

Resources for the New Fruitfulness Project Component for United Methodist Ordination



Effective with the 2012 Discipline, those seeking ordination will need to present “a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church’s mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

The Board of Ordained Ministry serves the mission of the United Methodist Church as the board enlists, encourages, authorizes, and supports those who lead in this mission. This new fruitfulness project for ordination emerges from our biblical and historical roots and will deepen a crucial dimension of the ministry of those who lead us toward this mission.

The biblical mandate for fruitfulness is clear: We are accountable for achieving outcomes that move us toward the mission. Jesus spoke of being known by our fruitfulness. And “Are there fruits?” was a perennial question asked by John Wesley. The recovered focus on fruitfulness today can bring vitality to those who are ordained and to local congregations seeking to move from a mentality of maintenance to becoming mission outposts for the world.

Where to Look for Projects

- Focus on a particular aspect of the mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world.
- Find that focus where your passion and that of the congregation converge.
- Look for places where the Spirit is already moving in the form of readiness.
- Identify a place where there is a consensus on the need for change.
- Take on a project that is manageable in the coming months or year.
- Work on that for which the likelihood of success is reasonable.
- Keep in mind that the project may need adjustment as a result of what you learn as you are involved in the process.

Develop a “So That” Statement

The formula for a “so that” statement is:

We will do X so *that* Y happens.

A fruit is not a new activity or program. For example, beginning a new choir is an accomplishment but not necessarily a fruitful one. The question is not “Did you begin a choir?” but rather, “Is the new choir accomplishing the outcome for which the choir exists on behalf of the mission?”

The “so that” statement might be:

We will begin a new choir **so *that*** more members use their talents for ministry and worship is enhanced for everyone.

For more information, see *Bearing Fruit: Ministry with Real Results* by Tom Berlin and Lovett H. Weems, Jr. (Abingdon Press, 2011). A free study guide is available at www.churchleadership.com/resources/bearingfruit.html.

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