

# ESTABLISH A LOCAL MINISTRY

A Practical Guide to Build a Core Compassion Ministry



||>> SEND Relief

<b>Building Relationships</b> .....	2
The Power of Proximity.....	2
Moving Beyond Donor/Client.....	3
 <b>Start Soon</b> .....	4
Understand The Call.....	4
Understand The Qualifications.....	4
 <b>Start Small</b> .....	5
Learn All You Can.....	5
Essential Things to Learn.....	5
The Best Way to Learn.....	5
 <b>Start With What You Have</b> .....	6
An Asset-Based Approach.....	6
 <b>Before You Start-BE WISE</b> .....	7
Building W.I.S.E. Core Ministry.....	7
Practical Questions to Gauge Sustainability.....	8
Empowering.....	9
 Asset-Based Assessments.....	10
Community Surveys.....	15
Appendices.....	19





### The Power of Proximity

Meeting needs and changing lives begins in local communities (Acts 2). The best way to do that is through the power of proximity. As you and your church seek to serve the most vulnerable, the first step is to move closer to those in need. Building relationships is the greatest assessment tool you can use to gain insight into your community and the populations your church desires to serve.

### The “Christoid” Effect

A woman in New York City living in an abandoned building had Christian visitors stop by twice a year. These Christians came to the city to minister to those experiencing homelessness. They tried to serve the community by meeting tangible needs and sharing the love of Jesus. Though they faithfully came twice a year and interacted with the woman, the chasm between them grew. The woman had a nickname for these Christians. She called them “Christoids.” Her name suggested that she saw these visitors as two-dimensional, more like robots—physically present yet emotionally disconnected.

Although these Christians had good motives to go and meet the needs of the homeless community while sharing the love of Jesus, they had missed a vital piece of the equation—relationships.



A background image showing several people sitting around a light-colored wooden table. They are holding open Bibles, suggesting a Bible study or church service. The image is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the text overlay.

## The Value of Relationship

To establish a local ministry that avoids the “Christoid” effect, ministry leaders must value relationships. When churches leave out this vital piece, many miss an opportunity for true life-transforming ministry. Relational ministry plays an essential role for these reasons:

- **Relationships limit categories.**

As people grow closer, it is harder to put the person into categories. Once our hearts get involved, it is not about homelessness; it’s about Joe, the person. It’s not about unemployment; it’s about Sarah. It’s not about addiction; it’s about Eli.

- **Relationships lead to action.**

Our friend’s hurts and suffering become our concern because of the relationship we have with them. We will seek to find new ways to help and encourage them.

- **Relationships imitate Christ’s example.**

John 1:14 tells us God became flesh. When God looked at mankind, he planned reconciliation through Jesus. In doing so, God chose to love us and to be with us. Through Jesus, he remains proximate or in a relationship with us.

- **Relationships provide opportunities.**

Jesus developed “unlikely friendships,” such as lepers, children, prostitutes, tax collectors, blind beggars, the Sanhedrin and Roman Centurions. He took on flesh to reconcile us to himself. Relationships provide us the opportunity to love and serve the “least of these” and our “unlikely friends.”



## Moving Beyond Donor/Client

The “Christoid” effect happens when we follow a donor/client model as we serve the most vulnerable populations. Jesus came to earth, taking on the form of man, not to serve as the donor meeting a need; instead, he loved by establishing relationships. To move beyond this donor/client model means taking a step toward imitating the footsteps of Jesus. To shift from a donor/client mentality requires an understanding of these things:

### Prioritize friendships.

- *God came and sought us. He calls us to do the same for our neighbors.*
- *Missions mean stepping beyond our interests to see the real needs of others.*

### Conversation comes before collaboration.

- *Staying proximate with the broken will always prove challenging, yet Jesus did it. He set the example for us clearly in Scripture.*
- *Don't just provide food for people. Eat with them.*
- *People often want you to hear their story more than they want you to grant their request.*

### Understand cultural dynamics.

- *We are all made in the image of God and as reflections of him, we have value.*
- *Understanding context and respecting cultural differences is essential to building relationships.*
- *See Appendix A for tips on building Cross-Cultural friendships.*

### Invest in the community/people without an agenda.

- *Approach the underserved in your community without a plan.*
- *Build community partnerships with local organizations and groups serving the vulnerable in your city without an agenda.*
- *You can find surveys at the end of this document to assess and build community partnerships.*

### Understand there is mutual brokenness.

- *Mutual brokenness is the reality of every human being. There are no “haves” and “have nots.”*
- *Remembering our mutual brokenness helps us avoid the ‘us serving them’ attitude. We equally have value and worth. We are equally desperate for grace, mercy and salvation.*

### Longevity is imperative.

- *When you understand the requirement of the “long-haul,” the longevity of your ministry will not surprise you.*



