

WCI:Full Strength - Participant Guide

The WCI:Full Strength process provides the full Whole Church Initiative experience through a combination of local church team gatherings, a weekend training events, follow-up video conferences and ongoing coaching.

Build Your Team

Check List For This Section

- Recruit your team.
- Submit Your Covenant. <http://www.wholechurch.org/media/WCI-Convenant.pdf>
- Commission Your Team in Worship. <http://www.wholechurch.org/participant-area/liturgy-of-blessing/>

The WCI team should include six lay people plus a pastor. Participation on this team should be by invitation. The Pastor and local church leaders should strategize about who is best suited to participate. While there are no formal requirements, some basic guidelines should be followed:

- Servanthood attitudes. Non-dominating, reflective listeners, willing to face fears.
- FAT – Faithful, Available, Teachable.
- Mutual Brokenness – no “perfect” people.
- Should be given time to pray about it before committing.
- At least one new person (someone who has started attending regularly in the last 3-5 years).
- DO NOT simply use your Church Council or other formal church committee.

Each church will need to designate a lay convener. This person should be part of the WCI team and they will be responsible for the process along with the pastor. The convener and the pastor are the ones that will receive information from the facilitator and conference staff about logistics of the WCI process.

Our Team

Name	Email	Phone Number

Teams should be recognized in the wider church community. This is not a secret group. The best way to do this is to celebrate the team in worship as they begin their work. A liturgy is provided that can be modified to suit your needs. In addition, a covenant is provided that sets important expectation for both the local church and the conference. Signed covenants should be emailed to your District Superintendent.

Gather & Pray Phase (6-10 weeks)

Check List For This Section

- Select four or eight weeks.
- Select your meeting dates.
- Select your location.
- Review additional requirements on the next page.

Pray is used as an umbrella term for what John Wesley called the Means of Grace. Wesley recognized that there were certain activities that predictably allowed people to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit. Some activities he recognized as being universal, like Baptism and Holy Communion. Others were rooted more in the culture of the time, like Class and Band meetings. The important thing is that we recognize that we must intentionally pursue activities that put us in the right frame of mind to listen to God.

The first part of the WCI is an intentional time of spiritual practice. Too often our instinct is to dive into the work we feel is before us. By laying an intentional foundation of spiritual practice we resist the urge of moving too quickly to find fixes. Instead, we allow God to properly inform our work and root ourselves in pursuing God’s will.

This initial phase will often invite two types of responses. Those who are more naturally inclined to start working may feel it is a waste of time. Conversely, there will be those who will desire to stay in this phase exclusively and resist moving to more practical activities. Both of these reactions will need to be managed by the convener.

Four or Eight Weeks?

Either a four or eight week Gather & Pray process is required by the WCI process. Guides can be found here: <http://www.wholechurch.org/participant-area/gather-pray/>. Your Gather & Pray time will be structured like a Wesleyan Small Group. This is intentional to give you experience with that type of gathering. You will learn later that these types of small groups are critical for intentional disciple making.

You will need to be done with your Gather & Pray sessions before you move onto the Learn & Imagine phase. You will also need to complete some additional tasks not listed in your Wesleyan Small Group guide. Those tasks are listed on the next page.

Gather & Pray Sessions.

Session	Date	Location
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Additional Requirements

Check List For This Section

- Select person(s) to deploy the Readiness 360.
- Develop your communication plan.
- Schedule your celebration day.
- Have each team member take the spiritual assessment.
- Gather and distribute required books & articles.

Readiness 360 Survey

If you are participating in the Readiness 360 survey as part of the WCI you need to get started during the Gather & Pray phase. Visit <http://www.wholechurch.org/participant-area/learn-imagine/> to download the Readiness 360 Launch Guide. You should identify one or two people responsible for following the guide and deploying the survey. (About Readiness 360: readiness360.org)

Communications Plan

Each team should create a communications plan. It's important to keep your congregation informed and celebrate your success. A short guide to creating a communication plan can be found here: <http://www.wholechurch.org/participant-area/learn-imagine/>

Celebration Day

Soon after the third weekend training event you will want to have a celebration day event. This is a time for all people from your church to gather and hear about the process. It is best to have a meal and table conversation where people commingle at tables. Ahead of time, invite members of the WCI team to share responses to the following:

- What is the most exciting thing you've learned as part of this process?
- How is your team growing in discipleship through the process?

