Our congregation needs to figure out a way to train our lay leaders. Sometimes we send our leaders to seminars or conferences, but we have had limited success in helping them grow as leaders. Can you recommend resources that will help us figure out a more intentional approach to leadership development?” Questions such as these are frequently asked of the Center for Congregations. They are appropriate questions since the mission of the Center is to strengthen congregations by helping them find and use the best resources to meet their challenges and opportunities.

In order to recommend excellent resources, the Center periodically engages in a systematic resource discovery process to determine what we believe to be the best resources on a particular topic. The Center recently engaged in such a project to identify the best leadership development resources for congregations.

We began by defining what we mean by leadership development.

Leadership development within congregations is an intentional effort to build the capacity of laity to lead effectively. While the purpose of congregational leadership development is to equip persons to lead within the congregation, an added value is often that it strengthens people’s leadership skills in other areas of their lives.

Several assumptions undergirded this resource discovery work.

- God desires people to demonstrate leadership for the benefit of self, others and the world.
- All people have the capacity for leadership and can learn to lead.
- Suitable lay-leader development resources will offer present and future lay-leaders a process and tools to help them become more effective leaders.
- Secular resources can provide valuable knowledge and skills for congregational leaders.

Web browsers, amazon.com, denominational websites, and current clergy were sources from which we collected resource ideas. Criteria were established to help sort through the myriad of resources uncovered. The criteria for books included

- Publication date of 2002 or later
- Availability
- Useful to congregations
- Readability
- Inclusiveness
- If a secular book, its content is relevant and can be readily adapted for congregations.
Criteria for websites, organizations and blogs included:
- Content about leadership development for laity
- Website is clean, attractive, professional, and easily navigated
- Site was not overly commercialized
- Site had a high number of articles, newsletters, and other resources that could be accessed free-of-charge

Ultimately, 18 book resources and ten organizations and websites were identified as “the best” resources for lay-leader development. Of the final eighteen books, eleven have a Jewish or Christian faith perspective and seven have a secular perspective. Of the ten organizations and websites selected, eight have a religious perspective.

**OBSERVATIONS AND ON-GOING QUESTIONS**

This resource discovery project led to several observations and on-going questions.

1. **“There are too many, and there aren’t enough leadership development resources.”**

The market has an ample inventory of leadership resources; however, few are specific to leadership development, especially lay-leader development.
- Why are there so few lay-leader development resources?
- What might account for a perceived lack of leadership in spite of so many available leadership resources?

2. **Many leadership resources are from a business/secular context.**

Secular interests are spending money on publishing and providing cutting edge, readable, quality resources with breadth and depth.
- How compatible are secular resources in a congregational context?
- What questions and issues do congregations need to address before using a secular resource?

3. **There seems to be a trend toward a holistic approach to leadership and leadership development.**

Some books appear to be trying to embrace three dimensions of leadership: personhood, knowledge and skills, and actions. Religious publishers typically add a fourth element; namely, leadership models from the Bible.
- Is there a trend toward a holistic view of leadership and leadership development?
- If so, is there a value of that trend for congregations?

4. **Very few resources discuss gender, ethnic and cultural differences in leadership.**

Questions such as how gender, ethnicity and culture affect leadership style are not addressed in many of the leadership resources examined in this project.
- Do these dynamics impact leadership styles?
- How might questions and issues about gender, ethnicity, and cultural differences in leadership be addressed for the benefit of congregations?
RESOURCES YOU CAN USE

Books


Adair believes leaders embody a particular combination of sound character, have adequate skills and knowledge, and engage in appropriate activities. Leadership, then, is who a leader is, what a leader knows, and what a leader does. Adair’s holistic approach further identifies three levels of relational leadership: “team, operational, and strategic.” Adair then suggests seven principles that will grow leaders: training, selection, mentoring, opportunity, education, strategy, and being a role model. Adair’s case studies support his philosophy and theory, making his overall work accessible and applicable for different types of situations and environments. This slim volume is written from a business perspective and is an excellent primer on leadership. It is an engaging way to start a conversation with others and oneself about the topic of leadership.


Harvard Business School Professor Badaracco proposes that the people who make the most difference in the world are those who lead quietly and wisely. These people are not the heroes our culture clamors for, says Badaracco, but they are leaders whose goal is to achieve the most positive outcome for all concerned. Business, military, and civil service case studies are dissected to reveal eight strategies that leaders use to resolve difficult, challenging, and complicated situations that are without a clear, discernible solution. Each case study provides readers with material for considering their own competing values, strategies, and discernments for making the best possible decisions when in murky waters.