# LONGEVITY IS IMPERATIVE.



# START SOON

## Understand the Call

We often misunderstand the role God has called us to play in serving the broken and vulnerable around us. We believe only a few and gifted can answer the call to minister to the most vulnerable. As Jesus followers, we all have the charge to follow him and be like him. Micah 6:8 tells us, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Recognizing and understanding three fundamental truths can help us take the first steps in meeting needs in our communities:

- **God’s Word commands it.**

*Over 2000 verses in Scripture speak about the poor, oppressed and sojourner. God’s Word not only speaks about the poor, but the Bible instructs us to care for the poor and oppressed.*

- **Our troubles become our ministry.**

*Augustine is said to have stated: “Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are Anger and Courage; Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are” Collective action requires the right combination of both anger and courage.*

- **God has called us to love our neighbor.**

*The second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. This commandment means we should love all our neighbors.*

---

## Understand The Qualifications

We often disqualify ourselves from starting. We use our past mistakes, addictions, sin, and lack of knowledge or training to convince ourselves that we do not qualify to engage in God’s reconciliation efforts. Understanding three truths can help us start soon:

- **Everyone has something.**

*God has given everyone something. John 6:5-13 tells us the story of Jesus feeding 5000 because a little boy had five loaves of bread and two fish. We all have something to help those in need.*

- **Everyone has a part to play.**

*All Jesus followers have a place in the body of Christ, and we all have a part to play in God’s redemption and reconciliation of the world. 1 Corinthians 12 helps us understand that we have unique gifts to do what God calls us to do.*

- **Everyone has unique gifts.**

*Starting soon means accepting ourselves—how God has wired us—our personalities and all that comes with “us.” God has provided us with talents and gifts for his purposes.*



## Learn All You Can

Start small by learning. Study all that you can before taking the first step into your ministry.

- Understand where your passions point to and where they lead. Prayer ministry? Planning? Project Management?
- Research, study, pray, and seek counsel before you start!
- Have an educated, holistic, and biblical approach to meeting the needs of your community. See **Appendix B** for Trauma-Informed Approaches to meeting needs.

## Key Things to Learn

Learning about your community can sometimes feel overwhelming. Focus on these things at first:

- *What actual issues exist at the root of the needs you discover?*
- *What people group do you feel called to serve? How does their culture differ from yours?*
- *What do they truly need? Research their needs. Resist assuming what they need.*
- *What best practices can you perform to meet the specific need? How can you serve this particular people group?*
- *List some empowering ways to meet the needs of others. See **Appendix C** for Empowering Approaches to Meeting Needs.*

## Effective Ways to Learn

The best way to learn about your community and the people you want to serve is through friendships. Friendships provide and give us a new perspective. They do two things:

### 1. Befriending those in need transforms us.

- Friendship personally bonds us to the person, not the cause.
- Friendship opens our eyes to the image-bearing nature of those in need.
- Friendship reflects the nature of God.

### 2. Befriending those in need informs us.

- Friendship teaches us the truth about a whole person.
- Within the relationship, our actions prove more effective.
- We can act on what we know instead of our assumptions.
- See **Appendix D** for Tips and Tricks, a list of practical first steps to take in forming “unlikely friendships.”





## START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

### An Asset-Based Approach

The most common place we start is with:

- What do we lack?
- What does our city need?
- What does this person require?

The better place to start is with:

- What do I have?
- What does my city have to leverage?
- What does the person/people/group have to offer?

An asset-based approach starts with current resources and focuses on what God's provision. An asset-based approach assesses four areas:

1. You
2. Your city
3. The person/people in need
4. Your church/faitch community

This document includes printing-friendly asset-based assessments to help you determine needs within your community and context. Use these assessments for yourself, your team, church, community and people in need. The results will help focus your area of ministry within your community.



## **Before You Start—Be W.I.S.E.**

*As you build your local compassion ministry, consider your core ministry. Begin with the end in mind by utilizing these Be W.I.S.E. principles to experience longevity in your ministry.*

## **W-Holistic – Incarnational – Sustainable – Empowering**

### **Building W.I.S.E. Core Ministry**

*Core Ministry: Core ministry includes the day-in and day-out activity in a local context, using local staff and volunteers. Serve the city WITH the city by leveraging what exists there to meet the needs and affect change, especially for the most vulnerable.*

### **W-HOLISTIC: Take a holistic approach to meet needs.**

- God created us a WHOLE person: body, spirit, heart and mind. Each part of us participates as part of the WHOLE.
- God created us as relational beings. We see that in the call to love the Lord (relational) with all our heart, soul, mind, strength (whole person). When something impacts one part of us, the whole gets affected.
- Poverty is not solely material. Poverty exists because of brokenness—in relationship with God, self, others and creation. The brokenness of a relationship is at the root of material poverty.
- Therefore, because a brokenness of relationship is at the root of poverty—a holistic, whole-person, relational approach is needed to alleviate poverty.

