

Sojourners Vote Out Poverty Campaign

— Training Curriculum —



*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all people who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights
of the poor and needy.*

—Proverbs 31:8-9

Curriculum Guide Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Vote Out Poverty Campaign Training	5
Goals & Objectives	6
Individual Reflection: Personal Goals	7
Campaign Strategy & Structure.....	8
<i>Notes</i>	11
What Is Organizing?	12
Telling Your Story	13
Teamwork Exercise: Sharing Your Story	14
Worksheet: Telling Your Story of Self	15
Story Coaching Tips	19
<i>Notes</i>	20
Vote Out Poverty Campaign Tactics	21
Hosting a Poverty Sunday	22
Voter Registration	24
VOP Pledges	25
Pentecost 2009 Mobilization.....	27
Building Relationships	28
Key Skill: One-on-One Meetings.....	29
Teamwork Exercise: One-on-One Meetings.....	31

Curriculum Guide Contents (cont.)

Launching Your Team	32
Teamwork Exercise: Launching Your Team.....	33
Worksheet: Local Team Recruitment & Goals	34
Worksheet: Team Roles.....	35
Worksheet: Team Norms.....	36
Creating a Local Action Plan	38
Worksheet: Next Steps	39
Appendix	40
Telling Your Story	40
Working as a Team: Decision-Making Models	41
Creating a Culture of Commitment	42
The Gospel Compels Us, The Law Allows Us.....	44
Voter Registration Overview	47
Voter Registration FAQs	49
State Voter Registration Deadlines.....	51
Millennium Development Goals Fact Sheet	53
Teamwork Exercise: Securing a Pledge.....	55
Teamwork Exercise: Getting Commitments	56
Resources	57

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Vote Out Poverty Campaign Training

Welcome

Welcome to a very exciting weekend of training for the Vote Out Poverty campaign. Our goal is to mobilize a faith-based constituency capable of influencing congressional and presidential priorities around domestic and global poverty, starting with the 2008 election and finishing in spring 2009.

Why Vote Out Poverty?

While most elected officials say they want to reduce poverty, few have provided leadership on the issue. Why? Most Americans are disengaged from the lives of the poor *and* the political process, so poverty reduction is pushed to the bottom of the priority list. Meanwhile, 30,000 children die every day of preventable causes around the world and millions go to bed hungry. These statistics are unacceptable to Christians if we profess to follow the teachings of Christ. To change them, we must engage in personal service, community transformation, and political, structural advocacy. The Vote Out Poverty campaign is designed to address the advocacy part of that equation.

What does it mean to Vote Out Poverty? We want to elevate poverty to the top of the political agenda. We will pursue this goal in two ways:

- Creating political will in a crucial election season through voter registration, education, and commitment pledges.
- Mobilizing thousands of faith-based activists in spring 2009 to hold their elected officials accountable for providing national political leadership to end poverty.

Training Format

Consider the next two days to be a crash course in organizing. All of us come to this training with different levels of experience. Our hope is to build a common foundation that can incorporate our individual gifts and expertise.

Most sessions follow a pattern: new material introduction, teamwork and role-playing, and a debriefing time. Our desire is for you to practice new skills immediately—making your learning experience more effective.

Because this campaign vision assumes shared values, common purpose, and working together, this weekend we will learn how to articulate those values, define common purpose, and work as a team. We will end by designing a local field plan, so you can hit the ground running when you return home.

We hope you choose to bring an “exploratory” spirit to this training—try new things, take risks, ask questions, and stretch your understanding.

Goals & Objectives

Campaign Goal: Mobilize a faith-based constituency that calls the new president and Congress to action and accountability to create a national plan to achieve the following:

- 1) Cut the number of Americans living in poverty in half over the next 10 years.
- 2) Address the needs of billions of people living in poverty around the world by working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Training Objectives

Objective #1: Learn how the public narrative interacts with a story of self, story of us, and story of now to motivate our actions and perspectives.

- Outcome: Develop and **articulate your personal story** in ways that motivate you and others to engage in anti-poverty work from a faith perspective.

Objective #2: Learn the key goals and strategy of the national Vote Out Poverty campaign and how to apply them to your local context.

- Outcome: Write a **local action plan** for implementing the Vote Out Poverty campaign in your faith community.
- Outcome: **Local team creation**—organize a local team of 5-6 people with specific roles and responsibilities.

Objective #3: Learn skills to implement a local VOP campaign, including team building, securing commitments, registering voters, and soliciting pledges.

- Outcome: **Poverty Sunday**—host Poverty Sunday on September 21, 2008.
- Outcome: **Voter registration**—register 10-50 new voters in your church.
- Outcome: **Commitment pledges**—the majority of your congregation members commit to voting through the lens of the poor and ask congressional candidates to prioritize domestic and global poverty.

Objective #4: Learn how faith-based organizing and advocacy can demand accountability from Congress for bold leadership on poverty.

- Outcome: **Pentecost 2009 mobilization**—commit to attend the mobilization in spring 2009 and organize a delegation from your community.

Target Audience: People of faith who understand the urgency of ending poverty and see organizing and political advocacy as indispensable ways for the church to make a difference.

Important Note – While we use the word “congregation” throughout most of the curriculum, this term can be broadly defined beyond a local church to include a campus ministry or other type of faith community that you would like to organize through your local action plan.

Individual Reflection: Personal Goals

What are your hopes for this training?

What kinds of skills are you interested in learning?

How would you like to be engaged in the VOP campaign?

What campaign skills do you already have? What do you think you could teach others?

What is your commitment to winning the outcomes of this campaign?

How much time are you willing to spend to accomplish your local action plan?

VOP Campaign Strategy & Structure

Our Goal: To mobilize a faith-based constituency capable of changing congressional and presidential priorities around domestic and global poverty.

TIMELINE	PHASE	OUTCOME/PEAK
Phase 1:	Training and Preparation	
June 13-15	Training for Change: Campaign Launch	Individuals and groups trained to implement VOP campaign locally.
June-July	Team Building & Creating a Local Action Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recruit leadership team (5 or more). 2) Congregation agrees to participate in VOP campaign. 3) Submit local action plan to Sojourners in order to receive VOP campaign packet (July 14).
August	Final Preparation for Campaign	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Finalize Poverty Sunday plan and strategy. 2) Receive VOP campaign packet from Sojourners with materials for outreach. 3) Launch of VOP Web site.
Phase 2:	Pre-Election Campaign Implementation	
September	Campaign Kick-off on Poverty Sunday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organize & host Poverty Sunday, September 21. 2) Register 10-50 new voters in your church. 3) Secure VOP pledges from 50 percent of congregation and distribute educational voter guide.
October	Candidate pledge	Secure candidate pledges by mailing individual pledges.
November 4	Election	Election Day: Vote and encourage others to vote.

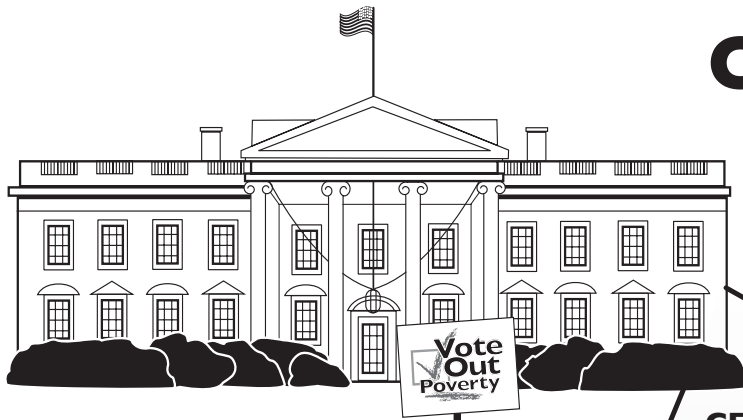
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Training Curriculum

TIMELINE	PHASE	OUTCOME/PEAK
Phase 3:	Post-election Campaign & Mobilization Preparation	
November-December	Post-Election Reflection & Campaign Review	Pray and reflect on pre-election campaign and results. What did you accomplish? What did your team learn?
January-March	Preparing to Mobilize	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organize a local delegation committed to attending the Pentecost 2009 mobilization in spring. 2) <i>Optional:</i> Organize a 6-week small group study on justice, possibly for Lenten season; resources are available from Sojourners.
April	Congressional Outreach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Outreach (letter, call, or visit) to local congressional office in preparation for visit to Washington, D.C. 2) Travel preparation for delegation.
Phase 4:	Pentecost 2009 Mobilization in D.C.	
Spring 2009	Pentecost Mobilization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Attend mobilization in Washington, D.C., to demand leadership and commitment by president and Congress on anti-poverty agenda. 2) Lobby Congress to enact an anti-poverty policy platform.
June 2009	Campaign Evaluation & Transition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Celebrate the VOP campaign. 2) Evaluate campaign success & lessons. 3) Discuss follow-up and future campaigns for anti-poverty movement.

