



DNA Strand #4: Adaptability

Ice-Breaker Question

“Movements that drift away from their core beliefs are always at risk, but so are movements that regard the way they currently function as sacred.” – Steve Addison

Go around the circle and share my favorite sports team, and favorite moment in that team’s life. Then share my worst moment as a fan!

Watch VIDEO #6: ADAPTABILITY

Digging In – Be sure to take notes on any “AHAs” you have or questions as you watch the video.

1. Myth #4 is “*The LCMS never welcomed change.*” What surprised me about the history that Rev. Newman shared in this segment? Go around the circle and share any of these “surprises,” or anything else that Rev. Newman shared from LCMS history that exposes this particular myth about the LCMS.



2. Next, share some examples of how we have seen our own congregation adapt to change. What was good about that adaptation? What was hard?

3. Go around the circle, and each person name one change in our world that, in his or her opinion, is threatening the truth of the Gospel. What makes this unsettling?

4. Let's return to the icebreaker question about sports (yes, this is going somewhere!). Think of my team and the particular sport it represents. Go around the circle and share how each specific sport has changed over the years. Then, talk about what has stayed the same.

5. There's a reason we are talking sports! Rev. Newman says, *"To fulfill their mission, the most effective movements are prepared to change everything about themselves except their basic beliefs."* Like teams that change drastically but still play the same game, people and churches can change drastically and stick to their basic beliefs. Share with one another: What is one core way I have changed over the years, but have stayed grounded in faith?

6. Rev. Newman says, *"The Innovative movement of the Gospel is founded in unwavering faithfulness to the Gospel. It's who we are."* Given our discussion so far today, what does this mean to me?

Getting Traction in Scripture

- Read Matthew 6:31-34 out loud together.

- What do I think Jesus wants us to understand through these words?



- These verses are a promise from Jesus. What specific comfort, confidence, and hope have I received from His word here today?
- Read Matthew 6: 31-34 again together. What stood out this time?
- How does knowing Jesus and His promises help me fulfill the call to be open to change?
- In the video, Rev. Newman shared that much of LCMS history was responding to the emergency of souls being lost by changing practices or methods or structures so that those souls could be reached with the Gospel. What needs to change in my life or in the life of our congregation to help us meet the emergency of souls being lost?

Last Month's Action Step

Over the course of the past couple months we have focused (through this group study) on working with other churches in the community in order to share, pay forward, or give a taste of the Good News. This study encouraged us to create a list of one item, person, or group to connect with in order to bring this action step to life. Share once again how that is going and how we might improve this process.

Monthly Action Step

Return to the list that we have been working on with the partners we're building in our community. *What needs to happen now?* (This question is purposefully open so that our group can determine how best to proceed.)



Closing Action and Prayer

Last month, we prayed to use “the treasures” that God has given us for His sake to propagate the Gospel. *Go around the circle this time and pray specifically for one area in my life, or in our congregation, that needs to change or grow for the sake of the Gospel.* If a specific action step comes out of this prayer time, talk to the group about it and someone in leadership, asking for discernment on how to proceed.

BONUS: Watch “Bonus Video 4: LCEF” in the Gospel DNA Toolkit folder in the Resources section of nowlcms.org. How might our congregation use some of the opportunities and initiatives mentioned?





SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT **Leadership Team Guide**

“Adaptability”

This additional study accompanies the small group discussion guide. It is designed for leadership teams as a process to discuss a strategic ministry plan connected to their mission and local community. The Leadership Team Guide is a focused group process that leads to specific action steps with progress checks at future meetings.

Note: *At this stage of meeting regularly as leaders (five months), effectiveness has to do with two leadership practices: listening to one another carefully, and consistently following through on goals. This guide is built “lean” so that, as you move forward together, your leadership team can focus on discussion and meaningful action on items that you identify.*

DISCUSS/EVALUATE

- 1. Adaptability is a balancing act, as noted by author Steve Addison: honoring foundational beliefs while at the same time finding new ways to transmit those truths to new people in new contexts (“Gospel DNA” p.148). How well is our leadership team handling this balancing act in our congregation?**
- 2. What challenges are in the way of “better balance?”**
- 3. What practices might help us gain “better balance?”**
- 4. Rev. Newman asks, “What needs to change in the church? How are we, the family of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, being called to adapt these days?” (p.161). Take some time to answer these questions and consider their impact.**



PLAN

5. How does this discussion on adaptability influence our congregation's ministry plan? What ideas can we incorporate going forward?

6. Sometimes a ministry needs outside support or help to review balance, especially if leadership determines together that the congregation is having trouble walking into mission. Whether or not this is the case for our congregation, make time in the planning discussion to ask this pointed question: *"How might outside support or guidance be helpful to us?"*

IMPLEMENT

7. Don't move on without identifying the answers to the next four questions:
 - a. What actions does our team need to undertake before we meet next?
 - b. Which leaders will make this happen?
 - c. Who can we invite to be involved? (*Try to think of people who have not participated so far.*)
 - d. When is our next meeting?

PRAY

(This activity mirrors the prayer in the previous section). If you have not done so, use that section as a guide. In addition, include any specific thoughts or action plans from this meeting in your prayers, asking the Lord of the Harvest to provide His guidance and courage to share His unchanging Gospel in an ever-changing world.

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