

First 12

First 12 Training Overview

What is First 12?

The first twelve people to join you in starting a new ministry, new church, or new faith community will set the tone and shape for the future, set the pattern for replicating leadership, and begin a cascade of invitation. Finding those first twelve people who are invested and committed as leaders with you in helping start a new ministry is a key initial step in growing into something larger without your vision burning out or stalling out before a successful ministry launch.

First 12 is a two-day training event designed to help you gather and grow the first twelve committed, core people. Combined with a year of practical coaching follow-up, you will learn the skills, habits, and lifestyle practices that will give your new vision the best chance of launching with a team of twelve committed leaders. Although designed the team at Path1 New Church Starts from principles of new faith community planting, this training is equally valuable for existing church leaders who want to start new small groups, new fellowships, new mission outreaches, new worship services, or new gatherings.

Who will benefit from First 12?

First 12 is designed for leaders and planters who are starting new faith communities, worship services, churches, fellowships, or small groups. Some leaders may already have a small team already committed to their vision of a new ministry. If so, then the team should all participate in First 12 to accelerate the ministry's growth. Some leaders will just be beginning, and will participate in First 12 on their own. All leaders at First 12 should come equipped with four things:

1. Active and vital personal spiritual life

Your relationship with God is your greatest and most attractive asset for starting something new. Most people today are not looking for another social program or fun group. For the most part, their lives are too busy to add anything else. However, many people are desperate for a deep relationship with God. A living and vital faith, lived out in public, will be the most fascinating part of your connections with new people. Additionally, this will be exhausting, frustrating, and disappointing work. You will meet hundreds of people who will say "no" to your invitation. You will need the strength that is only drawn from comfortable habits of personal spiritual practice.

[Before coming to First 12, complete Spiritual Life Worksheet in First 12 Workbook.]

2. Powerful vision of the ministry or faith community you hope to launch

Why do you want to gather people? Why should anyone care to join you in this new ministry? Before you can reasonably begin gathering, you must be able to answer these questions in a way that is inspiring and compelling to you and to others. This is a vision for ministry that is powerful enough for people to give their times and lives to see it come true. It's simple and profound, easy to remember and challenging enough to cause people to reorder their personal priorities.

[Before coming to First 12, complete Vision Worksheet in First 12 Workbook.]

3. Permissions, support, and partners for launching new ministry or faith community

Even if you are beginning this new ministry or faith community on your own, do not try to do this without support and partners. The most basic support is permission from your family, friends, connected churches, and denominational or network leaders. You should also have committed support from your family and household, as their lives will be reshaped by this work as well. Most successful new ministries and faith communities have at least three partner organizations, networks, or churches that are already investing leadership, spiritual, material, administrative, and/or financial support. This support can take a wide range from intercessory prayer for the new ministry to complete financial support for the new project.

[Before coming to First 12, complete the Permissions & Partners Worksheet in First 12 Workbook.]

4. Working knowledge of target neighborhood, people, and community

Who are the people that you are trying to reach with this new ministry or faith community? How do they experience life, spirituality, community, and faith? Where do they go, and what do they do there? How can you join them in their places and build new relationships?

[Before coming to First 12, complete the Community Research Worksheet in First 12 Workbook.]

What does First 12 cost?

First 12 is a ministry of Discipleship Ministries: Path1 New Church Starts, and the trainers are supported by the United Methodist Church. Each hosting conference will have slightly different cost structures, but all will include:

- Hosting costs – First 12 training is two days, with 6 hours on first day and four hours on second. Hosting conferences will need to make arrangements for training location, meals, snacks, and for participants to stay in the area overnight for the second day of training.
- Coaching costs – Each First 12 participant will be placed into a coaching cohort. Coaches will participate in the First 12 training and receive compensation for their coaching sessions. We estimate this will cost \$295 per participant for coaching. This is significantly less than the usual cost of a one year coaching contract. Path1 will work with the hosting conference to recruit coaches and will provide the coaches with training and resourcing. The host conference will enter into a coaching contract with each coach and be responsible for supervision and payment for services.

What will happen during First 12?

A typical training includes:

Day 1 – Gathering (6 hours)

- Discovering yourself
 - Identifying your affinities
 - What is your leadership style?
 - Patterns of cross-cultural communication
- Going where the people are
 - Researching people in your community
 - Getting invited to someone else's party: Events, Clubs, Sports
 - Becoming a "regular" or "the art of strategically hanging out"
 - Being friendly to strangers
- Make friends, contacts, interested leads
 - How to meet new people
 - Making small talk that matters
 - How to get contact information for follow-up
- Deepen leads: follow, build, [track], repeat
 - Building a relationship tracking system
 - Conducting 1-on-1 meetings
 - Developing a habit of constant invitation
- Invite others to help start new thing
 - Connecting their interest in your vision
 - Making the ask
- Create missional community to build cross-relationships
 - 5 practices of missional community
 - Avoiding terminal small-group syndrome

Day 2 – Growing (4 hours)

- Deepen discipleship (coaching)
 - Beginning a journey with Jesus
 - 6 practices of effective discipleship coaching
- Deepen investment: heart, time, money
 - Planter passion, investment, tithe, and commitment
 - Getting to "Yes!" with vision and mission
 - Asking for money: Fundraising and Spiritual Care
- Deepen leadership (apprenticeship & giftedness)
 - From followers to leaders, the apprenticeship cycle
 - Discovering strengths, gifts, and skills
- Deepen invitation: lifestyle, habits, practices
 - Your marketing is your life
 - Teaching and practicing invitation
- Working with your First 12 coach & cohort
 - Meeting your cohort
 - Drafting your First 12 plan

What is a First 12 coaching cohort?

As part of your First 12 experience, you will be matched with a learning cohort of 4-6 other new ministry leaders. Together, you will be guided over the next year by an experienced coach who will support you as you put into practice the skills learned at First 12.

Coaching is critically important to learning. Most people will retain very little of what they learn at a short training event like this, but with the addition of follow-up coaching, most people will retain a majority of what they've learned. Working with your coach and cohort, you will discuss your plan for gathering and growing your first twelve, you'll check-in regularly on your progress, and you'll have a forum for adapting and adjusting this training to fit your context and leadership.

Your coaching cohort will meet 9 times over a nine-month long process. At the end of this time, you and your ministry supervisors will evaluate your plan and progress to see if you need to participate in an additional year of First 12 training and coaching, a different kind of training, a different kind of coaching, or reconsider your project.

Sample Coaching Agenda:

Month 1 – Drafting Your First 12 Plan

Month 2 – Making Your First 12 Plan Better

Month 3 – Building Accountability for Your First 12 Plan

Month 4-8 – Implementing & Adjusting Your First 12 Plan

Month 9 – Evaluating Your First 12 Plan