### **INCARNATIONAL: Build relationships.**

- Local ministry should model the template God laid out for us: incarnational and relational. *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” John 1:14 ESV*
- God has called us to be WITH those he has called us to serve.
  - “With” our understanding of who we are.
  - “With” by our physical proximity.
  - “With” by our willingness to listen, learn, and grow ALONGSIDE those in need.

### **SUSTAINABLE: Practice healthy ministry activity.**

- People called to local ministry make it sustainable.
- People called to local ministry make the greatest asset of local ministry.
- Long-term ministry sustainability only occurs WHEN the health of leadership and team is a priority.
- A ministry’s “internal culture” is of equal importance to its “external output.”
- Prioritizing health on all levels, building a healthy internal culture, and PRACTICING provide an essential part of building a ministry that’s sustainable long term.
- Ministry activity should never trump health. Ministry goals should never eclipse the souls of those called to it.

## Practical Questions to Gauge Sustainability

- Is the pace we move as a ministry sustainable for health and balance across every domain of our life? If the answer is no, we have some work to do.
- If we grow to “x,” will that level of activity remain sustainable for health and balance across every domain of our life?

### **EMPOWERING: Practice empowering approaches.**

- We must determine an appropriate response for those we serve: relief, rehabilitation or development.
- The right approach begins an empowering process.
- When applied to poverty alleviation, empowerment means that people will grow in their ability to analyze their situation, make healthy decisions to improve that situation and carry out those decisions in all four relationships—God, Self, Others and Creation.
- Do we do “for” or “with” those in need within our ministry?
- Do we provide relief where development is needed?

### **Building W.I.S.E. External Mobilization**

**External Mobilization:** *short term mission trips, vision trips and training opportunities*

### **W-HOLISTIC: Consider holistic approaches.**

- Mobilization opportunities should keep the whole-person approach and the whole vision of the local ministry in mind.
- Opportunities should include hands-on serving. Physical projects should allow individuals to engage with people face-to-face to learn with those outside their norm. They will do a project “with” instead of “for” those the ministry serves.
- Short-term mission trips and mobilization opportunities should do less harm—improving the local ministry’s vision and mission and those they serve.
- Short-term mission trips should impact at a physical, emotional, and spiritual level for all involved.

### **INCARNATIONAL: Mirror Local Ministry.**

- Mobilization should LOOK LIKE what’s happening on the ground daily. Mobilization should stay ON MISSION with what your local ministry aims at every day.
- Mobilization should mirror your local ministry. It’s an extension of culture.

### **SUSTAINABLE: Prioritize Local Ministry.**

- Your job as ministry leaders includes evaluating and guarding the priorities of local ministries as they also build mobilization and short-term opportunities.
- Sustainability in this sense looks at other local ministry abilities to support short-term opportunities WITHOUT losing ground locally on any level.





### EMPOWERING: Equip partners for the local context.

- Mobilization at its finest creates opportunities for those who come in for short periods to receive information and firsthand practice of what they can now do in their context at home.
- The end goal of mobilization opportunities is not the trip. Short-term mission trips provide an opportunity to “send” individuals back to their cities where they can make the most significant impact.

### Next Steps

*Everyone's next step looks different. Use the information you gather from the asset-based assessments and the Be W.I.S.E. steps to determine your next steps. Look for a What to Expect list in **Appendix E** to help you navigate how to begin a local ministry. Please visit [www.sendrelief.org](http://www.sendrelief.org) to learn how Send Relief can help you take your next step.*



## ASSET-BASED ASSESSMENTS

### Individual Asset-based Assessment

Knowing your spiritual gifts and discovering the thing(s) you're passionate about will help you focus on the ministry God has prepared you to do. Consider a spiritual gifts test before utilizing this asset-based assessment.

Answer these questions when assessing your gifts and passions:

- What are your ministry desires? What keeps you up at night?
- What have others said about your gifts? What natural talents and abilities do you have? What things in the church do you feel a pull?
- What unique skills do you have? (Teaching, organizing, gathering people, counseling, building/construction, event planning, etc.)
- What is your personality type? What makes your personality unique?
- Have you ever taken a personality test or a spiritual gifts assessment? If so, what were the results? (If not, find one. They are great tools for learning about yourself.)
- How does your career/job allow you to help others? Are you in a career/job that uniquely positions you to help the vulnerable in your city/town?
- Do you have extra income, material possessions, time, etc.?
- What is your current influence in the community?
- Who is in your sphere of influence? (School, businesses, faith community, organized sports, etc.)
- What unique connections do you have that can make a difference within your community?

The answers to these questions will help you list the assets you currently have. These assets are the things God has given you so that you can use them to fulfill the Great Commission in your city/town.

### Faith Community Assessment

Knowing the assets that your faith community offers will help you and your church successfully establish and maintain a ministry in your community.

