

Sharpening Your Ministry Axe

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Two legendary lumberjacks from Canada decided to have a tree-cutting contest to settle once and for all which lumberjack was the best. The contest was to take place on a Saturday—starting at five in the morning and was to continue until five in the evening. The lumberjack who felled the most trees in that twelve-hour time span would be declared the winner. The news of the contest spread, and on the big day—the timbers were filled with curious spectators.

BANG! A shot rang out to start the contest, and the two lumberjacks eagerly and methodically hacked away at trees with their axes. However, after about fifty minutes, the first lumberjack noticed that the second lumberjack quit hacking away at the trees. The lone sound of the first lumberjack's axe filled the forest. Why did the other lumberjack quit? What could possibly be the problem? A full ten minutes went by before the first lumberjack heard the sound of the second lumberjack's axe beating on the trees again. The first lumberjack thought to himself, "Great! I felled two trees in that ten-minute period. I've got to be ahead."

Furiously, the lumberjacks continued to swing, sweat, and slice. Strangely—every hour for the next eleven hours—the second lumberjack's axe would fall silent for about ten minutes. Then, once again, the forest would be filled with the sound of two axes conquering trees. Each time this happened, the first lumberjack worked all the harder so he could continue to increase his lead.

At the end of the day, each lumberjack's trees were counted. Amazingly, when the final tally was announced, the second lumberjack out-cut the first lumberjack nearly two to one. The first lumberjack heatedly questioned, "How can that be? I never stopped the entire twelve hours—and he stopped to rest for at least ten minutes every hour!" To which the second lumberjack smiled and said, "I did not stop to rest—though I did rest some. While you were wasting your energy swinging a dull axe, I regularly took a few minutes to sharpen my axe—and my sharp axe increased my ability to cut down more trees."

Why Training Volunteers Is Worth Your Time, Money, and Energy!

One of the best investments of time and money you can ever make in your life and ministry, whether you are a ministerial professional or a volunteer in your church, is to sharpen your ministry axe by participating in relevant, substantive, and Biblically based training workshops. When you participate in high quality training conferences like "The Fourth Annual Christian Education and Resource Training Conference—you are taking the time to sharpen your ministry axe—so that you can go back to your ministry refreshed, refocused, and ready to impact people in a more significant way. Whereas other folks swing their tired, dull ministry axes with little effect, those who take the time to sharpen their axes by participating in high quality training workshops can be more productive and effective.

"A dull axe requires great strength; be wise and sharpen the blade." Ecclesiastes 10:10

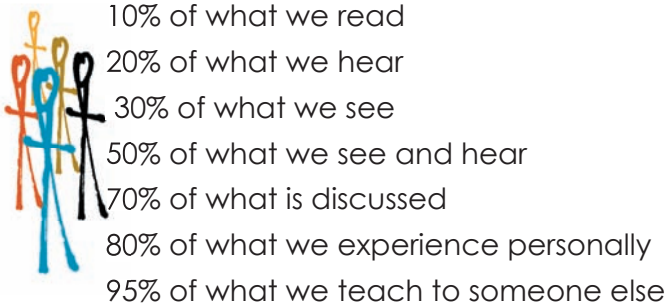
What YOU Should Do to Get the Most Out of a Training Workshop

If you are serious about getting the most bang for your time, money, and effort at this year's Christian Education and Resource Training Conference, it is absolutely critical that you take a strategic approach to learning and growing before the training begin, while you are participating in the various workshops, and once you get home from the conference.

Before You Choose Your Workshops

1. Identify your specific training needs. Ask yourself, "What do I need to learn to be more effective in my ministry? What do I need to know and be able to do to bump my ministry up a notch or two?" Make a short list and be as specific as you can.
2. Match your most important training needs with specific training workshops. Be sure to consider WHO is doing the training as well. You will want to choose a presenter who encourages you to interact and participate. Why? See the next point!

3. Plan to be a participator—not a spectator. One of the worst things you can do is to passively attend a training workshop as a spectator. Why pay money and give up time to sit your fanny on a chair for hours—and not really engage in learning? Before you get to the training workshop—determine to participate as much as you possibly can. Education guru, Dr. William Glasser, states that we learn:



Note that the more we are engaged in the learning process (discussing, experiencing, and teaching—as opposed to just hearing someone talk) the more we learn. Since you are taking the time out of your busy schedule to sharpen your ministry skills, you might as well be involved in meaningful learning! This should be your mindset before you even attend.

4. If at all possible, find a training partner. Remember, we learn up to 70% of what we discuss. Sharing an excellent training workshop with a ministry friend provides excellent fodder for discussion—and, consequently, learning. Another advantage of sharing a seminar together is the accountability factor. That is, two people can keep each other accountable for implementing what was learned at the training—whereas one person can go home and put the training manual on the shelf and forget about it! The bottom line: taking a partner creates a greater possibility that the training workshop will CHANGE OUR LIVES AND MINISTRIES!

5. Pray for a teachable heart. The word “disciple” translated from the Greek literally means learner. Be a disciple—a teachable learner. Be hungry. Be full of curiosity and questions. Take notes. Don't let an arrogant spirit keep you from learning and growing. Certainly, we ALL have room for personal growth!

