

Committee on Professional Development and Support

Suggestions for Local Chapter Activities

The Professional Development Committee of each chapter is responsible for providing information to members which will be helpful in seeking, securing and maintaining their positions as church or temple musicians. Here are some ideas which local Professional Development Committees might find useful in developing programs and activities to meet this responsibility. A contact person from the national committee has been provided for each topic to assist in developing these program ideas. For more info on any of these topics, contact Committee Director David Rhody at drhody1@comcast.net

1. **Improving Clergy-Musician Relations.** Plan a discussion meeting around positive approaches to improving staff relations, possibly a book discussion using a resource like Eileen Guenther's *Rivals or a Team?* or a similar study with practical ideas. You should consider inviting a guest moderator (Dr. Guenther does accept invitations from local chapters when her schedule permits).
2. **Conflict Resolution Training for Church Musicians, Clergy and Lay Leaders.** One- or two-day sessions may be offered. (Tamara Albrecht has written such a curriculum and a book and/or training manual is in process) Participants receive a certificate of completion
 - a. Sessions may include or also be exclusively offered at church governing retreats (such as vestry, council, session). The church musician would hopefully be invited to such retreats. This would be a time to overview how music and worship are one entity and outline the role of minister and musicians partnerships as having equal status in different areas of ministry. The conflict resolution workshop includes such discussion
 - b. Workshops are holistic in the sense that the entire scope of know thyself and how each person fits into the mold of handling or preventing conflict in a godly manner is explored using biblical, historical, and sociological sources and examples
 - c. Workshops could be offered at AGO conventions, either before or after the event. Sessions should be at least 6-8 hours. Two days would be ideal to give enough time for role-play and comprehension of a new lifestyle concept.
3. **How Can the Job Interview Help One Make the Best Decision if the Job is Offered?** Some ideas include
 - a. Observing staff dynamics and body language
 - b. Fair compensation and support of music ministry
 - c. Equal and respectful treatment of training and skills
4. **That Difficult Conversation with Your Employer – Talking About Salary.** How you should prepare for this conversation, what resources are available to support your presentation, how to conduct the meeting, how to follow-up.

5. How Can I Encourage Fair Evaluations?

- a. Discuss ways one can encourage evaluation conversation that is kept positive and supportive
- b. What language can one use that is honest but not judgmental?
- c. Are clergy also evaluated by the musician?
- d. What word can replace *evaluation*? Is there a better way to write an evaluation that does not encourage judgment? (possibly asking how can ministers and musicians assist each other)

6. Can Mediation Help Settle Conflict Situations Between Clergy and Musicians?

- a. Include mediation in the contract or agreement if needed and either have the church agree to pay or split the cost
- b. Mediation can also be used before a situation gets out of control if one feels an understanding is not possible between musician and clergy
- c. Be advised that mediation is a private session between two people or small groups, where all conversation remains confidential. At the end, if both parties reach an agreement, a contract between both parties is drawn up but is not legally binding
- d. The mediator is not biased, but only serves as a conduit to keep the process flowing and respectful
- e. Mediation is a good tool for understanding and learning the truth behind why one was fired, mistreated, or not understood. This process is also an educational tool for clergy and musicians to better understand each other as “human” and help each other to move on in a positive manner. If clergy and/or musicians save face through private mediation it might create a more honest environment for improvement and how to better handle future relationships and unsettling situations.

7. Plan an Activity Around Mentoring Young Chapter Members. Inexperienced members share their questions and issues in their work situation with more experienced members who can offer guidance.

8. Organize a Small Group from the Chapter for a “Musicians’ Feast.” Meet for lunch in members’ homes or at a local restaurant to share what is happening in your careers and spiritual lives. You can discuss upcoming events, music for the church year, and situations which call for advice from your colleagues. The idea is to listen and offer support.

9. Should I Have a Contract? Discuss pros and cons of a written agreement with your employer, considering materials available from the AGO resources and successes and failures of various types of agreements.

10. What Every Church Musician Should Know About Copyright Law. Invite a knowledgeable resources person to discuss the restrictions on copying and performing published works.

11. Plan a Mini-Discussion at Each Meeting on One Brief Topic – like an infomercial, address and discuss a developmental topic, possibly using an article or letter to the editor in TAO, in a fun and interesting way.

12. **Plan a Coffee Chat with your Regional Coordinator of Professional Development.** Regional officers are available to visit local chapters as their schedules allow. Ask the questions and air issues which have not been adequately answered.
13. **Organize a “Musicians’ Roundtable”** – a small group from your chapter which meets one Saturday per month to perform repertoire for each other, experiment with style and registration, and share insights on interpretation.
14. **Make a Conscious Effort to Invite Ministers to Meetings** – hear their perspective on staff responsibilities and duties. Have them participate in singing and musical activities at your meetings; trade roles in worship service as a learning experience; ask them to demonstrate how to chant. Plan workshops which are helpful both to musicians and clergy and build a closer relationship between these staff members.