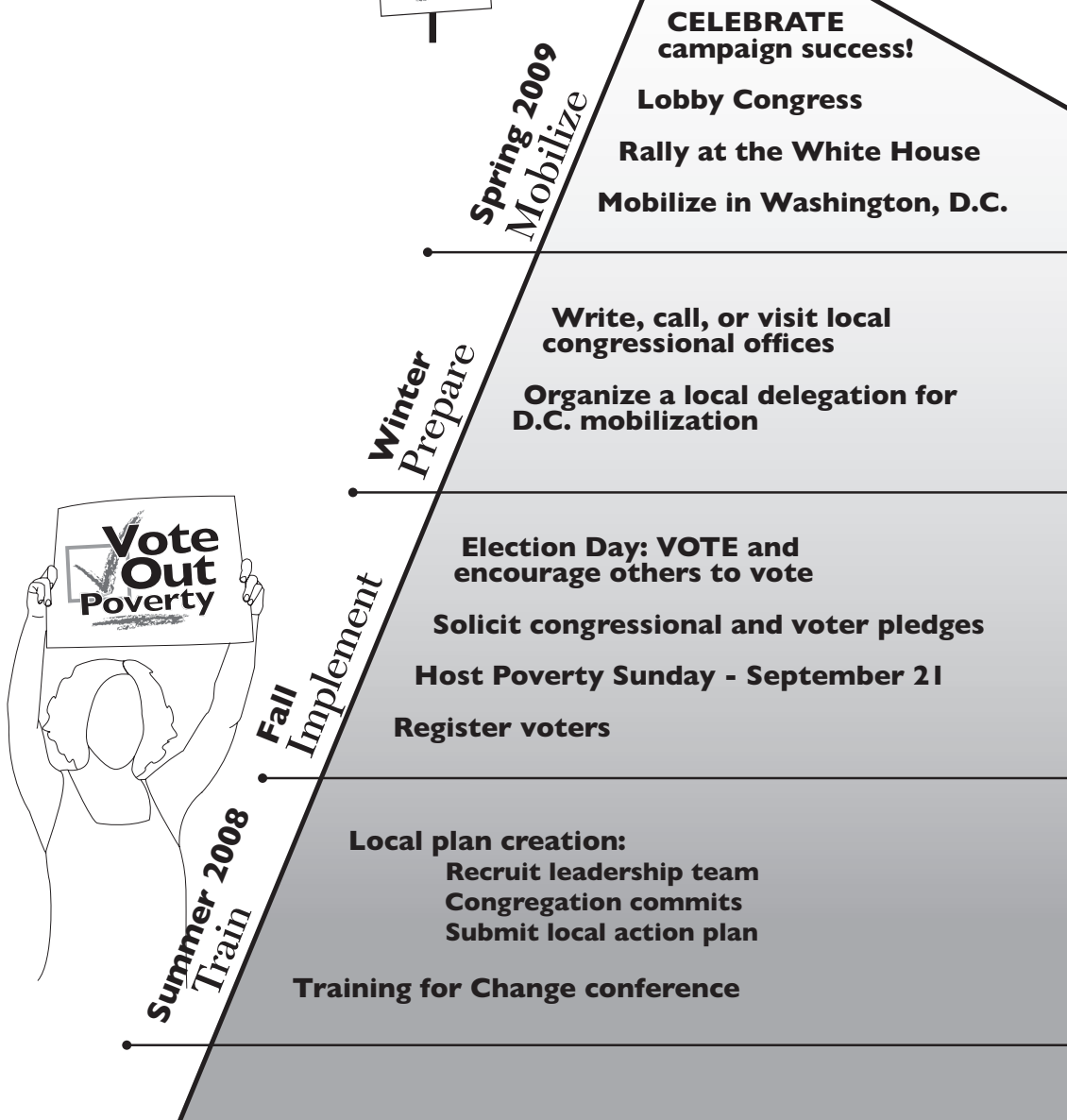
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Training Curriculum



Our Goal:

To mobilize a faith-based constituency capable of changing congressional and presidential priorities around domestic and global poverty.



Notes

What is Organizing?

Worksheet

What is Leadership?

Enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty by focusing on one's own calling, the calling of one's community, and the call to action.

What is Organizing?

Identifying, recruiting, and developing leadership, building community around that leadership, and building power from the resources of that community.

What are Organizing Practices?

- Telling your public story
- Building relationships
- Creating a team
- Devising strategy
- Mobilizing specific skills in a winning campaign: volunteer recruitment, congregational contact, communications, and data management

NOTES:

Telling Your Story

Key Skill: Telling Your Story

The questions of “*What am I called to?*”, “*What is my community called to do?*”, and “*What we are called to do now?*” are as old as Moses’ conversation with God at the burning bush. Moses asks, “*Why me?*” when called to free his people. “*Who is calling me? Why these people? Why here? Why now?*”

To build a local team and recruit people to join the Vote Out Poverty campaign, we must be able to share our story and motivate others with it. Our stories explain why we as people of faith care about poverty and advocate for change, so learning how to tell our story is the first key skill we need to practice.

Public Narrative & the Story of Self, Story of Us, and a Story of Now

Public leaders employ both the head and the heart to mobilize others to act on behalf of shared values. They engage people in interpreting **why** they should change their world—their motivation—and **how** they can act to change it—their strategy.

Public narrative is the “why”—the art of translating values into action through stories. It is a process through which individuals, communities, and nations construct their identities, make choices, and inspire action.

Each of us has a story that can motivate others. We’ll discern our stories of **self**, **us**, and **now** by writing, sharing, and reflecting on them with each other.

A **story of self** tells why we have been called to serve. The key focus is on choice points—moments in our lives when our values are formed, when we have to choose in the face of great uncertainty. When did you first care about being heard about concern for others, about abuses of power, about poverty? Why? When did you first feel you had to do something? Why did you feel you could? What were the circumstances?

A **story of us** communicates why our community, organization, movement, and campaign has been called to its mission. Just as with a person, the choice points in the life of the community and/or those moments that demonstrate the values underlying the work your organization does are key.

A **story of now** communicates the urgent challenge we are called to face now, the choices we must make to act now (our strategy), and the change we might achieve.

Teamwork Exercise: Sharing Your Story

GOALS

- 1) Learn how to tell your personal story of **why** you are called to organizing to alleviate poverty. In this way you can develop leadership in others, as well as yourself.
- 2) Coach each other to tell your **stories of self** by listening carefully, offering feedback, and asking questions.

Be prepared to take some risks, and support your team members as they step out on the limb themselves!

AGENDA

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 1) Gather in a team of four. Appoint a team timekeeper. 1 min.
- 2) Take some time to silently draft your **story of self**. 5 min.
Use the “Telling Your Story of Self” worksheet.
- 3) Come back to your team to share your stories. Review the list of coaching techniques below. 3 min.
- 4) Tell your story to your team members and respond to each other—each person gets 2 minutes and the group gets 3 minutes to offer feedback. 20 min.

NOTE: You have 2 minutes to tell your story. Stick to this limit. Make sure your timekeeper cuts you off. This encourages focus and gives everyone a chance.

- 5) Choose a storyteller to tell their story to the cohort in the debrief session. 1 min.
- 6) Return to the cohort to debrief the story work.

Report Out: Your team’s best storyteller tells their “story of self”

Worksheet: Telling Your Story of Self

A good public story is drawn from the spiritual markers or choice points that have structured the “plot” of your life—challenges you faced, choices you made, and outcomes you experienced.

Challenge: Why did you feel a situation was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it *your* challenge?

Choice: Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage—or not? Where did you get the hope—or not? How did it feel?

Outcome: How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?

Take time to reflect on your story of self. The questions below are a guide.

