

Handbook for SPADE



The church-based leadership development
program of the North Central Collective

SPADE Introduction

The North Central Collective believes that churches are meant to operate in covenant community with one another, such that this would establish a gospel presence that leads to gospel proclamation. We value geographic and theological proximity in these relationships; that is, we believe churches in covenant community are to be like-minded in our theology, and physically close enough that we operate in adjacent, or even overlapping, areas of influence. This community is intended to work together to accomplish the mission of the church, relying on one another as individual members of a local church rely on one another for community, accountability, and growth as disciples.

We believe it is the job of the church to lead the mission given to us, to make disciples of all the world under the power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the command of Christ. This responsibility comes with the expectation that the church will reproduce herself in the form of new maturing churches, and that each church will be composed of individuals who are growing into deeper maturity in their faith. This development of mature disciples includes the development of mature leaders; it is, therefore, the belief of the North Central Collective that the church is intended to

be producing her own leaders within the normative operations of the church, rather than sending potential leaders away and outsourcing their development to other organizations. We believe this is the process we see in scripture; with Paul taking on Apprentices such as Timothy and Titus to train them as leaders during his normal work, Barnabas bringing Paul to Antioch to train up disciples into a church with established leadership, and Christ teaching His disciples His way by literally walking that way with them.

This is not to condemn the work of other organizations; they have their strengths, which are beneficial to the work of the church. It does, however, mean that we believe the church is to be directly responsible for the process by which future leaders are identified, trained, and commissioned. It means that the process should not be done *in conjunction* with churches, but *under the authority* of churches and *within the context* of churches. It is an accurate assessment, however, that the majority of churches simply do not have the means to perform this work alone. When done in a network of covenant-bound churches relying on one another, however, these limitations begin to fall away.

This is one area where the push for geographic and theological proximity stands out as a necessity. Churches with closely aligned beliefs, who are near enough to one another that they can share personnel and material resources, as well as regularly invite trainees into the lives and operations of other churches, are able to fully invest in a communal development process that gives trainees access to all the wisdom, material resources, and opportunities they need to become fully mature leaders within the context of the local church. This puts the church in charge of developing her leaders, unlocks the skills and knowledge of established church members to benefit the growth of those leaders, and ensures that the growing leader puts this training into practice in the active life of the church.

SPADE is the method by which the North Central Collective has chosen to put these beliefs into practice. It is a church-based leader development apprenticeship that relies on the investment of a network of churches. Where possible, it is designed to operate as a direct apprenticeship, with the Apprentice actively working in the

field and learning through observation of established leaders, as well as supervised practice within the local church. It is designed around a handful of pathways, each intended to prepare an Apprentice for a specific role in leading the local church and engaging in the mission of the church. These pathways are firmly defined in accordance with Biblical expectations and cultural needs, and have specific requirements for both entry and completion. The requirements for completion are broken into four primary areas of development, from which SPADE gets its name. These four areas are Skills, Paradigm Alignment, Disciplines, and Education. These will be described in the next section.

Where necessary, however, secondary concerns like efficiency, hard timelines, and strict job descriptions have been sacrificed in order to utilize the resources of churches in directing the process, the gifting of the Apprentice, and the investment of the network churches in the development of the Apprentice. We believe that churches in the network should not simply give resources to help develop future leaders, but should be actively involved in and committed to their development. As such, room has been made for multiple churches to supply multiple leaders to contribute to the development of the Apprentice. The pathways themselves are also designed in such a way that the specific calling and gifting of an individual Apprentice can be taken into consideration and used to shape the details of their training and requirements for completion. An Apprentice in the Key Leader pathway with a call and gift set revolving around counseling, for instance, would have a different set of expectations than another in the same pathway whose call and gift set incline them toward financial stewardship. Similarly, an Apprentice who already has some training, and can show competency, in some areas of their pathway will proceed through the apprenticeship faster than one who needs to acquire those skills.

Holding these two demands—defined expectations and traceable advancement on one hand, with room for individualized training and multi-church investment on the other—in tension defined much of SPADE’s design. The basic process that resulted from these considerations is that a church identifies a potential future leader, who is affirmed by the elders of that church for a specific

work. If the potential leader is coming from outside the North Central Collective, it is expected that they will seek a sponsoring church within the North Central Collective and commit to that church for the duration of their apprenticeship. They are then presented to the North Central Collective Board, who will verify that they have the affirmation of their elders and meet the character and history expected of their relevant pathway. Once accepted by the Board, they are entrusted to a Sponsor, who works with the Apprentice to define the course of their training and directs that process while directly mentoring the Apprentice. Once the Apprentice has completed the requirements of their training, they are affirmed by the North Central Collective Board as an established leader and released into full service under the authority of a local church.

