan for developing them? How did you create the plan?

- Have you heard the term ‘discipling’ before? If so, define it.

Discipleship and Developing Others:

Give an example of a time you saw someone grow from being a beginner to being proficient at something.



Maybe you thought of a kindergarten teacher taking a student step-by-step from what sounds letters make to being able to read a book from start-to-finish. Or maybe it was a really good boss helping her new sales associate move from his first cold call to closing a big deal. Or it could be the person who helped you grow from doing soccer drills to scoring a goal or the friend who took the Bible from being an app on your phone to it being something that shapes every part of your life. These are all real-life examples where a leader guided and taught someone to move them from wherever they currently are to a place where they could be and do more.

As a Bridge Group leader, you will primarily be developing people spiritually. In Christian-speak this is also called ‘discipling’. This might sound super-spiritual and intimidating, but it’s simply **developing someone spiritually so they are growing in knowing and becoming more like Jesus.** And the skills needed to develop someone spiritually are the same ones you use in developing a player as a coach, an employee as a manager, or even a child as a parent. You need to:

- Model who you want them to be and what you did to get there
- Assess where someone currently is, by listening to them and seeing them in action
- Cast vision to where they can grow
- Help them come up with a plan to get there
- Celebrate small wins along the way

A lot of this spiritual development will happen naturally (and supernaturally) as your group meets regularly. By putting together the ingredients of **experiencing the Gospel** through Bible study + **engaging in community** consistently + **taking steps to build bridges**, spiritual growth is bound to occur. But imagine what it would look like if the group didn’t just grow as a whole, but if each person in the group grew from wherever they are on Day 1 of your group to who they could be in Year 2 of your group. What if the guy who’s never been in a group learns to trust others in new ways and open up about what’s really going on in his life? What if the woman who’s never opened up a Bible before starts to read it for every night before she turns out the light? Or what if the couple who has been in groups for the past 10 years decides they are ready to step out and lead their own group for the first time?



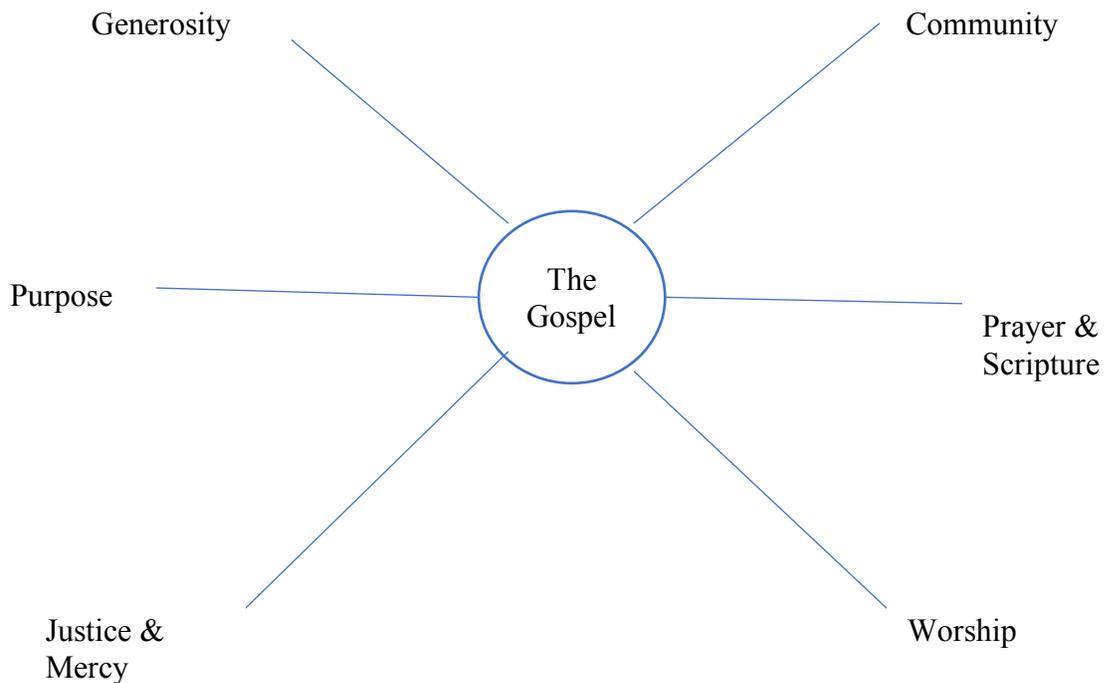
So how do you get that to happen for each individual in your group? The best place to begin is by seeing what the starting line is. At Forest Hill Church, we have 7 different markers that help us see how fully someone is experiencing dynamic life in Christ. These are the vital signs that gauge to what extent someone is living and experiencing the filled-up, abundant life that Jesus promised (John 10:10).

