



CORPS MISSION DEPARTMENT

Photo: Matthew Smith/unsplash.com

HELPING THE
LOCAL CORPS
THRIVE

CORPS REVITALIZATION GUIDE



Photo: Courtesy of Scarborough Citadel

Join us...

We are excited to invite you to participate in the Army's new Corps Revitalization journey, designed to empower and equip leaders with support, resources and community to seek God's will for ministry today and in preparation for the future. We invite you to join us.

Lay leaders, we want you to be part of the journey as well! Your engagement, support and ministry are as vital as that of the corps officers/pastors, and facilitates the sustainability and continuation of the revitalization journey.

What will we achieve through revitalization?



Corps/Community Churches will:

- Connect with other corps/ community churches and recognize they are not alone on the revitalization journey.
- Fully engage each year through study, discussions and workshops.
- Demonstrate the ability to experiment and reflect upon their practice.
- Set progress expectations with attainable and measurable timelines.
- Imagine, formulate and create ways to connect with communities in mission.
- Support corps officers/pastors in their health and development alongside that of their corps/community church.

Church revitalization is not about finding the “magic pill” or “sure-to-succeed” programming. It is about discovering God’s vision for the church and practising it!

– **TOM CHEYNEY**



Revitalization Journey

Watch a podcast around the experience of revitalization, encouraging your corps to embark on this amazing journey! Discover that you are not alone in this process; you will have the support of a certified Field Consultant, your Divisional Headquarters (DHQ) team and your Territorial Headquarters (THQ) team every step of the way.



CONTACT

1. A corps officer, with the support of the Area Commander, contacts the Corps Mission Department.
2. The Corps Health Section recommends Field Consultants to the corps officer/Area Commander and the corps officer/pastor and key lay leader select a Field Consultant/Coach.

CLARIFY

3. A ministry agreement, outlining the primary objective(s) and projected timeline, is formed and agreed upon, and then saved for reference in a Microsoft Teams' Team. This Team includes a corps' leadership (generally corps officers and key lay leaders).

CONTRIBUTION

4. The process is initiated with the congregation. A timeline is created with scheduled check-in times.

CHECK-IN

5. Progress is reviewed with corps leaders and the Area Commander.
6. Discern if the objective has been reached or if a significant change in objective—or revision of the timeline—is required, such as amalgamation, closure or replant.

Corps Revitalization Process

This is a coaching and training opportunity that helps corps revitalize through small church gatherings, webinars and coaching. This journey allows your corps to navigate revitalization opportunities and challenges. Completing this journey will require commitment and faith, but you will receive comprehensive assistance and encouragement along the way.

After viewing the podcast and completing a ministry agreement, a corps leadership team will meet bi-monthly with a Field Consultant/Coach. On average, the corps revitalization process will take three to five years to complete.



GETTING STARTED: PASTORAL COHORT

This is a necessary first step as the leader(s) prepare themselves for the work of revitalization that lies before them. This step will last a minimum of six months as the leader learns with a group of fellow revitalizers. Each leader will:

- Engage with a spiritual coach.
- Enhance their discernment skills.
- Increase their conflict management proficiency.
- Learn the revitalization process.
- Engage with a revitalization coach.

MOVEMENT 1 Spirituality



Church Health: The first movement will focus on the corps' spiritual health. The foundation of the process must be grounded in prayer and the Word.

MOVEMENT 2 Community Connections



Intentional Missional Relationships: The second movement will focus on community connections as the corps embraces its God-given mission within their community.

MOVEMENT 3 Strategy



Sustainability Measures: The third movement will focus on the corps' future identity and its strategy to remain mission focused.

— Getting Started: The Pastoral Cohort

Revitalizing the church is not easy and leaders need to prepare themselves for the work ahead. This preparation will be completed with a cohort of other leaders embarking on the same process in their corps.

The Pastoral Cohort will cover six subjects:

1. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

The most important part of the preparation is the spiritual life of the leader. All leaders taking part in the revitalization process must engage with a spiritual director for the duration of the revitalization process. This helps leaders:

- ▶ Sense and respond to God's presence amid life's challenges.
- ▶ Listen to the Spirit's still, small voice and align with the Lord's purposes in life and ministry.
- ▶ Receive empathy and prayer, fostering intimacy with God and providing support in sensing and following the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Focus on experiencing God's presence and the spiritual formation of becoming more like Jesus, through an open-ended conversational process.
- ▶ Intentionally and consistently ask the Lord for guidance, discern God's plan for the ministry unit and community.