Consider these questions when assessing your faith community:

- What is your church's vision? What do the members of your church care about within your city?
- Who makes up your church body?
- What influence does your church already have in the city?
- What skills or unique abilities does your church body have?
- Where is your church located? Who is directly around you?
- Where is God already using your church body to meet the needs of the vulnerable?



## Assets-based Assessment of People Group in Need

Proximity to those in hardship is essential to meeting their needs. Engage the person/people group to assess what they perceive as their greatest need. Friendship transforms and informs us.

Consider these questions as you complete an assets-based assessment of the people group in need:

- What do they know that would be helpful to you?
- What skills do they have that will help you understand the rest of the community?
- What resources do they have that can provide awareness when addressing the need?
- How can you involve them in the process as much as possible?
- What driving forces impact that area the most? (Example: lack of access to education, jobs, etc.) Every city has a particular set of forces at work that drives the issues. It's important to feel out what those are in your area.)
- What unique strengths and assets exist in the city's impact areas?
- What do they feel they bring to the equation, the dialogue or the solution?
- What changes do they want to see? What meaningful change would they like to see?
- What doesn't work? Anything specific that makes them roll their eyes?
- How do they feel? What everyday struggles do they share? Fears? Goals? Strengths? Dreams and abilities?

The most empowering and Christlike way to learn about the people and the needs in your city is through relationships. Refrain from any research and assumptions on the internet and ask the people impacted by injustice. Become a listener. Listen to everyone involved, from all sides.

## COMMUNITY/CITY ASSESSMENT

As you start this assessment, look for the specific needs and assets of your community/city. Five main focus areas apply to this assessment. Your context and passions may include others. Expand this assessment and its application as it fits your specific context.

Focus Areas:

- Strengthen Communities
- Care for Refugees
- Protect Children and Families
- Fight Human Trafficking
- Respond to Crisis

## THE CITY ITSELF

- Learn about the city:
- What are the city's demographics?
- What is the poverty rate?
- What are the socioeconomic dynamics?
- What is the layout of the city-based upon the answers to the questions above? Is there a connection between the demographics, poverty rate and other socioeconomic factors?
- What is the city's history regarding justice/poverty/exploitation issues?
- What is the city's tone or personality regarding justice/poverty/exploitation issues?
- What percentage of the population are professing Christians?
- What is the unique expression of the kingdom of God in the city? How do believers live out their faith? (Do Christians seem to influence the city? Is there something to be gained from being a Christian?)

## NEED ASSESSMENT

- What are the city's greatest needs?
- Which of those needs is being met or focused on already?
- Where are the obvious gaps in the city? Which needs are unmet?

## ASSET ASSESSMENT

- What are the city's greatest assets?
- What is unique about the city that other cities don't have?
- What justice programs does the city already have in place?
- What institutions are creating change?
- What schools create change and make an impact?
- What faith-based initiatives have gained traction and are changing lives?

## POVERTY/HOMELESSNESS SPECIFICALLY

- What is the breakdown of poverty in the city? Where is it located, and who does it most affect?
- What is the breakdown of homelessness in the city? Where do the homeless congregate geographically within the city?
- Who is most affected by homelessness?
- What is the scope of the homeless issue in the city? Mild, moderate or severe?
- What is the city's attitude toward poverty and homelessness? What about city leaders? Are there any laws in place that reflect this attitude or approach to addressing it?
- What initiatives work well to address both poverty and homelessness?
- What is in place that isn't working?



## **EXPLOITATION**

### **What is the breakdown of sexual exploitation and human trafficking?**

- How many strip clubs are in the city?
- What is the scope of the prostitution activity in the city?
- What is the scope of the sex trafficking problem?

## **CHILD-FOCUSED ISSUES**

- What is the foster care system like in the city/county?
- How many children are in foster care?
- How many foster families are actively fostering?
- How many children need placement?
- Are there runaway shelters?
- Are there children living in homelessness?
- What is the situation regarding child hunger?
- Who is advocating and fighting for children?

The next section of the assessment focuses on evaluating people and organizations in your community/city with whom you can work alongside to meet ministry needs.

## **PEOPLE OF PEACE**

People of Peace are those impacted by the issue who embed themselves within the culture and are knowledgeable. They can serve as an ambassador and a good guide for you.

We can often recognize people of peace because they will:

- Welcome you
- Receive you
- Remain open to you and your friendship
- Listen to what you have to say about Jesus
- Actively stay interested in and open to the life you live as a follower of Jesus
- Assist and serve you in some way
- Who are the people of peace in the impact areas of your community/city?
- Who are the people of peace in the systems? Law enforcement? Leadership?

## **PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE**

- If you want to work in the justice system, who is a good person to contact?
- Who makes decisions that impact the vulnerable the most?
- Who is the mayor and what are they like?

