



# GATEWAY SEMINARY

## All Courses

### *Theological Field Education at Gateway*

## Covenant

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# Covenant of Learning and Learning Goals

## Philosophy of the Covenant of Learning

We use a covenant of learning in Theological Field Education (TFE). The purpose of the covenant is to give the student specific and directed learning experiences that integrate self-knowledge, ministry opportunities, personal reflection, accountability, and feedback from others. Below is an outline of our philosophy in the use of covenants.

### *Involvement in Ministry Practice*

Students should be engaged in ministry if they are serious about the commitment that brings them to seminary. While many students have staff responsibilities at a church, parachurch ministry, or community agency, others do not. The covenant engages everyone in ministry at the level of their need.

### *Active Contribution*

It is not enough for students to be only an observer. They must feel the weight of engagement and responsibility that the covenant will provide.

### *On-The-Job Supervision*

Supervised learning can only be properly achieved where there is field engagement in ministry. Field Mentors need to see how their student interns function. Activities that are ministry related will provide Field Mentors opportunity to see their interns function within the pressure of responsibility.

### *Clear Learning Goals and Outcomes*

Students gain insight, knowledge, perspective, and confidence when they begin ministry with definite goals and agendas. By setting goals and working to achieve them, students gain a sense of accomplishment. Ministry goals that they fail to achieve will be clear for them to see and deal with, rather than being able to escape by means of ambiguous rationalization.

### *Accountability*

Accountability is necessary for the guidance of the student and the process of supervision. Through the terms of a covenant, a means of accountability is developed. Feedback from multiple sources helps students deal concretely with their actions and the accompanying results.

### *Theology Happens*

Theology is not just propositions in a book. *People live out their theology.* All we do is based on some theology, whether or not we are conscious of it at the time. Covenants help define areas in which theology happens, so that reflection upon that theology becomes more productive.

### *The Dignity of Contribution*

Every student deserves the dignity of contributing. While churches, ministries, or agencies provide a laboratory setting for students; they also provide an opportunity for students to make a contribution to the ministry of their field setting.

# Making Your Covenant

The covenant will be made up of four parts:

1. The **Learning-Serving Agreement**.
2. At least **2 Ministry Skill Learning Goals**.
3. At least **1 Personhood Growth Goal**.
4. At least **1 Spiritual Growth Goal**.
5. At least **1 Evangelism Growth Goal**.

Developing your covenant will be more productive if you, your Field Mentor, and your Spiritual Formation Mentor faithfully follow the outline below in arriving at a mutual agreement. (For more information, see chapter 4 in *Experiencing Ministry Supervision*, Pyle and Seals, editors.)

## *Covenant Part 1 – Learning-Serving Agreement*

### Basic Information

1. Student information: name, student ID#, degree program, etc.
2. Ministry setting information: name, contact information, members, attendance, etc.
3. Field Mentor information: name, contact information, his/her credentials, etc.
4. Spiritual Formation Mentor information: name, contact information, his/her credentials, etc.
5. Ministry Reflection Group information: names (at least 4) and why this group was selected.
6. Title and brief description of the position the student will fill.
7. Description of student intern's responsibilities.

### Conditions

1. Hours per week (breakdown by responsibilities as much as possible). **The minimum hours of ministry for each TFE course are 10 hours per week for two-hours credit. At least 6 of these hours should be face-to-face in ministry with people.** The total may include the one-hour weekly meeting with your Field Mentor and necessary preparation time.
2. TFE is available for variable credit: three-hours credit for at least 20 hours of ministry per week and four-hours credit for at least 30 hours of ministry per week. These additional credit requests must be acknowledged on the TFE application prior to the beginning of class.
3. The dates of the covenant.

### Other Expectations

1. When will student meet in weekly session with the Field Mentor?
2. What Field Setting resources are available to the student?
3. What core competencies does the student hope to learn during the coming year?
4. Ministry opportunities for observation: funerals, weddings, baptism preparation, etc.
5. Is the student expected to become a member of the church?
6. Other specific expectations from the ministry setting.

## ***Covenant Part 2 –Learning/Growth Goals***

Your learning goals for your TFE Ministry Practicum should relate to three elements:

- 1. The results of your self-assessment** (Initial Core Competencies for Ministry).
  - Think about where you rated yourself low?
  - What are some specific things in those areas that you can do to improve?"
- 2. Your Ministry Field Setting and Ministry Field Mentor.**
  - What are the unique aspects of this ministry field from which you can learn?
  - What can you learn from your Field Mentor during your practicum?
- 3. Your personal learning desires.**
  - What are some things that you want to learn that can only be learned through an *on-the-job* ministry experience?

