

Robert Schnase

Author of *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*

JUST

• say •

YES!

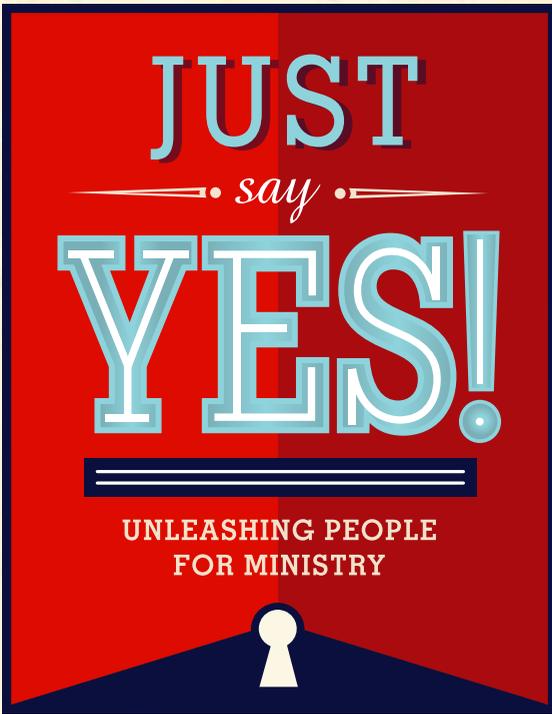
UNLEASHING PEOPLE
FOR MINISTRY



Leadership Training

—Facilitator Script—





NOTE TO FACILITATOR

This guide is designed to foster leadership development with church leaders, staff and lay leaders. It is organized into three sessions. This material can be used in a three-hour training setting (longer if using all the optional activities) or in three 1-hour sessions. The resources available include: a facilitator script, video content, a PowerPoint presentation, and printable participant worksheets. Videos are recommended as enhancements to the material. Videos and additional resources can be found at www.SayYesToMinistry.org.

[] Brackets indicate instructions for facilitators

() Parentheses indicate page numbers from *Just Say Yes!*

TRAINING PREPARATION

PREPARATION PRIOR TO TRAINING

- Pray
- Read *Just Say Yes!: Unleashing People for Ministry*
- Order books for each participant
- Set date and place for retreat/training
- Personally distribute books along with the invitation postcard (6-weeks ahead if possible)
- Print downloadable worksheets and 7-Session Devotion for each participant
- Pray again with anticipation

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

- Computer with PowerPoint
- Projector with screen
- Pens
- Chalkboard or Dry Erase Board
- Blank paper for openness exercise in Session 2 ("Letting Go")
- Altar decoration ideas: Christ candle, locks and keys, block letters spelling YES, red, teal and navy cloth
- Baskets or containers for confessions
- Communion supplies (gluten free, if needed)
- Snacks and music

Introduction and Welcome

— SUGGESTED FACILITATOR SCRIPT —

Thank you for joining us for this leader training [or retreat] and for taking the time to read, *Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry* by Bishop Robert Schnase. It is written for people like you whose passion has been simmering for years, who yearn to be told Yes! and to be part of a Yes! church culture. Developing this kind of culture takes intentionality. The book illustrates how people, pastors and churches say no in a thousand ways to new ideas, ministry initiatives, and creative people (ix). Perhaps these examples resonate with your own experience of leadership and church.



At the heart of this training is a desire to draw closer to God and neighbor, and to make active disciples of Jesus Christ. This leadership training is designed to provide you with tools to move your personal leadership and church culture from postures of No to Yes. It is designed to uncover the Nos in church leadership (people and systems), unlock the power of Yes in each person, and unleash a culture of Yes here at [your church's name].

This work of personal reflection, training and team development is crucial and we cannot do it alone. Jesus said to the disciples long ago and says to us, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion, who will be with you forever ... The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you." (John 14:15, 16 and 26, CEB). Together, let us seek the guidance offered. Please join me in prayer.

