

Sierra Leadership Network Curriculum: Month 4, Year 1

Participation in the Sierra Leadership Network (SLN) is a process of adult learning. It is the responsibility of the participant to do their assignments and seek out the necessary accountability. It is the responsibility of the participant to schedule time with their mentor, not the other way around. Here is a checklist of this month's exercises and space for comments. All useful generated materials should be placed in your Sierra Leadership Network binder. The mentor will look over the exercises and be given opportunity to add their own comments. Be sure you take your binder to the quarterly meetings at Granite Springs Church to also be available to the SLN directors.

Month 4, Year 1

Date Completed

____/____/____ Covenant and Community: [Estimated time: _____]
Mentor Comments:

____/____/____ Preparation for Adult Baptism/Profession of Faith:
Mentor Comments [Estimated time: _____]

____/____/____ Personal Testimony: [Estimated time: _____]
Mentor Comments

Participant Signature

Mentor Signature

Covenant and Community

This assignment is essentially answering the following questions. You may do so in the form of just answering the questions, 1, 2..., in the form of an essay, or in the form of a lesson or series of lessons.

1. What does the word “covenant” mean to you? What are the essential elements of a covenant?
2. Does Genesis 1 to 3 contain a covenant? Why or why not? Defend your answer? Does it matter?
3. Does God make a covenant with Noah? Where? What does this covenant tell us? What is its significance for your life, the life of your children? (Big tip: get your hands on an NIV Study Bible and check out the chart of the major covenants in the OT.)
4. Locate the important passages where God makes his covenant with Abraham and list them. What are the elements of these covenants? How is a covenant related to a promise?
 - a. What do you think is the significance of the smoking firepot and the halved animals?
 - b. Why is circumcision so important?
 - c. Circumcision is the first conditional element in any of the covenants we have seen so far. It is clear from this that there is the possibility of human failure as a part of this relationship. It is also both an individual and communal sign.
 - d. At this point, what might you think the relationship is between “covenant” and “election”?
5. Read Exodus 19-24:
 - a. Why does God want to establish another covenant with Israel. How does this one build on the others and yet add to it?
 - b. What is the relationship between “the law” and “the covenant”?
 - c. Give a few examples of rewards for covenant faithfulness and punishments for covenant violations?
 - d. Why do you think God gets very specific with many of these laws? What is at the heart of these laws? What is the over-arching promise for Israel made through this covenant?
6. Read 2 Samuel 7:
 - a. What part of the covenant has now been initially accomplished? What remains?
 - b. Why is this covenant made with David important for us?
7. The Prophets
 - a. It is sometimes said that the job of the prophets was to call Israel back to covenant faithfulness. What does that mean? Give an example of a prophet doing this.
 - b. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. What does this say about Israel’s response to the covenant made with Israel in the book of Exodus? What is the critical element of the new covenant as opposed to the old? How might this connect with Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2?

8. Covenant in the New Testament
 - a. Get a concordance and look up the word “covenant” in the New Testament
 - i. What types of contexts does it seem to come up most in?
 - ii. What kind of transition is seen by the New Testament authors in terms of this covenant?
 - b. Covenant, Community, Circumcision and Baptism
 - i. Read 1 Corinthians 10: In what way was Israel “baptized” into Moses (vs.2)? How does baptism serve as an analogous sign to circumcision in the Old Testament? Is there still an element of conditionality in this new covenant?
 - ii. In our individualistic culture, we tend to focus on the individual nature of “covenant”. Is this perspective faithful to the biblical picture? In your Bible reading thus far, do you find that God focuses more on individual covenant faithfulness or communal covenant faithfulness? Explain and defend.
 - iii. Find the New Testament references to groups of people being baptized as opposed to individuals coming forward to be baptized as individuals. What do you think of this?
 - iv. In the history of the church there have been many times where whole households, villages and even nations have been “baptized” together, usually after the group’s leader or leaders have decided that their community will become Christian. What do you think of this? Is this practice biblical? Wise? What factors would be important in accepting or rejecting this sort of thing? Can you make a biblical argument for it or against it?
 - v. What is the connection between infant baptism and covenant? Why do we baptize infants?

Preparation for Adult Baptism/Profession of Faith

1. Find out how your church handles preparation of new converts for adult baptism or profession of faith. Discuss the process with your mentor. If possible, interview someone who has gone through this process and get their take on what the process meant to them. Write up a brief outline of the process and a brief evaluation. (Most pastors I know are less than happy with their process, they will probably find your evaluation helpful.)
2. Do some research to see what a “model” church is doing. Check websites, books, etc. to see what process they require of their members. One place to look would be Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven Church which is likely either in your pastor’s library or in your church library. Describe and evaluate their process, at least to the degree that you can from the information you gather.
3. Having now looked at at least two examples of a preparation process, outline a “preferred” process according to what you have learned. If your process includes classes, outline basic topics and learning goals for the participants. You don’t need to produce lesson plans unless you want to. Note Biblical passages and theological concepts that would be important for each class. When you have completed your preferred process (it may be an adaptation of another process you discover, again originality isn’t the goal, quality and improvement is), run it by your mentor for his/her evaluation of your process.

Personal Testimony

1. At some time in any process of discipleship there general comes a point where you as the discipler will have to share your story with the seeker or new believer. This assignment is quite simply to write down the story of how you came to adult faith in Jesus Christ. The story may not necessarily be a dramatic conversion story, but it should deal with some episode in your life where you made a decisive and dramatic turn towards increasing faithfulness or service to Christ. I recognize that it is a bit artificial to craft “your story” in an abstract context like this, so when you are writing this I want you to think about a relationship in your life where Lord willing in the next few months you will have the opportunity to share your story with this individual. You should try to keep your story to one side of a sheet of paper, two at the most.
2. Practice telling your story to your mentor, your spouse, or some other trusted person to get feedback before you complete the assignment. Use their feedback to edit your testimony.
3. Share your story with a seeker. This may not happen before this month is up, but at some time in the next few months look for an opportunity to share your story. Write an addendum (it may be months later) and attach it to your story in your binder stating how it went. In the next few months don't be afraid to re-write your story if you find you want to alter some things.