**Your learning/growth goals should fall into four categories: ministry skills development, personhood issues, spiritual formation, and evangelism. You will be expected to formulate goals in each of these areas.**

As you reflect on these four elements you will need to formulate SMART goals for your Covenant of Learning.

Specific – Is this goal narrowly defined? (Behavioral, attitudinal, emotional, spiritual)

Measurable – How will I know if I reach the goal or not? (How is it measured?)

Attainable – Is this goal realistic and reasonable? Can I really do it?

Relevant – Does the goal relate to my ministry setting? What needs to change in me?

Time-framed – What is the target date for reaching this goal? How long will it take?

**Use the following format to write your goals:**

- 1. Need**
  - What is the ministry need that you're trying to address through this ministry? Why are these goals necessary? What needs to be accomplished?
- 2. Goal statement**
  - For each goal write a one or two-sentence "SMART" goal statement that expresses clearly what you really want to accomplish.
- 3. Strategy (action plans) for reaching the goal**
  - List in bullet point format the steps that you are going to take to reach each goal.
- 4. Evaluation criteria for the goal**
  - List the specific ways by which you will determine your success in reaching this goal.
  - How will you know if you have accomplished your task?
  - Give specific dates (second week of November, etc.) for each goal.

## ***Covenant Part 3 – Ministry Goals***

Your covenant will include at least two ministry goals that address your ministry assignment. This goal will include specific actions designed to understand who you currently are as a minister and move you toward improving you as a person. It will be developed primarily in conjunction with your Field Mentor and included as a part of your Covenant of Learning. Below are some guidelines for developing your ministry goals.

***Take time to do some ministry self-assessment and reflection:***

- Where are you in understanding your ministry identity?
- Are there areas of need in this ministry in which you want to focus?
- What needs to change within you as you grow as a minister?
- Will my time in this ministry make it a better situation when I leave?

Review your self-assessment results. Are there areas that you need to grow in that relate to your ministry formation? Meet with your Field Mentor to get their input concerning your ministry goals.

Investigate, then negotiate, on how best to address these ministry needs. How can you grow in the areas where you need to grow? Review the ministries within your core competencies and select areas of needed growth in which to focus.

Develop your Ministry Goals that you will include as part of your Covenant of Learning, using the following format.

### **1. Need**

- List at least one need from this ministry that you and your Field Mentor have identified.

### **2. Goal Statement**

- For each, write a one or two-sentence “SMART” goal statement that explains what you really want to accomplish.

### **3. Strategy (action plans) for reaching each goal**

- List in bullet point format the steps that you are going to take to reach each goal.

### **4. Evaluation criteria for the goals**

- List the specific ways by which you will determine your success in reaching each goal.
- How will you know if you have accomplished your task?
- Give specific dates (for example, second week of November, etc.) for each goal.

## ***Covenant Part 4 – Personhood Goals***

Your covenant will include one personhood goal that address your personal needs and growth. This goal will include specific actions designed to understand who you currently are and move you toward improving you as a person. It will be developed in conjunction with your Field Mentor and your Spiritual Formation Mentor and included as a part of your Covenant of Learning. Below are some guidelines for developing your personhood goal.

***Take time to do some personhood self-assessment and reflection:***

- Where are you in understanding who you are as a person?
- Are there areas that you have neglected?
- Are there areas that you know you need to improve?
- Ask someone close to you to share about some “blind” areas.

Review your self-assessment results. Are there areas that you need to grow in that relate to your personal formation? Meet with your Field Mentor and Spiritual Formation Mentor and get their input concerning your personhood goal.

Investigate, then negotiate, on how best to address this personhood need. How can you grow in the areas where you need to grow? Will personality assessments such as Myers-Briggs help? Will reading help? Will a feedback group help? Will an accountability partner/group help?

Develop your Personhood Goal that you will include as part of your Covenant of Learning, using the following format.

### **1. Need**

- List at least one need for growth that you, your Field Mentor, and your Spiritual Formation Mentor have identified.

### **2. Goal Statement**

- Write a one or two-sentence “SMART” goal statement that explains what you really want to accomplish.

### **3. Strategy (action plans) for reaching the goal**

- List in bullet point format the steps that you are going to take to reach this goal.

### **4. Evaluation criteria for the goal**

- List the specific ways by which you will determine your success in reaching this goal.
- How will you know if you have accomplished your task?
- Give specific dates (for example, second week of November, etc.) for the goal.