PRAYER

[Encourage your participants to find a posture that helps them be the most open to hearing God, perhaps open or lifted hands. This prayer will be said in unison. The words will be in the powerpoint and on the Session 1 worksheet.]

***Faithful and Life-Giving God,
Please create in this room a sacred space filled with Your Holy Spirit. We come here to learn more about You and Your call to lead in this church. Open our hearts and minds to the work we must do to honor You. Reveal to us the stifling impact Nos have on the gifts, talents, creativity and passion of Your people. Help us feel Your grace in moments of conviction and then offer grace to each other through this work. Give us courage to follow You from No to Yes. By the end of our time together help us each to say boldly Yes Lord, Yes! It is in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.***

[Take some time for introductions. Possible icebreaker idea: invite them to say their name and share why they said Yes to come today?]

SESSION

1

50 minutes

Uncover the Nos

Play Video 1

[This session is intended to uncover the Nos in your ministry setting. We begin with an introduction from Bishop Schnase.]

STORIES OF NO

[What follows are stories of No, which were not included in the book. Please share one of the stories, a personal story, or retell a story from the book. This will help illustrate the destructive tone a culture of No can be for ministry. A word of caution: sharing stories from your current setting may be hurtful. As this session progresses, individual leaders will likely share stories from your church, so please help lay a groundwork of grace and hope.] Here are some No examples to help us realize the destructive culture of Nos for ministry.

- **VBS** - A church decided they only had space for 30 children at their Vacation Bible School. For this reason, they would not allow sign-ups from the community unless all congregation members were signed up first. *They said No to their neighbors.*
- **Children's Wing** - A group within a church decided to donate money for a new children's wing as long as they could also meet there once a week. They chose fancy carpet and furniture. At the dedication for the new wing, there was no evidence of children using the space. *They said No to children.*
- **Signs** - A church was located in an ethnically diverse community. They wanted to be a multi-generational and multi-ethnic church. They built a new and wonderful playground for the community. Yet, there were signs of welcome in English and signs of "No Entry" written in Spanish. *They said No to diversity.*

Group Sharing - Take a moment to imagine what these No scenarios do to the life of a congregation. What were some of the No stories from the book that spoke loudest to you?

CHECK LIST OF NOS

Just Say Yes! outlines 13 ways people say No. Our challenge is to recognize the Nos in our midst. The Session 1 participant worksheets include a "Checklist of Nos." Take a few moments to check all the types of Nos you have received personally as well as all the types of Nos you have said yourself. If you want more details about the Nos listed, please feel free to reread the section in the book on pp. 3-8.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> You're Not The Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis Paralysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Need That, So Why Should We Do It? | <input type="checkbox"/> You're Too Young, Too New, or Too Different |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Only Five People Signed Up | <input type="checkbox"/> You're Doing It All Wrong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They're Not Our Members Anyway | <input type="checkbox"/> You Didn't Ask Me First |
| <input type="checkbox"/> That's Our Room | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Rock the Boat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They Can Just Join Us | <input type="checkbox"/> Things Won't Be the Same |
| <input type="checkbox"/> That Will Never Work Here
(and I'll See That It Doesn't) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Group Sharing - [Encourage participants to break into groups of two to three. Ask them to share their answers to the following two questions.] Describe one of the times you were on the receiving end of a No response. What happened to your ministry idea? Have you ever been the one saying No? What happened to that ministry idea?

FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS LEADING TO NO

Most of us wake up in the morning with good intentions to say Yes to the work of Jesus Christ in the world. Yet, in the course of our lives we say No, knowingly and unknowingly to the movement of God's Spirit. Why? "Many reasons why people say No derive from faulty assumptions" (8). *Just Say Yes!* describes three faulty assumptions. [Take a few minutes to describe these faulty assumptions (8-11).]



This Is **OUR** Church



Ideas Come From The **CENTER**



It's **ALL** about **US**

Let's take a few minutes to talk about how these assumptions say No to the work of Jesus Christ.

- What happens when we say "this is OUR church"?
- What happens when we believe ideas only come from our core leadership team, "the center"?
- What happens when we say "it's all about me"?