Established Leaders

There are three levels of leaders involved in the training of an Apprentice within SPADE: Sponsor, Guide, and Mentor. Multiple levels may be filled by the same person in certain circumstances (in fact, as will be described, the Sponsor is always serving in at least one other role). These three levels of leaders work in conjunction, each investing in the Apprentice in their own way in line with the defined pathway that Apprentice is on.

The amount of responsibility and authority each leader has in the process scales with their level. Mentors within the NCC answer to Guides about how they are teaching the Apprentice, and Guides answer to the Sponsor. Each of these roles is defined in the following pages.

Sponsor

The Sponsor is the primary point of contact for the Apprentice and the other Guides. They may be any elder from the North Central Collective church to which the Apprentice has

committed, but will most often be the pastor. The Sponsor has the following responsibilities:

- **Create Development Plan:** The Sponsor and Apprentice are expected to have some number of meetings, ideally beginning before the apprenticeship formally begins, where the gifts, skills, and goals of the Apprentice are discussed and the Sponsor helps them flesh out a specific list of program requirements. This development plan will have the defined requirements for their identified pathway, as well as any other requirements that best suit the intended end result of the apprenticeship. Note that this is a big-picture document; it should include the milestones of the Apprentice's development, the program requirements, and the reasoning for various elements, but should not include minute details about how each expectation will be met. The Sponsor will then maintain a record of the development plan and use it as a guide for all other responsibilities. The development plan may be altered, but this should not be an act taken lightly, and should never be done more than once.¹
- **Assess Progress:** The Sponsor will meet with the Apprentice no less than once a month to discuss the Apprentice's progress, identify areas where the Apprentice is doing well and/or in need of greater improvement, give and receive feedback, and plan next steps.
- **Coordinate Guides:** The Sponsor helps select Guides for the Apprentice and provides those Guides with the specific program requirements that fall under that Guide's purview. The Sponsor then meets regularly with the Guides assigned to the Apprentice. During this meeting, the Guides will update the Sponsor on the progress they are seeing, submit plans for seeing the Apprentice through their relevant

¹Needing to make some minor adjustments to details as the program progresses is fairly normal and should be expected; needing to revisit the actual content of the development plan multiple times should be taken as a sign that the entire development plan may need to be revisited from the beginning, and possibly raise the question of whether or not the Apprentice is on the right path.

program requirements, and voice any concerns they have about the Apprentice. The Sponsor approves or denies proposed methods for meeting the Apprentice's program requirements, makes suggestions where appropriate, and coordinates any events the Apprentice may need to attend as part of an approved plan.

- **Scheduling:** Since the Sponsor also doubles as the Skills Guide (see below), they are responsible for helping to schedule events and ministry opportunities that are part of the Apprentice's training. They are also responsible for working out any class or office schedule required of the Apprentice as part of the training. All such scheduling should be done in coordination with the Apprentice.
- **Direct Investment:** The Sponsor is the primary person leading the Apprentice through the process of training for leadership, and should therefore be actively involved in the life of the Apprentice and open to the Apprentice being involved in their life and ministry to the degree appropriate for the pathway. The Apprentice should have opportunity to see how the Sponsor walks out their life in ministry, and the Sponsor should have opportunity to see how the Apprentice is growing in their daily walk with Christ.

Guides

Each Guide takes responsibility for one area of the Apprentice's training, as listed below. They meet regularly with the Apprentice, checking on progress and discussing their area of training. They coordinate with the Sponsor, receiving the list of expectations for the Apprentice from the Sponsor and regularly checking in to inform the Sponsor how the Apprentice is progressing. The Guide decides the order in which the Apprentice will work through the resources required of them, and may propose alternate materials, as appropriate, to the Sponsor.

The Guide may personally lead the Apprentice through their required resources, or may arrange a Mentor for each resource.