- Think back as far as you can remember. Focus on a challenge or two you faced, choices you made to deal with them, and the satisfactions—or frustrations—you experienced. Why did you make those choices? Keep asking **why**.
- What did you learn from reflecting on moments of challenge, choice, and outcome? How do they feel? What do they teach you about yourself, your family, your peers, your community, your nation, your world—about why what really matters to you matters? What about these stories was intriguing? Which elements offer perspective into your own life?
- What brings you to this campaign? When did you decide to get involved? Why? When did you decide to give up time for this training session? Why?
- What factors brought you to this campaign? Was there pressure to make different choices? How did you deal with conflicting influences?
- Who introduced you to your “calling” or encouraged you to become active? Why do you think that they did this? What did your parents model? What was the role of a community of faith? Who do you admire?
- Who helped you get involved in your cause? What involvement in your life made a difference? Why was it important to them to do so?

Many of us concerned with social justice have stories of both loss and hope. If we did not have stories of loss, we would not understand that loss is a part of the world. But we also have stories of hope. Otherwise we wouldn't be trying to fix problems in the world.

Record Your Story of Self

Tips for brainstorming your story of self:

- Determine the challenge, the choice, and the outcome you want to focus on.
- Add specific details. Reflect on how it makes you feel.
- Keep it short—you only have two minutes to share.

List your choices here:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Select one of your choices from which to develop a story. Map the challenge, choice, and outcome here:

Challenge	Choice	Outcome

Fill in the details:

When did this challenge and corresponding choice happen? What phase of life?
What cultural time period? What time of day? Year?

What are the particular details that you remember about this experience? How did it
feel, what did it look like, what did it sound like, what did it smell like?

What about the story still moves you?

Who would you tell this story to? What about it would motivate or move them?

**Record Feedback & Comments
from Your Team Members Here:**

Coaching Your Team's Story of Self

As you listen, keeping track of the details of each person's story will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's stories.

Name	Challenge	Choice	Outcome	Notes

Story Coaching Tips

DO...

Identify the CHALLENGE and the HOPE in the story. For example, if someone tells a story of an issue that distresses him or her, make sure you ask about how they handled it—what was the CHOICE he or she made, and what does that demonstrate about his or her underlying VALUES?

What points work? Don't work? Always give feedback on what works first, such as “this particular detail was vivid.” Then tell which points were unclear or hard to follow.

Focus on choice points. In our stories, this is where the action is and we must describe the emotion of the action. For example, ask, “When you decided to leave your job, how did it feel?”

Ask questions about the intended audience and the desired action or response. Our stories are always told in the context of motivating action for our campaign. Who will this story be told *to*? How will it resonate with them? Is the “ask” clear? Put yourself in the shoes of the intended audience, and tell the storyteller whether you are moved to act.

Connect the dots. If a story isn't making sense to you, ask questions! If it doesn't make sense to you, chances are that it won't make sense to anyone else.

Build the skeleton, then put meat on the bones. Sketch a simple story outline then fill in details, transitions, etc.

Show it, don't say it! Challenge the storyteller to take you to the time, place, and moment when the event happened—the choice, the reaction, the realization. Try speaking in the first person present. For example, “I stand up. Everyone looks at me. I can't speak.”

DON'T...

Offer vague “feel good” comments. What does the storyteller learn from “you did a great job,” as opposed to, “the way you described your moment of choice made me feel very hopeful because...”?

Make value judgments about the storyteller's voice or the validity of their story. The key is for each person to express themselves in their own voice. Of course they do need to know if choices they've made communicate what they want to communicate.

Notes

Vote Out Poverty Campaign Tactics

The Vote Out Poverty campaign includes the following tactics designed to accomplish the campaign goal of putting poverty on the national agenda.

Pre-Election Tactics

- 1) Poverty Sunday:** An event organized for your target audience (church, campus ministry, faith community) that provides a central organizing time for registering voters, signing pledges, sharing education resources, and teaching through worship.
- 2) Voter Registration:** Assist people in registering to vote. Voting out poverty requires that people are registered and actually vote.
- 3) Individual Pledges:** Ask people to sign a pledge committing to cast their vote based on prioritizing the fight against poverty. These pledges will be sent to congressional candidates for consideration.
- 4) Candidate Pledges:** Ask congressional candidates to sign a pledge committing to address the scandal of poverty if elected.

Post-Election Tactics (*training materials available in November*)

- 1) Pentecost 2009 Mobilization:** Organize a delegation from your faith community to attend a large mobilization in Washington, D.C., in spring 2009 to hold elected officials accountable to their pledges to reduce poverty.
- 2) Advocacy and Lobbying:** Continue to pressure congressional leaders to support key pieces of legislation that will help achieve the campaign goals.

Hosting a Poverty Sunday: September 21, 2008

The Vote Out Poverty campaign is anchored by an event called Poverty Sunday. Poverty Sunday will look different for each faith community, but each event should engage in the following core areas:

Worship: Explore poverty and justice as central biblical themes during your worship time through liturgy, prayer, scripture, announcements, and the sermon.

VOP Campaign Table: Educate, register, and commit people to the goals of the campaign at an information table outside your worship service.

How to Organize a Poverty Sunday

A Poverty Sunday toolkit will be posted on the Vote Out Poverty Web site (launch scheduled for August 1) with specific worship resources to help you plan your event, but local teams should start preparations as soon as possible.

- 1) Create plan with localized goals and objectives
- 2) Secure support from church leadership to host event
 - Coordinate with worship team or liturgist
 - Place Poverty Sunday on all appropriate calendars & schedules
- 3) Finalize program with help from the Poverty Sunday toolkit
- 4) Recruit volunteers needed beyond your local team
- 5) Secure necessary materials (registration cards, VOP pledges, etc.)
- 6) Create follow-up plan for measuring success and collecting information

Ideas for Organizing a Poverty Sunday *(details in the Poverty Sunday toolkit)*

- Set up a table to register voters, sign pledges, share vision
- Preach on the issue of poverty during the sermon
- Promote the campaign in a church newsletter or bulletin
- Have a short testimony from someone moved or affected by the issue of poverty
- Have a team member share for 2 minutes about the VOP campaign
- Have a prayer focused on justice and the poor
- Present and discuss the Vote Out Poverty campaign at an adult education class
- Involve your youth group in collecting pledges or performing a skit for the service

Ways to Get Your Church Leadership Committed

1) **Identify mutual goals.** Create goals that are mutually beneficial for both the campaign and the church leadership. Here is a list of possible shared objectives:

- **Break attendance records.** Work with the church leadership to ensure that Poverty Sunday breaks attendance records. Call church members, invite friends and family, and reach out to the broader community with this message: “Our church is doing something about poverty and we want you to be a part of this exciting event.” Church leadership appreciates seeing old and new faces come back to church.
- **Raise outreach funds.** Encourage signers of the Vote Out Poverty pledge to make a donation to the church outreach fund.
- **Create positive press.** Work with local media outlets to advertise Poverty Sunday and the desired outcomes. Poverty Sunday creates a positive image for the church and illustrates practical leadership to the community.
- **Reach young people.** Young people are looking for church communities that are engaging the world through both compassion and advocacy. Host a special outreach to the youth of the community in cooperation with Poverty Sunday.

2) **Overcoming roadblocks.** Depending on your church community and leadership, you may encounter some roadblocks along the way. Here are some possible challenges or questions with suggested responses:

- **Our church doesn't do politics.** The Vote Out Poverty campaign is nonpartisan and seeks to unite Christians from all perspectives around the goal of ending poverty in our country and the world.
- **What is Sojourners?** Founded in 1971, Sojourners' mission is to articulate the biblical call to social justice, inspiring hope and building a movement to transform individuals, communities, the church, and the world
- **Isn't Sojourners partisan?** Sojourners is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) Christian organization that is dedicated to raising the biblical call to social justice. It is comprised of churches and individuals from across the religious and political spectrum. Sojourners believes that God is not a Republican or a Democrat and that faithful Christians can vote for candidates of either party. The goal of the Vote Out Poverty campaign is to get candidates from all parties to endorse our agenda of overcoming poverty.
- **I already have a sermon topic picked out for that Sunday.** Can you have your sermon relate to the issue of poverty and/or work into the service the campaign prayer and announcement?
- **Some of the conservatives in our congregation will object.** Our goal is that everyone, no matter how they propose doing it, commit to finding concrete ways to overcome poverty.

Voter Registration

The 2008 national election provides a groundbreaking opportunity to raise the crisis of domestic and global poverty to a national priority. Voting is the language of our democracy and a moral and religious responsibility. Registering people to vote, although it may seem complicated, is a tangible way to minister to your faith community, open the conversation about poverty in light of the election, and to build interest and awareness for the Vote Out Poverty campaign.