GROUP EXERCISE

[Use a dry erase board, chalkboard or large paper to document the insights from the conversation. Depending on time, ask how the assumptions change in light of Jesus' words: the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:34-40, the great compassion in Matthew 25:34-39, and the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20.]

Before a break, write down one of the No scenarios you have experienced, either said or received. These scenarios will be used in the subsequent sessions, so this step is important!

Break [10 minutes]

SESSION

2

45 minutes

Unlock the Power of Yes

Play Video 2

[This session is intended to help leaders move from postures of No to Yes in ministry. It will focus on the means of grace found in prayer and communion.]

The story of Sturgeon United Methodist Church is all too common: too small, too old, too tired. Under the unifying direction of Pastor Mike Will, they joined forces, along with the four other local churches and forged a new way of being church to their broader community. By taking risks and learning together, they are saying Yes to God. Now, their church no longer remains silent and closed, but helps serve 280 families (almost 950 people) at a free food pantry and 350 people monthly at a thrift store.

Group Sharing - Take a moment to share what struck you the most about the video.

INTENTIONAL LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

Just like Pastor Mike Will, we all face challenges in church leadership. Leaders who say Yes to God must be intentional and understand who they are as leaders. Do we bring negativity or hope? Do we bring fear or joy? Are we staying connected with the One who called us into leadership? In the book, the Bishop shares a revelation about his leadership after a purposeful time of "rest, renewal, and learning" (93). [Share the story of the Bishop's sabbatical on pp. 93-94.] Bishop Schnase reveals that "sometimes leaders are the obstacles to innovation without knowing it." How can we discern if we are knowingly and unknowingly creating barriers to ministry?

Here are some ways to start our reflection:

- Ask yourself, "am I ever a stumbling block to others or the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world?" This is a very general question, so think back specifically to the No scenario you wrote down in Session 1. In light of this question, what role did you play in the No?
- When faced with a leadership decision are you conscious of the internal struggle described in the book? The Bishop said, "when I'm asked whether I think we should go forward with an idea, if I don't monitor myself to focus on the larger mission, my default response reflects my personal preference and my perception of the impact that the decision will have on me" (10).
- Jesus said it another way, "But he turned to Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan. You are a stone that could make me stumble, for you are not thinking God's thoughts but human thoughts.'" (Matthew 16:23, CEB) Could Jesus be saying the same things to us when we set our mind on human things like control and selfishness?
- Thankfully, even though we sometimes are stumbling blocks, Jesus calls us to learn and lead anyway. Not long after Peter gets reprimanded by Jesus, he is asked to experience the Transfiguration. Peter sees Jesus glorified and is invited to get up and not be afraid (Matthew 17:1-8). No matter our past failings, Jesus invites us into amazing opportunities for ministry through his forgiving grace. We are going to take some time now to grab onto that freely offered grace.

In each of us, there are obstacles preventing us from saying Yes to God. Rev. Jenn Weekes-Klein gives us suggestions on spiritual practices that can move us from No to Yes through Jesus Christ. Rev. Klein says a key to unlocking ourselves for ministry is to let go of negativity and fear. Shifting from No to Yes requires openness to the transformative power of Jesus. This is a movement from personal control to trust in the grace of God. As Rev. Klein suggests, take some time to humbly seek God in prayer. Our hope is this time will foster a spirit of openness, so we can all fully receive the love and grace of God through communion.

WRITTEN & VERBAL CONFESSION & PRAYER

[Give adequate time, silence and space for people to complete this exercise. Supply a blank sheet of paper for this exercise.] On your blank piece of paper, take a few moments to write down the Nos you want God to transform into Yeses. Take the time you need to really communicate with God. This can be written in a prayer to God or as a list of all the ways you want God to help you lead with trust and hope. The "Checklist of Nos" from the Session 1 worksheet and the following list are here to help you get started.

