



Grace Community School

Tyler, Texas

Jay Ferguson, Headmaster



Project Summary: We Need Leaders!

Grace Community School is a rapidly-growing Christian day school of nearly 1,000 students, grades K-12, in Tyler, Texas. Grace is like many other Christian schools in that it has not previously had an intentional system for identifying and training up young leaders from within its staff. With the school's current growth, training up and preparing young leaders who are equipped to run the various ministries of the school is at a premium. The purpose of this project was to establish a systematic approach to leadership development: Proposing a model, a method, and the content of a program for young leaders within Grace Community School.



Project Summary: Developing Leaders

The project consisted of two parts :

- **Writing the curriculum:** After a literature review, we concluded that there were no materials in a format effective for our needs that communicated what we wanted to teach about leadership. So, we wrote our own. The resulting curriculum is a 12-week study incorporating readings from leadership literature and discussion questions. It consists of two major parts:
 - *Part One—“The Leader”:* What does it mean to have a servant heart, and what are the characteristics necessary to lead? Topics covered include sustaining a servant heart, prayer and the leader, relational skills, effective communication, and developing the disciplines of a leader.
 - *Part Two—“Leading”:* What is the art of leadership? Topics covered included what vision is and where it comes from; developing a course of action; leveraging relationships and tasks to execute on the course of action; and operational reflection.
- **Teaching the Course:** We taught the course to three young leaders on our school staff over a 12-week period. The learners would read outside of class and participate in class discussion.



Project Results: Leadership Development—An Intentional, Ongoing Process

- It is too early to tell what the overall benefit of the leadership development course will be. Initial learner feedback was good. The course forced the learners to be intentional about their own leadership styles, their assumptions of what leadership is and is not, and how they can better serve those within their areas of responsibility.
- The course felt rushed; we will need to meet every other week in the future to give learners a chance to read and process. We will also need to expand the course to discuss other issues specific to Christian school.
- Developing these leaders and others is a continuing process involving teaching, but also coaching and mentoring young leaders daily through their work and their lives.