Recruiting at least some Mentors is advisable when possible, to ensure a broader range of perspectives on the progress of the Apprentice and a deeper investment in the Apprentice's development across churches. The Sponsor should be made aware at all times what the proposed schedule for the Apprentice looks like, to avoid conflict with the plans of other Guides and ensure prerequisites in other areas of training are being met when necessary.

Guides will be chosen from within North Central Collective churches. They must be established leaders who have shown a deep understanding and commitment to grow in their practice of the relevant sphere of training, an ability to teach, and sufficient social skills that they can be expected to connect with the Apprentice and identify suitable Mentors. For instance, a Disciplines Guide would need to be someone who is in, or has retired from, active leadership in a church within the North Central Collective, have a known practice of the disciplines of the Christian life and a drive to grow in that practice, with some history of teaching well and connecting with others, who knows enough about the lives of other people in the North Central Collective that they know who they would ask to help mentor the Apprentice on specific disciplines.

The Guide should be willing to take a certain amount of initiative; where the Sponsor is looking at the Apprentice's progress as a whole and focused on turning that progress into practice, each other Guide is specializing in one area of the Apprentice's growth as a leader. As such, they are in a position to notice gaps in the plan that the Sponsor may not have noticed. Perhaps the Education Guide realizes that the Apprentice has never taken a basic study that will be necessary to building their education pathway, something that was overlooked in the planning process because of some degree of natural aptitude. The Guide should seek a suitable course or means of studying that area, and tell the Sponsor that this basic course should be added to that Apprentice's pathway. They will still need the approval of the Sponsor to actually add it to the pathway.

Skills Guide

The Skill Guide coordinates the Apprentice's work through the identified skills. The Skills are any training that focuses on practicing the work of a leader in real-world situations. Skills will be tailored toward the kind of work the Apprentice will ultimately be doing; someone learning to become a youth leader should be spending a large chunk of their hands-on training time working with youth, while someone training to be a deacon with an eye for finances should be spending time with accounting books and money. Some examples may include, but are not limited to:

- The process of identifying and preparing for a specific ministry location;
- Preaching opportunities;
- Service at an NCC Greenhouse;
- Shadowing an established leader in a goal-specific activity (such as performing a funeral service or leading music on a Sunday morning);
- Fundraising;
- Taking on responsibility for a relevant ministry within their church; and
- General scheduling of courses and other training events.

The Skills Guide is always the Sponsor. This means that the Sponsor is not only aware of the big picture of the Apprentice's goals and requirements, but is actively involved in helping the Apprentice put everything they're learning into practice.

Paradigm Alignment Guide

The Paradigm Alignment Guide coordinates the Apprentice's work through the identified Paradigm Alignment resources. The Paradigm Alignment resources are any training that focuses on:

- The Apprentice's understanding of the gospel;
- The ideology of leading a ministry;
- The necessity of church-centered education and leadership development;

- The role of church networks; and
- The nature of the church as understood by the North Central Collective.

The goal of the Paradigm Alignment Guide is to ensure that the Apprentice has a deep and robust understanding of the principles by which the Christian life is meant to be lived, the mission the church is intended to advance, and the tools and connections the church has available to advance that mission.

Disciplines Guide

The Disciplines Guide coordinates the Apprentice's work through the identified Disciplines. The Disciplines are any training that focuses on the practices of a healthy Christian life and the understanding of one's personal role within the work of the church. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Prayer life;
- Understanding of worship;
- Devotional reading; and
- Investment in the church body.

The goal of the Disciplines Guide is to ensure that the Apprentice has a rich personal walk with Christ that feeds into their service to the church body. Note the distinction from the Paradigm Alignment goals; while the Paradigm Alignment goals focus on understanding the content of the gospel and the principles that arise from it on both an individual and a communal level, the goals of the Disciplines Guide are focused on daily practice of the ways the gospel shapes the life and growth of an individual.

Education Guide

The Education Guide coordinates the Apprentice's work through the identified educational requirements. The educational requirements are any training that focuses on knowledge that a leader will need in their work, and are usually handled in the form of classes or workshops. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Antioch School courses;
- Skill-specific lessons;
- Goal-specific certifications; and/or
- Preaching or other ministerial workshops.

