

This document contains three parts:

1. Help a New User Church or Organization To Make a Good Choice of New Group Leaders
2. Prepare the ground
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1. Help a New User Church or Organization To Make a Good Choice of New Group Leaders

Two sets of questions can prepare the way for a wise choice of Group Leaders:
First, from the church's perspective:

- What vision for church growth and development does the church leadership have?
- What part do they hope that groups studying SEAN materials will play in fulfilling this vision?
- What kind of Group Leaders are most likely to contribute to fulfilling this vision?

It can be very helpful for church leadership to put into words the vision that they have, and the TEE Program may be able to help crystallize unspoken ideas and thoughts.

Second, from the TEE Program's perspective:

- What is involved in being a good SEAN Group Leader?
- What kind of person will be able to do this job well?

The TEE Program should be able to give a clear description of what is expected of a good SEAN Group Leader. Here is one possible description.

A good Group Leader :

- guides the group meeting so that the lesson objectives are fulfilled
- encourages and develops each member's participation in the group
- helps resolve any relationship problems that may arise in the group
- encourages and guides group discussion
- helps group members apply their learning in their contexts
- wants to see each group member flourish in their gifts, ministry and calling
- organizes the group meetings and keep records efficiently

Discussion between TEE Program and church leadership could help the church leadership to draw up their own list of criteria for choosing new Group Leaders.

Here are some examples of criteria that might be used to select new Group Leaders for training:

New Group Leaders should be people who are

- passionate about God, about discipleship, about God's people
- passionate about the transformation of society
- growing in maturity, going places with God
- committed to the church, and consistent in their membership
- living a lifestyle consistent with someone following Jesus
- displaying real evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives
- already experienced at least to some extent in leadership and service

In addition, new Group Leaders should be

- sensitive to the needs, abilities, and different situations of group members
- firm but flexible
- humble, with a servant heart
- willing to learn, and be trained as Group Leader
- honest, with personal integrity
- clear communicators

On the other hand, here are some signs that a person would **not** make a good Group Leader. If they are:

- not able to submit to church leadership
- already committed to too many ministries
- critical and impatient with others
- liable to dominate a group
- full of themselves and their own opinions
- good talkers but poor listeners, then they are unlikely to make good Group Leaders.

It is worth noting that the choice of new Group Leaders sends clear and strong signals to the whole church about the importance the leadership are giving to SEAN groups.

Some TEE Programs make it a requirement that the main church leader should participate in the first Group Leader Training workshop, and that he or she should lead, or be a member of the first group studying SEAN materials. This principle helps place training using SEAN courses at the heart of the church's agenda and leads to church members valuing the program, investing in it, and gaining great benefit from it.

2. Preparing The Ground

Introduction

Across the world, new Group Leaders are being prepared to use SEAN courses in many different situations. In some places, groups have been using SEAN courses for many years. Those who have already completed courses can be chosen and trained as new Group Leaders.

In other places, SEAN courses, and the TEE method are new. Someone has heard about SEAN courses, and wants to begin using them. This document is addressing such a situation. How should a TEE Program prepare new Group Leaders where there is no previous experience of SEAN courses or the TEE method?

TEE Programs using SEAN courses are most fruitful where there is a good partnership between the Program and the local user. Usually the local user is a church, but could be a factory owner, a school Principal, or a training college. The same principles apply.

The first stages of the partnership are especially important. They can either help the local user to make a good start, that leads to fruitful use of SEAN courses, or they can result in misunderstanding, confusion, and a disappointing use of SEAN courses.

Preparing the Ground

Before new Group Leaders are chosen for training, there is important preparation. In the same way that a farmer prepares the ground before sowing seeds, TEE Programs should prepare the ground before training new Group Leaders.

If the ground is not fertile, the farmer will need to apply fertilizer to make it richer. If the local user does not have a rich, biblical vision for every-member discipleship, ministry and growth, then the Program will use key Scriptures to commend and explain the biblical vision.

Key Scriptures to commend and explain the biblical vision:

- Ephesians 4.11-13, and Colossians 2.6-7 build vision for the growth of all church members.
- 1 Peter 2.9-10, 1 Corinthians 12.12-20 build vision for the ministry of all church members, and the church as a body where every member has an important function.
- Matthew 5.13-15, and the Lord's prayer, 'Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven', build vision for the transformation of society
- Mark 10.42-45, the example of Jesus, and Ephesians 4.11-12 build vision for servant leadership, where the leader helps to equip and build up the membership

If the ground is full of weeds, the farmer will clear the ground before planting the seed. If there are fears and misunderstandings about the Program or the courses, the TEE Program will clear them away before training new Group Leaders.

Fears and misunderstanding may include the fear that using SEAN courses will undermine their authority in the church, because church members will have more knowledge than them. Leaders may fear that studying SEAN courses will create divisions in their church, or that the TEE program is another denomination, or that SEAN courses are linked to one particular denomination.

Fears and misunderstandings are best dealt with by spending time together, and building a good relationship.

If the ground is hard, the farmer will take time to prepare the soil so that it is ready to receive the seed. If busy church leaders are reluctant to consider SEAN courses, because they will be demanding, the TEE program will show how SEAN courses can provide effective long-term help to fulfill their personal vision and calling. Study of God's Word by using SEAN courses is demanding, but can yield a great harvest.

How to reap a good harvest from TEE courses

New users can learn from the experience of many churches in many situations about the factors that lead to effective and fruitful use.

1. The leadership actively supports the use of SEAN materials.

Real and active support comes from personal conviction. Personal conviction usually comes from personal participation. The leadership knows from experience that the materials are good and helpful, and that God uses them.