- Fear - of the unknown or change
- Passive aggressive behavior - disparaging or snide remarks, sabotage others, etc.
- Negative attitude or thinking - church is too old, too small, too poor, too [fill in the blank]
- Unwillingness to help others - it will cost me too much, it is too hard, it is not my passion, or it is not for me
- Harsh correction of others - that is not how I think it should be done, that is not how "we" do it
- Body language - disapproving glances, shaking of the head, crossing of the arms

Once you have written down your confession or plea for God's help, please crumple it up and hold it tightly in your fist. With clenched fists please join me in this prayer of confession. [The words of the prayer will be on the screen as well as the participant worksheet.]

L: Lord, we confess our day-to-day failure to fully say Yes to You.

P: Lord, we confess to you.

L: Lord, we confess we often fail to love with all we have and are, often because we do not fully understand what loving means, often because we are afraid of risking ourselves.

P: Lord, we confess to you.

L: Lord, we confess we sometimes forget this church is Yours.

P: We sometimes center our ministry on personal preferences and desires.

L: Lord, we confess that by silence and ill-considered words,

P: we have built stumbling blocks to the creativity and passions of your people.

L: Lord, we confess that by selfishness and lack of sympathy,

P: we have stifled generosity and missed opportunities to serve the least of these.

All: Holy Spirit, speak to us. Help us listen to Your word of forgiveness so we might lessen our tight-fisted hold on leadership. Right now, help us open our hands to receive your grace. Allow us to become leaders of hope, innovation, and grace. Come, fill this moment and free us from our sin. Amen.



[Use the Service of Word and Table 1 in The United Methodist Hymnal or use the optional Prayer of Thanksgiving offered here. Participants will be invited to bring their note of confession to leave at the altar. Please provide a basket or some way for the notes to be left with a sense of privacy. Participants will then be invited to receive the bread and juice with open hands. This will mean the servers need to hand the bread to recipients. Song suggestions for communion that are available on Youtube: "Yes" by Shekinah Glory, "We are Yours" by I am They or "One Bread, One Body" from The United Methodist Hymnal #620.]

OPTIONAL PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

On the night when Jesus gave himself for us, he lovingly met with his disciples. He called each of them to learn from him and follow him. He saw in them gifts crucial to share the good news he had to offer the world. In his last living moments with them he took time to teach them how to stay connected with him always. In those moments, he offered them forgiveness, love, and an everlasting promise of relationship. He took the bread, thanked God and broke the bread. He taught them the miraculous power of how his broken body can heal them. Then he took the cup and made it more than wine. He told them it was his blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus invites you to hear him calling you to learn from him and follow him. He has given you each gifts and talents crucial for the ministry as part of the body of Christ. He invites you to renew your commitment to follow him. He invites you to remember his never-ending love through this bread and juice. He speaks words of forgiveness and grace into your hearts and minds. He has done everything necessary to help you be unafraid and expectant about God's work in your midst. Please join me in prayer.

Dear Lord, you have heard our confessions. Help us truly let go of any negativity blocking your powerful Spirit's movement, and whole-heartedly receive your forgiveness with open hands. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and on these gifts. Make this bread and juice be your body and blood, so we will be forever connected with you and others redeemed by your blood. Give us all we need to forgive others, to grab onto your grace and to be the leaders you call us to be. Help us to be unafraid of saying Yes to You and all You ask of us. Invigorate us now with this incredibly, selfless gift of love. May it inspire a community of people who say Yes to You. In the saving power of Jesus Christ, Amen.

You are invited now to leave your confessions at the table of the Lord. Please come with open hands and hearts to receive this awe inspiring gift of forgiveness and love. After you receive, please feel free to stay in prayer as long as you need. (Play song or songs during communion.)

Before the break, take a moment to fill in the answer to the question at the top of your Session 2 worksheet. Have you begun letting go of the hurts or guilt about the No scenario you wrote down at the bottom of the Session 1 worksheet? If not, keep the worksheet as a reminder to continue the process of letting go. The devotion guide we will introduce after the break will help in this journey.