While You Are in Workshops

1. Take the short list of your specific training needs with you to the training workshop. If by the end of the training workshop you have not dealt with several key training needs, you can ask the presenter about them during a break or after the training. Also, you can talk to the other participants about what they are doing in the areas you have needs—which brings me to a second important point:

2. Network with other people. The most overlooked resource at a training seminar is the other people attending. This is a sad waste because these folks, in the trenches like you, have much to teach! Before the workshop, while you are on breaks, and after the workshop, be sure to talk with the other participants. Again, be curious and hungry to learn. Ask questions—lots of them. Find out what is working for others in the trenches and what is not. Get phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and ask about resources and other training workshops.

3. Participate and get involved. This has already been stated—but its importance, I believe, cannot be overstated. The more involved you are—the greater the potential that you will learn and grow! Also, you are more apt to have fun if you participate. If the trainer asks you to sing—then sing with gusto! If the presenter asks you to discuss something in small groups—go for it! If the presenter asks for a volunteer—JUMP! Throw yourself into the training! Whatever you do, don't just sit there!

4. Throughout the workshop—continually create a rough draft of an action plan. When something in the seminar resonates with you and/or your ministry situation, make note of it on a separate piece of paper. Continue to add to this list each time something is particularly meaningful and apropos. By the end of the training, this list can become an action plan for implementing what you have learned. Do not leave any training workshop without an action plan.

After the Workshops

1. Prioritize, edit, and finalize your action plan. Before you go to bed that night, revisit the rough draft of your action plan and put it in final form. Prioritize your action plan (what is the one step you need to take NOW?) and start to put it into action as soon as possible.
2. Teach the main points of what you have learned and your action plan to someone within 24 hours. Since we remember up to 95% of what we teach, it is critical that you teach what you have learned—including your action plan—to someone within 24 hours.
3. Revisit the training materials and manual for six consecutive days for review, reflection, and application. Research shows that when people are exposed to new material they only remember 2% of it two weeks later. However, if people continue to expose themselves to the new material for six consecutive days, they will remember about 62% two weeks later. Divide the particularly important material you have learned from the training workshop into six five-minute review sessions. This should help you connect with the material for the next six days and assist you greatly in your attempt to implement it.

If Ye Know These Things, Happy Are Ye If Ye Do Them (John 13:17)

CONSIDER:

What skills, tools, or experiences do you need to be more effective in your volunteer ministry? Be specific.

What do you need to know and be able to do in order to bump your volunteer ministry up a notch or two? Be specific.

What specific training workshop titles at this conference come closest to addressing your needs??

Who are some potential workshop partners you could team up with to participate in a training workshop? List their names here.

This article originally appeared in Cadre Connection, the free monthly electronic newsletter for volunteer leaders and teachers in the church from Bill Allison and Cadre Ministries. If you would like to receive a monthly dose of FREE encouragement from Cadre Connection, or if you would like more information about hosting a Cadre training workshop for the volunteers in your church, visit www.cadreministries.com



CADRE INTERNATIONAL

speaking, teaching & training that encourages, equips & energizes



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Cadre exists to help the local church become the greatest volunteer equipping organization on the planet! We come alongside the local church by bringing interactive, fun, Bible-based training, teaching, and speaking to them in a relational container. While we will take training to any size church, a special concern of Cadre Ministries is the church with one pastor.

We are having fun making those around us wildly successful!



What in the world is a cadre?

A cadre [pronounced 'kah-dray'] is a small group of people who have been trained to impact and train others. This is precisely what Cadre International is all about—training people to impact and train others (II Tim. 2:2).

[training workshops]

Accessible, flexible, time-sensitive and practical training that comes TO YOU...

Leadership

- [The Leadership Genius of Hezekiah: A Strategic Action Plan for Leaders
- [Recruiting, Motivating, and Retaining Volunteers
- [Personal & Ministry Planning Retreats
- [Small God, Big Problems: How God uses volunteers to change the world

Ministry Heart & Skills

- [Ministry Is Relationships
- [Worship is Relationships
- [Evangelism is Relationships
- [Grow, Minister & Lead Workshops

Teaching (Character, Connection & Competence)

- [Becoming a High-Impact Teacher
- [Engaging in High-Impact Methods of Teaching
- [The Teaching Genius of Jesus

Communication

- [Aspiring Communicator's Academy 1
- [Aspiring Communicator's Academy 2

Time Management

- [Time Management for Painfully Pooped-Out Volunteers in the Church

Worship

- [Concerts of Prayer & Spiritual Identity

[speaking ministries]

Encouraging, equipping & energizing...

Churches

- [pulpit supply, outreaches, retreats, special occasions, family camps

Youth ministries

- [fall & winter retreats, summer camps, outreach events, Junior High ministry

Parachurch ministries

- [camp ministries, YFC & FCA events, youth ministry networks, Christian music festivals

through speaking that's packed with...

- [High energy and enthusiasm
- [Humor and fun
- [Engagement and interaction
- [Relevance and impact
- [Substance and biblical truth
- [Prayer and life-change
- [Encouragement and equipping

Helping local churches...

Impact Students: About 94% of those who trust Christ as Savior do so before age eighteen.

Train Volunteers: About 88% of all churches in America are one pastor churches.

Multiply Leaders: About 85% of all leaders say the influence of a mentor launched them into leadership.

For more information about FREE monthly online training or to host a Cadre workshop, please contact us at:

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