



FEATS Participant Handbook

**For Evangelical Friends Church Southwest
Friends Center
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Introduction

What is FEATS anyway?

FEATS stands for Friends Equipping and Training System. It is a non-degreed program for leadership development offered by the Friends Center of Evangelical Friends Church Southwest. It is designed to work within the context of a local church, a group of churches or regionally. The goal of FEATS is to equip a wide variety of leaders for ministry to fuel a world-wide church multiplication movement, expanding the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe God has called us to plant 40 new churches in the next five years. To do that, we must increase our resources for leadership development. A wide variety of leaders will be needed to serve in all aspects of ministry. If participants are faithful to the FEATS process, they will come out of it prepared to minister and lead in whatever capacity best aligns with their gifts. FEATS will help people:

- integrate 15 EFC leadership values into their lives and ministries encompassing character development, ministry skills and lifelong learning
- understand their call
- discover where and how they fit into our church multiplication movement

Who is FEATS for?

It is for any leader within EFCSW who wants to develop and hone their leadership skills for use in a local church. FEATS will help them discover their part, as well as set them on a trajectory for lifelong learning.

Why are we doing FEATS this way?

1. God brings opportunities for spiritual growth; people can choose whether or not to actively cooperate with that process.¹

God brings experiences into our lives to teach us and grow us. The Holy Spirit urges us forward. We can choose the degree to which we cooperate with that process. Our part is opening ourselves up to what God is doing through paying attention, deepening our awareness, and growing in obedience. FEATS provides a supportive, encouraging environment and resources to facilitate that development.

Key Idea: Spirit guided

¹ I Cor. 3:7-7 “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”

2. To function effectively as leaders, people need to establish practices of lifelong learners.²

We best prepare for leadership by developing habits that will serve us for years to come as people who continue to learn and grow. Although the FEATS program is only three years long, with an optional fourth year, we recognize that learning and spiritual growth will always be in process as people continue to serve in leadership. Therefore, FEATS prepares leaders by helping them develop practices now that will serve them well for years to come, resulting in the longevity and fruitfulness of future ministry.

Key Idea: Habit for lifelong learning

3. People learn best when learning is done in the context of life and ministry.

People learn best when they have an immediate need for information or skills. This type of learning has been called just-in-time learning or experiential learning; it means learning with a view toward immediate application. By combining ministry experience with content, FEATS creates a just-in-time learning environment.

Key Idea: Just-in-time learning

4. People develop best within a consistent coaching relationship.

Coaching encourages people to reflect, refocus, and formulate next-steps in an environment that nurtures, encourages and empowers their listening to the Holy Spirit.³ Wisdom is then cultivated through a cycle of action > reflection > action > reflection that coaching fosters. By assessing outcomes and then making mid-course adjustments, coaching cultivates a pattern for continued development.

Key Idea: Coaching

5. People learn best in community rather than in isolation.

People play various roles in the body of Christ and none of us are complete alone. We need others alongside us. Coming together with others who are different from us, and yet journeying alongside us, propels

² Phil. 3:12-14 “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

³ John 16:8, 13 “When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

the learning process forward. Through engagement with others, we also come to better understand our own role in the body of Christ. FEATS' learning sessions facilitate shared reflection, the processing of experiences, and deeper learning.

Key Idea: Community

FEATS Delivery System

FEATS consists of two parallel processes.

The first of these is a *coaching process*. In FEATS you will be assigned a coach who will meet with you one-on-one for a pre-assessment and post-assessment session to help you come up with a plan to integrate leadership principles and values into your lifestyle, both personally and within the context of your ministry. Then you will meet three times within the context of each module for coaching sessions with two other FEATS participants to encourage you and keep you on track for your leadership development.

Secondly there is a *learning process* where you will participate in a community of other FEATS participants. Your learning under girds the leadership values you are incorporating into your life and ministry with a firm biblical and theological grasp of your Christian faith. The process of communal learning will inspire and propel you to study as a life-long habit that will stand you in good stead well beyond your FEATS experience.

By participating in both the coaching and learning processes side-by-side you will find yourself in a unique place to hear from and respond to the Holy Spirit, integrating tremendous leadership values into your life and ministry in the context of community and accountability that will empower your ministry for whatever God has planned for you ahead!