SESSION

3

60 minutes

Unleash a Culture of Yes

Play Video 4

[This session is intended to help participants see the joyful and honoring quality of permission-giving churches. You may want to have some soft upbeat Christian music playing and snacks. Promoting creativity, joy and innovation is very important.]

In St. Louis, Missouri, Lafayette Park United Methodist Church is a powerful example of a permission-giving culture. The video introduced us to Bridge Bread, an amazing social enterprise ministry for the homeless. In order for this extraordinary ministry to begin a number of things had to occur: a man named Fred had to believe God was speaking to him, and he had to discover a permission-giving leader and a permission-giving culture at his home congregation.

Group Sharing - Take a moment to share what struck you the most about the video.

PERMISSION-GIVING LEADER & PERSONAL DEVOTION INTRODUCTION

In light of the forgiveness, love, hope and grace that Holy Communion has unlocked in us, we continue our journey toward becoming permission-giving leaders (95-99). "In a culture of Yes, leaders are purveyors of hope. They believe in new life, new birth, and resurrection. They believe God is in the minds and hearts of people for ministries they never imagined" (95). Becoming a permission-giving leader is not an instantaneous transition. For this reason, each of you have been given a 7-Session Devotion Guide. Please use this as a tool to keep your life centered on Christ and listen for God's continued call on your life. The guide contains both practical and spiritual disciplines to help us each develop into permission-giving leaders. For the remainder of the training, we are now going to transition from individual work to team development of a Yes culture.

CORE OF THE BOOK

According to Bishop Schnase, the core of this book is "vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations have been willing to say Yes to things that declining congregations have said No to." The Bishop goes on to say, "missional churches shift a No culture to a culture that helps people cultivate their calling and creativity ... People need to be unleashed for ministry - encouraged and emboldened, equipped and sent out. Unleashed means to set free, to unbind from restraint, to set loose ... Unleashed also means to 'set forcefully in motion,' ... When we set people free to do the work of God, the spirit of Christ propels us into places and into ministries we could never have imagined" (x). An unleashed church is an exciting place to be. In an unleashed church, an ever increasing number of people know the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

The really difficult work is shifting from a No culture to an unleashed Yes culture. As we see in the video, Rev. Jim Downing has been able to lay a foundation changing the default from No to Yes and now serves a culture unleashing people for ministry. At its heart is reminding people they are partnering with God for the work of offering hope.

Group Activity - Rev. Downing talks about 3 types of people: complainers, critics, and champions. Name some champions you have met in your lives. What about them unleashes others? [Accumulate a list of qualities in those leaders.] What would shutting down the complaints department mean in our church and how could we make that happen?

PERMISSION-GIVING CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

In churches creatively saying Yes, like Rev. Downing's church, their systems encourage dreaming. "Instead of church council adopting a program and then convincing volunteers to implement it, a ministry begins with the sense of calling and enthusiasm among people at the margins, builds momentum, and then becomes recognized and adopted by the council" (9). How do we make this happen here? With the help of three volunteers, we are going to act out a few possible scenarios for how your church can function.

ROLE PLAYING EXERCISE

[Invite three people to act out the script located with the separate printable participant worksheets. This will help participants see a No response and then what is possible when they develop a permission-giving culture.]



To make sure Scenario No. 1 does not happen in this church, as a team we need a framework for making decisions. We are going to do everything we can to make this a church of people unleashed for ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. Please remember, this is not a time for brainstorming ministry ideas. This is the time to set a framework for encouraging the people in our midst to share their ideas and dreams for using the gifts and talents God has given them. This means putting a structure in place to equip, strengthen and unleash them to ministry. Sometimes No is the right answer (87), but even better is having a framework to encourage people in their dreams. This means rarely saying no, but instead asking questions to help them discern the heart of God's call in their life.

[Optional Discussion Related to Video #6: Even in a Yes oriented culture, one has to protect values, quality, framework and purpose. No is still important. Rev. Matt Miofsky emphasizes sticking to the particular vision for a community in a particular time and place allows the community to remain vibrant and healthy. Rev. Miofsky reminds us that shutting down people who are enthusiastic is counter to our calling. How can we say Yes to an element of people's ideas even when our initial, internal reaction is No?]