Recommended Resources:

Practicing the Way
by John Mark Comer

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality
by Pete Scazzero



While it is only required that the corps officer/pastor meet with a spiritual director during the revitalization process, continuing this relationship afterward is recommended.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE REVITALIZATION PROCESS

The entire plan for revitalization of the corps will be presented at the outset, providing a clear understanding of the path, concepts to be presented and timeframe for completion.

3. DISCERNMENT TRAINING

Spiritual leadership requires discernment: recognizing and responding to God's will both personally and in community. This involves deep listening and responding to the Spirit of God, moving beyond our reliance on cognition and intellectual hard work.

Recommended Resource:

Pursuing God's Will Together. A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups
by Ruth Haley Barton

4. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict is inevitable in revitalization. Leaders must prepare for it and learn how to navigate the challenges that change brings. The Salvation Army's Leadership Development Department may also be able to offer appropriate resources.

5. ECCLESIOLOGY

What does it mean to be the church? What does it mean to be a missional church? A study of *Community in Mission* by Phil Needham alongside *The Shaping of Things to Come* by Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost will provide a deeper understanding of Salvation Army missional ecclesiology.

Recommended Resources:

Community in Mission
by Phil Needham

The Shaping of Things to Come
by Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost

6. MESSAGE SERIES

An outline of the messages to be used for the first year of the revitalization process should be determined. This will help to ensure that the message of the revitalization process is clearly and regularly communicated to the congregation.

For example, the first movement of the process is about the spiritual health of the corps and its members, so appropriate messages include:

- ▶ The Sermon on the Mount
- ▶ Bible study
- ▶ Spiritual gifts
- ▶ Spiritual practises
- ▶ Prayer

Possible sermon series could include:

- ▶ Our missional God
- ▶ The role of the believer in the Missio Dei
- ▶ What is the church?
- ▶ Navigating transitions
- ▶ Emotionally healthy discipleship

This practise of outlining message series to be used each year will continue throughout the revitalization process.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE PASTORAL COHORT:

- ▶ We recommend that the cohort should meet monthly for eight months, taking into consideration public holidays.
- ▶ The first meeting should be an in-person gathering for two to three days of teaching, fellowship and worship.
- ▶ Revitalization coaches should attend the initial gathering to interact and share with the cohort members, and to discuss expectations.
- ▶ A team to lead the revitalization process will be formed which could include congregation members and corps council/leadership team members.

Movement 1: Spirituality

The revitalization process begins with the corps officers/lay leaders and congregation by focusing on the overall health of the corps, primarily its spiritual health. The foundation of this process must be grounded in prayer and the Word.



Photo: AdobeStock.com



TOPICS TO COVER IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT:

- ▶ Spiritual gifts
- ▶ Prayer
- ▶ Bible study
- ▶ Emotionally healthy discipleship
- ▶ Spiritual disciplines and practises
- ▶ The Sermon on the Mount

NOTES:

- ▶ The corps' leadership and their coach will determine the specific details of the topics to be covered, e.g., in Bible studies, sermon series, weekend events, etc.
- ▶ Before starting the first movement, it would be beneficial to establish a baseline of the congregation's spirituality and the corps' health.
 - ▶ The corps' leadership and coach will set markers necessary to advance to the next movement, using the corps' pre-established baseline to determine these markers.
 - ▶ Markers may include an increase in spiritual health, a vibrant culture of prayer, increased participation and evidence of spiritual disciplines.



Photo: Courtesy of Scarborough Citadel

— Movement 2: Community Connections

The second movement focuses on intentional missional relationships as the corps embraces its God-given mission to make disciples within their community. This movement connects the corps' identity with its mission—having discovered what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be the church, the congregation now seeks ways it can make disciples within its context.



Photo: AdobeStock.com

TOPICS TO COVER IN THE SECOND MOVEMENT:

- ▶ Missional Theology: Focus on the Missio Dei and the believer's role in God's mission.
- ▶ Community Exegesis: An in-depth analysis of the corps' community.
- ▶ Missional Programming: Evaluate current programming for missional significance and either incorporate missional objectives into them or cancel them.

