

Adaptive Leadership - Session Five Handout

Session Theme

A Framework for Leading Change: Adaptive Leadership

Preparation:

You were asked to read the following 8-page article before Session 5: Becoming An Adaptive Leader - Lifelong Faith



Revisit the Prior Session – 15 Minutes

In a breakout group, discuss the following question: *Were there any ways you observed how the Ladder of Inference showed that different people can have alternative versions of the “truth?”*

Breakout Group Reflection – 15 Minutes

Take two minutes of quiet time and consider the main challenges you currently face in your life. Those challenges could be positive (a goal you are striving to achieve) or negative (a threat you want to turn into an opportunity). Write a list of two or three.

- Which one seems the most complicated?
- What makes it complicated?
- What do complicated challenges have in common?

For ten minutes share the most complex challenge with the members of your breakout group. The intention is to find commonality among our challenges, *and not to solve one another's challenges or offer advice.*

Report Outs:

Share a salient point from your breakout group about things challenges have in common.

The Seven Adaptive Leadership Skills Are:

1. Get on the balcony. Distinguish subject from object: Maintain perspective by observing the system above the action.

2. Think politically: What are each stakeholder's values, loyalties, risks of loss, and hidden alliances?
3. Orchestrate the conflict: Create a "holding environment" where people can tackle tough questions honestly.
4. Discipline attention to the real issues: Don't be distracted by the noise and confusion.
5. Give the work back: Avoid trying to handle everything and resist giving people the answer.
6. Regulate disequilibrium: Increase or lower the heat/pressure/motivation.
7. Infuse the work with meaning: Focus on *why*, not just *how*. Connect tactics to the mission.

Breakout Group Reflection – 15 Minutes

- What is one example of how you are leading adaptively?
- How could you apply one of these practices to your most complicated challenge?

Concluding Commitments and Prayer – 10 Minutes

- What commitment do you want to make to practice adaptive leadership for the next two weeks? (Each person answers both questions in the large group.)
- Does anyone have a prayer request, perhaps for someone you know who is struggling or celebrating a blessing?

Looking to the Final Session – Building Bridges in the Church – 5 Minutes

At the beginning of the final session, you will be asked: *How have you experimented with using one of the seven practices of Adaptive Leadership?*

View the following three-minute video from Pittsburgh University before Session 6: [Cultural Humility](#)



Please read this short document from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) *Cultural Diversity In The Church, Intercultural Competencies* Module 2: [Intercultural Competencies Module 2 | USCCB](#)



Resources:

[*The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*](#), Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, Harvard Business Press, 2009.



[*A Survival Guide for Leaders*](#), Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, Harvard Business Review, June 2002.