The goal of the Education Guide is to ensure that the Apprentice has solid proven competency in the areas they will be serving and leading. Note that this has significant overlap with areas covered by both the Paradigm Alignment and Disciplines Guides. The distinction is that the Education requirements are fundamentally academic and focused on meeting external requirements (such as degree or certification demands), while the other two are focused on taking these same ideas and applying them to the life of the individual, the life of the church, and the life of the network. Consider the relationship between these four areas of study as the following sequence of questions:

1. What are the basic, fundamental claims of the Christian Faith? (Paradigm Alignment)
2. What theological truths arise from these basic claims? (Education)
3. What are the principles that allow that theology to be applied to the life of the Christian and the life of the church? (Paradigm Alignment)
4. How do I grow in my walk with Christ and my personal application of these principles? (Disciplines)
5. What is the mission of the church, and what is my responsibility to that mission? (Paradigm Alignment)
6. How do I best use my gifts and talents to serve the local church in its mission? (Disciplines)
7. What do I need to learn to improve my service to the church? (Education)
8. How and where can I put what I've learned into lived practice? (Skills)
9. How do I assess this practice in light of the call of Christ? (Disciplines, Paradigm Alignment, Education)

Note how each of these areas feed into and rely on one another, so that each Guide is invested in the growth of the Apprentice throughout their development.

Mentors

Mentors are individuals who have taken on the responsibility of leading the Apprentice through a single given resource. They are expected to provide the relevant Guide with updates on the Apprentice's progress through that resource. These may be teachers leading a class, established leaders the Apprentice can shadow in the practice of ministry, skilled observers who can assess the Apprentice as they perform a goal-specific task, or any other individual that can take direct responsibility over a single resource.

Mentors may be chosen from any church within the North Central Collective or outside bodies. An Apprentice that needs to get a trade certification, for instance, may need to attend a legally-mandated class or take a legally-mandated test provided by a secular agency. In such an instance, the relevant Guide should help the Apprentice set up access to the resource and may seek to be apprised of the Apprentice's progress through it if possible. It is worth noting that any Mentors taken from outside the North Central Collective may not consider themselves bound to the Guide in any way, and therefore may decline to provide updates to them. If it is not possible to receive updates from the individual or body providing the direct training, the Apprentice will be expected to provide any test results or progress tracking they receive to the Guide.

A single individual may be a Mentor across multiple resources, if their skill set and schedule allow for that.

Pathways

Each Apprentice is put into a pathway to determine the general expectations of their training. Each pathway comes with a basic set of resources an Apprentice should complete to be considered suitable for the work to which they are called. This pathway will then Guide their process through the apprenticeship, and should be provided to the Guides to ensure they know what expectations the Apprentice has and have a broad idea of how those expectations are moving toward the goal for that Apprentice.

It is important to remember that the goal for a given Apprentice is not simply to produce a generic example of the role identified; not only will a ministry leader focused on counseling have different expectations than a ministry leader focused on music, but two church planting pastors with different sets of gifts should have different expectations to make the best use of their gifts in that role. A church planting pastor with a heart for replanting in rural communities will have different challenges than a church planting pastor with a heart for planting in the inner city, and their training should reflect those differences. These pathways can, and should, be edited to suit specific needs, experiences, and concerns relevant to individual Apprentices. As such, the requirements listed under each

pathway that follows should be treated as minimum universal standards; everyone working through the Established Pastor Pathway will need to have displayed competency in the listed requirements by the end of the internship, and personalized requirements will be added to that list on an individual basis.

Part of the initial assessment between the Sponsor and the Apprentice is identifying the best pathway for the Apprentice, as well as what resources should be added (or listed as completed, if the Apprentice has already displayed suitable competence) to that pathway to best align the Apprentice with their specific calling, personality, background, and gifting. The criteria for completion of each resource should be provided to the relevant Guide, as well as the Apprentice, before work on that resource begins. For some things, like established courses, this criteria is already provided. For more subjective categories, such as competency in preaching, either the Sponsor or the North Central Collective Board will need to define a set of criteria.

There are three categories for pathways within SPADE as practiced by the North Central Collective. These are the Church Planter Residency Program, Established Church Leaders, and Network Leaders. Each is explained, and its relevant pathways defined, in the following sections.

Church Planter Residency Program

The Church Planter Residency Program (CPRP) is an internship aimed at preparing people to be key members of a church planting or replanting (revitalization) team. Part of the development process will involve selecting a location for ministry within north central Massachusetts or an adjacent region, and graduates will be provided the means to plant a church or replant a struggling church in that location.

