

Christian Educators Association International

Local Network Leaders' Handbook

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. (Psalm 133:1-3)

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are from the Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV).
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Introduction

Mission Statement

The Mission of Christian Educators Association International is to Encourage, Equip and Empower Educators according to Biblical Principles.

In pursuit of this mission, we:

- Proclaim God's Word as the source of wisdom and knowledge
- Portray teaching as a God given calling and ministry
- Promote educational excellence as an expression of Christian commitment
- Preserve our Judeo-Christian heritage and values through education
- Promote the legal rights of Christians in public schools
- Provide a forum on educational issues with a Christian world view
- Partner with churches, parachurch organizations, educational institutions and parents
- Provide resources and benefits for educators including professional liability insurance

Statement of Faith

We believe in:

- One God eternally existent in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- Christ, the Son of God, His virgin birth, His miracles, His vicarious atoning death for our sins, His bodily resurrection and His return.
- The need and reality of spiritual conversion by the Holy Spirit through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit Who enables us to live a godly life.

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Chapter One

Networks

A. Introduction

When people with similar burdens and shared commitments link up with each other, a new and fresh dream is often born. They feel they have joined together in a special partnership with God Himself (through His body, the Church). This is “networking!”

Networking is...the linking together of like-minded people for the common good.

One other expression often used to describe networking is **synergy**: the joint action of individual agents in which the total effect is greater than the sum of their efforts when taken independently.

—from Building 21st Century Networks by
National Network of Youth Ministries

Because many Christian educators find their profession so time-consuming, “joining” another professional group that meets regularly and requires commitment seems impossible. In addition, some leaders have a zeal and concern for Christian educators in their local area, but find formally organizing a group prohibitive because of time constraints and other responsibilities.

It is for this reason that the CEAI Board of Directors has approved a group policy that is much less time and energy taxing. CEAI recognizes small networks of Christian educators meeting together either regularly or sporadically for prayer and mutual concerns under a CEAI approved leader.

This kind of fellowship group will benefit many CEAI members and other Christians in the field of education. They will find support, inspiration and help they may need to live the day to day struggle in the classroom.

B. Network Leadership

Key to the maintenance of networks is the Network Coordinator. This person must have a vision of what God wants to do in his or her local area through Christian educators. He or she must also feel the needs of these educators and have a heart for their struggles as Christian professionals.

Beginning and/or maintaining a CEAI network takes prayerful consideration, a servant’s heart, and the sense that the Holy Spirit has called you to this work. It also takes a commitment to God’s qualifications for leadership. If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach . (I Tim. 3:1-7). Although this passage is specifically speaking of leaders in the church, the qualifications are necessary for anyone desiring to lead a local group for Christian Educators Association. The passage reveals a capable leader as one who has balance in his or her private and public life, who exercises moderation and humility, and who is known for character of good repute outside the church. This would include an educator who has the respect of those with whom he or she works, including students.

A leader must be mature enough to understand the perseverance required, the possible criticisms that may come, and the necessity for prayer in each aspect of the work. In other words, he or she must “count the cost.” Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to

finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' (Luke 14: 28-30).

It is essential to depend on God for His equipping in every area of network leadership. Having a Godly vision for the work of CEAI must be at the foundation of leadership. Without it, success will be short-lived and discouragement will bring the group down. Find others who will pray with and for you as you consider this ministry.

Besides the spiritual qualifications of leadership, CEAI leaders should have experience in the "real world" of school. They should understand the stresses and passions of the education profession. They should be connected with local church leaders and other para-church organizations. They should make every effort to attend CEAI national conferences and stay in touch with other CEAI leaders across the nation. When called upon to present the work of CEAI, they should be knowledgeable and possess a dedication to the purposes of CEAI.

Finally, the CEAI leader must understand his or her role as that of a servant. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:26-28). There will be times as a leader when you will have to work alone, when others won't take the responsibility they should, and when you will have to forgive and "take up the cross." Remember that it is the Lord Christ you are serving!

