



Living Local: Joining God

Introduction for Congregational Coaches

Key Question: How do we go on a shared journey in discerning what the Spirit is doing ahead of us in our neighborhoods and communities in order to join God in those places?

Step 1: Listening to Learn

January – May 2017

- Congregations practice listening to God, one another and their neighborhoods.

Step 2: Reflecting and Discerning

June – September 2017

- Listening work is brought together from each congregation. Congregations are assisted in identifying and shaping a series of experiments.

Step 3: Engaging in New Behaviors—Behaving Our Way into New Thinking

October 2017 – June 2018

- Engaging in new behaviors takes place across all the congregations.

Steps 4 and 5: Reflecting and Deciding

July - December 2018

- Congregations:
 - Identify the learning they have done in the experiments
 - Identify ways in which they will name 'next step' actions and experiments

What Does a Congregation Coach Do?

The role of the congregation coach is to accompany and support the Guiding Team as they guide the work of *Living Local: Joining God* in their congregation. The congregation coach will fulfill this role by learning, guiding, listening, encouraging and reflecting with their Guiding Team and the broader team of coaches. Coaches are supported through regular guided conversations, as a group, as well as on an individual basis as needed.

Learning

- Become familiar with the resources provided to the Guiding Teams.
- Develop collegial relationships with other coaches and be willing to learn from one another and alongside each other on the journey.

Guiding

- Guide the Guiding Team through the process. The work of the congregation team is to work through the assigned tasks outlined in the *Living Local: Joining God* resources.
- Be flexible and aware of what the Guiding Team needs as time goes on
 - The Coach will tend to be more directive in the beginning, clarifying information, suggesting process and helping the group to form as a team and understand one another's gifts.
 - As time goes on, the Coach will often become less directive, inviting the Guiding Team to dig deeper, asking questions that elicit shifts in perspective and new understanding.
- Remain substantively neutral, without a stake in particular outcomes.
- Help the Guiding Team to assume responsibility for the process.
- Make sure that each meeting ends with clarification of assignments and next steps.
Help the Guiding Team identify measures of accountability.

Listening

- Help the Guiding Team listen for how God might be leading them.
- Maintain awareness of content and process, and the participation and interaction of Guiding Team members.

- Assess when the Guiding Team is struggling and determine when additional support is needed.
- Focus on listening to others fully – both what is being said and what is not being said.
- Ask open questions in order to draw out someone and more clearly understand their perspectives and desires.
- Listen to get clarity about the “whole situation” rather than focusing on details.
- Use question-based conversation.

Encouraging

- Affirm that stepping into new behaviors can be difficult. Celebrate with the Guiding Team as they courageously try new behaviors and approaches.
- Support the Guiding Team as they engage *Dwelling in the Word* each time they gather.
- Create an atmosphere of trust and safety among the Guiding Team members. Accept disagreement, conflict, and evaluation as normal and natural.
- Engage people in finding their own solutions rather than providing counsel on what they should do.
- Create space for others to define options, recommendations, and drive solutions.
- Help people see the benefits of collaborating/partnering with others.

Reflecting

- Help the Guiding Team to reflect on what they are learning about themselves, their congregation and where God might be at work ahead of them.



Commitment of Coaches

- Attend all *Living Local: Joining God* Guiding Team training events.
- Participate in regular meetings with the Point Person supported by TMN (in person or via phone/video).
- At a minimum, connect monthly with the Guiding Team. This can be done in person, via email or via telephone.
- Be present in any meeting the Point Person has with the congregation (or Guiding Team) they are coaching.
- Complete work related to reviewing the learning congregations are doing through listening, conversations, experiments. This work will come in spurts as teams report in on their work in each phase of *Living Local: Joining God*.