These markers are:

1. ***Jesus is the Goal*** (*The Gospel*) - *Jesus is the driving priority of our lives, the object of our devotion and the focus of our relationships.*
2. ***Worship is a Rhythm*** (*Worship*) - *Regular worship together is how we live, move and have our being, inspiring us to be more like Christ while we respond to the greatness of God.*
3. ***God is in the Room*** (*Intimacy*) – *Like a close friend, we have regular conversations with God and spend time in the Word growing in love for God and love for others.*
4. ***Together is Better*** (*Community*) – *Bridge building is a team sport, requiring faith friendships from beginning to end.*
5. ***Everything is a Gift*** (*Generosity*) – *Since everything comes from God, what a joy it is to offer it all back to Him through our time, resources, money and praise.*
6. ***Everyone has a Mission*** (*Purpose*) - *Each of us is uniquely gifted for the purpose of Kingdom impact and evangelism.*
7. ***Wrongs can be Made Right*** (*Justice/Mercy*) - *We take action to set the wrongs of the world right and care for the vulnerable and broken.*



Now let's imagine these markers as 6 spokes on a wheel with The Gospel as the Center like this:



Put a mark on each spoke of the wheel that shows how you are progressing in that area. For example, is worship and focusing on the greatness of God a regular part of your life? Are you coming together in the community of the Church to worship regularly? More than that, is worship not just a Sunday morning thing, but something that comes to mind while you drive to work or sit down for a meal? Is so, then put your dot closer to the Gospel. You are living in a Gospel-centered way as you worship. Now do the same with each area of dynamic life in Christ that is given as an example.

What do you observe? Where in your spiritual life are you not growing in the good news of the abundant, dynamic life that Jesus is offering? What areas of your life feel farther away or even untouched by the power of the Gospel?



Tools such as this are great way of assessing places where God could be calling you or others in your Bridge Group to grow spiritually. In short, that’s all discipleship is—it’s helping someone take a next step closer to Jesus from where they are now.

Habits of a Leader who is a Developer¹

Developing others doesn’t have to be complicated or intimidating. When Jesus said “go and make disciples” to a group of uneducated men, he was calling them to be developers. So if it was something he trusted them to be able to do, then the skill of developing others is something that should be attainable for all believers. The disciples became developers because they saw the ways that Jesus developed them and made those ways into habits in their own lives. You can do the same! Let’s look at several habits of people who are developers like Jesus.

1. Be a Model

No one can guarantee the growth of another person. Scripture teaches that “God gives growth”, not us (1 Cor. 3:7). But God chooses to use us to help others in their spiritual journey. He does this primarily by using ‘growing people’ to grow people. In other words, if you focus on continuing to grow and develop in your own spiritual journey, then others around you will be challenged to grow as well. First and foremost, in all leadership areas whether it’s your Bridge Group or your family or your team in your workplace, remember to model growth in your own life.

2. Be Open.

It is easy to lead your group or any team by walking ahead of people or even side by side, but it can be hard to lead soul to soul. Yet leaders who are developers know that rich and substantial relationships between you and your group provides the best soil for growth and development.

¹ This content adapted and used with permission from:
Mac Lake, *Leading Leaders* (Columbia, SC: 100 Movements Publishing, 2019), 14-19.



We grow in relationships as we know people on Five Levels. They are:

- **Level 1: Know Face.** You recognize the person and associate them with a place or group of people.
- **Level 2: Know Facts.** You know their name, who is in their family, what they do for work, where they're from—the basic facts of their lives.
- **Level 3: Know Feelings.** You know their opinions—what they think and feel about things. You know what they like and what they don't like. You know their preferences and their favorites (teams, stores, foods, hobbies, vacation spots, etc.).
- **Level 4: Know Fears.** You know their vulnerabilities that they would not expose to just anyone—weakness, struggles, anxieties, concerns, and challenges.
- **Level 5: Know Faith:** You know what they believe about the deepest things in life and if they have a relationship with Jesus and how central that is to their lives. You know what He is doing in their life, what God has brought them through, and the passions and dreams He has placed in their soul.

The best way to get to know the soul of a person is to allow them to get to know you. If you take the lead by volunteering information one level deeper than you currently know them, they are likely to follow. If you don't go first, they probably won't; but if you reveal too much too fast, they'll probably pull back. Instead, gently reveal yourself a bit ahead of where they are and you will see an authentic, rich relationship begin to develop.

3. Be Intentional.

One of the first excuses leaders give for not developing others is lack of time. They immediately think, "How am I going to have time to develop all of the people in my group or on my team?" The time you have scheduled with your group is already blocked out for other things, especially in an environment like your workplace. It's challenging to find the time to develop someone in the middle of serving together or running an event or system at work.

This is where being intentional can help. Development conversations don't always have to be an hour-long discussion. Some of the most life-changing moments in our lives can come in a five-



minute conversation where a leader asks a question that causes you to reflect on some aspect of your life or work.

