

Discipleship Module: Championing a Culture of Positivity

For All Church Leaders

I. Purpose of This Training

Goal: Equip church leaders to intentionally create and protect a culture of encouragement, unity, joy, and service within the church.

Big Idea:

Culture is not accidental. It is cultivated. Every volunteer is a culture carrier.

“Let everything you do be done in love.” — 1 Corinthians 16:14

“Encourage one another and build each other up.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:11

II. What Is a Culture of Positivity?

A culture of positivity is:

- Encouragement over criticism
- Solutions over complaints
- Ownership over blame
- Gratitude over entitlement
- Unity over division
- Joyful service over reluctant obligation

It does **not** mean ignoring problems.
It means addressing them in a Christlike way.

DISCUSSION:

1. What person in your department do you think embodies these qualities most frequently? Why did you pick them?
 2. When it comes to creating a more positive culture, what is one area where you personally need to improve the most?
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III. Why Positivity Matters in the Church

A. It Reflects the Gospel

- The word “Gospel” means good news. When we share negativity with others, that’s the opposite of the Gospel.
- Our tone, attitudes, actions, and beliefs should match our message.

B. It Protects Unity

- Negativity spreads quickly.

- So does encouragement.

C. It Shapes First Impressions

Volunteers often set the emotional tone for guests before they hear a sermon or song. Body language often communicates far more than words.

D. It Strengthens Teams

Healthy culture retains volunteers and develops leaders. No one wants to join a church or serve on a team where there's a culture of negativity.

IV. Biblical Foundations

Have different people look up the following verses. Read each verse to the group and share a key word from each passage that relates to what it takes to create and maintain a culture of positivity.

- Hebrews 10:24–25
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Guard the Tongue

- Ephesians 4:29
- Proverbs 18:21

Pursue Unity

- Philippians 2:1–4
- Colossians 3:14

Rejoice

- Philippians 4:4
 - Nehemiah 8:10
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V. Core Principles of a Positive Volunteer Culture

1. We THINK Before We Speak

Before we speak, we always need to think:

- **T** — Is it True?
- **H** — Is it Helpful?
- **I** — Is it Inspiring?
- **N** — Is it Necessary?
- **K** — Is it Kind?

Which of the above comes easiest to you? Which is the greatest challenge?

2. We Own the Mission

Negative culture says:

- “That’s not my job.”

Positive culture says:

- “How can I help?”

Who is someone on your team that is always looking for ways to help?

3. We Assume the Best

Before reacting:

- Assume good intentions.
- Seek clarification.
- Avoid gossip.

Matthew 18:15 directly relates to addressing sin issues but going one-on-one is also the best way of clarifying communication, correcting confusion, or understanding motives.

When someone mentions a problem or states something negative about to you about someone in the church, practice saying, “What did they say when you talked them about this?”

Why do you think churches with a negativity cycle struggle so much with this concept?

4. We Celebrate Wins

Celebrate:

- Salvations
- Baptisms
- Small improvements
- Faithful service
- Team effort
- Weekly wins
- Each other

Gratitude fuels joy. What’s one thing you’d like to celebrate about your department today?

5. We Handle Problems the Right Way

As stated earlier, a positive culture does not avoid conflict. It handles it biblically and constructively. At One Church, every ministerial staff member is required to address any concerns with other staff members *directly* without involving other members of the staff in their situation. If they cannot resolve the conflict between themselves, the following instructions are in each of their job descriptions:

Neither the staff member nor any member of his/her family should speak negatively of any other staff member (or church member) in the presence of others. Concerns shall be shared privately with the Senior Pastor. If the s/he does not believe the Senior Pastor is adequately addressing their concerns, after once again discussing those concerns with the Senior Pastor, s/he may request a meeting with the Senior Pastor and the Leadership Team/Elders.

DISCUSSION:

- How does this policy both guard the unity of the church and create a biblical culture of positivity among our staff?
- Obviously, not every department's issues need to make it to the Senior Pastor's desk or be discussed in an Elder meeting. How would you word a similar statement for how your department needs to handle conflict?

VI. Practical Volunteer Applications

In Guest Services

- Smile intentionally.
- Use names.
- Speak hope.
- Avoid frustration in front of guests.

In Kids/Students Ministry

- Encourage kids publicly.
- Correct privately.
- Affirm parents.

In Worship/Production Teams

- Speak solution-focused language. What needs to be done vs. Who isn't doing it
 - Encourage excellence without harshness.
 - Celebrate teamwork, not spotlight.
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In Small Groups

- Protect the room from sarcasm or cynicism.
- Redirect negative spirals.
- Model vulnerability and authenticity without complaining.
- Do not speak negatively of any other church member in the form of “prayer requests”

VII. Warning Signs of Cultural Drift

Watch for:

- Eye-rolling
- Sarcasm
- Chronic complaining
- “Back in the day” comparisons
- Blame language
- Passive-aggressive communication

Negativity spreads quietly.

Leaders and volunteers must take the initiative to guard against it.

VIII. Interactive Discussion Questions

1. What behaviors make you feel encouraged on a team?
2. Where do we most often see negativity creep in?
3. What language shifts could we implement immediately?
4. How should we respond when we hear gossip?

IX. Role Play Exercise

Scenario 1: A volunteer says, “Leadership never communicates anything clearly.” How do you respond in a way that:

- Acknowledges frustration
- Protects unity
- Encourages constructive action?

Scenario 2:

A team member complains loudly in front of guests.

What is the right response?

X. Personal Commitment

Have each volunteer complete: “I will champion positivity by...”

Examples:

- 1 encouraging text per week to a teammate
- 1 public affirmation each Sunday
- 0 participation in gossip