As tables, ask people to reflect on the following questions:

- When where you most proud to be part of your church?
- What most excites you about your church's future? What most worries you?

Date	Location

Spiritual Gifts

During the Gather & Pray phase each person should complete the Spiritual Gifts assessment. Discuss the assessment during one of your sessions. What surprised you? What do you feel called to do in response?

Online Assessment: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/exploring-your-spiritual-gifts>

Required Books & Articles

- *The Good and Beautiful Community*, by James Bryan Smith. (For 8 week Gather & Pray)
- *Adapt to Thrive*, by John Flowers and Karen Vannoy.
- *Transforming Evangelism*, by Henry H Knight III and F. Douglas Powe Jr.

Monographs by Gil Rendle (Download: www.wholechurch.org/participant-area/learn-imagine/):

- *Three Essential Types of Leadership Conversations*
- *Getting to the Why: Turning Intentions Into Outcomes*
- *Counts, Measures and Conversations: Using Metrics for Fruitfulness*

Learn & Imagine Phase

Check List For This Section

- Set dates and location of Learn & Imagine Weekends.
- Get copies of WCI:Core Process and Whole Discipleship Workbook. One per team member.
- Make hospitality arrangements (lunch, snacks, coffee & tea).
- Review the Plan Ahead section on the next page.

The purpose of the Learn & Imagine phase is to expand participants’ imagination about what is possible. The Learn & Imagine phase is a process of discovery. The provided resources are intended to challenge participants to increase their understanding of what the possible future can look like. They help think beyond the known and comfortable and invite us to dream about new possibilities. They also help us to connect with the underlying purpose of the church.

The Learn & Imagine phase also generates many ideas. They often come up unpredictably as conversation flows. These ideas need to be captured so that when you enter the next phase they can be used as starting points. Teams will often employ a Parking Lot. This is a place where these ideas are written down and saved for future discussion. This helps us avoid getting bogged down in the details of any one idea while still preserving the idea for further conversation later.

In the WCI:Full Strength process the Learn & Imagine Phase consists of learning weekend events. These last from 10am-3pm and include a 30 minute lunch. All teams in the cohort participate together.

Learn & Imagine Weekends

Date	Location

First Weekend

Opening worship time.
 Introductions (Commingle members of different teams).
 Take turns answering: *Name, church, what you hope to get from the WCI?*
 Share with whole group responses to *what you hope to get from the WCI?*
 Complete section “The Church Today” in Core Process Workbook.
 Lunch
 Complete section “Mission of the Church” in Core Process Workbook.
 Homework: Read *Adapt to Thrive*.

Second Weekend

Opening worship time.
 Debrief Book: *Adapt to Thrive*. Use *Book Debrief Sheet* in Core Process Workbook
 Complete section “What Are We Doing?!” in Core Process Workbook.
 Lunch

Complete section “Environmental Protection” in Core Process Workbook.
Homework: Finish Readiness 360.

Third Weekend

Opening worship time.

Begin section “Fine Your Foundation” in Core Process Workbook.

Lunch

Complete section “Fine Your Foundation” in Core Process Workbook.

Homework: Read *Transforming Evangelism*. Host Celebration Day.

Fourth Weekend

Opening worship time.

Debrief Book: Transforming Evangelism. Use *Book Debrief Sheet* in Core Process Workbook

Complete section “Faith Sharing” in Core Process Workbook.

Lunch

Complete sections “Introduction” and “Crafting a Definition” in Whole Discipleship Workbook.

Review *Know Your Neighbor* and *Missional Outreach* processes.

Plan Ahead (page 6 of this guide).

Closing worship.

Plan Ahead

Check List For This Section

- Schedule Whole Discipleship Meetings.
- Schedule Clergy Cohort Meetings.
- Review *Know Your Neighbor* and *Missional Outreach* processes.

Before leaving your final weekend experience church teams should plan for when they will gather to complete the Whole Discipleship Workbook. Ideally, schedule five meetings for the remaining parts.