The role of the coach in FEATS

Every participant in FEATS will be assigned a coach. The role of the coach within FEATS is a vitally important and critical ministry for the raising up of Christian leaders who will follow and serve Christ in the complex world of the 21st Century. The coach brings all the FEATS principles together to bear on their relationship with the developing leader, the FEATS participant. The coach asks probing questions to help the FEATS participant discern how the Holy Spirit is leading them in their life and ministry. The coach encourages learning, so that it becomes a habit, a pattern of lifelong learning that then is applied to you own unique ministry calling and context. And finally, the coach helps the participant get the most out of being a part of a learning session where biblical ideas and concepts are explored in such a way that they become integrated into the developing leader's lived expression of their Christian faith. The coach provides the participant with encouragement, enables reflection, helps to focus learning and the development of leadership values that will serve the participant well for a lifetime of ministry. Coaching for FEATS is, itself, vital hands-on ministry!

Modules and Coaching Towards Competency

FEATS consists of nine three-month-long modules based on scripture. Each module has a set of six to ten leadership competencies associated it. The competencies are designed

to be measurable behaviors that altogether encompass 15 leadership values in the areas of being, doing and learning. The task of coaching is to move the participant toward greater competency in terms of the behaviors being focused on for the module they are working on. Your task is to discern where you need to grow and develop and then form an action plan to bring about that growth.

The 15 Leadership Values

BEING connected to the Vine – The Character of a Leader.

1. Leaders grow through **Abiding in Christ**
2. Leaders develop in the local church through **Community**.
3. Leaders minister through **Servanthood**.
4. Leaders earn a following through **Faithfulness**.
5. Leaders exhibit the **Fruit of the Spirit**

DOING the work to cultivate effective ministry – The Skills of a Leader

6. Leaders equip others to **Share and Multiply** ministry
7. Leaders are committed to **Evangelism and Disciple-making**
8. Leaders minister within the complexity of **People and their Relationships**
9. Leaders live out a lifestyle of **Compassion and Social Justice**
10. Leaders learn and grow within their **Unique Giftedness**

LEARNING what will yield a better harvest – The Mind of a Leader

11. Leaders **Think Biblically and Theologically**
12. Leaders know and communicate **God's Principles and Vision**
13. Leaders know and appreciate **Church History**
14. Leaders cultivate **Wisdom and Discernment**
15. Leaders understand the **Culture**

Pre-Assessment

This assessment is done with you and your FEATS coach prior to the beginning of a module and before your first coaching session. The assessment should take one hour. The purpose is to give you and the coach an understanding of where you are in terms of each of the competencies to be worked on in a given module. Talking about the competencies should also spark ideas and inspire the participant on what areas the Holy Spirit would have you focus your work on during the course of the module considering your unique gift mix, current ministry context and level of spiritual maturity.

As the participant, your coach will ask you a series of questions designed to discover where you are at in your leadership development in a number of areas. Some of the questions will be asked via the CoachNet on-line tool prior to your assessment. Other questions will be asked when you get together with your coach.

With your coach, you will attempt to assign a rating for each competency. You will also begin to develop a sense for what you need to focus on during the module in your coaching relationship. Realistically, you will not be able to work hard in all areas at once. Some areas you may, in fact, discover are already quite developed! You will discover, with the help of the Spirit, which competencies will provide the most traction for you particular ministry and calling. This will set your unique development path.

For example, in the first module on the Gospel of John, there is a focus on competencies dealing with the discipline of being in community. One of the competencies deals with the stewardship of giving. The competency is: Give generously of one's finances, time and self. Associated with that competency are a series of coaching questions designed to help the coach discern where your usual practice currently is in terms of that competency. The pre-assessment coaching questions for this competency on stewardship may be something like:

- *What does it look like for you to stewardship your finances, time, spiritual gifts and other resources for the work of the church?*
- *Which of these areas of stewardship are easiest for you?*
- *Which are areas of weakness?*
- *Where to you sense God wanting you to grow?*
- *How would your church and ministry benefit from this growth?*

Your coach would then ask the questions and any other relevant questions they determine helpful in order to understand your current practice of stewardship. The coach would then assign a rating for that competency. Here is how the ratings are assigned for the stewardship competency:

Ratings:

- 3 = Gives sacrificially financially, time and self and inspires others to do the same
- 2 = Gives significantly of finances, time and self
- 1 = Gives in all areas but not consistently
- 0 = Does not give in all three areas with any consistency

The coach will help you assess each of competencies in the module you are working in as well as develop an understanding of where you are in terms of your ministry.