The Network Coordinator should seek to acquaint all Christian educators and supportive individuals with the CEAI national organization, and to expose them to all the benefits available to members. Membership brochures and other CEAI materials should be made available each time the network groups meet.

The Network Coordinator must be a CEAI member, understand and affirm the Statement of Belief and policies of CEAI, and take initiative in reporting to the national office and keeping them abreast of network activities at least annually. In order that the network become officially affiliated with CEAI, this Coordinator must submit application to CEAI Board of Directors for approval.

C. Obtaining Network Approval

CEAI Local Networks, informally organized, can be established in local areas using the following guidelines:

I. Purposes:

- A. Prayer—off-campus and on**
- B. Mutual support**
- C. Information dissemination**

II. Local Leadership:

Unlike chapters with elected officers, the local network will be led by a Network Coordinator, responsible for:

- A. Implementing fellowship groups.**
- B. Reporting activities quarterly to the National CEAI Office.**
- C. Acting as a CEAI resource to churches, groups, para-church organizations.**

III. Authority:

Beginning Network Coordinators will submit a letter of recommendation and a letter of intent to the National Board for approval. This letter of intent should state that the Coordinator subscribes to the CEAI Statement of Belief, and will follow the policy of CEAI.

D. Network Meetings-Time and Place

The time and place of meetings should be determined by the members of the group. Often, network groups are small and prefer to meet in private homes. Church parlors, library meeting rooms, even school classrooms (depending on the length and time of the meeting) provide possible places.

If the purpose of the group is prayer, networks can meet before or after school. Longer meetings can be held weekday evenings or Saturday mornings.

If there is more than one network group within a local area, the Coordinator may schedule occasional joint meetings. These joint meetings may take the form of a banquet or to hear a special speaker. In this case, the meeting would have to be planned for a site adaptable to a larger group.

E. 3-Fold Ministry Model

I. Spiritual Growth

Encourage educators in your network to grow in their faith by providing opportunities, both formal and informal. First of all, encourage members to be involved in their local churches. It is essential that Christian educators, while they love network meetings and the support they offer, never displace their commitment to the local church with activity in CEAI.

Provide a devotional from Scripture at each meeting and base the activities of your network on God's Word. Attendees should have no doubt as to the importance of submission to that Truth. Take opportunities from time to time to assign Scripture readings or devotionals to individuals within your network cell. Resist any attempt to quibble over small doctrinal issues that may differ among various members of the group.

Most networks meet for the purpose of prayer for their own members, their schools, and the educational needs of the nation. Moms in Touch, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ International, has a wonderful guide for group prayer in their small handbook. CEAI's Public Schools Power Prayers is another wonderful resource for network leaders.

If your network group meets away from school campuses, encourage your members to participate in a school prayer group on their campus. These can be short, informal, once-a-week get-togethers, or a more structured group meeting with a prayer leader and a longer format. Some school teams meet more often than once a week, sponsor prayer breakfasts for their school or district educators, and aggressively seek active prayer partners, whether or not they join CEAI. Remind your network members to be cognizant of the law, protective of the school working day, and sensitive to other programs and staff members when meeting on campus. If it becomes uncomfortable or difficult to meet at school, prayer groups can find a church hall, restaurant, or other public meeting places.

In all things that the CEAI network does, it should be obvious that you are first of all a Christian group, submissive to the Lord Christ and His word.

II. Following Christ in the Profession of Education (with material quoted and adapted from *The Gift of Teaching* by Drs. Daniel C. Elliott, R. Lewis Hodge, Mr. Roger White and Mrs. Clara Ruffin and published by CEAI).