## ***Covenant Part 5 – Spiritual Formation Goals***

Your covenant will include one spiritual formation goal that will address your spiritual needs and growth. This goal will include specific actions designed to move you to the next level in your walk with Christ. It will be developed in conjunction with your Spiritual Formation Mentor and included as a part of your Covenant of Learning. Below are some guidelines for developing your spiritual formation goal.

***Take time to do some spiritual self-assessment and reflection:***

- Where are you in your spiritual development?
- Are there areas that you have neglected?
- Is there a discipline you need to cultivate or would like to try out?

Review your core competencies results. Are there areas that you need to grow in that relate to your spiritual formation? Meet with your Spiritual Formation Mentor and get his/her input concerning your spiritual formation goals and assess your spiritual needs.

Investigate, then negotiate, on how best to address this spiritual need. Will you use a prepared study such as *Purpose Driven Life*, a program such as *Master Life*, or a guide such as *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster? Will you use a plan that you create yourself? There are many resources to draw from.

Develop your Spiritual Growth Goal that you will include as part of your Covenant of Learning, using the following format.

### 1. Need

- List at least one need for growth that you and your Spiritual Formation Mentor have identified.

### 2. Goal Statement

- Write a one or two-sentence “SMART” goal statement that explains what you really want to accomplish.

### 3. Strategy (action plans) for reaching the goal

- List in bullet point format the steps that you are going to take to reach this goal.

### 4. Evaluation criteria for the goal

- List the specific ways by which you will determine your success in reaching this goal.
- How will you know if you have accomplished your task?
- Give specific dates (for example, second week of November, etc.) for the goal.

## ***Covenant Part 6 – Evangelism Goals***

Your covenant will include one evangelism goal that will address your evangelistic needs and growth. This goal will include specific actions designed to move you to the next level in reaching others with the gospel. It will be developed in conjunction with all of your mentors and included as a part of your Covenant of Learning. Below are some guidelines for developing your evangelism goal.

### ***Take time to do some evangelism self-assessment and reflection:***

- Where are you in sharing your faith with others?
- How do you do at initiating and developing personal relationships?
- Can you share your testimony in an understandable and meaningful manner in three minutes?

Review your core competencies results. Are there areas that you need to grow in that relate to your evangelism efforts? Meet with your mentors and get their input concerning your evangelism goal and assess your needs.

Investigate, then negotiate, on how best to address this evangelism need. Will you use a plan that you create yourself? There are many resources to draw from.

Develop your Evangelism Goal that you will include as part of your Covenant of Learning, using the following format.

### 1. Need

- List at least one need for growth that you and your mentors have identified.

### 2. Goal Statement

- Write a one or two-sentence “SMART” goal statement that explains what you really want to accomplish.

### 3. Strategy (action plans) for reaching the goal

- List in bullet point format the steps that you are going to take to reach this goal.

### 4. Evaluation criteria for the goal

- List the specific ways by which you will determine your success in reaching this goal.
- How will you know if you have accomplished your task?
- Give specific dates (for example, second week of November, etc.) for the goal.

## Covenant Goal-Setting Process

1. Students evaluate their competency for ministry.
  - Students complete an **Initial Core Competencies for Ministries Assessment** in an interview format with their Field Mentor with these categories:
    - ✓ Lead
    - ✓ Care
    - ✓ Proclaim
    - ✓ Relate
    - ✓ Personal

*(Note: Core Competencies for Church Planters & Counselors use different categories.)*
2. Students recognize areas of competency in which they need significant growth.
3. Students work with Field Mentors and Spiritual Formation Mentors to develop learning needs based upon areas where significant growth is needed and their specific desires.
4. **Students work with Field Mentors and Spiritual Formation Mentors to develop the following minimum goals based upon growth needs:**
  - 2 Ministry Skill Learning Goals
  - 1 Personhood Growth Goal
  - 1 Spiritual Growth Goal
  - 1 Evangelism Growth Goal
5. Students develop action plans to reach goals.
6. Students develop evaluation criteria for measuring success in reaching goals.
7. Students submit a copy of the final covenant to their Field Mentor, Spiritual Mentor, MRG, and Professor through the TFE Report System.



# Sample Covenant

## Sample Covenant Instructions

The following presents a sample covenant for your review, stimulation, and use as a guide. This sample covenant should be considered merely as a guide and encouragement. Please use the format within this sample when you create your covenant.

Be sure to include a Turabian Cover Sheet for your covenant.

Your covenant requires at least five goals (see sample and Covenant Goal-Setting Process above). You may include additional goals, if you desire.