Six Easy Steps to Voter Registration*

1) Get the cards.

- Pick up a supply of voter registration cards from your secretary of state's office or your county or city elections office. Make sure you understand how to correctly complete the cards.

2) Help registrants complete the cards.

- Make sure they are filled out properly with their full address, including "St." or "Ave.," and direction.

3) If the person says they will mail the card themselves ...

- Try to persuade voters to let you turn in their cards.
- Assure them that you are turning in many people's cards and that theirs will get to the right place on time.

4) *Optional* Get their permission to contact them with information about the election and their polling place.

- Have a clipboard with sign-up sheet available for this purpose.

5) Remind the voter to bring their photo ID to the polls.

6) Drop off the cards to your local board of elections.

- Familiarize yourself with your state's laws regarding when, where, and how to deliver cards. These can vary widely and it is best to be safe.

There are many helpful resources on voter registration in the Appendix:

- "The Gospel Compels Us, The Law Allows Us"
- Voter registration FAQs
- State voter registration deadlines
- Links in the resources list

*Materials adapted from Rock the Vote: www.rockthevote.com.

VOP Pledges

Individual Pledges. Ask people to sign a pledge committing to cast their votes by considering candidates and issues through the lens of the poor. These pledges will be sent to congressional candidates for consideration.

Candidate Pledges. Ask congressional candidates to sign a pledge committing to address the scandal of poverty if elected.

National Goal:

- 75,000 individual pledges
- 100 congressional candidate pledges
- Pledges from both presidential candidates

Why Pledge Cards?

The Vote Out Poverty pledge cards are designed to generate the political will among our nation's leaders necessary for them to prioritize the fight against poverty. In order to create this sense of urgency, we must demonstrate that a large group of citizens are equally committed to the cause. Many of you have been on the frontlines of this work by serving those affected by poverty in inner cities, developing countries, and rural areas. Now it is time to demand that those in positions of power use their influence on behalf of those who are the least, the last, and the lost.

In order to hold these leaders accountable to a goal of dramatically reducing poverty once elected, we first need for them to make clear commitments to us as the faith community. The Vote Out Poverty pledges are aimed at first securing many individual voter commitments, which then create the political will to secure candidate commitments. We must let our candidates know that we are casting our vote through the lens of the poor and that we are watching what they do as leaders.

We have decided to put the focus of the first half of this campaign on securing pledges because nothing can create a sense of political will among candidates more than the threat of not being elected! Even if they are not interested in prioritizing the fight against poverty, we can make it in their interest if we are willing to unite in this cause and demonstrate our collective power.

Target Group

While we encourage everyone to sign the VOP pledge card, we specifically are aiming our efforts at getting the majority of our faith communities to sign the pledge. In order to do this effectively, you will need a platform, which is the purpose of Poverty Sunday. Poverty Sunday will give you an audience with which to share the importance of the pledge in the context of this election and the broader fight against poverty.

Approaches for Securing Individual Pledges:

- Find ways to distribute the pledge widely to people in your church (e.g. place it in the church bulletin), being sure to set up a means of collecting completed pledges, such as a labeled box in the church foyer.
- Have a table in the church with the pledge cards and a box for collecting them when completed.
- Do the big push for pledges on Poverty Sunday. Organize as many volunteers as you can to help you secure pledges that day. Have a Vote Out Poverty table in the lobby of the church to collect the pledges and educate folks about the campaign.
- Once you receive the pledges, enter the names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mails into the database template that we will send you. This will build your local list of contacts—a key resource for an organizing group!
- Send contact information from the database to Sojourners so we can follow up with folks about the Pentecost 2009 mobilization.

Securing Congressional Pledges:

1) Find the mailing addresses for the following people (visit www.votesmart.org):

- Your two current U.S. Senators
- Senator's opponent if his or her seat is being contested (senators are up for reelection every six years)
- Your current representative from the U.S. House AND any representative who represents a district where several members of your church live
- Representative's opponent(s) in the election

2) Hand-deliver or mail the candidate a VOP pledge card to sign. Include:

- Form letter from Sojourners asking them to sign the pledge
- A list of everyone who has signed the individual VOP pledge
- A packet of some or all of the signed individual pledge cards
- The candidate pledge
- Your team leader's contact information
- A self-addressed stamped envelope to mail the pledge back to you
- A request to set up a meeting with faith leaders participating in the campaign to answer any questions the candidate may have about the pledge

3) Follow up with the candidate's office one week after mailing the pledge to confirm that they received the letter; ask when they will sign the pledge.

4) Let Sojourners know (voteoutpoverty@sojo.net or call 1-800-714-7474) which candidates commit, so we can keep track of the national total!

Pentecost 2009 Mobilization in Washington, D.C.

The Pentecost 2009 conference and mobilization represents the culmination of the Vote Out Poverty campaign and the accountability moment for elected leaders. The late spring event is designed to demonstrate that Christians are mobilized around an anti-poverty platform and want a strong, national plan and leadership to achieve the campaign goals.

Mobilization Goals

- 1) Mobilize delegations of faith-based leaders from every congressional district in the country to attend the three-day Pentecost 2009 mobilization, with a goal of at least 2,000 participants.
- 2) Sponsor a lobby day that has meetings planned with every Senate office and at least 75 percent of the House of Representatives offices, with at least one-third of those meetings being with actual members of Congress.
- 3) Organize a rally at Lafayette Square with more than 2,000 people in attendance, calling for the new president to commit to developing a plan for how he or she will achieve the domestic and global poverty reduction targets. These demands could include a call to establish a bipartisan commission or conference on poverty and/or the appointment of a poverty czar within the newly elected administration.

SAVE THE DATE!

Be part of the movement. Make your voice heard.

PENTECOST 2009

April 27-29

Washington, D.C.

Building Relationships

Relationships are the threads from which communities, organizations, and movements are woven. They create context within which we become who we become, form the values we share, define the goals we seek, and mobilize the resources we need to achieve these goals.

How Do Leaders Build Relationships?

- Identifying shared values by learning about one another's stories
- Exchanging resources and interests
- Making and eliciting commitment to a shared future

Key Relationships in Your Life

Think about the key relationships that have influenced your own life, the lives of your friends, your family, and your colleagues. List them below with short descriptions of their influence:

1)

2)

3)

Key Skill: One-on-One Meetings

One-on-one meetings are the key to building and sustaining successful campaigns and organizations. These types of meetings will be used to meet with faith leaders and gain their support for the Poverty Sunday initiative. You may also use these skills to recruit your local team members or solicit support from other leaders in your target audience.

One-on-one meetings are:

- **Scheduled**—*not accidental*. Leaders initiate relationships with others.
- **Purposeful**—*not chit-chat*. Leaders initiate one-on-one meetings for the purpose of finding common values and interests.
- **Intentional**—*not casual or haphazard*. One-on-one meetings establish a public relationship for public work together.
- **Probing**—*not prying*. One-on-one meetings help participants discover each other's interests and stories when participants exchange many "why" questions.

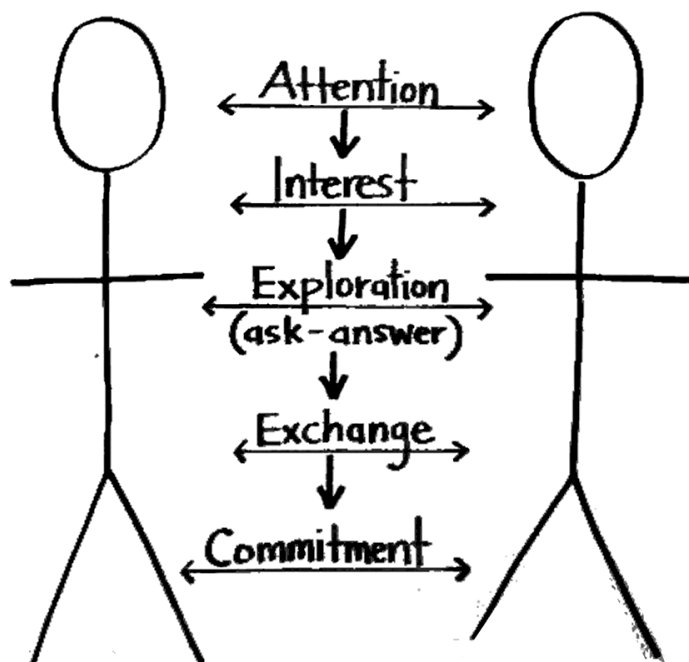
One-on-one meetings are not:

- Sending an e-mail or even exchanging an e-mail.
- Making a phone call or leaving a message.
- Asking someone to do something without establishing a relationship first.