If Christians are living for Christ, they bring Salt and Light to their schools. (Matt. 5: 13-16). In many ways this brings a Christian in conflict with the predominately secular culture of the public school. Because most members of a CEAI network group are educators in public schools, reminders on living “Christianly” in that environment become an essential part of the purpose of scheduled meetings. Christians need to see their workplace as a place to live victoriously, not as victims. Christians need to understand that God is sovereign, and that the U.S Constitution along with the First Amendment is compatible with the freedoms of Christianity. Educators that live transformed lives, and work within just laws are a powerful force for God to use as He will. Therefore, an essential element in network information should be about the law as it relates to living for Christ within the confines of the Constitution.

Christians working in public schools should be effective transmitters of good character and values. These values are transmitted both directly and indirectly, both on purpose and unexpectedly. As Christian educators relate to one another, to other school staff members, and to administrators, the model of Christ-like character should be seen. The work ethic and moral private lives of Christians in public education should be above reproach, so that Christ is seen clearly. According to Galatians 5:22,23, “there is no law” against the Fruit that the Spirit produces in a Christian’s life. This kind of life remains the most effective tool for revealing Christ to others.

Christian teachers, for the sake of Christ, need to take leadership in their schools in regard to curriculum and textbook selection, policy development, and cultural aspects of local education. Often, they can effect decisions concerning hiring of new administrators and teachers. By getting involved, they can influence these matters as no one else can. They become Christ’s eyes and ears, as well as His voice within boards and committees where decisions are made that affect the entire school district. CEAI networks and chapters become the “sending team” for such leadership, and give needed support.

As an expression of Christian commitment, CEAI networks need to emphasize educational excellence. Individual network groups can provide models of excellent teachers, encourage professionalism in various subject areas, and even promote mentoring relationships between experienced and inexperienced teachers. Encourage professional growth among your network membership and the overriding knowledge of God and His word as central to that growth.

III. Compassionate Outreach in Christ’s Name

CEAI networks can reach out in Christ’s name within the community. This not only blesses those touched by the ministry, but encourages growth in the individual CEAI member. I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. (Matt. 25:40).

Ministering to school staff members who are sick or bereaved with personal notes of encouragement, meals, and visits shows the compassion of Christ to them. A team of Christian teachers within a building can make a difference in many lives through this kind of ministry.

Bibles can be distributed to young people by CEAI networks. The American Bible Society offers New Testaments for a very reasonable cost. Distribution can be to Christian day schools, homeless/transition shelters, public after school Christian clubs, and to children of the imprisoned through the Angel Tree program. Contact the CEAI national office for information.

School supplies and uniforms donated to homeless and abuse shelters are appropriate gifts from educators as part of a network outreach. Serving on teams for local food drives, home building, ministries to jails and convalescent homes gives CEAI members opportunities to tangibly show Christ's love.

Organizing a school district to pray for their schools is a worthy project at the beginning of a school year. One small group planned a "Prayer on the Playground" endeavor that included every school in a large urban district. Area clergy, interested Christian leaders, and a CEAI member organized this event.

An Outreach Committee from a local network can find unique ways to minister within the community in Christ's name. By making the network members aware of the needs, and giving them opportunity to serve, they are helping to fulfill Christ's commission to give to those in need. We must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35).

There are some local groups within CEAI who have done phenomenal ministry in each of these three areas. Call the national office for contacts you can make for suggestions for your network.

F. Network Models

I. Ohio Model

This type of Network meets as a Home Cluster. The meeting lasts for two hours with the simple purposes of fellowship, Bible study and prayer. When the group gets to twelve members, each of the twelve is encouraged to begin a "satellite" cluster of his or her own, thus multiplying the impact. Bible Study materials can be provided by the Network Coordinator.

II. Florida Model

This type of Network is school-campus based. An Encourager Group is formed within an individual school and is for educators (any who are school staff members) in that building. They can choose to meet daily, bi-weekly, or weekly. The format of their meetings and the time allotment will vary from group to group. Prayer, personal sharing, Scripture and devotional readings, and singing praise songs, are all appropriate activities for these Encourager Groups. More than one group may be formed on a campus in order to meet the differing needs and schedules of staff members.