Whole Discipleship Meetings

Date	Location
*	

**At the last Whole Discipleship Meeting review the Act & Reflect Phase below.*

Clergy participate in a followup cohort that focuses on case studies. Plan a schedule for those meetings before you depart. The case study format is provided at the end of this guide.

Clergy Cohort Meetings

Date	Location	Case Study

Act & Reflect Phase

Check List

- Finish Whole Discipleship Workbook.
- Complete Creating Next Steps booklet.
- Determine what meeting schedule is required to keep progress moving forward.
- Multiply the team if necessary.

Making progress to increase the vitality of your local congregation will require you to take action. You will not be able to predict exactly what the outcomes of your actions will be, which is why we use the language of experiment. Taking some time to determine where you go next is critical to the Act & Reflect phase. Schedule a *Next Step* meeting to determine where you go from here. This may be the time the team needs to divide or expand. Different people will feel called to different parts of the work. As long as at least two people are willing to build and lead a new team multiplication is encouraged at this point.

Four to eight weeks after your learning weekend, and after you finish the Whole Discipleship Workbook, you will need to complete the *Creating Next Steps* booklet found at: <http://www.wholechurch.org/participant-area/act-reflect/>

You should also plan follow-up meetings as necessary.

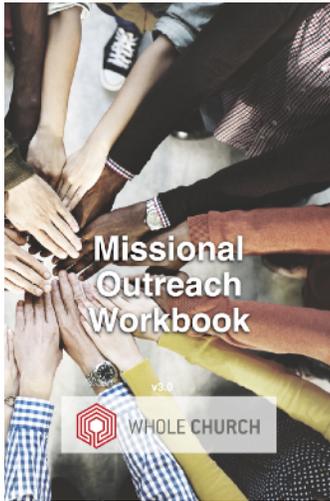
Creating Next Steps Meeting(s)

Date	Location

Team Multiplication

Being part of the WCI process should lead to action. The intention is for participants to feel empowered and equipped to lead change in their church and community. It is very likely that individuals will feel pulled in different directions. That is good! What it means is that it is time for your team to multiply.

WCI Related Booklets



<http://www.wholechurch.org/resources/missional-outreach/>

Every follower of Jesus has the inescapable call to participate in works of mercy and justice. This call predates Jesus' earthly ministry and is expressed clearly in the following passage from the prophet Micah:

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8, NIV)

You cannot call yourself a Christian and ignore suffering or injustice. Participating in acts of mercy and justice are as much a part of discipleship as are worship and prayer. Unfortunately, in many churches today, what passes for ministries of mercy and justice (often called "missions") is the collecting and sending of small sums of money. However, mission is much more than money. In Matthew 25, Jesus

personalized our call to acts of mercy and justice by saying when we reach out to others, we are reaching out to him. Do we want to encounter Jesus from afar or up close and personal?



<http://www.wholechurch.org/resources/know-your-neighbor/>

The mission field for the contemporary church is no longer a far-off place. It is no longer sufficient to call and send missionaries to bring good news to people an ocean away. Every neighborhood, city, or town is now a mission field. In the United States, following the same path as Western Europe, more and more people are being born, raised, and moving into adulthood never having participated in Christian community. More and more people, soon to be a majority, have never attended worship, Sunday school, or church camp.

At the same time our existing congregations are becoming more disconnected from their communities. How many committed laypeople have strong relationships with those outside of their church circles? We have become cut off to the point that we do not even know who is in our communities.

Better understanding your community is a required step for any congregation seeking to better live out its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Oftentimes it is not what we are saying but how we are saying it that causes our outreach efforts to fall flat. Like in Acts 2, our job is to translate the message of the good news into a language our neighborhood can hear.

Case Study Format

As you are developing your case study, please provide the following in written format at least 3 days before your cohort gathering:

BACKGROUND: What is the context of the situation? What led you to this place and who was involved? What other pressures or circumstances were playing into the situation?

DESCRIPTIONS: What happened and what did you do? Include only the essential facts.

ANALYSIS: What issues and relationships were in play in this situation? What else was happening? Who were you as minister and leader? How was God evident or absent?

EVALUATION: Estimate your own effectiveness in the event. Did you function effectively? Why? Why not? Did you do what you set out to do?

Provide two questions for the group to discuss that would be most helpful to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: If you do not want to reveal the identity of real persons or institutions, please use fictitious names and places.