Filled with activities, reflective questions, and exercises, Bennis and Goldsmith offer readers a process to develop six different “competencies” that lead to effective and ethical leadership. The six competencies are as follows: know yourself, know your context, have a vision, communicate, trust and integrity, and action. This workbook can be used with Bennis’ On Becoming a Leader; however, it is not essential to have read the book to understand the workbook material or to complete the worksheets. Learning to Lead has a lengthy annotated bibliography, which is another asset for both individuals and groups who use the workbook. This secular workbook is appropriate for pastors and lay-leaders and anyone interested is becoming a more effective leader.
Bennis, Warren. *On Becoming a Leader.* Revised and updated. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2009. Bennis’ easy narration and ability to offer complex ideas in an accessible style is one of the great strengths of this secular classic on leadership. Using examples from business, politics, entertainment, and other contexts, Bennis reviews various aspects and elements of sound and intentional leadership. These aspects and elements include seeing the “big picture,” being clear about one’s identity, exploring values, leading and responding to difficult situations, and working collaboratively. Bennis’ realistic and hopeful perspective on leadership permeates the book as he contends that leadership can be learned and that leaders continue to develop and grow in character and competence. The Epilogue to this edition remains current and provocative as Bennis ventures into what the contemporary world needs from its leaders. *On Becoming a Leader* lends itself to individual and group use. The content is not a process or curriculum so much as it is wisdom, experience, and anecdotes that read a bit like a novel, making the book appropriate for a discussion group.

Brown, Erica. *Inspired Jewish Leadership: Practical Approaches to Building Strong Communities.* Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2008. “What makes your leadership Jewish?” asks Brown, and with that she is off and running in this well-written book about what it means to be a leader in the Jewish context. Full of bits of wisdom, biblical examples, and practical helps, Brown understands leadership as an art that can be learned and enhanced over time with patience, practice, and continuing education and growth. Brown discusses calling and vocation, the relationship between clergy and the congregation, generational differences, board membership and responsibilities, conflict, and ethics. Brown also addresses two infrequent leadership topics: having a succession plan and a realistic look at the challenge many women face in being accepted as leaders. The book includes a list of reading suggestions and two helpful appendices: “Twenty-five Questions a Jewish Leader Should Ask” and twenty-five “Leadership Exercises.” Although Brown’s book is written for Jewish congregations and non-profit communities, individuals and groups from other faith traditions will find much to like and use in this book.

While the book’s emphasis is on developing leadership skills, Cartmill and Gentile also use biblical examples to demonstrate and discuss spiritual leadership. Both leadership groups and individuals can use this book. Questions for reflection are within the body of the text and at the end of each chapter. An added bonus in the book is a detailed agenda for a day-long leader planning retreat. Written from within the United Methodist tradition, the hints and helps are user-friendly and applicable for individuals and groups in other religious traditions.

Fujishim, Randy. *Creating Effective Groups: The Art of Small Group Communication.* 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. In the context of how small groups can most effectively coalesce and work together toward a goal, Fujishim explores listening, conflict, problem-solving, self-identity, and forgiveness. This secular book on effective communication further addresses the impact of gender on communication, makes suggestions for facilitating discussions and making decisions, and speaks to following and leading in a group setting. Fujishim closes each chapter with individual and group exercises that seek to lead individuals and groups to be a positive influence for others, whether that be at home, school, work, or in congregational life.

Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness.* 25th Anniversary ed. Larry Spears, ed. New York, NY: Paulist, 2002. This 25th edition of Greenleaf’s classic on defining and applying servant leadership offers his philosophy, theories, and ideas on the essential elements of servant leadership. Using different contexts, stories, and environments, Greenleaf explores what it means to be a servant leader, how a servant leader operates and understands oneself, and the various aspects of servant leadership. Greenleaf has a chapter on what servant leadership looks like in the church as well as what it looks like in an educational setting. Ultimately, Greenleaf proposes that the essence of servant leadership is moral authority. This dense book can be read as written or used as a reference book for particular topics or contexts.

Each chapter has a minimum of one “on the balcony” and “on the practice field” section, giving readers an opportunity to apply what they have learned to their own contexts. The essence of adaptive leadership is included, making it unnecessary for readers to have read Heitz’s earlier work. The book is somewhat dense and relatively long and some individuals and congregations may shy away from it because of that; however, the authors suggest that readers may use specific parts of the book to address particular questions and issues. The detailed index is especially helpful for that purpose.


With an orientation toward servant leadership, Heisberger writes a basic leadership development primer on issues that leaders face. Topics covered include working with volunteers, dealing with conflict and change, planning meetings, self-care for leaders, building and affirming community and small groups, strategies for communication, and constructing mission statements. Heisberger has written for a Roman Catholic audience; however, other traditions can adapt this book with minimal work. A strength of this book is the inclusion of additional resources at the end of each chapter. The book lends itself to be used by groups of leaders as well as individuals.


