EVENT PRE-WORK

WELCOME TO LAUNCHPAD! YOUR JOURNEY UNFOLDS!

In each of the categories below, please write a paragraph or two, so that when we gather, you can get the most from this training. This may take three or more hours. Please set aside time in the next few days. This pre-work reflection is for you! You are not turning it in for someone else to evaluate. You will be asked to share some of your reflections in small group.

1. YOUR CALL

Somehow, God called you to plant a new faith community. This call may be separate from another call to ministry you have experienced, or it may be one and the same. Did your call to plant come first through a human being, even a bishop, who asked you to consider such a challenge? Did the call come through prayer, through earlier ministry experiences, or your experience of a new church? Be as specific as you can about what you feel called to do, in a paragraph.

2. PEOPLE-AFFINITY

You as a leader are naturally attracted to (and attract) certain kinds of folks. At one level, these folks may share similar interests or life experiences (Example, a mother with two preschool kids will probably reach young moms with preschoolers more easily than college-age singles or 50-something empty-nest families). You will team with folks who will help you expand the social-bandwidth of your new faith community, but it is good for you as planter to acknowledge the kinds of folks with whom you most easily relate, and/or which energize you. Write a paragraph or two describing your personal affinity group(s).

Where do you find these people in your mission field, if at all?

What kinds of people do you wish to reach who are outside your most natural affinity group? What kinds of people will you need on your launch team to help you understand and connect with such people?

3. DEMOGRAPHICS

Epicenter Group and Path 1 want to help you get a handle on your mission field. We need for you to tell us the rough location where you are working. We can then run a demographic study/report (a) by zip code or (b) based on a nearby major intersection, from which we will draw a 2 or 3-mile radius circle all around, (c) based on the address of the church or building where your ministry is based or (d) from your home address (assuming you live in your mission field).

Please contact epicentergroup.dc@gmail.com today to provide us with this location information. We only need one of the above pieces of location information – not all. Include your name and the name of your planting project if it has a name. If you are focused on a specific ethnic or other kind of people group, tell us, and we will customize your report accordingly, to help you locate your people group(s). Please email this today – allowing office time to run the reports by the start date of the event.

When you receive the demographic report, please read it and add a paragraph about what it tells you.

We will take time at Launchpad to unpack the demographic reports further. Please bring your report either on your computer or printed out for you and your team.

Toward the end of the report, there is a section on Mosaic Groups. These are segments of your population who share similar habits and values, similar lifestyle issues. Your church will probably reach two or three of these at most. We will provide you with an explanatory document to help you understand the Mosaic Groups in your area. You will hear more about Mosaic Groups at Launchpad.

4. VISION

In a paragraph or two, describe what you imagine this faith community (that you are planting) might look like five years from now. What kinds of practices do you see in the lives of members, groups, ministry teams, etc.? What kinds of people have found spiritual home here? What kinds of key ministries help to reach and grow people and to bless the surrounding community? What does worship look like?

5. KEY SCRIPTURE

What Bible passage or story is foundational for you or has really influenced your decision to do this? Why?

6. REALLY DISTINCTIVE

Sometimes, a new faith community really colors outside our lines of what we used to think church was. While there is probably some church somewhere that approximates what you are planting, your church may be quite distinctive or unusual for its local community. Answer in one to two paragraphs.

What sets your church apart from the neighboring churches?

What do you offer that they do not?

How will your new faith community be distinctive?

How will your faith community be very public in its presence?

7. IF YOU HAD 30 SECONDS

Sometimes, a new faith community really colors outside our lines of what we used to think church was. While there is probably some church somewhere that approximates what you are planting, your church may be quite distinctive or unusual for its local community. What sets your church apart from the neighboring churches? What do you offer that they do not? How will your new faith community be distinctive? Answer in one to two paragraphs. Answer each of the following questions in a couple sentences.

* What do you do for a living?
* What is your church going to be like?
* Will there be public worship services within the first two years? When and where? How many people will you seek to gather in worship in order to sustain critical mass for energy and momentum?
* If you are choosing an alternative pathway to developing this church (other than a worship-centered approach), what is this pathway, and why does it make sense in this mission field?
* Why are you doing this when we already have a bunch of churches?

8. HIGH IMPACT CHURCH

Have you been a part of a high-impact local church that grew you spiritually or inspired you toward this new work in which you now engage? Where is that church? How have they inspired you? How is your new church going to be like them in certain ways? How will your church be different? Have you asked that pastor and church to pray for you in this new work? Write down some key lessons learned and some action points in relation to your high-impact church.

9. STRATEGIES

Please review the Path 1 “Church Development Strategies” document, which is part of this pre-work packet. Consider which strategies most accurately describe the church you will plant. During the discussion of Strategies at Launchpad, please be ready to share information or ask questions about your congregation’s strategies).

10. THE POINT OF IT ALL

Planting a faith community will require sacrifice and probably cause you to lose a little sleep along the way. Planters often share harrowing tales of what some would call “Spiritual Warfare.” People who do not believe in a personal devil when they start planting sometimes change their mind on that subject after a few months. It is very important that through it all we have a strong focus on the point of all the trouble and hard work. Please write one to two paragraphs answering the following questions: What difference is this new church going to make? Why is this worth it? Why are you willing to pay a significant personal price to lead such a thing? What’s the point? Can you say this in words that will hook your focus population?

11. YOUR BIG QUESTIONS

Think ahead. If you come to Launchpad with a well-considered agenda in terms of what you want to learn or figure out, you will benefit more. What do you need to learn about at Launchpad? What are your big questions? Prior to the event, you may wish to create half a dozen blank pages, around certain themes or questions, to help make Launchpad really work for you. As ideas come up that relate to your key issues, you can then make notes and create your customized plan.

PRAYER:

Please think of Launchpad as a three-day intensive conversation with God and a host of others on a journey similar to yours. Far above all the specific information, the strategies and best practices, please listen for God in it all. Ultimately, God got you into this, and God will show you a way forward for your new faith community. We invite you to write a prayer below that reflects your focus and the Spirit’s stirring within your soul, as you head into the Launchpad weekend.