



the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

Leadership Development Framework

Session 1 guide: What is leadership? How does leadership make a difference?

Objectives:

- Examine how effective leadership makes a difference.
- Build an understanding of effective leadership and seek to apply it to our own context.
- Introduce the Uniting Church Leadership Development Framework (LDF) domains.

Description:

This session explores the concept of leadership and reinforces the understanding that leaders make an impact on those around them. Five important areas of leadership (domains) are introduced and participants will consider how these domains apply to leadership in their context.

Facilitation process:

Session: One hour

Room set up: Tables for 3–5 people or the capacity to form small groups quickly.

1. As you conclude your welcome to the whole group, walk around and hand an orange to each table or group.

“Today we are going to explore the concept of leadership and find out how good leadership has impacted you personally. By the end of the session, I will invite each one of you to decide on one thing to focus on to further develop your leadership capacity.”

“Please think about what makes an effective leader. As you do that, please pass the orange around your group. Think about oranges; look at the orange, touch it, smell it. Now, think of one positive way that a leader is like an orange. Be creative. For example, an orange and a leader can refresh a tired person; they can both energise others.”

After a minute or so, say “Share your thoughts with your small group on how a leader is like an orange”.

Ask a few participants to share their thoughts with the whole group. (Light discussion, seeking some creative responses).

“From the responses that we have heard, you can see that individuals have different experiences of leadership and a wide range of interpretations of what leadership means. We are now going to explore your personal experience of leadership, particularly how good leadership has impacted you.” (10 minutes)

2. “Think of someone who has led you well—preferably from a church context, otherwise from work or life in general.”
 - 1) Ask participants to complete the three points in Box 1 of the handout. (1–2 minutes)
 - 2) Ask them to turn to the person next to them and discuss their example of good leadership. “How did they impact you and what was it about the person or the way they treated you that made a difference?” (2–3 minutes)
 - 3) As a whole group, share key words that highlight what made a difference to each person. Make a whiteboard summary. Highlight that leaders who inspire us tend to be ones who believe in us and make some sort of emotional connection, make us feel valued, sometimes have more faith in us than we have in ourselves, help us to see something bigger than ourselves, trust us, have confidence in us.

“Part of our personal challenge within our congregation/organisation/life is to be someone who positively influences others.” (5–7 minutes, 10 minutes in total)

Session 1 guide: What is leadership?

3. Ask participants to read the definition of leadership (Box 2, page 1 of the handout) and underline key words. Ask three or four participants to share one of the words they highlighted and explain the significance to their view of leadership. Briefly discuss the definition.

Explain that there are many definitions of leadership (hundreds) and there is no generally agreed upon definition. Ask participants: “What would you add to this definition?” Do not discuss these additions. However, recognise these as other positive aspects of leadership. (5 minutes)

4. “Our Uniting Church Leadership Development Framework (LDF) has five important areas of leadership, called domains, which reflect leadership in action. These areas are relevant to all levels of leadership. They are listed in Box 3, page 1 of your handout: ‘Develop and lead self’, ‘Build relationships and engage others’, ‘Partner and collaborate’, ‘Shape a preferred future’ and ‘Achieve results’. You will notice that the focus starts with self, moves to others, widens to look to the future and finally focuses on outcomes. As you will see in Box 4 on page 2 of your handout, each one of the five areas is supported by four capabilities that are seen as important for leadership. Each of the four capabilities are important but they do not cover every possible aspect of leadership. Four capabilities were chosen as a manageable number to focus on. It is also important to note that ultimately leadership is not about personality or position, it is about behaviour—an observable set of skills and abilities which positively influence those around them.”

Suggest that participants (individually or in small groups) spend a couple of minutes perusing the details in Box 3, page 1 and Box 4, page 2 of the handout. Then ask the group “From your first glance, think of an example of how one or more align with your earlier examples of leaders who inspired us. Discuss examples briefly in small groups.” (15 minutes)

5. “We have made a number of connections between our personal experience of positive leadership and the five domains. Our next challenge is to make a connection with Biblical principles. Considering the five leadership domains (Box 3, page 1 and Box 4, page 2 of the handout) think of a specific biblical story or concept that illustrates each of the five areas. Discuss these in your small groups and decide on one example to report back to the whole group.” Discuss examples as a whole group.

Back in small groups, discuss the questions in Box 6, page 2: “How would having more highly developed leaders impact on what we are hoping to achieve in our congregation/organisation? How do we go about developing these capabilities in others?” (15 minutes)

6. Conclusion: “Don Bennett lost one leg in a boating accident and is somewhat of a legend in the Seattle area. After abandoning his first climbing attempt, Don became the first amputee to climb Mt Rainer—14,410 feet on one leg. To achieve this, Don removed his prosthetic and hopped eight kilometres with a weighted belt around his waist every day for two and a half months before the climb. When asked how he made it to the top, he replied, ‘one hop at a time’. Leadership development is similar. We get there one hop at a time AND often there is a lot of behind the scenes preparation that goes into our development.”

“In pairs, discuss which of the five leadership domains you feel you could benefit from developing further, either in yourself or in others in your congregation/organisation. What action could you take to continue your leadership development? Share this with your neighbour and write down one action that you are going to do straight away.” (5 minutes)

Materials

- UCA LDF Session 1 handout – What is leadership? for each participant.
- An orange for each group.
- Whiteboard or poster for recording group ideas.
- Copy of The Uniting Church in Australia, Leadership Development Framework (LDF) ucaqlld.com.au/download/6194/