The elements of a successful one-on-one meeting include:

- **Attention**. We have to get another person's attention to conduct a one-on-one meeting. The best way is simply to be upfront about your own interest in the other person and the purpose of the meeting.
- **Interest**. There must be a purpose or a goal in setting up a one-on-one meeting. It could range from, "I'm starting a discipleship group and thought you might be interested" to "I'd like to get to know you better."
- **Exploration**. Most of the meeting time is spent in exploration. We probe to learn about the person's values, resources, and interests by asking why they made the choices that they did and sharing our own. This is different than prying into one another's personal lives.
- **Exchange**. We exchange resources in the meeting such as information, support, and insight. This creates the foundation for future exchanges.
- **Commitment**. A successful one-on-one meeting ends with a commitment, most likely to meet again. By scheduling a specific time for this meeting, you make it a real commitment.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING



One-on-One Tips:

- **Listen/ask for story.** What were key choice points in the person's life; where did he or she learn the values that guide their choices? Keep asking "why?"
- **Listen/ask for interests.** We formulate our values into specific purposes, outcomes, or goals that we pursue: "I want my church to grow," or "I want to learn how to motivate others."
- **Listen/ask for shared interest.** What is an interest or goal that you both share, which you could commit to working together to accomplish?
- **Listen/ask for resources.** A resource is almost anything we can use to act on an interest—money, expertise, networks, imagination, etc.

Teamwork Exercise: One-on-One Meetings

GOAL

To practice a one-on-one meeting to learn more about articulating and identifying shared interests and values as we seek to mobilize people to address poverty through this campaign.

AGENDA

- 1) Spend 5-10 minutes each sharing your own interests and values. 5-10 min.
- 2) Spend 5-10 minutes identifying the common interests and resources you bring to this campaign. 5-10 min.
- 3) Agree on how to follow up to act on these shared interests. 2 min.
- 4) Choose one of you to share your common interest, resources, and commitment with your cohort. 1 min.

Notes:

In our one-on-one, we discovered that we **share an interest** in:

1)

2)

Between us, we have the following **resources** that we can use to realize our interest:

1)

2)

We committed to follow up by:

1)

Launching Your Team

Key Skill: Developing Your Team

Cohorts

Saturday, June 14, 12:15-2 p.m.

Vote Out Poverty Campaign: Local Teams

The VOP campaign is designed for implementation by local teams of five or more leaders. Teams should consist of people interested in mobilizing Christians around ending poverty through political engagement. Your teams should be organized in June and July to prepare for the campaign.

Why Teams?

To organize an effective campaign that can help launch a movement, we begin by organizing ourselves. We must work together around shared values to achieve common purposes.

Bad Teams

We have all been part of bad teams. They divide into factions, alienate each other, push all the work to one person, or refuse to recruit new members so they can feel like big fish. As a result, many of us come to the following conclusions: I'll just do it on my own; I hate meetings, just tell me what to do; or I don't want any responsibility—just give me stamps to lick. There's just one thing wrong with these options: We can't become powerful enough to accomplish our goals if we don't work together.

Three Criteria for an Effective Team

- 1) **Individual Support:** Teams should support individual growth and learning.
- 2) **Team Growth:** Over time, members of a healthy team should grow in their relationships and learn how to work together in a more productive manner.
- 3) **Focused Direction:** Team members should work toward agreed-upon goals and objectives set at the beginning of their project.

Teamwork Exercise: Launching Your Team

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ...It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. —Ephesians 4:7,11-12

GOALS

The purpose of this exercise is to practice how to recruit a local team to implement the Vote Out Poverty campaign. We'll also discuss how to develop team goals, roles, and norms through defining shared values, common interests, and understanding of purpose.

AGENDA

Total Time: 30 minutes

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1) Break into pairs. | 1 min. |
| 2) Complete "Local Team Recruitment & Goals" worksheet. | 14 min. |
| 3) Complete "Team Roles" worksheet. | 14 min. |
| 4) Choose one person to report out. | 1 min. |

Report Out: Share your team's goal, roles, and at least one team norm.

Worksheet: Local Team Recruitment & Goals

Instructions: To recruit a local team you will need a plan for **who** to recruit and **what** the team goals might look like to gauge common interest of members.

Fill out this page to begin your team-building plan. Your answers will change as you learn more about the campaign, so just give it your best shot. Once each person fills out her or his form, discuss with each other in order to share and brainstorm ideas.

I will work to recruit the following people for a volunteer team to work on the Vote Out Poverty campaign:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Our team will organize the following constituency (name of church, campus ministry, faith community): _____

- This will require securing a commitment from my faith community's leader(s): _____ to support hosting Poverty Sunday on September 21, 2008.

Our team will work to meet campaign goals through our local action plan:

- Register _____ (10-50) people to vote and mobilize a majority of the congregation, _____ people,* to sign the Vote Out Poverty pledge by October 1, 2008.
- Recruiting commitments from _____ church/community leaders to come to Washington, D.C., in spring 2009 for the Pentecost mobilization.

* Campaign goal is to get at least 50 percent of your congregation's average Sunday attendance.

Worksheet: Team Roles

Instructions: This exercise “role-plays” how to determine team roles on your campaign team. You should use it with your local team when you return home, but for now it is a good way to process your potential role and who you will need to recruit for your team.

- 1) Write down the skills, experience, and talents you bring to this campaign. Then share for 2-3 minutes your skills and experience with your partner.
- 2) Review the VOP campaign team roles chart (see next page).
- 3) Discuss with your partner the role you see yourself playing on your team.

Personal Skills, Experience, and Talents

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Sojourners Vote Out Poverty Campaign

Training Curriculum

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES	DO YOU HAVE THESE STRENGTHS?
Team Leader	Responsible for overall leadership of team. Point person for communicating with Sojourners in D.C. and leaders of other teams in the region. Sets meeting times, agendas, and facilitates discussion. Oversees collective decision-making process.	Organizational & relational skills, ability to connect big picture with daily tasks and tactics, group facilitation, tracking progress, balancing multiple team goals. Can motivate self and others.
Outreach Captain	Responsible for overseeing voter registration drive and securing VOP pledges. Meets with church leadership to get their buy-in for Poverty Sunday. Recruits additional team members for outreach. Works closely with pledge manager.	Strong relational skills, willing to ask for commitment to register to vote and to sign pledge, enjoys engaging, empowering, and recruiting others, and telling the story of the VOP campaign.
Communications Coordinator (Team Storyteller)	Coordinate Poverty Sunday public narrative pieces and rehearse with team. Promotes campaign in bulletins, newsletters, e-mail. Coordinates presentations to small groups, Bible studies, and other secondary audiences for campaign.	Creative, strong writing and presentation skills. May be computer savvy (or can recruit someone who is). Able to meet advance deadlines.
Pledge Manager	Sets up campaign infrastructure: distribution & tracking of pledge cards, registration materials, and voter guides. Records information collected and sends to Sojourners. Coordinates letters to congressional candidates. Sends voter registrations to Secretary of State.	Strong organization and administration skills; detail- and deadline-oriented.
2009 Mobilization Coordinator	Develop process to ensure that everyone who signs pledges and registers to vote is invited to Pentecost 2009 mobilization. Plans and organizes a local delegation to attend spring event.	Strong organization and administration skills. Committed to enabling broad participation, is creative, has fund-raising ability; committed to long-range vision of campaign.

Worksheet: Team Norms

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. —Galatians 5:22-23

Discuss the norms you would like for your future team. *We strongly advise you to also do this exercise during your first local meeting after members have committed to the team.*

- 1) Brainstorm norms for meetings and discussion, following through on commitments, and communicating and coordinating, putting them in categories of always do/never do.
- 2) For each norm identify a way to self-correct when the norm is violated.

Meetings & Group Discussion

What we will always do:

What we will never do:

Following Through on Commitments

What we will always do:

What we will never do:

Communication & Coordination

What we will always do:

What we will never do:

Creating a Local Action Plan

By **July 14, 2008** (one month after this training), each team leader should submit to Sojourners a **one-page plan** for their local Vote Out Poverty campaign. Include the following:

- 1) Team members, roles, and goals (e.g. number of people to register to vote in the congregation, number of people to sign the Vote Out Poverty pledge.
- 2) Advanced commitments from individuals (e.g. pastor has agreed to host a Poverty Sunday, you have four people who have volunteered to help out).
- 3) Action plan for moving forward (e.g. your timeline and specific steps you will take to achieve your goals). E-mail to Sojourners at voteoutpoverty@sojo.net.

