



GATEWAY SEMINARY

P1121-P1122
Leadership in
Ministry Practicum

Covenant Creation

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 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 understood needs and definite goals and plans. 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 contribute to the ministry of their field setting.

Creating 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 8 in *A Guide to Theological Reflection by Wilson and Waggoner*.)

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. Title and brief description of the position the student will fill.
6. 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. Hours above your degree requirement will be counted as elective hours.
3. The dates of the covenant.

Other Expectations

1. When will the 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 four elements:

- 1. The identification of a need within the student to accomplish the ministry task.**
 - In order for a ministry to be accomplished, what needs to change in the intern.
- 2. The results of your self-assessment (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?"
- 3. 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?
- 4. 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 do you need in order to address this ministry? Why is this goal necessary? What needs to be accomplished in you?
- 2. Goal statement**
 - For each goal write a one-sentence “SMART” goal statement that expresses clearly what you really want to accomplish within yourself to accomplish the ministry.
- 3. Strategy (action plans) for reaching the goal**
 - List in bullet point format each step 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. These goals 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 you that must be accomplished to fulfill this ministry?
- 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 competency 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 in you that must be addressed for this ministry to be accomplished.

2. Goal Statement

- For each, write a one-sentence “SMART” goal statement that explains what you really want to accomplish and make sure it is laser focused.

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 of your “blind spots”.

Review your competency 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 further understanding of 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-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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Covenant Part 5 – Spiritual Formation Goals</i></p>
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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 competency 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 *Experiencing God*, 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-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 competency 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-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 Sample

See A Guide to Theological Reflection by Wilson & Waggoner, chapter 8.