- Who is the district attorney?
- Who is the chief of police?
- Who is an influencer in the faith community?

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- Are there any law enforcement-led initiatives in place for vulnerable populations?
- What is the general attitude toward law enforcement in the city?
- Does it appear that law enforcement works with the community/city?
- Is there a human trafficking task force?
- Who are the agencies that make up the city's enforcement?
- Example: City Police, County, State Police, FBI, etc.
- Do you know any individuals in law enforcement? How do they feel about the things on this assessment?

## **LOCAL CHURCHES**

- What local churches currently work within the community/city in an honest and impactful way?
- What local church ministries address the social justice issues of the community/city?
- What congregations best reflect the demographics of the city? (Racially, culturally and socioeconomically)

## **GOVERNMENT/NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

In your community/city, what government/nonprofit organizations continue to fight against poverty, homelessness, sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, as well as other justice issues that move your heart? Compile a list and know this information about each one:

Who are they? Vision, beliefs, affiliations and leadership  
 What do they do? Programs, initiatives, outreaches, etc.  
 How do they do it? Strategies, culture, expression  
 Are they making an impact? Is the needle moving in their focus area?  
 What government/nonprofit organizations shape the daily lives of those in the impact areas?  
 What is the consensus about these organizations?  
 Are they helpful?  
 Are they harmful or are they neutral?

## **BIGGEST QUESTIONS TO ANSWER**

- What is God already doing through organizations in your community/city?
- Who is making the most significant impact regarding justice issues?
- Who stands out and excels? What can you learn from them?
- Who is gospel-centered, relevant and moving the needle?
- What gaps are obvious when you learn about all the existing resources?



\*Note For Survey Use: Be sensitive when utilizing surveys, as they can communicate insensitively. They often time provide a clinical perspective as opposed to being relationally oriented. These guides provide a starting point. Please omit or add any questions that do not meet your ministry objectives.

## SURVEY 1: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR INDIVIDUALS

Street Location:  
Surveyor:

Neighborhood:  
Date: / / Time:

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_. We are one of many teams conducting interviews in the community. We desire to discover how we can better serve the community. May we ask you a few questions about your perspective of the community, the services within the community, and the things you'd like to see and be a part of in the community?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you lived in this community?

- A.** Less than a year      **B.** 1-5 years      **C.** 5-10 years  
**D.** 10-15 years      **E.** More than 15 years

2. What is your favorite thing about living in the community?

---

---

3. What are evident needs in the community that are not being met well?

---

---

4. Of the population group listed below, which one do you feel has the greatest need of assistance in the community?

- A. Children  
B. Teens  
C. Adults  
D. Elderly  
E. Homeless  
F. Families  
G. Women  
H. Men  
I. Unemployed  
J. Persons with handicaps  
K. Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

5. What are some groups in the community that make a difference? (This could include civic groups, community organizations, after-school programs, churches, etc.)

---

---

6. In your opinion, what role can a church or religious organization play in meeting needs within the community?

---

---

---

**SURVEY 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR BUSINESSES**

Business Name:

Location:

Surveyor:

Date: / / Time:

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_. We are one of many teams conducting interviews in the community to build relationships and discover assets to serve the community better. May we ask you a few questions about what you already do within the community, what you may be interested in doing in the community in the future, and your perspective of the community's strengths and weaknesses.

**Name:**

**Position:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Website:**

**1. How long has your business been in this community?**

---



---

**2. What is your favorite thing about the community?**

---



---

**3. What are evident needs in the community that are not being met well?**

---



---

**4. What skills or attributes do you look for in potential employees?**

---



---

**5. What job opportunities do you provide?**

---



---

**6. What are the most outstanding skill needs in your workforce?**

---



---

**7. Do you offer internship or job shadowing opportunities with your company? If so, please describe.**

---



---

**8. In your opinion, what role can a church or religious organization play in meeting needs within the community?**

---



---



---



---



**SURVEY 3: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS/ORGANIZATIONS**

Organization Name:  
Surveyor:

Location:  
Date:   /   /   Time:

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_. We are one of many teams conducting interviews in the community; to build relationships and discover assets to serve the community better. May we ask you a few questions about what you are already doing within the community, what you may be interested in doing in the future, and your perspective of the community's strengths and weaknesses.