Vote Out Poverty Campaign Packet

Once your local action plan is received, Sojourners will send you a **Vote Out Poverty campaign packet** that includes:

- Vote Out Poverty individual and candidate pledge cards
- Voter registration materials
- Educational voter guides
- Poverty Sunday toolkit (sample sermons, liturgy, poverty statistics, music suggestions, and promotional DVD).

The packet will also include strategic and tactical ideas (to complement your team's own ideas) for getting as many pledges as possible.

Worksheet: Next Steps of Your Local Action Plan

GOAL

To think through the steps you will take in the next month to reach your campaign goals.

AGENDA

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 1) Break into your same pairs.
- 2) Review the goals you set on the Local Team Recruitment and Goals worksheet, page 60. 2 min.
- 3) Discuss next steps. Is this list below the order you will follow? 10 min.
Why will or won't this work for your local setting?
 - a) Contact those individuals on my list and hold an informational meeting.
 - b) Solidify team—members, roles, norms.
 - c) Speak with pastor—get commitment.
 - d) Send proposal to Sojourners.
 - e) Organize Poverty Sunday with team.
 - f) Register new voters, secure pledges, educate others.
 - g) Mail in voter registration, record pledges, mail information to Sojourners.
 - h) Mail pledges to congressional candidates.
 - i) Recruit a delegation to attend the Pentecost 2009 mobilization.
- 4) Discuss who you will be recruiting and how you plan to secure commitments for them to join this campaign. 5 min.
- 5) Discuss what you will need to do in the following weeks to accomplish your goals of developing a team and securing buy-in from the leadership of your faith community: 10 min.

Week 1:

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

Appendix

Telling Your Story: Linking Self, Us, and Now

INTRODUCTION

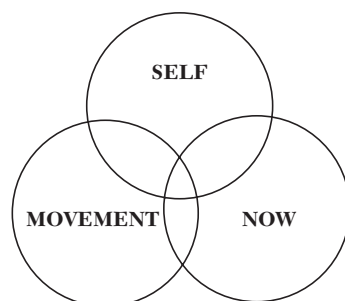
If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
When I am only for myself, what am I?
If not now, when?

—Hillel, 1st century Jerusalem sage
Pirke Avot

Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus, taught us that to stand for ourselves is the first but insufficient step. We must also find or create a community to stand with, and we must begin acting now. To combine our stories of self, us, and now, we have to find the link between *why I am called to this mission, why we as a community are called to this mission, and what our mission calls on us to do now.*

That linking may require us to rethink the stories of self, us, and now that we practiced earlier. Storytelling is an iterative—and nonlinear—process. Each time you tell your story you will adapt it—to make yourself clearer, to adjust to a different audience, to locate yourself in a different context. As you develop a story of us, you may find you want to alter your story of self, especially as you begin to see the relationship between the two more clearly. Similarly, as you develop a story of now, you may find it affects what went before. And, as you go back to reconsider what went before, you may find it alters your story of now.

Our goal this weekend is not to leave with a final “script” of your public narrative that you simply repeat word-for-word during your campaign. The goal is to help you learn a process by which you can generate your narrative anew, again and again, when, where, and how you need to in order to motivate yourself and others to specific, strategic action.



Appendix

Working as a Team: Decision-Making Models

How will you decide together?

Stages of a Decision-Making Process

- 1) Defining the Problem
- 2) Identifying Outcome Criteria
- 3) Open: Generating Alternatives
- 4) Narrow: Evaluating Alternatives
- 5) Close: Deciding
- 6) Learning from the Decision

Rules for Brainstorming

- Don't evaluate the idea; defer judgment.
- Quantity is the goal.
- The wilder, the better for creativity.
- Record each idea verbatim.
- Tagging on or combining ideas into one new idea is OK.

Decision-Making Models

Majority Rule

- + Speed (takes less time than consensus)
- Subgroup formation (still disagree, fracture lines)
- Lack of commitment by some (won't implement?)

Consensus

- + Commitment
- + Coordinated implementation
- Time cost

Individual Expertise/Interest

- + Speed (delegated, so no group agonizing)
- + Good use of talent (recognize special skills)
- Subsequent resistance or revisiting ("delegation authority" was not sincere)

Appendix

Creating a Culture of Commitment

Adapted from Sierra Club Leadership Development Program

One of the great challenges leaders face is learning how to establish the team direction and then to ask for—and get—commitments from each other to work to reach shared goals. As leaders, we are responsible for creating and maintaining a culture in which commitments are made and kept.

Why is commitment to a team important?

Once we decide on the shared outcomes we want to produce, we need to organize people to take specific actions that will produce these outcomes. As a team, we have to accept and delegate responsibilities for certain outcomes. We have to commit our resources to ensure that these outcomes are achieved.

There is a big difference between putting the word out about a meeting and getting commitments from people to attend. Unless we ask for and obtain commitments to attend, meeting attendance will be a “crap shoot.” It takes courage, training, and dedication to develop a team of leaders who are not afraid to ask for and get commitments. Without this, the “action” will remain always just a little out of reach.

How do we create a culture of team commitment?

- **Set shared goals.** If team members agree upon shared goals, they are more likely to be committed to achieving those goals.
- **Establish team interdependence.** Commit to work that can only happen if multiple people work together. This is a way to accomplish big things that no one individual can accomplish alone.
- **Set clear expectations.** You have to be clear about what you are asking someone to do.
- **Establish group standards.** Set norms of operation and reinforce them the first time they are violated. A norm needs to be corrected, or you have lost it. If failing to follow the established group standards is allowed, that behavior becomes the new norm.

Making commitments stick.

- **Feedback.** When someone makes a commitment, they need to hear from those they've committed to. They need to see that someone else notices.
- **Reflection.** Allow team members to evaluate one another, increasing peer pressure to contribute to the team's work.

- **Recognition.** Recognize people who do good work and meet commitments. Reward the team as a team for accomplishing goals.
- **Accountability.** There must be consequence for not keeping commitments.

How can I help my team members increase their commitment?

Lead your team in a conversation about commitment by having them answer the questions below.

STEP 1: The challenge of asking for a commitment

- Why are we reticent to ask for commitments?

STEP 2: The impact of not keeping the commitments we make

- Why does commitment matter to you as an individual? What is at stake?
- Why does commitment matter to your local team? What is at stake?

STEP 3: Creating a culture of commitment

Where should the team focus its effort to improve members' personal commitment to the team?

What specific steps can you take in your team to create and maintain a culture in which commitments are made and kept?

What barriers will you face in implementing these actions? How will you overcome these challenges?

Appendix

The Gospel Compels Us, The Law Allows Us

Guidelines for congregations and clergy on political action.

This document was created by Mara Vanderslice for the United Church of Christ and adapted, with permission, by Sojourners for general use.

How can congregations participate constructively in the political process during this election year? What are the opportunities and legal limits to faith-inspired political activity? This guide helps you understand what kind of activities churches and clergy can undertake to raise our voice in the 2008 elections.

Political activities of churches are limited due to IRS tax-exempt status.

Almost all churches are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code on the basis that they are “operated exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes.”

As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, a church:

- is exempt from paying corporate income taxes, and donations to it are tax-deductible on federal tax returns; and
- may expend funds for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, and an insubstantial amount on lobbying and to promote legislation.

A 501(c)(3) exempt organization ***may not “participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.”***

Political Activities

Political activities are quite broad and range from contributions to a political candidate to discussing public policies and election year issues to publishing the voting records of incumbents running for reelection. Only some of these activities are considered active “electioneering,” which cannot be done by a church.

There are no restrictions on educating church members about election year issues and promoting discussion of public policy. However, your church is prohibited from expressing its support or opposition to any candidate during the discussion of issues and policies, if it wishes to maintain its tax-exempt status.

Other kinds of unrestricted political activity include holding voter registration and “get out the vote” drives, preparing and distributing nonpartisan voter guides and voting records, and sponsoring candidate forums and debates.

Clergy and church leaders have the same rights as every American citizen and may fully participate in political campaigns as individuals; however, they must announce that they are acting on their own behalf and not on behalf of the church.

