



## 2023 Leadership Development Cohort Application

Applications due January 13, 2023

The Reformation Project's Leadership Development Cohort equips Christians who love God, love the Bible, and love the church with the tools and theological knowledge they need to be effective advocates for LGBTQ inclusion in the non-affirming church. The program consists of twelve weeks of in-depth, online study about the Bible and LGBTQ inclusion as well as four daylong virtual gatherings to reinforce learning and build relationships among participants.

The cohort is designed specifically for those who are interested in engaging non-affirming Christians through serving as a local ambassador of The Reformation Project. You can learn more about the ambassador program in the FAQ section below. The primary role of ambassadors is to serve as a resource and guide for Christians in their local community (and potentially beyond) who are seeking to work through their beliefs about the LGBTQ conversation in the church.

As a Bible-based, Christian organization, we are committed to LGBTQ inclusion in the church because, first and foremost, we love and are committed to the church. That's why we're looking for applicants who are passionately aligned with our [Statement of Faith](#) and [values](#) and whose Christian faith is the driving force in their lives. We particularly encourage straight Christians to apply, as they are often uniquely positioned to reach non-affirming believers.

The cohort runs from **March 15 to June 24, 2023**. It will be all-virtual, and participants will need to be available for four daylong online gatherings throughout that period: **March 25, April 29, June 3, and June 24** (all Saturdays). Applications are due on January 13, 2023, and selection decisions will be made by February 17, 2023.

**Carefully read all of the information below** to make sure you understand the program, are aligned with The Reformation Project's Statement of Faith and values, and can commit to the schedule before filling out the application.

*Note: We recommend downloading the application in PDF form first to work through your answers and save them on your computer before reviewing and submitting them.*



*To submit your completed application, please copy and paste your answers to the online Google form [HERE](#). You will be unable to return to the online form, so please make sure you have reviewed the entire application and are ready to submit your full application when you begin the online form.*



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How much does it cost and what is included?**

There is a one-time, non-refundable fee of \$225 for participants. This fee covers the cost of participation in the cohort as well as one license for our video curriculum, [The Biblical Case for LGBTQ Inclusion](#). Additionally, while most course materials will be provided at no charge, participants will be expected to purchase four books. The total cost of these books ranges from about \$45 (e-book versions) to \$65 (paperback versions).

### **What will I learn through the cohort?**

The cohort's 12-week study program is focused on the theological debate about the Bible and LGBTQ inclusion. It is designed similarly to a college course, and participants will read and respond to both affirming and non-affirming writings in order to develop a well-rounded understanding of this theological conversation.

But more than simply gaining theological knowledge, participants will also grow in their understanding of many foundational beliefs and concerns of non-affirming Christians, allowing them to become more effective and persuasive communicators. The cohort curriculum will also foster deeper learning around our organizational values of monogamy and covenant and diversity and inclusion, and it will equip participants for effective and sustainable leadership as local ambassadors once the cohort is over.

### **What is the time commitment?**

On average, participants should expect to spend 12-15 hours each week reading the course materials, writing responses, and engaging with other cohort members in online discussions. Weeks start on Wednesdays, with responses to course materials due on Tuesdays. There will be two weeks off during the three-month period: April 19-25 and May 24-30.

Participants must also be available for daylong online gatherings on four Saturdays throughout the program: March 25, April 29, June 3, and June 24. The gatherings will run from 10am-6pm Central.



## **What do local ambassadors do?**

After completing the Leadership Development Cohort, cohort members are eligible to serve as local ambassadors of The Reformation Project. The primary role of ambassadors is to be a resource and guide for Christians who are working through their beliefs about LGBTQ inclusion in the church.

There is no set time commitment for ambassadors; the time investment will vary based on your capacity and how many people reach out for support in your area or interest area. All active ambassadors must affirm that they are passionately aligned with The Reformation Project's Statement of Faith, mission, vision, and values (love for God, love for the Bible, love for the church, monogamy and covenant, and diversity and inclusion).

Ambassador terms last one year, after which ambassadors can recommit for additional one-year terms based on continued alignment, capacity, and interest.

## **Can I simply audit the cohort if I want to learn but not serve as an ambassador?**

No. Given limited resources, we will select only those who are personally committed to working toward greater LGBTQ inclusion in the non-affirming church by serving as a local ambassador of The Reformation Project.

## **Can I apply if I'm outside of the U.S.?**

Yes. That said, depending on where you live, it's worth considering time zone differences for the four daylong virtual gatherings, which will take place from 10am-6pm Central (U.S.) time. For those farthest away from the United States (like Asia or Australia), we can make certain accommodations like recording portions of the gatherings for them to watch later, but it will still be important for them to attend as much of each of the gatherings live as possible.



## The Reformation Project's Statement of Faith and Values

We are ecumenical in nature and mission, inclusive of Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christians alike. Our [Statement of Faith](#) reflects our beliefs in:

- The inspiration of the Bible, the Word of God.
- The Triune God, eternally existent as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The supremacy of God, who created all things seen and unseen through Christ our Lord.
- The deity of Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of the invisible God, firstborn over all creation, fully God and fully man, head of the church, author and finisher of our faith; His death for our sins; and His resurrection and eventual return.
- The regenerative power of the Holy Spirit, whose fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

As a Bible-based, Christian organization, The Reformation Project is grounded in [three core values](#): love for God, love for the Bible, and love for the church.