The North Central Collective holds that churches are meant to operate on the same basic principles as families operate in accordance with scripture. As such, we talk about churches as Families of Families, and the network as a Family of churches or a

Family of Families of Families. This defines a great deal about how churches in the network engage with each other, but it also impacts our philosophy of church planting.

Church planting teams in this model are not sent out from a sending church to operate in relative isolation with some time-limited financial support and an occasional visit from a missions team. We believe church plants are an act of the church reproducing; a church plant is a child being born into the family of Christ under the care of the North Central Collective. As such, the team operates within the network, maintaining constant active relationship with the other North Central Collective churches, who participate in the life of the plant to the degree they are able in terms of money, supplies, and even personnel, with members of the other churches investing time and effort to help with the church plant's events and ministry. As the church plant grows, it does not get cut off with the aim of self-sufficiency, but rather begins to reciprocate that investment more and more as it is able.

During their development in the program, Apprentices will be tasked with fundraising. Some of the money raised will be used for needs that arise during the program, such as courses or supplies, but the rest will be held in reserve to be used during the early days of the church plant. Depending on the financial reserves available to the North Central Collective and the church planting team, the Apprentice may find use for continuing to raise funds once they are active on site. As stated above, the North Central Collective will seek to provide to the degree that it is able, but at this time does not have the resources to offer a living wage to Apprentices.

Individuals interested in these pathways submit an application to the North Central Collective Board, who will review the application and move into a series of interviews with suitable candidates. At some point during this period, the applicant must establish connection with a North Central Collective church that will Sponsor them through the process. If the individual is already a member of a North Central Collective church, they will be commended to this process by their elders, from whom their Sponsor (from the previous chapter) will be chosen. If they are coming from outside of the North Central Collective, they must meet with a North

Central Collective church and secure their support. They will be expected to become a member of that church and make it their home church through the duration of the program.

Accepted applicants will be notified and commended to their Sponsor to begin their training. Each planting team will receive a voting seat on the North Central Collective Board, held by the highest ranking member of that team until the plant is actively working on-site. This seat becomes a standard Representative seat once a church plant or replant has been incorporated, at which point the church plant may use their own systems for filling that seat.

North Central Collective churches will be notified of the accepted applicant, and given opportunities to begin meeting and helping to develop that applicant. While Apprentices in this process will be expected to be at their home church at least half the time, it should not be considered unusual if their development has them performing ministry duties, such as preaching or filling a volunteer team role, among other churches on a regular basis.

The Church Planter Residency Program has three pathways: Church Planting/Replanting Pastor, Key Leader, and Ministry Partner.

Church Planting/Replanting Pastor

This pathway is designed for men intended to lead a church planting or replanting team. Graduates from this pathway will be in a position to assemble a team to either establish a new local church in a gospel-poor area or restore a struggling church to their mission, align their church to the North Central Collective's paradigm, and Guide the church at least to the point where it is capable of producing established leaders. Individual church planters or replanters may remain as the long-term pastor, or hand off the church to an established pastor.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a man who has an elder-confirmed call to this kind of ministry, a knack for taking initiative, strong relationship skills, and an evangelistic mindset. He must meet the biblical qualifications of an elder and

clearly display leadership characteristics in the context of his current church family.

This is the point person on a church planting team, and as such, their requirements will reflect a high standard of preparation and duties. To complete the program, an Apprentice in this pathway must show competency in the following areas:

- Antioch Courses:
 - Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church
 - Pauline Epistles: Strategies for Establishing Churches
 - Essentials of Sound Doctrine: Understanding the Essentials of Sound Doctrine
 - Leaders and the Early Church
- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- Counseling
- First Principles & Teaching the First Principles
- Fundraising
- General Disciplines
- Paradigm Alignment Articles
- Paradigm Papers
- Participation in an NCC Greenhouse²
- Pastoral Duties
- Personalized skill-related training and practice
- Recruiting/Team Building
- Sermon Preparation & Delivery

²An NCC Greenhouse is a service intended to be welcoming and accessible to the community, a training ground for leaders, a model for church plants, a laboratory to explore forms, and an opportunity for all our churches to work together on a single gathering. Every church in the North Central Collective contributes, sending teams to lead services and coordinate resources that we may, as a single body, reach a community for Christ. Services include a meal and fellowship time, worship music, a short message, and a time of Guided discussion about the message.