In this model, a team of people who are interested in the welfare of educators gather to pray and determine ways to minister to educators within a school district. This Empower Group ministers to those in the Encourager Groups on their school campuses as well as to those teachers who do not have such a group. The Group Team leader keeps accurate lists of teachers involved in their school district, stays in contact with Encourager Group

coordinators and gathers the team together for prayer and fellowship. The Empower Groups seek ways to reach out to the teachers in their district, and support efforts to create new Encourager Groups on school campuses.

Leadership in this model grows to accommodate the number of groups and number of group members. Area leadership is encouraged over several school districts.

For more information on these and other models, contact the CEAI National Office.

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Chapter Two Attachments

A. Book Lists for Leaders

Buzzell, Sid. *The Leadership Bible: Leadership Principles From God's Word*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

Colby, Kimberlee W. *Teachers & Religion in Public Schools*. Pasadena, CA: Light in Learning Press, 2000.

Elliott, Daniel C., Hodge, R. Lewis. *The Gift of Teaching: A Handbook for Christians Who Serve in Schools*. Pasadena, CA: Light in Learning Press, 1996.

Nichols, Fern. *Moms in Touch: Mothers Meeting to Pray for Their Schools & Children*. San Bernardino, CA: ©Fern Nichols, 1989.

Turpen, Judy. *Public Schools Power Prayers*. Pasadena, CA: Light in Learning Press, 1998.

Contact the National Office for information on these publications.

B. Local CEAI "friends"

From time to time CEAI local chapters and networks desire to work with other like-minded organizations. Within a local area there are other para-church organizations who are reaching out to pray, to encourage, to evangelize, to minister. There is strength in cooperation, and wisdom in networking with these organizations for a greater good.

Local clergy associations will often team with CEAI leaders for projects within a city or area. Seek friends in such an organization who can help you accomplish your goals.

Besides grassroots organizations on the local level, many national organizations have local representatives with whom your chapter should consider working. Some of these are:

Alliance Defense Fund
602-953-1200

American Center for Law & Justice
757-226-2489

Assemblies of God Youth Alive
800-545-2766
ya@ag.org

Book of Hope USA
888-845-4673
info@bookofhope.com

Campus Crusade for Christ Student Venture
800-699-4678
venture@ccci.org

Christian Community Credit Union (CCCU)
Contact: Larry Montgomery
800-347-2228

Christian Legal Society
703-642-1070
www.elsnet.org

Church of God (Cleveland)
423-478-7232
www.extremegem.org

Concerts of Prayer, International
908-771-0146
www.gospelcom.net/copi

English Language Institute for China
Contact: Marilee Crowell
909-599-6773

Fellowship of Christian Athletes
816-921-0909
www.fca.org

First Priority of America, Inc.
615-221-4963
www.firstpriority.org

Intercessors for America
540-751-0980
www.ifapray.org

Interlinc
800-725-3300
www.interlinc-online.com

International Institute for Christian Studies
Contact: Daryl McCarthy
800-776-4427

Josh McDowell Ministry
972-907-1000
www.josh.org/www.beyondbelief.com

Liberty Council
800-671-1776

Link Institute
260-359-4155
www.linkinstitute.com

Mission America Coalition
760-22-2707
www.missionamerica.org

Moms in Touch Int'l
858-486-4065
www.momsintouch.org

Reasons to Believe
Contact: Hugh Ross
626-335-1480 x118

Right to Work
800-336-3600

Rutherford Institute
804-978-3888

Sonlife Ministries
630-365-5855
www.sonlife.com

Western Center for Law & Religious Freedom
800-870-2831

Young Life
719-381-1800
www.younglife.org

Youth for Christ
303-843-9000
www.yfc.org

YouthFront
913-262-3900
www.youthfront.com