

Developing a Covenant with your Team

The process of developing a covenant is even more important than the document that is created. By answering the following questions together, you will learn what is important to each member of the team and hear their perspective and parts of their stories. It is a sacred conversation that God will bless.

Introduce the idea of team covenant by using the videos provided at www.twkumc.org.

Answer the following questions together as a team, making sure to get input from each team member. You may be tempted to begin with a covenant that has been formed by another team. This will only be effective if the covenant is changed and adapted by the current team for its context.

Using large pieces of newsprint, a whiteboard, or a flip chart to record the answers makes it easy for participants to see what has been said. If on video call, ask someone to take notes in the chat or use the whiteboard feature. Record all that is said. Allow plenty of time for this session. If it is your first meeting as a team, this may take the majority of the meeting time.

How do you describe a highly effective team?

Possible answers: successful, faithful, full of trust, has each other's backs, accomplishes their mission, willing to take risks together, offers grace to each other, etc.

What are the characteristics of the best leader you know or have known?

Possible answers: authentic, trustworthy, follower of Jesus, transparent, leads with vulnerability, courageous, curious to know what others think, etc.

What values or practices are essential for your participation on this team?

Possible answers: my voice will be valued, communication will be open and transparent, we will pray together, we will let each other know if we cannot attend, etc.

How can this team create a hospitable environment for full participation by each member?

Possible answers: I need closed captions when we meet on Zoom, I am unable to meet on the weekends that I work, I have difficulty trusting team process so I may need some grace while trust grows, etc.

Once the questions are answered, someone volunteers to take the answers and creates a draft covenant. It can be in paragraph form, bullet point format, or any other form that the team would like to create. However, whatever format is used, it needs to be accessible to the team and used at each meeting.

At the beginning of the second meeting, the draft is reviewed and adjusted to make sure it reflects the team's intentions and conversation.

At each meeting, the team will read the covenant aloud together. They will ask and answer these questions together: How have we witnessed God at work in this covenant? How has this covenant been helpful to our team? Where have we not upheld the covenant? Answering these questions at each meeting provides space for a team to celebrate their growing trust and effectiveness as well as acknowledge when they, as a member, have not been able to uphold the covenant or experience other bumps in the road of leadership.

The covenant usually remains in "draft" form because it is a process that is never completed, especially as new members join and help create new drafts. It is an experience for a team to learn that without the grace of God, adaptive leadership is not possible. Be open to the ways God will help you adapt the covenant to meet your team's needs.