## **Learning-Serving Agreement [Sample Covenant]**

**Student:** Lazarus A. Live  
Second Year

**Degree Program:** M.Div.  
**Vocational Goal:** Pastoral Ministry

**Dates of the Covenant:** August 29, 2016, to May 19, 2017

**Field Mentor:** Reverend Max Green  
Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist in Tidewater, CA for the last 6 years.  
14 years total pastoral experience  
Graduate of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (May 1988)

**Ministry Setting:** Emmanuel Baptist Church Telephone: 415-555-1771  
1763 Main Street  
Tidewater, CA 99999

Emmanuel Baptist Church in Tidewater is 26 years old with an average attendance in worship of 241 and a resident membership of 356. They have 37 high school students and 14 college students that I will be ministering to. The church is 23 miles from the seminary.

**Ministry Position:** Youth Minister

I will be responsible for leading the weekly youth worship, coordinating the budget for all of the youth activities, planning and directing special events such as lock-ins, retreats, etc.; overseeing the Bible Teaching program, working with both teens and parents in planning, and beginning a discipleship program. *See the attached job description as voted by the church.*

### **Weekly Time Expectations:**

- Worship leadership 1 hour
  - Planning and Preparation 2 hours
  - Youth Council and Committees 2 hours
  - Youth Activities 2 hours
  - Parent and Teen Visitation 2 hours
  - Meeting with Field Mentor 1 hour
- Total Estimated Ministry Hours* 10 hours

### **Other Expectations:**

- Student will become a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church and participate in its Sunday worship services.

- Student will work as a staff member during reading weeks and semester breaks.
- Student will be subject to the policies of the Church Staff Handbook for Emmanuel BC.
- Student will present a quarterly report to the church in business session.
- Student will observe at least two deacon meetings, to be arranged with the Chairman.
- Student will preach for the full congregation once a quarter, as arranged with the pastor.

### **Ministry Goal #1:**

#### **Need:**

To provide creativity and variety in the weekly youth worship time.

#### **Goal:**

I will develop the skills of planning a youth-focused worship by creating a worship schedule for the months of February, March, and April 2017 that incorporate creativity and variety.

#### **Actions:**

1. I will assess the members of the Youth Worship Team in regard to talent and passion by October 1, 2016.
2. I will assess the youth group to discover who might be interested in forms of worship other than music (art, poetry, dancing, reading, etc.) by December 1, 2016.
3. I will read *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations* by January 1, 2017.
4. By January 1, 2017, I will enlist a Youth Worship Planning Team to help plan the worship services.
5. In conjunction with the Youth Worship Planning Team, I will plan the worship services for February, March, and April. This will be completed by February 15, 2017.
6. I will share the worship plans with my Field Mentor the week of February 15, 2017.

#### **Evaluation:**

1. I will evaluate the process and the results with my Field Mentor the first week of May.
2. I will evaluate the process and the worship times with the Youth Worship Planning Team during the second week of May.
3. What percentage of my planned strategies did I complete? If I complete less than 80%, I will evaluate what kept me from doing what I planned to do. For example: Were there unforeseen circumstances that derailed my plans? Were my plans too aggressive? Did I lose motivation? Were there other strategies that I used or substituted for one I planned to do?
4. How did my strategies help me achieve my goal, or is there still work to be done?
5. I will debrief with my MRG to see if they felt the services were more creative and had more variety.
6. I will discuss the reflections from my MRG with my Field Mentor and ask for his feedback.

### **Ministry Goal #2:**

#### **Need:**

To develop necessary relationships and channels of communication with youth parents.

**Goal:**

I will develop a youth-focused parent network through a series of monthly meetings for the purpose of communicating to the parents our youth ministry philosophy and coming events. We will also create a ministry partnership between the church and our youth families through these meetings. Our first meeting will begin in September.

**Actions:**

1. I will organize our first youth parent meeting for September 15, 2016.
2. I will prepare a single page handout outlining our youth ministry philosophy.
3. I will prepare an ice breaker for parents to help them understand the importance of the relational side of our ministry.
4. I will plan a short Bible study to give them a taste of what we do with their teenagers.
5. I will see input on the needs teenage parents face in today's culture.
6. We will spend time praying for our teenagers during our time together.
7. I will ask one youth family to provide refreshments for that first meeting.
8. I will have youth families sign up to provide refreshments for the upcoming meetings.
9. I will develop an outline for relevant subjects to cover during upcoming monthly meetings.