Key Leader

This pathway is designed for men intended to take on crucial leadership positions within a church planting or replanting team. Graduates from this pathway will be in a position to support the church planting/replanting team in a manner similar to an elder in an established church, working with the church planting/replanting pastor to Guide the rest of the team and using their gifts to directly support the ministry of the church plant or replant.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a man who meets the biblical qualifications of an elder, has relational skills and an evangelistic mindset, is a responsive communicator, and clearly displays humility and leadership characteristics in the context of his current church family.

This leader is not the primary point person in a church planting team, and therefore has reduced requirements relative to the Church Planting/Replanting Pastor. However, as a leader within the church plant that will be actively helping to direct the team and support the mission, he must display competence in the following areas:

- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- Establishing Series
- First Principles & Teaching the First Principles
- General Disciplines
- Kerygmatic Communities article
- Participation in an NCC Greenhouse
- Personalized role-specific education
- Personalized skill-related training and practice
- Recruiting/Team Building
- Sermon Preparation & Delivery

Ministry Partner

The wives of church planting pastors or key leaders are not required to engage in this training; it is necessary that she be supportive of her husband's calling, and eager to be an active member in the church planting team, but deeper involvement than

that is optional. This pathway is specifically designed for wives who will be seeking a more active role in the church planting team. Graduates from this pathway will be in a position to actively engage in the work of church planting or replanting beyond basic attendance and service, with the aim of leading some aspect of either the planting process or the church plant.³

During the application and interview periods for entering the CPRP, wives of applicants will be asked about their feelings regarding their husband going through this internship and their involvement in that process. Ideally, during this time, women interested in being considered for this pathway should express that interest. If the wife of a CPRP intern develops interest in this pathway after her husband has begun his internship, she should alert the elders of her church who will consider her suitability for the role and, if found suitable, will ensure her interest is presented to the North Central Collective Board.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a woman who is married to a man enrolled in another program of the CPRP; she will have relational skills and an evangelistic mindset, be a responsive communicator, and clearly display humility and leadership characteristics in the context of her current church family.

This woman will be involved in leading members of the church plant and taking responsibility for at least one area of ministry, and as such, will need to display competency in the following areas:

- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- Establishing Series
- First Principles & Teaching the First Principles
- General Disciplines
- *Help! I'm Married to My Pastor* by Jani Ortlund
- *How to Thrive as a Pastor's Wife* by Christine Hoover

³The North Central Collective believes that the role of elder, and therefore also of pastor, is reserved to men; however, this still leaves openings for women to lead in the role of deacon, or to take responsibility for specific ministry areas within the church plant, such as finances, music, youth ministry, tech crew, or other such areas.

- Participation in an NCC Greenhouse
- Personalized role-specific education
- Personalized skill-related training and practice

Established Church Leaders

The pathways in this category are intended to train leaders to work within established churches. They may be getting trained to fill a role within their current church, to step into a church where a church planting or replanting team is ready to hand off their responsibilities and move to a new ministry location, or simply prepared so they can be considered for a role when it arises in the future. These pathways are also available to people already serving in a leadership role who need or desire deeper training in the demands of that role.

Applicants for these pathways have a simplified application process. They should present their desire to their elders, who will assess their suitability for the role in question. If they feel the applicant should be considered for a specific pathway, they should alert the North Central Collective Board, who will interview the applicant and make a determination. Accepted applicants will be commended to their Sponsor—an elder at their church—and may begin their development process.

There are four pathways in this category: Established Pastor, Elder, Deacon, and Ministry Leader.

Established Pastor

This pathway is designed for men intended to take the lead pastor position of an established church or a church with established systems that requires paradigm alignment. Graduates from this pathway will be in a position to step into the lead pastor position of a North Central Collective church should the current pastor retire, refocus, or die; they may also be prepared to become the lead pastor of a non-North Central Collective church looking to the North Central Collective for help with a vacancy, or to take on the lead

pastor role in a church plant once the initial establishment has been completed.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a man who has an elder-confirmed call to this ministry, meets the biblical qualifications of an elder, and clearly displays leadership characteristics in the context of his current church family.