Johns provides a general overview of leadership from the Lutheran (ELCA) perspective. The intended audience is the elected leadership who need basic information about the role and responsibilities of leadership in the church. Topics covered include spiritual gifts, congregational structure, decision-making, working with volunteers, the role of the pastor, facilitating meetings, addressing conflict, and effective communication. Because much of the information is foundational, other traditions can apply this book to their own contexts; however, many of the additional resources at the end of the chapters are particular to the ELCA, so other traditions may want to locate their own additional resources for reading further on specific topics. The book will be especially helpful for groups, though individuals will also find it informative.


This curriculum is written for congregations wanting to develop a student leadership team. However, because the content of *Leadership 365* is so rich, many sections could be used without the intention of forming a student leadership team. *Leadership 365* begins with the adult leaders, helping them reflect on their motives and purpose for wanting to develop a student leadership team. It then offers the adults a process and plan to develop the team, including the
application process, a sample Student Leader Covenant, and ideas for communicating and integrating the team into the larger life of the congregation. The curriculum then turns its focus to the development of student leaders. The student curriculum is 16 sessions that reflect the characteristics, skills, and actions of leaders. The content of each session includes Bible studies, worksheets, and other reflective activities. An accompanying CD holds the student guide that can be downloaded and printed free-of-charge. This is an easy-to-follow process and guide for a variety of Christian traditions.

Michell, Neal O. *Beyond Business as Usual: Vestry Leadership Development.* New York, NY: Church Publishing, 2007. This basic book on leadership development is written from within the Episcopal tradition. As such, it addresses issues related to vestry leadership, how the vestry functions within the church, and the continuing education of the leadership. In that context, Michell discusses the meaning of leadership, the factors leaders need to consider, and comprehensive and detailed plans to facilitate leadership development. The specific plan includes eight different Bible studies, personal and relationship exercises that lead to increased self-identity, seven reflective readings, and eleven presentations on subjects related to leadership, including a discussion of rights and responsibilities and the impact and dynamics that correspond to church size. The book is designed for pastors and lay-leaders. Traditions that are not Episcopalian will find Michell’s work to be user-friendly, though it will require some adaptation by other traditions, specifically on the topics of structure and polity.

Morse, MaryKate. *Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space, and Influence.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008. In this book, Quaker pastor MaryKate Morse addresses an oft overlooked area of leadership; namely, the issue of power. Morse’s begins with the idea that “Power is constituted between persons in a group through myriads of little body cues and instinctual decisions.” Her goal is to unpack what having power means, how power is used, and how power influences others. Morse uses stories, scripture, and questions for reflection to lead readers in a thorough and thoroughly engaging discussion about power and how one can claim one’s power without discarding or ignoring others. In this context Morse discusses group dynamics, boundaries, and the influence that differences such as personality, age, ethnicity, and gender have when using one’s power or allowing another to do so. Both individuals and groups can use this book, and it would be especially
helpful for those in positions of leadership.

Osborne, Larry. *Sticky Teams*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Addressed to pastors, staff, and lay-leaders, Osborne’s emphasis is on creating unity amongst the leadership, whether paid or volunteer, so that the congregation will also be unified in its mission and ministry. Osborne uses grace, humor, and candor to address the relational dynamics and role of pastor, staff, and laity; embedded ideas and traditions that obstruct unity; the power of growth; dealing with conflict; finances; telling the truth, especially when it is hard; and more. Osborne’s easy and accessible narrative style and his practical wisdom make this book user-friendly for all audiences. Each chapter has a set of discussion questions at the end of the book, which can be supplemented and/or adapted to suit one’s context.


Successful leaders know that if conflict is embraced rather than avoided it can lead to new opportunities. To that end, the authors offer a three-step model for responding to conflict: “cool down,” “slow down,” and “engage constructively.” They further offer ten main ideas that are the “key elements of conflict competence.” Runde and Flanagan use various methods to help readers develop their conflict competence, including diagrams, suggestions, discussion questions, values exploration, and communication skills for understanding self and others. This comprehensive book is from the Center for Creative Leadership, a “global provider of executive education.” This text also has internet resources that can be accessed by readers and is for use by individuals, groups, and organizations.

Tittle, Gail, Matt Tittle, and Gail Forsyth-Vail. *Harvesting the Power: Developing Lay Leadership*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, 1996-2006. The twelve workshops in this Unitarian Universalist (UU) curriculum are rich in activities, examples, worksheets, ideas for journaling, and reflective questions. Areas covered include self-identity, the relational dynamic between leaders and followers, power and authority, conflict, and systems theory. Each workshop session has been planned with care and inten-
tionality, respects differing styles of learning, and is led by two or more facilitators. The curriculum has not been published, but the nearly 300-page document can be downloaded for free from the UU website (http://www.uua.org/) under Religious Education curriculum within the series Tapestry of Faith. The curriculum is thorough, but other traditions will likely want to make adaptations that reflect their perspective and contexts, specifically the history portions, the hymns suggested, and specific doctrinal beliefs.