**Evaluation:**

1. I will evaluate the first meeting with my Field Mentor by the first week of October, 2016.
2. I will provide a copy of the upcoming meeting agendas with my Field Mentor by the first week of October, 2016.
3. I will debrief with my Spiritual Formation Mentor to get feedback on the first meeting.
4. I will debrief with my MRG to get their feedback on the first meeting.
5. I will discuss the reflections from my MRG with my Field Mentor and ask for his feedback.
6. I will evaluate the meetings with my Field Mentor in the week following each monthly meeting.

**Personhood Goal:**

**Need:**

I often find myself interrupting persons during one-on-one conversations and meetings. I also realize that I do not listen as well as I should.

**Goal:**

By May 1, 2017, I will have assessed my communication skills, developed, and began to implement a specific plan to improve them.

**Actions:**

1. I will enlist a communication feedback team made up of persons who interface with me on several levels. I will meet with this team once a month for the purpose of receiving feedback on my communication effectiveness.
2. After each meeting above (#1), I will make a list of my communication shortcomings and use the list to develop a communication improvement plan.
3. I will increase my understanding of quality communication by reading a book on communication effectiveness by December 1, 2016.
4. I will develop and implement an intentional personal communication improvement plan by February 1, 2017.
5. I will share this plan with my Field Mentor and my communication feedback team in the February meetings.

**Evaluation:**

1. At the end of second semester, I will ask my Field Mentor and the communication feedback team to evaluate my progress in improving my communication skills.

### **Spiritual Formation Goal:**

#### **Need:**

My devotional life is getting stale. I usually spend time with God each day, but it is the same every day. In fact, it is boring.

#### **Goal:**

By May 1, 2017, I will have identified and tried four devotional-worship practices that are new to me. I will evaluate each of these and determine which ones I will incorporate into my devotional time with God.

#### **Actions:**

1. I will read *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster by November 1 and *The Life You've Always Wanted* by John Ortberg by March 1.
2. I will journal my daily time with God, paying special attention to the new practices that I try. I will discuss my findings with my Spiritual Formation Mentor.
3. I will conduct personal spiritual retreats that use a variety of devotional methods, the first week of November and the first week of April.
4. I will practice fasting one day a week for the month of January.

#### **Evaluation:**

1. At the end of each semester, I will list the benefits and drawbacks of the various spiritual disciplines that I have used.
2. Each month, I will identify the devotional/spiritual high points and what spiritual discipline I was using at the time.
3. I will share my findings of #1 and #2 above with my Spiritual Formation Mentor.

### **Evangelism Goal:**

#### **Need:**

To develop an understanding and skills needed to share my faith within a multicultural setting.

#### **Goal:**

I will develop an understanding of sharing faith in Christ within my ministry context through study, and apply the principles I learn through intentional and contextual evangelism during the months of April and May 2016.

#### **Actions:**

1. I will become a part of the ESL [English as a Second Language] ministry of my church, at the beginning of February 2017.
2. I will attend a Hispanic worship service once each month during February, March, and April 2017.
3. I will intentionally develop a long-term relationship with someone in the Hispanic community, beginning by March 2017.
4. By March 1, 2017, I will create a list of possible contextual ministry opportunities among Hispanics who live near the church.

5. I will enlist a team to brainstorm, and develop ideas of ministry outreach to the Hispanic community. I will present the proposed ministry outreach plan to the church council in their May 2017 meeting.

**Evaluation:**

1. I will evaluate each of my goals with my Field Mentor the last week of each month.
2. Which of the strategies most impacted my success or failure in reaching my goal? Why were these strategies crucial?
3. What specifically did I learn about sharing my faith cross-culturally?
4. Did I discover some inner-resistance in completing one or more of the strategies? If so, I will journal what I feel may be the source of that resistance and discuss my findings with my Spiritual Mentor.

**Covenant Signatures:**

We have read and agreed to the above TFE ministry practicum covenant that consists of the Learning-Service Agreement, the Ministry, Spiritual, Personal, and Evangelism Goals. We enter into this covenant relationship to carry out our agreements from August 29, 2016 to May 19, 2017. We understand that this Covenant may be renegotiated at the mid-term break of the ministry practicum. Typing the mentor names below indicates that all are in agreement and have received a copy of this Covenant.

<b>Student:</b>	<u><i>Lazarus A. Live</i></u>	<b>Date:</b> <u>09/10/16</u>
<b>Field Mentor:</b>	<u><i>Max Green</i></u>	<b>Date:</b> <u>09/10/16</u>
<b>Spiritual Mentor:</b>	<u><i>Richard Sage</i></u>	<b>Date:</b> <u>09/12/16</u>
<b>Peer Group Leader:</b>	<u><i>George Smith</i></u>	<b>Date:</b> <u>09/15/16</u>