2. There is an official decision to use SEAN materials.

Decisions are made in many ways in churches. The important point is that the decision to use SEAN materials is not just the idea of one small group, but an official, whole-church decision.

3. New Group Leaders, especially the first Group Leader, are chosen with prayer and care.

The fruitfulness of a SEAN group usually depends in large part on the quality of the Group Leader. Everyone is watching the first group, so the choice of the first Group Leader is especially important. TEE programs can help by offering wise criteria.

4. The leadership gives continuing care and attention to Group Leaders and students.

Some plants need continuing care and attention with watering, pruning and regular application of manure. SEAN groups and Group Leaders also need continuing care and attention.

The TEE Program can spend time with leaders discussing the results of ignoring the experience of many users across the world:

- What is likely to happen if the leadership does not actively support the use of SEAN materials?
- What may happen if there is no official decision to use SEAN materials?
- What results can you expect if Group Leaders are not chosen with care and prayer?
- What will happen if you ignore SEAN groups and Group Leaders?

This sort of conversation can help leadership understand that SEAN materials are a great tool to fulfill their vision, and also that they have a vital role in making SEAN groups fruitful.

Counting the cost

The TEE program should encourage the new user to count the cost of using SEAN materials effectively. This is like asking whether the soil is ready for the seed, that is, whether the church leadership are ready to play their part in making the study of SEAN groups fruitful.

If the soil is not ready, it may be wise not to plant the seed by training new Group Leaders.

One single good and fruitful church-TEE Program partnership brings more glory to God, and more long-term benefit to both the local church and the TEE program than ten partnerships which start and then fail.

3. Principles for TEE Group Leader Training

TEE Group Leaders are prepared effectively in different ways in different programs.

These principles have in mind a situation where a new user wants to start using TEE materials, and a national or regional TEE team visit the new user and runs a training workshop to prepare the first Group Leaders in this new situation.

1. Prepare the ground with a new user before setting up Group Leader Training

TEE Programs are most fruitful with a good partnership between the Program and the local user. The TEE Program needs to understand the vision and context of the local user. The local user needs to understand how to use TEE courses effectively and fruitfully.

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2. Choose and prepare Group Leader trainers and coaches with great care

The experience, wisdom, knowledge and attitudes of trainers who run the training, and any experienced Group Leaders who act as coaches during the training, directly affect the quality of the training. A TEE Program should choose and prepare trainers and coaches with great care.

3. Help a new user church or organization to make a good choice of new Group Leaders

The choice of new Group Leaders, especially the very first Group Leaders, is very important for the future fruitfulness of the new TEE group. It deserves prayer and great care. The TEE Program's role is to make sure that the new user understands the general qualities of an effective and fruitful Group Leader.

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4. Provide training that equips new Group Leaders to start leading a TEE group effectively

There is a core of knowledge, skills and attitudes new Group Leaders need. By the end of Group Leader training, successful participants will have demonstrated knowledge of:

- some of the key Scriptures that nurture a passion for building up God's people through TEE [Matthew 28.18-20; Ephesians 4; 2 Timothy 2.2 but others as well]
- the three stages of TEE methodology: Home Study, Group Meeting and Practical Application
- the use of the Group Leader's Guide
- the steps a Group Leader takes to prepare for each week's Group Meeting
- the characteristics of a good discussion
- the criteria for self-evaluation after a group discussion
- the qualities of an effective and fruitful Group Leader
- the requirements for successful course completion
- key factors in adult learning, and reasons for assessment in adult learning

Successful participants will have demonstrated competence to:

- use the Group Leader's Guide to prepare a lesson plan
- lead a group meeting effectively, including
- use the group meeting time effectively
 - listen well
 - ask good questions
 - involve all group members as appropriate
 - achieve the lesson objectives
 - help the group find and commit to appropriate practical application
- evaluate themselves after they have led a group meeting
- manage any tests or forms required for successful course completion

And by the end of the training, successful participants will have shown some signs of passion for the way that God can build up his people using TEE.

5. Structure Group Leader Training around group meetings

Giving a demonstration of key skills, opportunities for practice and feedback is an effective way to structure Group Leader training.

- i. The skills involved in group leadership, like all skills, are learned through practice. So the training needs to provide opportunities to practice.
- ii. Learning is most effective (and enjoyable!) when people are engaged and actively involved. Participants will learn best about group leadership when they are actively engaged in a group themselves.
- iii. The experience of studying, exploring and applying God's Word together with others using TEE materials often gives participants a vision and a passion to use them.

6. Give all participants opportunity to lead at least two group meetings with feedback

Although they have just seen a demonstration of a good group meeting, many participants still give mini-sermons or lectures during their first group meeting they lead during training. The feedback they receive can be discouraging! But the second group meeting gives them another chance. They are able to show they can lead a group meeting effectively. Coaches and trainers are able to assess them fairly, and encourage them.

7. Use teaching/learning methods that support the teaching/ learning methods of a TEE group meeting

Many people assume that lecturing is the most effective way of teaching. If TEE Group Leaders understand themselves to be lecturing teachers, discussion in group meetings is very limited! Group Leader Training based around lectures may reinforce the assumption that lecturing is the most effective way of teaching. Group Leader Training can model a teaching/learning method that involves questions, discussion and feedback. Learning Tasks are a powerful tool to help here.

8. Assess participants by providing an opportunity for them to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to lead a group

A simple test for core knowledge, observation of practice group leadership for core skills, and a simple question or brief interview for attitudes gives participants opportunity to show what they know, what they can do, and their vision and passion for using TEE materials.