**1. Love for God:** We love God, and it's because of our love for God that so many of us have wrestled so prayerfully and deeply with our sexuality, our gender identity, and our faith. We seek to honor God with everything we do, with our lives, and with our relationships. We seek to follow Jesus, worshiping him as God and emulating his life, teachings, and ministry, especially in his treatment of those who were downtrodden and outcast.

**2. Love for the Bible:** We love the Bible and revere it as the Word of God, inspired by God and authoritative for Christian life and practice. It is because of our love for Scripture that we have studied it so carefully, seeking to discern the heart of God and the most faithful understanding of the text for the church today. Our love for Scripture is also what drives us to help the church interpret and apply it as faithfully as possible when it comes to gender and sexuality.

**3. Love for the Church:** We love the church, and we are compelled by our love for the church to help the body of Christ truly be the hands and feet of Jesus to the world, especially to those who only have heard messages of condemnation from the church. Our love for the church includes a love for fellow Christians who disagree



with us theologically or are still seeking to discern their views about LGBTQ inclusion.

Those three values are at the heart of all of The Reformation Project's work. They also shape [two other important values](#) for us:

**Monogamy and Covenant:** As a Christian organization with a deep love for the Bible, we believe that our values about sexuality must be shaped by Scripture, the communion of saints, and the Christian tradition. We honor the link that Scripture and the Christian tradition make between sex and lifelong commitment, and therefore, we embrace the principle that we should seek to say with our bodies what we are able and willing to say with the rest of our lives. That is why we are specifically asking churches to bless monogamous, covenantal same-sex relationships. (See *Bible, Gender, Sexuality* by Dr. Jim Brownson to learn more about our understanding of Scripture and sexual ethics.)

**Diversity and Inclusion:** Jesus's life and ministry were marked by his love and concern for people on the margins of society, and as a Christian organization, we believe we are called to follow Jesus's example by prioritizing diversity and inclusion in our work. LGBTQ Christians have too often experienced the pain of exclusion from the church, and that reality compels us to care about and address the ways in which the church has also fallen short of honoring other marginalized people as equal image-bearers of God. We strive to foster belonging and inclusion for everyone regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

The cohort is designed for those who want to serve as a local ambassador for The Reformation Project, and it's important that our ambassadors are aligned with our Statement of Faith and our values. Consequently, we are looking for cohort members who are aligned with—and passionate about—both our Statement of Faith and our values.



## Commitments

By submitting this application, you are committing to:

- Be aligned with and honor The Reformation Project's Statement of Faith and values as outlined above.
- Be available to attend all four daylong virtual gatherings on March 25, April 29, June 3, and June 24.
- Dedicate 12-15 hours every week of the 12-week study period to reading assigned materials, writing timely responses, and engaging with other cohort members about the content.
- Serve as a local ambassador for The Reformation Project for at least one year after completing the cohort.

**Recommendation Letters:** In addition to this completed application, we must receive two recommendation letters for you. Both recommendations must be **received by January 13, 2023**, in order for us to consider your application. Please share this link—<https://tinyurl.com/cohortrec23>—with the two people recommending you and ask them to fill out the form. Friends, mentors, family members, and others are welcome to recommend you. If you have any questions about the application process, please e-mail us at [apply@reformationproject.org](mailto:apply@reformationproject.org).



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### About You

Full Name:

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Mailing Address:

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Phone Number:

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Age:

Marital/Relationship Status:

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Sexual Orientation:

Gender Identity:

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Race/Ethnicity:

Denomination:

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Company/School:

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Occupation (title/etc)::

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1. What church do you attend? How long have you attended? Do you or have you held any leadership positions in your church?
2. How would you describe your church's policy/culture regarding LGBTQ inclusion?
3. What community organizations do you participate in and how do you participate? Do you or have you held any leadership positions in these organizations?
4. List some of your strengths as a leader, and share how you would like to grow as a leader in this program.



## Short Response Section

*Please answer each question in 50 words or less.*

1. How did you hear about the cohort and what motivated you to apply?
2. What are your current time commitments? How will you adapt your schedule to ensure you are able to dedicate 12-15 hours every week to the cohort from March through June 2023?

## Video and Links Section

*Please include a link to a video of you speaking for 2-5 minutes in response to the prompt below. Use the video to give us a sense of who you are and why you are passionate about this work. We recommend uploading the video to YouTube or Vimeo and then pasting the link; alternatively, you can record a video on your phone and e-mail it to us. On YouTube or Vimeo, make sure the video is either set to public or unlisted; if it is set to private, we won't be able to see it. **Videos longer than 5 minutes will not be viewed in their entirety.***

1. Tell us about yourself. Why do you want to be part of the cohort, and why do you feel called to advocate for LGBTQ inclusion in the non-affirming church as a local ambassador? Link to video response:
2. Optional: Include up to three links to help us get to know you better. Examples could include an article about you, a blog post or essay you've written, or design work you've done.
  - Link 1 with short description:
  - Link 2 with short description:
  - Link 3 with short description:



## Essay Section

Applicants should watch Matthew Vines' 2021 talk, ["Yesterday, Today, and Forever: The Heart of Christianity."](#) prior to responding to the following essay prompts.

- 1.** Describe your alignment with our Statement of Faith and share your response to "The Heart of Christianity" talk linked above. Why are you passionate about Christianity, and why do you think you are well-positioned to reach non-affirming Christians in your church and/or local community on LGBTQ inclusion? *(Please answer the prompt in 300-400 words.)*
- 2.** Please describe your alignment with each of the values listed on our website: love for God, love for the Bible, love for the church, monogamy and covenant, and diversity and inclusion. Address each value separately. *(Please answer the prompt in 200-300 words.)*