NOTES:

Evaluating programs can be an emotional process. Care must be given to remind people that revitalization is concerned with the body of Christ and the kingdom of God over and above a Salvation Army program. Programs should be kingdom oriented and meet the needs of the larger community, not just a small group within the corps.



Photo: Courtesy of Scarborough Citadel

Movement 3: Strategy —

The third movement focuses on the corps' future identity and its strategy to remain mission focused after the revitalization process is complete.

TOPICS TO COVER IN THE THIRD MOVEMENT:

- ▶ Structures: Develop structures using resources from the pastoral cohort and the first movement. These structures should be detailed and may include discipleship, leadership, assimilation, hospitality, worship and ushers/greeters.
- ▶ Sustainability Measures: Include items necessary for a flourishing corps, such as succession plans, innovation, change management and next-generation considerations.
- ▶ Strategy: Set goals for the next year(s) including goals for the next generation, Natural Church Development (NCD) goals (if participating) and any goals required by THQ/DHQ.

NOTES:

- ▶ This part of the process is crucial and should not be taken lightly, as it determines the overall success of the entire process.
- ▶ Review these goals and look back at the revitalization process to identify any gaps in implementation.



Photo: Courtesy of Scarborough Citadel

— Important Considerations

- 1.** Leadership and the revitalization coach will determine the markers for advancing to the next movement prior to the start of each one.
- 2.** Corps leadership team will meet monthly with a revitalization coach the first year and then bimonthly.
- 3.** It would be helpful for corps officers/pastors to stay in the revitalization corps for a minimum of five to seven years.
- 4.** Revitalization corps should set aside one weekend annually to concentrate on spiritual growth.
- 5.** Plan a celebration when the revitalization corps moves from one movement to the next.
- 6.** THQ should have a community of professionals available for the process, including spiritual directors, revitalization coaches and leadership coaches.
- 7.** The corps involved in this revitalization journey should be excused from the Annual Corps Review for that period of time, other than providing the statistical reporting and membership updates.
- 8.** Current TSA initiatives, such as leadership development and discipleship, can be incorporated into the process.

Corps Revitalization Resources

Along with this guide and the support of your field consultant, a wealth of resources are available for you to access at:



These resources have been gathered from materials used by current corps planters and revitalizers, and cover topics that you will encounter daily as your corps works through the Corps Revitalization Process.

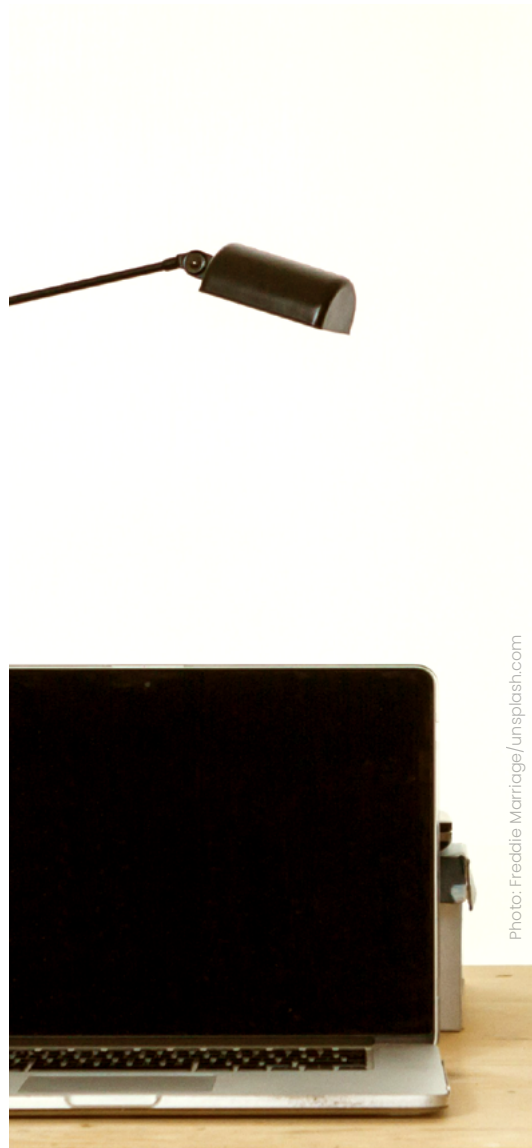




Photo: Peter Neumann/unsplash.com

Don't let your church be a cul-de-sac on the Great Commission highway.

– ED STETZER