If you intentionally seize opportunities as they arise—during your group meetings, during down time while your team is gathering or anytime you’re together—you may be able to impact someone’s development without adding hours to your busy schedules. But this requires that you are prepared, which is the next habit.

4. Be Prepared.

When Jesus taught the disciples, he often asked them questions. He would also reply to a person’s question with a question of his own. When you have good questions, you have lots of tools on-hand for developing others.

One leader I know who is a great developer of people in their spiritual journey, always has three “DNA” questions on-hand that he asks whenever he talks to people he is developing. These “DNA” questions are about:

- **D: Divine Revelation**
This is a question like: *What did God say you from his Word this week, and how did you respond?*
- **N: Nurturing Relationship**
This is a question such as: *How is your walk with God going this week? What is going well? Where are you struggling?*
- **A: Apostolic Action**
This is a question about where they are being sent (“apostle” means “someone who is sent on a mission”). This is question like: *Who is someone in your sphere of influence that you could reach out to and have a spiritual conversation with this week?*

That leader asks one or all of these 3 types of DNA questions every time he sees one of the people he is developing and discipling.

In the same way, you can build up your toolbox of questions that you ask regularly to those on your team, in your Bridge Group or even in your family. Some other examples are:



- *How full are your emotional, physical, and spiritual tanks right now (empty, a quarter full, half, three quarters or full)?*
- *If you could see God do one thing over the next thirty days, what would it be?*
- *What has God been saying to you through his Word recently?*
- *What passion is the Spirit stirring in your soul lately?*
- *What season best describes your spiritual life right now: winter, spring, summer or fall? Why?*
- *What truth of who God is do you need to believe more deeply right now?*

5. Be Challenging.

Too often we approach development as simply knowing more information. But development is more than knowing—it's doing. In the book of James it says, "faith without works is dead (James 2:26)". So to have a faith that is active and developing means taking steps outside of your comfort zone and doing things that cause you to have a greater dependence on God.

Look around the people in your group or on a team you lead, and select someone you can give a task to such as leading a meeting, coaching someone who is struggling or taking on a new project. Or give the entire group a challenge such as having a spiritual conversation with someone who doesn't know Christ or praying with or a neighbor or co-worker this week. Giving people challenges like this will stretch their imagination and their abilities and help them grow in competence and confidence.

Reflection Questions:

- Who do you know at a "Level 5"/Faith level? What did you do to get to know them that well? How might you do the same thing for someone whom you are currently developing that you don't know as well?
- Look at the sample questions again under the "Be Prepared" habit. Which one do you most want to ask someone? Whom would you ask?
- Think of someone you are developing and know well. What is a "stretch challenge" you could give them?
- Which of the five habits of a developer is the easiest for you to practice? Which is the most difficult?



Put into Practice

- Choose one of the assessments below, take it yourself and make a plan for taking a next step in your own spiritual development as a disciple.

Spiritual Pathways Assessment:

<https://groupleaders.org/curriculum-feed/spiritual-pathways-activity#personal-assessment>

Simple Spiritual Gifts Test:

<https://groupleaders.org/curriculum-feed/2017/4/26/spiritual-gift-assessment?rq=spiritual%20gift>

SHAPE assessment:

<https://mountainsprings.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SHAPE-Assessment.pdf>

- Think of one person in your circle of influence for each of the *Five Levels of Knowing* based on how well you know them today. Write out a next step that you could take to get to know each person better.
- Have a conversation with someone (a family member, friend, someone in your current Bridge Group, co-worker) that helps you and them better understand how they are currently growing or not growing as a disciple.
 - Try using the intentional questions noted in the Habits of a Leader who is a developer:
 - *How full are your emotional, physical and spiritual tanks (empty, a quarter filled, half full, three quarters filled)?*
 - *If you could see God do one thing in the next 30 days what would it be?*
 - *What has God been saying to you in His Word lately?*
 - *What passion is God stirring in your soul lately?*
 - *What season best describes your spiritual life right now: spring, summer, fall or winter? Why?*
 - *What truth of God's Word do you need to believe more deeply?*
 - Have the person use the wheel from with Forest Hill's Marks of Dynamic Life In Christ and mark where they are on the six spokes. Talk through what areas are flat and in need of filling up by trying some new spiritual habits.
- If you've already launched your Bridge Group, get to know the people in your group and think through how you'd like to see them grow during the time they are in your group.



- Use a group meeting and have each group member take one of the assessments above and discuss your findings together.
- Aim to meet with each person or couple in your group 1-on-1 over the next 3-6 months. Have a discipleship conversation with them using the intentional questions listed above or their responses to one of the suggested assessments.

Reflection On Your Learning:

Where did you grow the most in this competency?

What next step do you need to take to continue to grow in this competency?