

CRE Testimonies

Being a CRE means having few peers--not a teaching elder, but with more responsibilities than a typical ruling elder. The PSCE program provides peer support that I have found to be crucial in my development as a church leader. When I learn about other people's ministries, I gain insight into my own. My cohort was also instrumental in helping me determine what the next step is for my ministry. They brought a wealth of experience and a variety of perspectives that led me to a decision that enables me to follow God's call.

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This is what I wrote to the CREs/CPs in our presbytery last year: I am writing to tell you about a great opportunity for networking and support for your work as a lay pastor. Union Presbyterian Seminary is developing cohorts for CREs/CLPs. These cohorts are made up of Presbyterian lay pastors from across the country. They meet by zoom for approximately two hours once a month for one year. The purpose of the gatherings is to learn from and support each other in their ministry. In addition to the wonderful support and wealth of knowledge that is shared, each participant is paid a stipend for taking part in the cohort. I would encourage each of you to prayerfully consider participating in this endeavor. I have participated in a cohort for the past year and have found it to be very beneficial. Not only have I learned from my fellow participants, but the support has been just what I needed during some very stressful times. Since most of us serve as solo pastors, we don't have many opportunities to engage with other pastors. The cohort gives you that opportunity.

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The CRE Cohorts has impacted my ministry by allowing me to share some of my most personal concerns with a group of people from diverse backgrounds but similar foundational beliefs. Being able to meet monthly has been a wonderful opportunity to hear from others who are experiencing similar issues and surviving. The individuals in these groups have provided a support team who provides insight, discernment, wisdom, and prayer.

I am so glad that someone thought to invite me to get involved during my first year of serving as a commissioned pastor. Being able to share and listen to others has likely helped me to survive many of the challenges of serving in a small church that does not fit the mold of most of those churches I did pulpity supply in as I prepared for this journey.

Thank you for the opportunity!

Educator Testimonies

I am brand new to working in faith formation as a professional, and have no formal training. I am learning SO MUCH from my cohort, everything from hearing about new resources and sources of information, to hearing what other churches have tried and how it is working, to reading and discussing best practices for what we do. I find all of it extremely useful in guiding my decision making and pointing me in the right direction to gain the tools I'll need to do this job well.

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Personally it is helpful to have people to talk to who are experiencing similar things I am in this season with the church and a pandemic or have experienced things I am currently dealing with which for me is a mom in ministry with 2 very young children.

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I have implemented several ideas from the cohort. The group has more experience than I do as a lay educator. They introduced me to a film series we now use for our teens. They gave me ideas on how to manage a coffee house Sunday School. I purchased a book that was suggested for our children's table during Advent.

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My expectations have been exceeded for the cohort. I have enjoyed meeting with, learning from, and gaining support and perspective from other people interested in Christian Education. The resources have been rich and I have loved going through our spiritual practices. This has been a great and varied experience.