Appendix

Guidelines for Congregations and Clergy on Political Action

Political Activities	Churches?	Clergy as individuals?
Discuss the positions of candidates on public issues	Yes	Yes
Endorsement of political candidates	No	Yes
Contributions to political candidates	No	Yes
In-kind expenditures in favor of or against political candidates	No	Yes
Independent expenditures in favor of or against political candidates	No	Yes
Contributions to PACs	No	Yes
Appearance of political candidate at church meeting or service*	Yes	N/A
Payment of expenses for candidate to appear	No	Yes
Distribute at church:		
(1) Nonpartisan candidate surveys or guides**	(1) Yes	(1) Yes
(2) Voting records	(2) Yes	(2) Yes
(3) Candidate political statements	(3) No	(3) Yes
Rent church list at market value if offered at same rate for all candidates	Yes	N/A
Publish in church newsletter, bulletin, or magazine***		
(1) Political ads sold at market rate	(1) Yes	(1) N/A
(2) Political ads sold at less than market rate	(2) No	(2) N/A
(3) News stories	(3) Yes	(3) N/A
(4) Editorials	(4) No	(4) N/A
Nonpartisan voter education and registration	Yes	Yes
Nonpartisan get out the vote drives	Yes	Yes

*See page 74.

**A political candidate may appear at a church service. The appearance of a candidate before a church service, however, is limited as follows:*

- Any other candidate for the same office that requests to appear must be given the same opportunity; and
- No solicitation for funds may be made by any representative of the church.

In addition, a church may allow political candidates to use the facilities of the church for events or meetings on the same basis that civic groups and other organizations are allowed. If civic groups and other organizations are required to pay rent for using the church property, the political candidate should be charged the same amount.

***A church may publish or distribute the results of surveys of candidates on public issues. Such surveys, however, must be nonpartisan. As a result, 501(c)(3) church groups should observe the following conditions in publishing or distributing the survey:*

- Publish the response of all the candidates for the particular office by use of “yes” and “no.” The survey should not specify what the desired response is.
- Do not include any words indicating either endorsement of or support for any of the candidates or their positions on issues.

****Church publications:*

- Political ads: A church newsletter or magazine may publish an ad for a political candidate, as long as the ad is purchased at the regular rate for ads in that publication.
- News stories: A church newsletter, bulletin, or magazine may publish, without limitation, news stories on political candidates and political campaigns.
- Editorials: A church may not publish an editorial supporting or endorsing a candidate for political office or political party.

Appendix

Voter Registration Overview

A comprehensive voter registration campaign is the first step in executing a successful voter engagement effort. Nonprofit organizations engage in the electoral process to foster participatory democracy and increase the diversity of voices represented in our local, state, and national elections. In addition, voter registration is an important organizing tool for accessing resources in under-represented communities and building the base of an organization.

Why Register Voters?

Expand the electorate.

Elections are often determined by those who do NOT vote as much as those who do. Organizations often work with underrepresented or unorganized constituencies in our democracy. Communities of color, low-income people, new Americans, young people, single mothers, and people with disabilities are a few examples of such groups. By reaching these constituencies, you can dramatically expand who is voting and whose concerns will be addressed. When communities are organized and empowered to vote, they find that their voices are more readily heard by their elected representatives.

Build the base.

In grassroots organizing and voter engagement, access to people is critical. Every organization has a core **base** (the group of people who support you) from which to start—your staff, boards of directors, donors, and volunteers. To win victories that change people's lives, nonprofits need to expand this base by finding allies. Voter registration is an excellent way to do this. A voter registration drive gets nonprofits out into the community, contacting their constituencies and providing an outlet for people to become involved in your work. Because registered voters become part of public record, you can record the name and information of each new voter you register. In this way, voter registration becomes a critical way to build your list of supporters and identifies people to get out to vote.

Create opportunities to talk about issues.

Nonpartisan voter registration allows organizations to create a community dialogue about the issues and challenges you are seeking to address. Nonpartisan voter registration is not about candidates or political parties; it is about connecting the issues that people care about to the power to do something about those issues. By making the connection between affordable housing, public safety, or health care and our elected decision-makers, nonprofits can turn concerned citizens into empowered voters.

Further the mission of your organization.

For nearly all charitable organizations, improving the lives of those served by the organization is core to the mission. A nonprofit can further this mission by equipping its constituents to participate in the electoral process. While it may seem like a step outside of the regular, day-to-day work of your nonprofit organization, imagine the impact on your work if every staff and board member, every volunteer, and every client voted.

Special Cases

For certain populations, it is important to be aware of special laws and circumstances related to voter registration.

Survivors of domestic violence: Voter registration rolls are public information, increasing danger to the victim by making the location of the victim accessible to the abuser. Many victims do not realize that by registering, they are making their address and personal information publicly available. However, several states have passed confidentiality laws that keep the addresses of victims off the public rolls but still allow them to register to vote. To find out if your state has such laws, and to get tips on safely registering survivors of domestic violence, contact the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV).

Appendix

Voter Registration: Frequently Asked Questions

Adapted from the Community Tool Box and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Minnesota Participation Project, developed in collaboration with Grassroots Solutions.

1) What if I registered but I didn't receive anything in the mail from the Secretary of State?

You should receive information about where to vote within a few weeks of registering. If you do not, you should call your county's elections office and ask them to check if your registration was accepted. Be sure to bring your photo ID to the polls, just in case.

2) How can I respond to people who are reluctant to register?

Find out what issues they care about. What affects their family and community? How do those things relate to voting?

Below are some ideas for possible responses to reluctant voters:

My vote doesn't make a difference.

Answer: Your vote can make a huge difference, especially in local elections. There have been many times when an election has been determined by just one or a very few votes.

I've never gotten around to it.

Answer: Now's your chance—it will only take a couple of minutes!

I don't know how or where to register.

Answer: You can register right here, right now, and we'll help you do it.

I don't want to be called for jury duty.

Answer: Registered voters are not the only lists used to select potential jurors. They're mostly used together with driver's license lists and merged to avoid name repetitions. We've never heard of anyone not driving because it might lead to jury duty!

I'm disgusted with (or just don't care about) politics.

Answer: Then change it! You have the power to take a situation you hate and make it better. The decisions politicians make affect you directly every day. For example [name a major issue in your area]. Wouldn't you like to have some control over that?

I don't have transportation to the polling places.

Answer: We will be happy to provide transportation for you on Election Day if you don't have any.

I don't know what's going on/I don't know enough to make an educated decision.

Answer: We'll help you. We'd be happy to give you summaries of the candidate's views on major issues. If you get the local newspaper, they usually provide a lot of information on this too.

I didn't know I could vote.

Answer: If you are a U.S. citizen, over the age of 18, and have not been convicted of a felony (applicable in some states, not all), you definitely can! (And we hope you will, too!)

My spouse takes care of it.

Answer: Your spouse's vote is very important, but yours is, too! If you both vote, you've just doubled your household's voice in the government.

I'm not a citizen. I have a "green card." I just became a citizen.

Answer: Thanks for telling me. If you don't have any legal documentation, then you are not eligible to vote in any elections. If you need help with citizenship issues, we will try to point you to a safe and knowledgeable resource.

If you have a "green card" (i.e. you are a non-naturalized "permanent resident" or "conditional resident") of the United States, then you can only vote in local and state elections that do not require you to be a U.S. citizen. It is very important that you do not vote in national, state, or local elections that require a voter to be a U.S. citizen when you are not a U.S. citizen. There are criminal penalties and you can be deported from the U.S. if you vote in elections limited to U.S. citizens. To find out if you are eligible to vote in state or local elections, check with your local board of elections.

If you are a new citizen (newly "naturalized"), then congratulations! As a new American, you have an opportunity to vote in this historic election. As a naturalized U.S. citizen you have the same rights and privileges as a native-born U.S. citizen—including voting in all elections. Let us register you today.

3) What do I need to double-check on the voter registration card?

- a) Make sure you fill out your complete name as it appears on your ID card.
- b) Make sure you fill out your complete address, including "Avenue" or "Street" and direction.
- c) Sign the card.
- d) Use the proper ID.
- e) Turn it in before the deadline.

Appendix

State Voter Registration Deadlines

Check with your local election board or Secretary of State's office to confirm these dates.

