Seed Projects Overview

"Seed Projects" are small-scale, wholistic outreach initiatives through which local churches demonstrate God's love in practical ways to those in their community.

Rather than one-time, whole-church, staff-initiated outreach programs, Seed Projects are designed to be carried out on an ongoing basis by church members in the context of families or small-groups. They work particularly well for churches with an active small-group, neighborhood focused approach to ministry.

Pastors equip church members to identify needs in their communities and use the Seed Projects Planning Guide to thoughtfully and intentionally take action.

The goal is for wholistic outreach to become part of the ongoing life of the church body. Individual church members are equipped and empowered to do the work of ministry.

Characteristics

Seed Projects should be covered in prayer.

Seed projects are identified, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit through prayer. Prayer must be a significant focus before, during and after the project.

Seed Projects reflect God's heart of compassion for brokenness. They are not manipulative tools for evangelism.

Seed Projects provide an opportunity to obey Jesus' command to love our neighbor unconditionally. If salvation and church growth are the principle motives for our service, our efforts become manipulative.

Seed projects are motivated by God's intentions and carried out with God's strength.

Traditional community development projects are often undertaken when a need is seen, felt or expressed by local people—or when funding is available. But doing good works in human strength is a trap. Christian ministry should be different. It should reflect God's intentions for people, not ours. We should ask: "Father, what do You want us to do?" It should be God who directs our service rather than a "felt need."

Seed Projects should be thoughtfully planned.

Planning includes preparation, prayer, writing, implementation and evaluation. The Seed Projects Planning Form ensures that these steps are taken.

Seed Projects must be simple, short, small and uncomplicated.

The projects themselves should take no more than one or two days, although planning and preparation will take longer. God honors and brings results to faithful, small works. People grow in faith as they attempt to take small steps. If large projects fail, people may be discouraged and unwilling to try again. Small actions are essential stepping stones to larger efforts.

Seed Projects are to be done with local resources.

Outside resources can be helpful, but *when* and *how* they are introduced is very important. The local church must be sacrificially investing its own resources in ministry *before* receiving outside resources. If the outside resources come first, powerlessness and dependency is reinforced and local initiative is stifled. Seed Projects use resources that already exist in the community.

Seed Projects are directed to those outside the church.

We should not express God's love only to other Christians. We serve community members because we are obedient to Jesus' command to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Those who benefit from Seed Projects should also participate in them, as possible.

When those who are being helped are involved in the process of planning and helping, they have the dignity of participating in their healing. Doing things for people who are capable of participating—but not involving them—is paternalism. People who benefit and participate in a ministry project also have a greater sense of ownership.

An observable spiritual impact is built into the Seed Project where it is appropriate.

There should be a planned spiritual impact whenever possible. People should recognize that our motivation for doing the project is our love for God and desire to be obedient to Him and His command to love others. We should be ready to give the reason for the hope that is within us so that people may come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Seed Projects are evaluated by Kingdom standards.

Evaluation is important—by Kingdom standards. Here are some questions to ask: Did God multiply the resources? Have people been blessed or favorably impacted by the project? What God's love evident and did the project result in Him receiving glory and praise?

More on Seed Projects can be found in If Jesus Were Mayor by Bob Moffitt (2006, Monarch Books), chapter 13: "Seed Project Planning." This document was adapted by permission of the author.

Seed Project Instructions

Seed Projects are best planned in small groups. *Any* small group (including a family) can plan and carry out a project that reflects God's love and concern for people in their community. If your group is large, divide into smaller groups of four or five people.

Follow these steps:

1. Identify the small group that will be planning and implementing the project.

2. Identify the neighborhood or community to be served.

3. As a group, carefully read and discuss the <u>Seed Project Overview</u> document.

4. If you haven't already, become familiar with the community you plan to serve. Prayerfully walk around it and talk to the people you meet. Ask this question: *If God's will was done perfectly in this community, what would be different?*

5. *Pray for guidance.* Participants ask the Spirit's direction as they select a need to address.

6. Using the *Seed Projects Planning Form (next page)* group members plan out their project.

7. *Review the Plan.* Once the *Planning Form* is complete, it is a good idea for the team or its leaders to meet with others who have already done Seed Projects to review and give input on the plan.

8. *Implement.* This is the important part! Group members carry out their Seed Project.

9. *Report, evaluate, and look toward the future.*

   ▪ Leaders select the reporting method that works best for their group. A suggested report form is provided at the end of this document, but a church may choose to design its own. The group completes the report together and shares it within the church, as appropriate.

   ▪ Participants should pray, evaluate, and plan ways to continue to tangibly express God's love in an ongoing way.

Remember, Seed Projects are not one-time activities, but are designed to become part of the lifestyle of the church.

Seed Project Planning Form

Problem - Prayerfully identify a problem or a need that the project will address. Summarize it in a few words:

Example: The neighborhood schoolyard is strewn with trash and there is graffiti on the walls.

God's Intention - Discuss God's general intentions related to this need, and choose one or more passages of Scripture that support this. Write out God's intentions and the passages below:

Example: We should live in a clean and healthy environment. Leviticus 11:36.

Seed Project Title - Decide on a small project, action or initiative that can be done with local resources to address the need you selected. Write a descriptive title below.

Example: Pick-up trash and paint-over graffiti at the neighborhood school.

Impact areas – In Luke 2:52, we read that Jesus grew in four key areas: Wisdom, physical (stature), spiritual (favor with God) and social (favor with man). Based on these four areas of growth, identify which area the project *primarily* addresses. Then list one or more secondary impact areas.

Examples:

- *Pick-up trash and paint-over graffiti at the neighborhood school - Physical*
- *Seminar on God's intentions for husband-wife relationships—Wisdom (Secondary: Social)*
- *Help elderly widow or single mother with backyard cleanup/landscaping—Physical*
- *Invite neighbors over to watch and discuss an evangelistic movie—Spiritual (Secondary: Social)*
- *Day of games for community children—Social (Secondary: Physical, Spiritual)*

Primary impact area:
Wisdom_____
Physical_____
Spiritual_____
Social_____

Secondary impact area(s):
Wisdom_____
Physical_____
Spiritual_____
Social_____

When? – Set a date to implement the project

Planning

Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Due Date	Resources Needed	People to Consult
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Seed Project Characteristics Checklist

Check to see if your plan is complete by evaluating it against each of the following Seed Project Characteristics. If certain characteristics are neglected, go back and adjust the plan accordingly.

_____Covered in prayer
_____Compassionate—not manipulative
_____Motivated by God's intentions
_____Thoughtfully planned
_____Simple and short
_____Done with local resources
_____Directed toward those outside the church
_____Those who benefit participate
_____Spiritual impact where appropriate

Seed Project Report

Name of Group _____

Church _____

Address _____

Contact Person_____ _____

Name of Pastor _____

Seed Project title: _____

Scripture: _____

Location: Country: _____ City _____ City Section _____

Dates of project: _____ Year _____

Primary impact area: _____ Secondary impact area(s): _____
(List only those areas for which there was a planned emphasis.)

Answer the following questions. Use as much space as necessary.

1. Whose idea was the project?

2. What was done? (Give a concise description of the Seed Project.)

3. How long did the project take? To organize: ____ days. To do the project: ____ days.

4. Who participated?

5. How many people participated?

6. Who were the primary beneficiaries?

7. How did the beneficiaries participate?

8. What resources were needed? Where did you get them?

9. What resources were contributed by the people who were being helped?

10. What indication was there that God blessed the project?