As the lead pastor of a church already in operation, the graduate from this pathway will need to have displayed competency in the following areas:

- Antioch Courses:
 - Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church
 - Pauline Epistles: Strategies for Establishing Churches
 - Essentials of Sound Doctrine: Understanding the Essentials of Sound Doctrine
 - Leaders and the Early Church
- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- Counseling
- First Principles & Teaching the First Principles
- General Disciplines
- Paradigm Alignment Articles
- Paradigm Papers
- Participation in an NCC Greenhouse
- Pastoral Duties
- Personalized skill-related training and practice
- Sermon Preparation & Delivery

Elder

This pathway is designed for men intended to become elders in an established church. Graduates from this pathway will be in a position to take on leadership within a church in line with the scriptural role and requirements of elders.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a man who meets the biblical qualifications of an elder in the context of his current church family as affirmed by his current elders.

As an elder overseeing an operational church, the graduate from this pathway will need to have displayed competency in the following areas:

- Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church
- *Biblical Elders* by Jeremy Rinne
- *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch
- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- First Principles
- General disciplines
- *Gospel Eldership* by Robert Thune
- Personalized role-specific education
- Personalized skill-related training and practice

Deacon

This pathway is designed for individuals intended to become deacons in an established church. Graduates from this pathway would be in a position to take on leadership within a church in line with the scriptural role and requirements of deacons.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a person who will meet the biblical qualifications of a deacon in the context of their current church family as affirmed by their elders.

As a deacon responsible for administration within an operational church, the graduate from this pathway will need to have displayed competency in the following areas:

- Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church
- *Biblical Deacons* by Jeremy Rinne
- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- First Principles
- General disciplines
- *Gospel-Centered Deacons* by Robert Thune
- Personalized role-specific education
- Personalized skill-related training and practice

Ministry Leader

This pathway is designed for individuals intended to become ministry leaders in an established church. Graduates from this pathway would be prepared to fill a specific ministry niche within their church. This may include leading music, teaching youth, counseling, or any other similar role.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a person who has an elder-confirmed call to leadership, takes initiative, has strong relationship skills, displays growth in Christian character, and clearly displays leadership characteristics in the context of their current church family.

As the leader of a specific area of ministry within an operational church, the graduate from this pathways will need to have displayed competency in the following areas:

- *Caring Enough to Confront* by David Augsburger
- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- First Principles
- Personalized role-specific education
- Personalized skill-related training and practice

Network Leaders

The North Central Collective recognizes a role we call the “apostolic team.” This is not equivalent to the office of Apostle held by those directly commissioned by Christ in the first century; rather, they are leaders whose specific role requires them to have the freedom to move among churches. These leaders have a gift and skill set that is beneficial to the network as a whole, or to multiple churches within the network.

An example of this is Claire, a woman whose gifts, skills, training, and heart are aligned around developing intergenerational disciple-making relationships. As a member of the apostolic team with this task, she leads the development of network-level systems (including the North Central Collective annual retreats) and can be invited into churches to lead their efforts to develop church-specific intergenerational ministries.

Applicants for this category must be recommended to the North Central Collective Board by the elders of their church, after which the Board will assess their qualifications, perform interviews, and commend suitable candidates to their Sponsor to begin development.

This category describes leader pathways designed to equip an Apprentice to operate as part of the North Central Collective’s apostolic team. Currently, there is only one pathway within this category.

Network Leader

This pathway is designed for individuals who will either become a member of the North Central Collective’s apostolic team or will be commissioned to establish a new network within a different geographic area. New networks created in this way will remain in cooperation with the North Central Collective as part of a complex network of networks.

A candidate that may be considered for this pathway is a person who has been commended by the elders of their church and shows a history of speaking and operating with influence, taking

initiative, and operating in an adaptable manner. They must display a sodal mindset and have a basic understanding of the role of complex networks.

As a leader operating on the network level, graduates from this pathway must display competency in the following areas:

- Antioch Courses:
 - Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church
 - Pauline Epistles: Strategies for Establishing Churches
 - Essentials of Sound Doctrine: Understanding the Essentials of Sound Doctrine
 - Leaders and the Early Church
- *The Churches of the First Century: From Simple Churches to Complex Networks* by Jeff Reed
- Completion of a spiritual gifts assessment
- Relevant Encyclicals
- First Principles & Teaching the First Principles
- Personalized role-specific education
- Personalized skill-related training and practice

Resource Inventory

These are resources approved by the North Central Collective Board as useful for training individuals working their way through the SPADE process. Pathway requirements should primarily pull from this list, though individual needs may require additional resources. These are broken up by category. Any resources that appear in more than one category may be considered for use by Guides working with any category where it appears. No Apprentice should be expected to complete the same resource twice; the Sponsor should ensure Guides do not duplicate assignments.