To develop our framework for decision making, Bishop Schnase gives some launching points. He offers missional assumptions to counter the faulty ones we discussed in Session 1. He also gives missional question examples from two permission-giving congregations. You will notice the questions for each of the congregations are different. They represent specific congregations and their role in the body of Christ. The questions we develop will be specific to our setting. As a team, let us take some time to discern our questions. [If the conversation is slow to begin or slows before questions are started, here are some possible conversation starters:

- Walk through the importance of adopting the missional assumptions. What questions foster this adoption?
- Talk through your own mission statement and ask what questions will help follow through on this mission?
- Discuss the questions from either/or both churches. Do they resonate with us? Is there anything missing?]

Just Say Yes! Missional Assumptions pp. 55-62:

1. Everyone has gifts for ministry
2. God calls everyone to service and ministry
3. The ministry of the Church should foster spiritual growth and discipleship
4. The Church's mission is outward focused
5. The work of the Church is to encourage people in their callings

Woods Chapel UMC's Three Questions pp. 75-78:

1. Does it align with the mission?
2. Who will do it?
3. How will it be funded?

Must be grounded in prayer, discernment and calling.



First UMC Sedalia's Three Questions pp. 80:

1. Have you prayed about it?
2. Do you believe it is God's will for us at this time? (Timing is important: do we have the right resources for sustainability, the right alignment with the priorities of the church for this ministry at this time?)
3. Will it bring glory to Jesus Christ?

USING THE QUESTIONS

Now that we have our missional questions, turn back to a No example we wrote down at the end of Session 1. In groups of 2-3 revisit one or two of the No scenarios and replay it with our new mission questions? [Pull them back into an entire group to ask the next question.] How have these scenarios changed with our increasingly permission-giving atmosphere?

We are building something exciting here. "A culture of Yes expects people to have ideas, gifts, and callings. It amplifies what works and encourages the passions and callings that already exist but what remain unseen or hidden from view" (95). We are building a culture saying Yes to Jesus Christ here.

CLOSING

At the beginning, we heard Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit will always be with us as guide and teacher. We have started learning about and becoming permission-giving leaders and church. As we close this training [or retreat] our work is not done, but we can be confident of the One we follow into the world. He says to us, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid." (John 14:27, CEB). Say Yes with peace and confidence knowing that God goes with us into the future.

As you leave, you will receive an anointing of oil. Feel the Holy Spirit's seal on your life. With the Spirit's power we will continue to say, Yes, Jesus, Yes!

(Anoint the leaders with oil as they leave the room symbolizing the Holy Spirit's anointing of their leadership.)

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS FOR FACILITATORS

These options can be used for subsequent work during a weekend retreat setting or at a follow-up meeting for the team after completing the devotion.

Below are some concrete things to keep unleashing your church for ministry:

- Encourage participants to share their insights from working through the 7-Session Devotion guide.
- You may want to set up a private Facebook group for sharing or plan a time to share the ways God is working in each of the leaders.
- Look at the list of Nos we have said in the past year and see if there are people we need to invite back into dreaming. Are there specific Nos to be revisited? It may be helpful to assign a representative to revisit the people with the dreams for ministry.
- Share this new permission-giving framework with others in the congregation. Cultural change requires increased communication. Others need to know you believe God is working in them and that the community will encourage each other in ministry. Here are some ideas for communicating this exciting culture shift: ask a participant who has really thrived in this training to write an article for the community newsletter, share their testimony in worship, and/or lead an informational meeting for the congregation. You may also partner with the Pastor or worship team to include this as a sermon series and/or share a prayer of blessing on this work in worship.
- Use the information in Chapter 3: Buildings, Bulletins, and Attitudes to take a look at ways your church may be saying No to ideas and people. For example, look at newsletters, bulletins, signs, and websites to see what they say to guests.
- Check out additional resources at www.SayYesToMinistry.org.

JUST SAY YES!