Your coach will record and save the ratings of your pre-assessment so that you can re-evaluate yourself again at the end of the module to see how you have progressed during the course of the module.

As a result of the pre-assessment coaching session, you and your coach will come up with a preliminary action plan that you will enter into the CoachNet system after the pre-

assessment session. An action plan is a proposal to develop one or several of the areas you rated a 0 or a 1. If a competency is a key focus for your understanding of your ministry, the goal is to work toward ratings of 3 in these areas. A rating of 2 is considered largely competent. While the action plan need not be set in stone, this will become the basis from which you and your coach will work together during the module. The work that will be entailed with the action plan should be supported by the work required for the learning sessions in this module. You will be asked to balance both the action plan and the work for the learning sessions within the module. Care should be taken so that this is challenging, but not overwhelming.

The final aspect of the pre-assessment is giving the homework assignment for the first learning session. Homework assignments for each module are also provided in an Appendix of this document. They should also be available on-line through the EFC website. Your coach should be able to explain the assignment. Additional homework assignments will be assigned at the module's learning sessions.

If the pre-assessment does not take place prior to the beginning of the module, you may lose credit for the entire module, and certainly you will lose out on a tremendous opportunity for growth within the context of the module. It is critical that you keep your pre-assessment appointment with your coach.

Post-Assessment

The post-assessment must take place after the third learning session for a specific module and before the next module begins. In the post-assessment session you and your coach will look together again at the competencies. Sometime you will have worked on several areas of the competencies during the course of the module, others perhaps only one. In some cases, circumstances surrounding your ministry may have taken the coaching in a direction away from the competencies. Also, you and your coach will have more familiarity with you after you have worked through a module.

You and your coach will then determine the participant's current rating in each of the module's competencies. It may not have changed from the pre-assessment, particularly if the action plan or current level of ministry skills took the coaching in another direction. Of concern would be if you worked specifically in one area and re-evaluation of that area yielded no change in the competency from the pre-assessment. You and your coach will need to figure out honestly what inhibited your planned growth and development in that area so you can make adjustments.

If the post-assessment does not take place, you may lose credit for your participation in the module. It is critical that you keep your post-assessment appointment with your coach.

Coaching Sessions

Monthly you will be participating in a coaching session with a maximum of two other participants and your coach. Each coaching session should be an hour and a half long. While the homework and learning sessions focus primarily on the learning aspects of the module, the coaching sessions will concentrate on the being and doing aspects, particularly with what you have identified as your action plan in the pre-assessment phase.

Prior to the coaching session your coach will send you some questions to respond to ahead of time using the CoachNet tool. Taking the time to prepare for your coaching session by answering your coach's questions will insure your coaching session is relevant and effective, that the session stays on task and that your time is used effectively. CoachNet coaching sessions can be set up so participants can all see one another's responses and in this way all the participants can come prepared and ready to work together.

The first 1/3 of the coaching session will explore the connections you are making with the learning aspects of the module, and the following 2/3 will be devoted to what God is doing right now in your life and ministry, as well as those of the other participants in your session, as pertinent to you action plan.

- **1st half hour:** connection to module (round-robin style)
 - What is God showing you through your study or through the learning sessions?
 - What insights from the previous learning session are sticking with you?
 - What progress have you made toward your goals for this module?
 - What's one point where God is challenging you?
- **Remaining 1 hour:** broken into three 20-minute segments for each individual
 - In light of this, what is the most important thing to focus on right now?
 - Pray for each individual at the end of their time.

After the session you will update your action plan on CoachNet as per your coaching session. In this way you and your coach will track how you are integrating the material, as well as how you are making progress toward your individual action plans. This approach provides both connectedness to the rest of the module and relevance to the immediate lives of the participants.

Some things to watch out for:

- Make sure each person gets an opportunity to share in the learning discussion.
- Care should be taken that each person gets their allotted time, no one should monopolize the coaching time.
- Coaching sessions can involve the sharing of deeply personal information. Strict confidentiality should be agreed upon by all the coaching session participants.

Coaching sessions should be closed with prayer for each of the participants.