**Name:**  
**Position:**  
**Email:**  
**Phone:**  
**Web site:**

**1. How long has your organization been in this community?**

---

---

**2. What does your organization do? What is its primary mission, goals and objectives?**

---

---

**3. What is your favorite thing about the community?**

---

---

**4. What are evident needs in the community that are not being met well?**

---

---

**5. In your opinion, what are the top three areas of concern in your community (i.e., poverty, homelessness, crime, joblessness, education, transportation, health, etc.)?**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What organizations in your community work to address these issues?**

---

---

**7. In your opinion, what role can a church or religious organization play in meeting needs within the community?**

---

---

**SURVEY 4: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR CHURCH MEMBERS**

Name:  
Address:

Church:  
Phone #

Date: / /

1. How long have you been attending this church? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you currently a member of this church? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you lived in this community? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your favorite thing about the community? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are evident needs in the community that are not being met well? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How often are you involved in worship and activities with this congregation?
  - ☐ More than once a week
  - ☐ Once a week
  - ☐ Once a month
  - ☐ Less than once a month
7. What personal and/or professional skills do you have? (check all that apply.)
  - ☐ Computer: technology, typing, word, excel, publisher
  - ☐ Management or business
  - ☐ Artistic: drawing, painting, sketching
  - ☐ Musical: singing, instruments
  - ☐ Building: construction, carpentry, home repairs
  - ☐ Food service: catering, cooking, serving
  - ☐ Health care: medical, dental, nutrition
  - ☐ Vocational training: computer, money management
  - ☐ ESL, Spanish speaking
  - ☐ Mentoring
  - ☐ Other:
8. Do you currently serve in any ministries of the church?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Are there specific ministries you think the church could be involved in or create to benefit the community? If so, please specify?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Please list any prayer requests so we can pray with you.  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Cross-Cultural Relationships

Besides encountering possible socioeconomic differences between our lives and those of the vulnerable, we may also discover differences in culture, upbringing and how we think about the world. We often take it for granted, but culture significantly impacts how we live, think, feel, and act.

## Alleviating Nervousness and Tips for Cross-Cultural Relationships

Before serving the vulnerable, examine yourself and ask God to cleanse you of all prejudices.

- Acknowledge some hidden socioeconomic or racial assumptions that exist in your attitudes toward people from different cultures. Consider if you often have a “fix it” mentality which looks at people as problems that need solutions or management. Our motivation in serving others ought to go beyond the idea of “helping them.” This method fails to see their capacity for designing their solutions and that we may need them as much as they need us.
- Submit and candidly acknowledge before God and others your inability, in your strength, to love others as God loves. Submit to one another—remain willing to learn rather than only teach; receive rather than give.
- Commit for the long haul. You must decide to stick with the cross-cultural friendships you’re forging even when they cause pain and stress.

## Build the relationship slowly.

It may feel awkward the first few times you meet and speak with someone in need. In most cases, no deep, life-changing conversation will occur in the first several interactions. This moment happens for several reasons: lack of trust, relationship, trauma, mental illness, addiction, etc.

Build on common elements or commonalities you can find between you and the person you engage.

Do not pity individuals so much that you take responsibility for their problems.

Treat the people you interact with as individuals, not based on racial or socioeconomic class stereotypes.

Do not assume those in need don’t have any job skills or are otherwise “helpless” to help themselves.

You are NOT their rescuer. Jesus is the savior.

Be empathetic. Resist giving others permission to excuse their present-day responsibilities because of unfortunate, painful events in the past.

Nurture an empowering relationship that allows the individual in need to contribute to their lives changing.

# TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is anything that does not nurture. The dictionary defines it as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.

Trauma leaves a lasting negative effect on the victim's brain and well-being.

Trauma impairs one's memory, concentration, regulation, behavior, relationships, self-identity, new learning and focus.

Trauma has led to heart disease, obesity, addiction, mental illness and many other medical conditions.

Trauma impacts an individual's ability to trust, cope and form healthy relationships.

Trauma disrupts emotion identification, the ability to self-soothe or control emotional responses, and the ability to distinguish between safe and unsafe.

Trauma shapes a person's belief about self and others, one's ability to hope, and a person's hope and entire outlook on life.

Be aware trauma could affect those you serve. It sometimes shows up as negative or unhealthy behaviors.

Consider the possibility that the person's behaviors are a valiant attempt to cope with a horrendous situation. Those behaviors may be saving their life.

## Fundamental principles to consider when dealing with a victim of trauma:

- Remember the ways that trauma changes the brain, thus changing the person.
- Treat the trauma, not the behavior.
- Healing should be the goal, not behavior modification.
- Follow the principles of Trauma-Informed Care.

## WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE?

Trauma-Informed Care engages people with histories of trauma that recognize the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges its role in their lives and behaviors, both past and present.

Goal: The goal of trauma-informed care is to acknowledge the impact of trauma on individuals so that they are not re-victimized in the process of seeking help. In addition, being trauma-informed allows you to focus on the root of presenting behaviors or circumstances to see what truly needs healing.

## FIVE PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE:

### SAFETY

Addressing the physical and emotional safety of an individual is the first important step to providing Trauma-Informed Care.

#### In Practice:

- Create a warm, hospitable, inviting environment and allow the individual to have some say over the place where you meet.
- Ensure physical safety and emotional security when talking on the phone or meeting in person.
- Identify potential sights or sounds that could trigger reactions from survivors and eliminate them by reducing or avoiding loud noises or sudden, surprising events.