This list is current as of August 4, 2025. It may be altered by the North Central Collective Board as needed.

Skill Resources

The Skills are any training that focuses on practicing the work of a leader in real-world situations. This includes the process of identifying and preparing for a specific ministry location.

- Counseling
 - *Gospel Conversations* by Bob Kelleman
 - *Gospel-Centered Counseling* by Bob Kelleman

- Elder Duties
 - *Biblical Elders* by Jeremy Rinne
 - *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch
 - *Gospel Eldership* by Robert Thune
- Fundraising
- Pastoral Duties
 - *Star Book for Ministers* by Edward Hiscox
 - *Nelson's Minister's Manual* by Thomas Nelson
- Recruiting
- Sermon Preparation
 - Preaching Workshop hosted by Jason Beamon
 - *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson
 - *Expository Preaching* by David Helm (9 Marks)
 - *Christ-Centered Preaching* by Brian Chappel
- Specialized Activities
 - Participation at an NCC Greenhouse
 - Preaching opportunities
 - Shadowing an established leader

Paradigm Alignment Resources

The Paradigm resources are any training that focuses on the Apprentice's understanding of the gospel, the ideology of leading a ministry, the role of networks, and the nature of the church as understood by the North Central Collective. Examples may include the First Principles, encyclicals, approved conferences, and other similar events or studies.

- Antioch School Materials
 - Acts: Keys to the Establishment and Expansion of the First Century Church
 - Pauline Epistles: Strategies for Establishing Churches
 - Essentials of Sound Doctrine: Understanding the Essentials of Sound Doctrine
 - Leaders and the Early Church
- BILD Articles
 - *From Jesus to the Gospels*

- *Kerygmatic Communities*
- *Shepherding Counseling and Sustainability*
- *The Churches of the First Century: From Simple Churches to Complex Networks*
- Church Identity
 - *Going to Church in the First Century* by Robert Banks
- Establishing Series Resources
- Paradigm Papers by Jeff Reed
 - “Church Based Theological Education: Creating a New Paradigm”
 - “Church Based Ministry Which is Truly Church Based”
 - “Church Based Leadership Training: Creating a New Paradigm & A Proposal”

Discipline Resources

The Disciplines are any training that focuses on the practices of a healthy Christian life and the understanding of one’s personal role within the work of the church. Examples may include the Apprentice’s prayer life, understanding of worship, devotional reading, investment in the church body, and other similar activities.

- Church Life
 - *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church* by Don Whitney
 - Spiritual Gifts Assessment
- Fasting
 - *Hunger for God* by John Piper
- General
 - *Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard
 - Spiritual Disciplines Workshop with Don Whitney
 - *Spiritual Disciples for the Christian Life* by Don Whitney
- Prayer
 - *Prayer* by Richard Foster
 - *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* by Tim Keller
 - *PAPA Prayer* by Larry Crabb

- Private Life
 - *Ordering Your Private World* by Gordon MacDonald
 - Weekend to Remember: Family Life Today (Retreat)

Education Resources

The educational requirements are any training that focuses on knowledge that a leader will need in their work, and are usually handled in the form of classes or workshops.

- BILD Curriculum
 - Involvement in First Principles
 - First Principles training course
 - Antioch School of Church Planting and Leadership Development
 - Establishing Series
- Church Ordinances
 - *Going Public* by Bobby Jamieson
- Counseling
 - *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman
 - *Gospel Conversations* by Bob Kelleman
 - *Gospel-Centered Counseling* by Bob Kelleman
- Fundraising
- Leadership
 - *Deacons* by Matt Smethurst
 - *Church Elders* by Jeramie Rinne
 - *Elders in Congregational Life* by Phil Newton
 - *Elders and Leaders* by Gene Getz
 - *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch
- NETS Women's Mentor Resource
- Recruitment/Teambuilding
- Skill
 - Robert E Webber's Institute for Worship Studies resources
- Women's Resources
 - *How to Thrive as a Pastor's Wife* by Christine Hoover
 - *Help! I'm Married to My Pastor* by Jani Ortlund

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