Please be advised that if you do not attend a scheduled coaching session, your credit for the entire module may be in jeopardy. Attending all your scheduled coaching sessions is critical to your participation in FEATS. You may be dropped from the program for not attending agreed upon coaching sessions.

Using the CoachNet Tool

You and your Coach will be using the CoachNet on-line tool to get the creative juices flowing and to prepare before coaching sessions. In the pre-assessment phase, initial questions for the competencies for that module can be asked to give the coach a head start and clues as to where you are in terms of the competencies for the particular module you are in.

It is essential that you take adequate time to answer the questions via CoachNet thoroughly, completely and in a timely fashion so your coach can prepare for your session. Questions asked via CoachNet prior to the coaching sessions are essential for helping the coach to make the 20 minutes of your individual coaching time as useful as possible, knowing from the CoachNet resource where the areas of concern and challenge seem to be for you specifically right now.

See also Appendix B for a specific guide provided by CoachNet. Going through the tutorial programs provided on the CoachNet site are also extremely useful to get the full benefit of the CoachNet tool.

Homework!!!

Each FEATS module requires that you complete some specific homework assignments prior to attending the learning sessions for that module. It is critical that you complete these assignments prior to attending the learning sessions so that you and those around you get the most out of the learning sessions. You will be bringing what you learn to help others at your learning session! Your facilitator will check the completeness of your homework at each learning session. Not doing the homework for the learning session may put your participation in FEATS and credit for the module in jeopardy.

All FEATS homework assignments are available on-line through the EFC website. Handouts associated with the homework will be mailed to you when you register for the module or will be available at the prior learning session. Please contact the EFC office if you need homework handouts.

Learning Sessions

As part of each FEATS module you will be attending a monthly four-hour learning session. You will prepare for that learning session by completing the homework assignment assigned for that learning session. You will not get everything you need to

out of your learning session if you do not do the homework since the learning session builds on the work you will have been doing on your own.

Your coach will often also be attending your learning session. This is so you and your coach continue to develop your relationship, so your coach can discover how you are understanding and using the learning material, and so that your coach can better coach you. You will also be challenged at the learning session to push yourself further than you thought you could go! This should be a fun and exciting time where you help others and others help you. The idea is to learn how to learn and in doing so become a life-long learner.

Please be advised that if you do not attend all the learning sessions for a module you may not receive credit for the module and could be dropped from the FEATS program. Attendance at learning sessions is critical to your growth and development in FEATS as well as contributes to the growth and development of others.

What if you need help?

Your coach should be your first resource if you have questions or need help with an assignment or piece of your action plan. Your coach will direct you in how best to contact him or her between sessions.

The Cost of FEATS

FEATS modules cost \$300 per module. For that price you get three sessions with your coach, three four-hour learning sessions, plus two one-on-one personal assessments. Think of it as \$100 per month with added benefits!

Please note that there are two significant registration dates for each module. Returning FEATS participants must register prior to the returning participant deadline for each module or the space may be filled by a new participant. Space will not be held open for returning participants past their registration deadline. Registration is complete and the space is guaranteed once the module is paid for.

You will be asked to agree to and sign the following Covenant statement as you begin working with your coaching cluster:

FEATS Coaching Cluster Covenant

Purpose: This covenant communicates the vision, values and commitment required for coaches and participants in FEATS clusters.

Values: The Coaching Cluster relationship will be characterized by the following values:

Partnership – We will all work together as a team.

Servanthood – We commit to being servants of God, one another, and the church.

Honesty – We will speak the truth in love.

Confidentiality – We will maintain trust and relationship by not sharing outside the coaching cluster

Vulnerability - We will openly share both life and ministry issues with our coaching cluster.

Punctuality – We will be prompt for all meetings and appointments in respect for each other.

Preparedness – We will seek to complete assignments and be prepared in advance for each meeting.

Ethics – We will model highest level of Christian character and professionalism.

Participant Commitment

- Attend all meetings of your coaching cluster.
- Keep all scheduled appointments with your coach.
- Promptly respond and complete questions and information asked for via e-mail and the CoachNet system.
- Promptly communicate challenges and questions
- Support one another in prayer

Coach Commitment

- Attend all meetings of the coaching cluster
- Keep all scheduled appointments with your participants.
- Promptly respond to questions and requests for information from participants
- Provide personal coaching and support
- Support one another in prayer

Before God and each other we commit ourselves to fulfilling the elements of this covenant.

Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____