### CHOICE

The more choices and control an individual has over their experience—through a collaborative effort with service providers and those meeting their needs—the more likely they will participate in services. And those services will prove effective.

#### In Practice:

- Ask questions that allow persons to make decisions, such as where they would like to go on an outing or where they would like to sit in a room.
- Offer information but allow individuals to make their own decisions about the care and resources they'd like to receive.

### COLLABORATION

Collaborative care involves sharing the responsibility to make decisions with the individual who has experienced trauma. It means working with them to plan, providing insight and input into their safety and plans. When collaborating with someone in need, you do not make decisions for them but with them.

#### In Practice:

- Set aside enough time to get to know them and their needs, their story, and what they have to offer in the equation of having their needs met.
- Allow the individual to play a significant role in planning and evaluating their needs and the services they receive.



## TRUSTWORTHINESS

When serving trauma victims, clearly communicate tasks, boundaries, and the role of all involved. Following through on what you say and respecting boundaries build trust with the individual in need.

### In Practice:

- Communicate the steps you will take to care for the individual in need.
- Allow the individual to communicate the role they will play in the process.
- Follow through with all things you have agreed to do.
- Allow the individual to communicate the boundaries they need you to hold for them to feel comfortable.
- Reiterate and respect those boundaries.

## EMPOWERMENT

Focusing on an individual's strengths and empowering them to build on those strengths while developing more vital coping skills provides a healthy foundation for them to fall back on if and when they stop receiving services or assistance for their needs.

### In Practice:

- Do not do for the individual what they can do for themselves.
- Allow the individual to decide their future, even if you disagree with it.
- Follow the individual's lead, support them in their efforts to analyze, assess and meet their needs.

## LEARN MORE

<https://www.traumainformedmd.com/churches.html>

<https://www.traumainformedchurches.org/>

[The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk](#)



## EMPOWERED APPROACHES TO MEETING NEEDS

The cause of poverty dictates the action and response to address it.

If the Primary Cause of Poverty is:	Then the Primary Response should be:
A Lack of Knowledge	Educate the Poor
Oppression by Powerful People	Work for Societal Change
The Personal Sins of the Poor	Evangelize and Disciple the Poor
A Lack of Material Resources	Give Material Resources to the Poor

**When someone uses the word poverty, we immediately think of material deprivation: a lack of material resources.**

But poverty is more than material.

**The Bible teaches that in creation, God established four foundational relationships for each human being:**

1. Relationship with God
2. Relationship with self
3. Relationship with others
4. Relationship with the rest of creation

**Relationship with God:** This is our primary relationship. The other three flow out of this one. Relationships with self: People, uniquely created in the image of God, have inherent worth and dignity. While we are not God, we have the high calling of reflecting God's image, making us superior to the rest of creation.

**Relationship with others:** God created us to live in a loving relationship with one another. God designed humanity to know one another, love one another, and live in community with one another. Relationship with the rest of creation: The "cultural mandate" of Genesis 1:28-30 teaches that God created us to be stewards: people who understand, protect, subdue, and manage the world God created—to preserve it and produce bounty.

These four key relationships highlight how human beings are multifaceted, which implies that poverty alleviation efforts should also be multifaceted.

## POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Poverty alleviation is the ministry of reconciliation: moving people closer to glorifying God by living in right relationship with him, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation.

Through poverty alleviation, people, both the materially poor and the materially non-poor, find empowerment to move closer to living in right relationship with God, self, others and the rest of creation.

When applied to poverty alleviation, empowerment means that people grow in their ability to analyze their situation, make healthy decisions for improvement, and carry out those decisions in all four of these relationships.

## RELATIONAL BROKENNESS – RELATIONAL HEALING

Given that poverty is rooted in broken relationships, Colossians 1:19-20 is a profoundly important passage for the process of poverty alleviation:

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

### Colossians 1:19-20

The solution to poverty is not more material possessions, a middle-class lifestyle, a stable income and health insurance. Instead, the ultimate solution to poverty is Jesus, in whom we find reconciliation back to God.

## MATERIAL POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Material poverty alleviation works to reconcile the four foundational relationships so that people can fulfill their calling to glorify God by working and supporting themselves and their families with the fruit of that work.

Two important key things to note in this definition:

1. **Material poverty alleviation involves more than ensuring that people have sufficient material things;** instead, it involves the much more complex task of empowering people to trust God and earn material things through their labor. In doing so, people will move closer to what God created them to be.
2. **Work is an act of worship.** When people seek to fulfill their callings by glorifying God in their work, praising Him for their gifts and abilities, and seeing both their efforts and its products as an offering to Him, work serves as an act of worship to God.

The goal is not to make the materially poor into middle-to-upper-class individuals, a group characterized by high divorce rates, sexual addiction, substance abuse and mental illness. Nor is the goal to make sure the materially poor have enough money.