Vanek, Denise. *Leadership 101: An Interactive Leadership Development Guide for Students.* El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2005. Vanek begins with Psalm 78:72, selecting two leadership concepts around which to develop her leadership development process for students: integrity and skill. From there, she defines and explores leadership by inviting students into an interactive discussion and learning process that includes reflective questions, exercises, Bible studies, and opportunities for journaling. Five chapters discuss aspects of integrity, and five chapters discuss leadership skills. Topics include prayer, service, communication, conflict, and mentoring. Vanek also offers what she calls a “Take It Deeper” section with each chapter. These “deeper” activities are suggestions for students who want to go beyond the pages of her book. This attractive, engaging, and readable book is written to develop student leaders; however, adult leaders and leadership teams may want to consider defining themselves as students, too, as many would also find this work helpful and engaging.

**Organizations and Websites**

**Alban Institute**
131 Elden Street, Suite 201
Herndon, VA 20170
800.486.1318 or 703.964.2700
http://www.alban.org/
The Alban Institute is a non-profit congregational help center. Memberships are available for a fee, though membership is not required to access some of Alban’s resources. The Institute offers training and educational events, consultants, Webinars, and a free e-newsletter, blog, and articles of interest to congregations.

**The Center for Courage & Renewal**
1402 Third Ave, Suite 709
Seattle, WA 98101
206.466.2055
info@CourageRenewal.org
http://www.couragerenewal.org/
This Parker Palmer affiliated and religiously based organization offers retreats and programs for holistic living and leadership. This website has blogs, podcasts, and a free e-newsletter and videos.
Centers of Church-based Training
1700 Gateway
Richardson, TX 75080
888.422.2896 or 972.997.4404
http://www.ccbt.org/
This Evangelical Christian resource offers consultants, coaches, and seminars. A quarterly e-newsletter and two-five minute videos are available on-line at no charge.

Christianity Today
465 Gundersen Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188
http://www.christianitytoday.com/
This comprehensive Christian organization offers free e-newsletters, blogs, and articles. Numerous other resources are available for a fee. The following are associated groups and websites with their own internet addresses:
Building Church Leaders
http://www.buildingchurchleaders.com
Christianity Today Library
http://www.ctlibrary.com
Leadership Journal
http://www.christianitytoday.com/le

Small-Groups
http://www.smallgroups.com
Your Church
http://www.yourchurch.net

The Courageous Leadership Consortium
A Program of the Susan B. Anthony House
17 Madison Street
Rochester, NY 14608
585.235.6124
info@couragousleadership.org
http://www.couragousleadership.org/
Specific to women in leadership, this secular group offers programs, resources, and workshops aimed at developing female leadership in a variety of contexts.

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center, Inc.
Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership
770 Pawtucket Drive
Westfield, IN 46074
317.669.8050
http://www.greenleaf.org/
Focused on the principles of Servant Leadership, this religiously based group has a speaker’s bureau, hosts training events, and has resources for purchase. Some items are available for members only.

John Maxwell on Leadership
The John Maxwell Company
2170 Satellite Blvd, Suite 195
Duluth, GA 30097
800.333.6506
info@johnmaxwell.com
http://johnmaxwellonleadership.com/
Maxwell’s secular leadership site includes a blog with excerpts from his books and links to books, press releases, and upcoming events.
Leadership Network
2626 Cole Avenue, Suite 900
Dallas, TX 75204
client.care@leadnet.org
http://www.leadnet.org/
Consultants are available through this Christian organization, but they also offer blogs on various topics related to religious life. They offer free resources, books, videos, podcasts, conferences, and a free twice monthly e-newsletter.

United Way of Central Indiana
3901 N. Meridian Street
P.O. Box 88409
Indianapolis, IN 46208
community@uwci.org
http://www.uwci.org/default.asp?p=1
Leadership United Phone: 317.921.1274
Nonprofit Training Center: 317.921.1212
United Way of Central Indiana serves six counties – Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Marion and Morgan. Two programs offered relate to leadership development. Leadership United is a non-profit board training program that lasts nine months and has a fee. The Nonprofit Training Center recommends resources and provides workshops, consultants, and referrals.

Survival School: Church Leadership Training
10045 N. 34th Drive
Phoenix, AZ 85051
602.321.3268
Pat Bennier, Executive Director
http://www.surviveministry.org/Survival_School/Home.html
This Christian organization offers on-site training for church staff and lay leaders in a series of four workshops over the span of five days. Topics addressed include developing volunteers, team-building, being a principled leader, power and influence, conflict, and personal growth.
Leadership Development was researched and written by Janet Hoover and Nancy DeMott.