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# Grow Minister & Lead!

by Bill Allison



**Ten Training Sessions  
to Help You Grow, Minister  
and Lead as a Volunteer  
in the Church**



# Grow, Minister & Lead

Ten Training Sessions to Help You  
as a Volunteer in the Church!

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## About the Author



Bill Allison has served as a youth pastor and a public high school English teacher. He has been a staff member of a YMCA and at a juvenile detention center. Bill's communication style is high energy, high interaction, and high impact—with a healthy combination of biblical truth and humor. His passion is to impact students, train volunteers, and multiply leaders through speaking, teaching, training, coaching, and writing. ■ Bill is the author of the *Grow, Minister, & Lead* Series for training volunteers and the book *Recruiting, Motivating, and Retaining Volunteers!* Bill is a graduate of New Tribes Bible Institute and Illinois State University, and holds a Masters Degree in Teaching and Leadership from Saint Xavier University. Bill is happily married and has six children. (Some people work in youth ministry—others of us live in a youth ministry!)

## About Cadre International



Cadre (kah-dray) International is a training and speaking ministry that seeks to encourage, equip, and energize volunteer and vocational church leaders, teachers, youth workers, and students by bringing interactive, FUN, biblically-based training to them. While Cadre will take training to any size church, a special concern is the church with one pastor—and many volunteer leaders.

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This book can be used as training sessions for your volunteers to help them fall in love with ministry by ordering a printed or a downloadable version of *Grow, Minister & Lead* from: [www.cadreinternational.com](http://www.cadreinternational.com)

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## Foreword

The largest army for ministry is often the most under-equipped. *Grow, Minister, & Lead* includes ten readable and practical lessons addressing the Ephesians 4:11-12 need to equip and be equipped as volunteers in ministry. This book shakes hands with the ministry model seen in Jesus' life as he calls us all to love God and love people.

- Your personal growth as a leader is the starting point for effective ministry—moving from your heart to your hands.
- The next step is to own a passion for ministry that is people-intensive. A people-focused ministry is the most demanding, but also the most rewarding.
- Our ministry as volunteers includes the role of leadership as we help others grow and minister. Leadership skills often scream the loudest, but without a foundation of inside-out growth and a heart for people-focused ministry, the impact will be mediocre at best.

**How does one learn effective ministry?** Only by jumping in the deep end of the pool and outswimming the alligators. In *Grow, Minister, & Lead*, Bill Allison swims alongside you as a coach. We share these chapters with you, trusting that God will allow us to serve you and your church in a virtual or cyber-mentorship for ministry.



—Dave Garda *for the Cadre Team*



**As a volunteer in the church:**

- Do you ever feel like you are working harder in your volunteer ministry with less impact?
- Do you ever feel like you lack the training to function effectively in your volunteer ministry?

# Sharpening Your Ministry Axe

*“A dull axe requires great strength; be wise and sharpen the blade.”—Ecclesiastes 10:10*

**T**wo 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 continuing 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."

One of the best investments of time and money you can 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 we participate in a high quality training workshop—we are taking the time to sharpen our ministry axes—so that we can, after a short period of training (reflection, teaching, stimulation, focus, and rest), come back to our ministries 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.

## **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, it is absolutely critical that you take

a strategic approach to learning and growing before the workshop, while you are participating in the workshop, and once you get home from the workshop.

## **Before the Workshop**

- 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 training needs with a training workshop.** After you have identified your specific training needs, I strongly suggest that you contact a training organization and ask key questions *before* you commit time and money. A short five-minute phone call is worth the time and money—compared to an entire day wasted in a workshop that is not relevant to you and your needs. Some questions you should consider asking a training organization *before* you commit yourself are:
  - How will this particular training workshop meet my specific training needs?
  - Does the training workshop have substance and biblical content?
  - Does the presenter engage participants in a wide variety of learning activities (small group interaction, individual reflection, personal application time, large group discussion, etc.)—rather than relying mostly on lecture?
  - When the training workshop is finished, what specific skills and expertise will participants acquire?

Questions like these will help you determine whether or not a particular training workshop will meet your ministry training needs *before* you invest any time, money, or significant effort.



**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:

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what we see and hear

70% of what is discussed

80% of what we experience personally

95% of what we teach to someone else

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. Find a training partner.** It is ideal if the trainer and the training workshop can come to your church so that you can experience the training with people from your ministry situation. However, life is rarely ideal. If you must travel to the trainer and the training workshop, try to attend with at least one other person who is from your church and involved in the same ministry you are. 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 at the Workshop**

- 1. Take the short list of your specific training needs with you to the training workshop.**

Keep your short list of specific training needs in front of you—and check them off as you learn something that will help you with each need. 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 Workshop**

- 1. Prioritize, edit, and finalize your action plan.** Before you go to bed that night, re-visit 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 percent 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 percent 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 percent 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.

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This chapter originally appeared in Cadre Connection, the monthly online training for volunteer leaders and teachers in the church from Bill Allison and Cadre International. If you would like to receive a monthly dose of encouragement from Cadre Connection visit [www.cadreinternational.com](http://www.cadreinternational.com).

## Transforming Knowledge into Life Change!

1. Read Ecclesiastes 10:10. On a scale of 1-10 (1 = extremely dull; 10 = extremely sharp), are you swinging a dull ministry axe or a sharpened ministry axe? *Explain your answer.*
  
2. When is the last time you invested some time to sharpen your ministry axe? Specifically what did you do?
  
3. What skills, tools, or experiences do you need to be more effective in your volunteer ministry? Be specific.
  
4. 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.