The goal is to restore people to a full expression of humanness, to be what God created them to be: people who glorify God by living in right relationship with him, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation.



## NOT ALL POVERTY IS CREATED EQUAL

The path we choose to meet the needs of those we serve starts with knowing the appropriate process. An empowering approach begins with the proper response.

Relief is the urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering from a natural man-made problem. After a crisis, a need arises to stop the free fall and “stop the bleeding.” This need is what relief attempts to do.

**Key Features:** Provider FOR Receiver model, quick and short term

Rehabilitation begins as soon as the bleeding stops and seeks to restore people to the positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions.

**Key Features:** Provider WITH Receiver model, getting people “back on their feet.”

Development is a process of ongoing change that moves all the people involved— both the materially poor and materially non-poor—closer in right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation than they have in the past.

**Key Features:** Provider WITH Receiver model, ongoing change over time

### **“TIPS AND TRICKS”**

Below are some tips from compassion ministry ambassadors with many years of field experience to establish and run your ministry.

- Friendship starters: 1. “My first name is....” What’s your name?” (Then repeat their name to them and take the extra time to remember it.” 2. Take the time to listen to their story. 3. Buy two sandwiches/burgers and sit down and eat with the person. 4. If they are up for it, ask them for help. (e.g., “Could you help me fold these clothes?” or “Could you help me pack these bags?”)
- Maturity in Christ often means approaching people with this inner attitude: “What’s it like to be you?” The word “disciple” means student or learner and we are always learners.
- For many people, attention provides a big pay-off. In groups, it is helpful sometimes to not reward temper tantrums in adults or children.
- The larger the group you work with, the more structure you need.
- In first encounters, knowing and using someone’s name (often a slang name on the street) contributes to a powerful connection.
- If someone helps your work financially, speak well over the smallest gifts, as Jesus did over the five loaves and two fishes (To bless means “to speak well over,” Mark 6:41)
- Have a “services not money” policy– we can easily participate in a person’s problem when giving them money.
- People in trouble feel they have no choices. Even if you can’t grant what they ask for, you can give them options. For example, “I can’t give you \$30, but I would like to invite you to eat lunch with us right now.” That person has the right to refuse or accept the invitation.
- The body of Christ always reaches out with two hands—relief and release work. We always need both hands. Relief work relates to immediate need. Release work relates to long-term freedom—freedom from sin, from patterns of dependency, from addictive behavior, etc. If we only do relief work, we risk patronizing others. If we only do release work, we risk a hardening heart.
- Sometimes you might have to say to immediate short-term requests, “I can’t help you anymore unless you let me become a part of your life.”

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Listed below are things that you might experience when serving the most vulnerable in your community. Knowing what to expect can help you prepare for any potential surprises or setbacks.

- Follow the “rule of three” with people. At the beginning of your ministry, plan for serving to occur outside. Encourage men to work with men and women to work with women.
- Don’t expect a “Thank you.” The Bible never says that when you help the poor, they will respond with a “Thank you!” Those that you serve may not appreciate what you’ve done for them. This attitude is typical among vulnerable populations due to distrust, past trauma, or a lack of solid relationships in their life. They may also live in so much chaos that it’s hard to feel any type of gratitude.
- If we try to act as the “savior,” we often become a person’s persecutor. E.g., “I have helped you so much. Why aren’t you doing such-and-such?”
- Self-care is important. We have had the sensation of offering a crumb to someone and in return, they take a bite up to your armpit.
- Work to be “light, not lightning.” Ministry takes a long time. Lightning brings a big boom and then it is gone, but a streetlight continues to bless people, even when they don’t see it.
- Be both “sweet in the manner and firm in the thing.” This idea is important, especially when dealing with addictive personalities. Clear boundaries help.
- Ministry to the most vulnerable is a “long haul.” Don’t expect quick changes. Deep change takes time.
- Individuals will relapse—it is inevitable. Relapse doesn’t equal failure. Celebrate any forward motion and when a relapse occurs, apply support to walk with the individual back to health.
- When you serve the most vulnerable, stay moderately informed of the many topics/issues so that you can respond appropriately. A few of those include:
  - Crime
  - Homelessness
  - Drug Use
  - Mental Illness
  - Suicidal thoughts/ideations
  - Prostitution / Sexual Exploitation
  - Abuse (physical, sexual and emotional)
  - Foster Care
  - Jail Systems & life in incarceration
- Expect your serving, engaging and investing strategies to “fail” from time to time.
- To serve the most vulnerable will cost you more than you expect but will transform you more than you could imagine.
- Hard doesn’t mean bad. Loving the vulnerable IS hard.





4200 North Point Parkway | Alpharetta, GA 30022  
[SendRelief.org](http://SendRelief.org)