STATE	VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE
Alabama	Fri, Oct. 24
Alaska	Sun, Oct. 5 (last day to postmark is Sat, Oct. 4)
Arizona	Mon, Oct. 6
Arkansas	Mon, Oct. 6
California	Mon, Oct. 20
Colorado	Mon, Oct. 6
Connecticut	Tues, Oct. 21
Delaware	Sat, Oct. 11
District of Columbia	Mon, Oct. 6
Florida	Mon, Oct. 6
Georgia	Mon, Oct. 6
Hawaii	Mon, Oct. 6
Idaho	Register at Polls
Illinois	Tues, Oct. 7
Indiana	Mon, Oct. 6
Iowa	Fri, Oct. 24
Kansas	Mon, Oct. 20
Kentucky	Mon, Oct. 6
Louisiana	Mon, Oct. 6
Maine	Tues, Oct. 21
Maryland	Tues, Oct. 14
Massachusetts	Wed, Oct. 15
Michigan	Mon, Oct. 6

Sojourners Vote Out Poverty Campaign

Training Curriculum

STATE	VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE
Minnesota	Tues, Oct. 14
Mississippi	Mon, Oct. 6
Missouri	Wed, Oct. 8
Montana	Mon, Oct. 6 (or same day at county elections office)
Nebraska	Fri, Oct. 24 (mail by Fri, Oct. 17)
Nevada	Tues, Oct. 14
New Hampshire	Same Day
New Jersey	Tues, Oct. 14
New Mexico	Tues, Oct. 7
New York	Fri, Oct. 10
North Carolina	Fri, Oct. 10
North Dakota	N/A
Ohio	Mon, Oct. 6
Oklahoma	Fri, Oct. 10
Oregon	Tues, Oct. 14
Pennsylvania	Mon, Oct. 6
Rhode Island	Sat, Oct. 4
South Carolina	Sat, Oct. 4
South Dakota	Mon, Oct. 20
Tennessee	Mon, Oct. 6
Texas	Mon, Oct. 6
Utah	Mon, Oct. 6 or in person Tues, Oct. 28
Vermont	Wed, Oct. 29
Virginia	Mon, Oct. 6
Washington	Mon, Oct. 4 (or Mon, Oct. 20 in person)
West Virginia	Wed, Oct. 15
Wisconsin	Wed, Oct. 15 (or Mon, Nov. 3 at office)
Wyoming	Can register at polls

Appendix

Millennium Development Goals Fact Sheet

*Information from United Nations Development Programme Web site:
<http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>.*

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the **UN Millennium Summit** in September 2000.

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The MDGs:

- synthesize, in a single package, many of the most important commitments made separately at the international conferences and summits of the 1990s;
- recognize explicitly the interdependence between growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development;
- acknowledge that development rests on the foundations of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and peace and security;
- are based on time-bound and measurable targets accompanied by indicators for monitoring progress; and
- bring together, in the eighth Goal, the responsibilities of developing countries with those of developed countries, founded on a global partnership endorsed at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, and again at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002.

MDG: How in the World Are We Doing?

The Millennium Development Goals Monitor tracks how countries are doing in their efforts to meet the eight MDGs set by the United Nations in 2000 for raising the global quality of life by 2015. Here's a look at progress (and regress) in the critical region of sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Poverty:** 41% of the population lived on less than \$1 a day in 2004, down from 47% in 1990. Goal: 23% by 2015.
- **Education:** 70% of boys and girls were enrolled in primary education in 2005, up from 54% in 1991. Goal: 100% in seven years.
- **Gender Equity:** In 2005, 32% of people in paid non-agricultural work were women, up from 28% in 1990. Goal: Gender parity by 2015.
- **Child Mortality:** The under-5 mortality rate was 166 per 1,000 live births in 2005, down from 185 in 1990. Goal: 61 by 2015.
- **Maternal Health:** 45% of births were attended by skilled health-care personnel in 2005, up from 42% in 1990. Goal: Reduce the maternal death ratio by three-quarters in seven years.
- **Disease:** In 2007, 22.5 million people lived with HIV, up from 20.9 million in 2001. Goal: Stop and reverse this trend by 2015.
- **Environment:** 26% of the region's land area was covered by forests in 2005, down from 29% in 1990. Goal: Reverse the loss of environmental resources in seven years.
- **Development:** The youth unemployment rate was 18% in 1996 and in 2006. Goal: Implement strategies for productive work for young people.

Source: "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007" (United Nations) and Sojourners (July 2008).

Teamwork Exercise: Securing a Pledge

GOALS

The purpose of this session is to practice asking someone in your faith community to sign the VOP pledge. The goal is to learn how to persuade a person of the importance of signing the pledge in less than one minute.

AGENDA

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 1) Break into pairs.
- 2) Individually craft a script (less than five sentences or talking points). 5 min.
- 3) Role-play this “ask” with your partner. 2 min.
- 4) Debrief and evaluate: What worked well, what will you improve? 5 min.
- 5) Join with another pair nearby. 1 min.
- 6) Have each person role-play their script. 5 min.
- 7) Debrief and evaluate: What worked well, what will you improve? 10 min.

Script Notes:

Teamwork Exercise: Getting Commitments

GOALS

The purpose of this session is to practice getting a commitment from someone to attend the Pentecost 2009 mobilization in Washington, D.C.

AGENDA

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 1) Break into pairs.
- 2) Individually craft a script (less than five sentences or talking points) that communicates the campaign narrative and the request to come to the mobilization. 5 min.
- 3) Role-play this “ask” with your partner. 2 min.
- 4) Debrief and evaluate: What worked well, what will you improve? 5 min.
- 5) Join with another pair nearby. 1 min.
- 6) Have each person role-play their script. 2 min.
- 7) Debrief and evaluate: What worked well, what will you improve? 10 min.

Script Notes:

Resources

Theological Reflection

- *Sojourners* magazine, archives available at: www.sojo.net
- Christians Supporting Community Organizing: www.csoweb.org
- *Hungry for Justice: A six-week guide for praying daily, building community, and changing the world.* Available from Sojourners: www.sojo.net
- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States.* Available from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf

Organizing

- Marshall Ganz's online organizing class:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k2139>

Voter Registration:

- Wellstone Action!, *Non-partisan Voter Engagement Manual* (available in English and Spanish): <http://www.wellstone.org/sites/default/files/Wellstone.pdf>
- Clergy Strategic Alliances, *Our V.O.T.E. Training Manual*:
http://www.clergyaction.org/downloads/CSA_OURVoteManual_teaser.pdf
- Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Faithful Citizenship Project: Congregational Profiles – A Guide to Non-partisan Voter Registration in Religious Congregations*:
http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/faithful_citizenship.pdf
- State-by-state information:
http://www.declareyourself.com/voting_faq/state_by_state_info_2.html
- Project Vote: www.projectvote.org
- Voter registration forms online: www.rockthevote.com

Additional Reading to Consider:

Spiritual Formation

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer - *Life Together*
- Robert Coles - *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*
- Richard Foster - *The Celebration of Discipline*
- Richard Foster - *Devotional Classics*
- Kirk Byron Jones - *Rest in the Storm*
- Thomas Merton - *New Seeds of Contemplation*
- Henri Nouwen - *In the Name of Jesus*
- Elizabeth O'Connor - *Journey Inward, Journey Outward*
- Jim Wallis - *The Call to Conversion*
- Dallas Willard - *Spirit of the Disciplines*

Christian Living & Discipleship

- Scott Bessenecker - *The New Friars: The Emerging Movement Serving the World's Poor*
- Shane Claiborne - *Irresistible Revolution*
- Edwina Gately - *Soul Sisters: Women in Scripture Speak to Women Today*
- Martin Luther King Jr. - "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- John Perkins - *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development*
- Jim Wallis - *The Great Awakening*

Politics & Social Justice

- Joan Chittister - *Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope*
- Michael Emerson and Christian Smith - *Divided by Faith*
- Obery Hendricks - *The Politics of Jesus*
- Dennis Jacobsen - *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing*
- Theodore Jennings - *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics*
- Martin Luther King Jr. - "A Time to Break the Silence"
- Robert Linthicum - *Building a People of Power*
- Charles Marsh - *The Beloved Community*
- Brian McLaren - *Everything Must Change*
- Bryant Myers - *Walking with the Poor*
- Theda Skocpol - *Diminished Democracy*
- Ron Sider - *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*
- Ron Sider - *Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America*
- Sojourner Truth - *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*
- Jim Wallis - *God's Politics*
- John Howard Yoder - *The Politics of Jesus*