



# 5 Talent Academy

Fire, Faith, Fruit

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. What is the 5 Talent Academy?

It's an action step described in All Things New Task Force and began with a resolution from the conference floor. The Academy's purpose is to offer an opportunity and resources for existing congregations to seek the next step in mission and ministry.

### 2. What are the core values of the academy?

- A partnership of the willing (Fire)
- Conviction that the Lord intends great things for every congregation (Faith)
- Every church has talents within that can be multiplied (Fruit)

### 3. What are the key focus areas of the academy?

- Worship
- Evangelism
- Faith Development
- Engage in Mission and Ministry with the Poor
- Stewardship
- Planting New Faith Communities

### 4. What are the goals of the academy?

Our goals challenge us to be faithful, fruitful servants and are guided by our Wesleyan values and include:

- **Worship**: 5% annual increase in average worship attendance
- **Evangelism**: Professions of faith represent 10% average worship attendance
- **Faith Development**: Small group participation represents 50% of average worship attendance
- **Engage in Mission and Ministry with the Poor**: A. 50% of worship attendance serves by actively participating in relational ministry (e.g., not just donating socks but face to face with the poor); B. 10% of annual operational giving supports ministry with the poor
- **Stewardship**: 5% annual increase in operational giving

### 5. What will we do in the academy?

- Participate in a three-year curriculum
- Keep each other accountable
- Have joint learning experiences and peer sharing
- Plant a whole bunch of thriving new faith communities
- Enjoy the challenge together!

## 6. How is the academy funded?

The academy has several sources of funding which include: church extension funds and conference registration funds.

## 7. How do I calculate annual average worship attendance?

Same definition as used for conference definition (i.e., includes children in worship and nursery).

## 8. What happens if I don't meet the 5 Talent Academy goals?

Upon joining the academy, the academy goals become congregational goals and will be self-monitored by the congregation. In addition, progress will be discussed in peer groups. **WHILE NO ONE WILL BE DISMISSED FOR MISSING THE GOALS**, it is our prayer that our mutual accountability will encourage one another to produce the fruit our risen Lord expects from His churches

## 9. What does planting a new faith community mean?

The definition of a New Faith Community is taken from our All Things New document. The following are understandings of what constitutes and does not constitute a new faith community in the Virginia Conference:

- Receives new members
- Did not exist before
- Ministry is consistent with the doctrine and polity (disciplinary governance policies) of The United Methodist Church
- Is an entity that has a primary focus of reaching new people who are not in existing churches
- Is different from a parent congregation (geographically, language, ethnicity, and/or generational)
- Knows why it exists and has a clear sense of mission/vision and who God is calling them to reach
- Gathers for regular worship
- Has intentional disciple-making, mission and financial stewardship systems
- Has the understood expectation of starting a new faith community in 10 years

A New Faith Community in the Virginia Conference is not:

- An additional worship service at an existing site unless this service is an intentional offering to identified groups of persons who are not significantly represented in the current church composition
- Building a building, nor paying for building a building

There are and will be many different vehicles for fulfilling this goal and a semester of the curriculum will be devoted to learning how to do it. The primary point is to take the DNA of healthy, growing, fruitful congregations and multiply that within our new congregations.

**10. How will the peer groups be determined?**

Peer groups will be based upon affinity, geography, and congregation size. There will be two peer group meetings each year and the locations and timing will be determined by the group.

**11. Does the giving of the apportionments count toward the 5 Talent Academy goals?**

Yes. Specifically, all of the world service apportionment counts toward the ten percent goal of being in ministry with the poor. There are several other denominational giving opportunities that will also count, including (but not limited to) disaster relief, UMVIM support, Advance Specials , and Conference offering.

**12. What is the relationship between Bishop Schnase's *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* and the 5 Talent Academy?**

Both were developed at the same time under different circumstances. The 5 Talent Academy endorses, celebrates and supports the current excitement & passion around the book.

**13. What do mean by ministry of the poor?**

Our goal is for every 5 Talent Academy Church to be in aggressive ministry with the poor. Our prayer is that this numerical/financial goal will drive the congregation towards those who are struggling for life. The ultimate goal, however, is not to simply write a check. As a people called Methodist, we always seek to be in relationship with those who hurt.

**14. Is the 5 Talent Academy participation mandated by the conference?**

No. This is what we mean by partnership of the willing. The academy is available to any Virginia United Methodist congregation that chooses to enter into the covenant, curriculum and desires to take the next step.

**15. What is the conference's long-term commitment to the longevity to the academy?**

The 5 Talent Academy is part of All Things New Task Force which mapped out a long-term strategy to fruitfulness and multiplying the Virginia Conference. It is included in the original vision of establishing at least 250 new faith communities in the next 30 years.