

AN ANÁGO RESOURCE

Seasons of Ministry Team Guide

A facilitator resource for staff teams, elder boards, and ministry leadership groups

AUTHOR

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AUDIENCE

Church leaders, ministry volunteers, and congregants

Purpose

Most ministry teams have never actually mapped themselves — who's a Younger Sibling, who's a Parent, where the gaps are, and who's quietly becoming a Grandparent without anyone noticing. This guide walks a team through that conversation together, out loud, in one sitting. It's designed to be low-prep, participatory, and honest — not a performance review, and not a diagnostic run by an outside consultant. It's a mirror the team holds up to itself.

Best used with: staff teams, elder or deacon boards, ministry department leads, or a combined group of paid staff and key volunteers.

Time needed: 60–90 minutes

Group size: Works best with 5–15 people. Larger groups should break into smaller discussion clusters for parts of the exercise (noted below).

What to bring: printed or displayed copy of the Four Seasons summary; a whiteboard, sticky-note grid, or shared doc for the mapping exercise; printed Cross-Season Conversation cards (one set per pair or small group); a timer.

Facilitator notes before you start

You don't need to be the most senior person in the room to run this. In fact, it often works better coming from someone slightly outside the top leadership tier, it keeps the exercise feeling like a shared discovery rather than a top-down assessment.

Set the tone early: **this is not about rank.** A Grandparent isn't "better" than a Younger Sibling, they're different seasons with different gifts and different blind spots. If the room senses this is secretly about who's "ahead," people will posture instead of being honest. Name that up front.

Agenda overview

TIME	SECTION
5-10 min	Opening: The Four Seasons
15 min	Mapping exercise
15-20 min	Team discussion prompts
20-25 min	Cross-season conversations (paired breakout)
10 min	Closing: commitments

Opening: the four seasons

Read or paraphrase the following to the group:

Every ministry leader moves through seasons, not based on age, but on posture, responsibility, and wisdom. There are four

Younger Siblings

Full of zeal and ambition, still building wisdom. Every mountain looks climbable.

Older Siblings

The energy is still there, but wisdom is catching up. Younger Siblings start finding them for advice, even while they're still growing themselves.

Parents

They own the ministry. Both Older and Younger Siblings look to them — usually the longest season for a healthy leader.

Grandparents

No longer running the day-to-day, but carrying decades of proven wisdom. Often the most forgotten season, and often the most necessary.

(Optional: hand out or project the full blog post ahead of time so the team arrives with context.)

Quick gut-check question to open discussion:

"Before we map anything, does this framework immediately make sense to you? Where do you think you land?"

Let a few people answer briefly. Don't linger, this is a warm-up, not the main event.

Mapping exercise

Instructions

1. Draw four columns on a whiteboard or shared doc: Younger Sibling / Older Sibling / Parent / Grandparent.
2. Go around the room. Each person names which season they believe they're currently in, and the facilitator writes their name (or they write it themselves) in that column.
3. Once everyone is placed, step back and look at the shape of it together.

Facilitator prompt after mapping: "Look at this as a whole. What do you notice?"

Common patterns to watch for and name if the group doesn't see it themselves

1. **Top-heavy:** Lots of Parents, few Older Siblings being developed underneath them
2. **Thin at the top:** No Grandparents at all, meaning either the ministry is young, or its most experienced people have quietly disengaged
3. **Bunched at the bottom:** Lots of Younger Siblings with no one currently in the Older Sibling season to mentor them
4. **Invisible Older Siblings:** Someone the room agrees is clearly operating as an Older Sibling, but who placed themselves as a Younger Sibling out of humility (or vice versa)

Team discussion prompts

Work through as many of these as time allows. These are meant to generate real conversation, not quick answers — it's fine to spend the whole block on two or three of them.

- Where are we top-heavy? Where are we thin?
- Who's operating like an Older Sibling that we haven't officially recognized or invested in yet?
- If our lead Parent stepped away tomorrow, who's actually ready to carry that weight? Be honest.
- Which of our Grandparents are we currently under-using? What wisdom are we not asking for?
- Are there Younger Siblings in this room who are ready for more responsibility than we're giving them?
- What would it look like for us to be intentional about this instead of leaving it to chance?

Cross-season conversations

This is the heart of the guide: rather than only discussing seasons abstractly as a group, pair people up across adjacent seasons for a short, structured one-on-one conversation using the question sets below. This turns insight into an actual relational moment, in the room, in real time.

How to run it

1. Based on the mapping exercise, pair each person with someone from an adjacent season (Younger with Older, Older with Parent, Parent with Grandparent). If your team doesn't have someone in every season, pair whoever is closest, or group three people together instead of two.
2. Hand each pair the appropriate question card below (or project it).
3. Give pairs 10–12 minutes to work through as many questions as they can — they don't need to finish all of them.
4. Bring the whole group back together for a brief share-out: "What's one thing you heard that surprised you?"

Younger Sibling ↔ Older Sibling

YOUNGER SIBLING ASKS OLDER SIBLING

- What's one decision you made in my season that you'd make differently now?
- How do you know when zeal is helping versus getting in the way?
- What's something you wish someone had told you before you were ready to hear it?

OLDER SIBLING ASKS YOUNGER SIBLING

- What's one thing about this ministry you see clearly that I might be missing?
- Where do you feel like you're not being trusted yet — and is that fair?
- What would make you feel like someone is actually investing in you right now?

Older Sibling ↔ Parent

OLDER SIBLING ASKS PARENT

- What's the hardest part of ownership that no one warned you about?
- How do you decide what to delegate versus what only you should carry?
- What do you wish an Older Sibling had asked you when you were in my season?

PARENT ASKS OLDER SIBLING

- What responsibility do you feel ready for that you haven't been given yet?
- Where do you see me holding on to something I should be handing to you?
- What would help you trust your own judgment more, faster?

Parent ↔ Grandparent

PARENT ASKS GRANDPARENT

- What's one thing you carried in this season that you're glad to have let go of?
- How did you know it was time to shift from leading to mentoring?
- What do you see in me now that I might not see in myself?

GRANDPARENT ASKS PARENT

- Where are you the most tired right now, and who knows that besides me?
- What's a decision on your plate where an unrushed perspective might actually help?
- What would it look like for you to actually ask me for something?

Closing: commitments

Bring everyone back to the full group. Go around one more time this time, each person commits to one specific action before the group meets again:

Prompt: "Name one relationship, one season up or one season down from you, that you will intentionally invest in before we meet next. What will that look like?"

Write these commitments down somewhere visible (a shared doc, a follow-up email) so they can be checked back in on at the next meeting or gathering accountability is what turns this from a good conversation into an actual shift in the team's culture.

Optional closing question for the whole room: "If we ran this same exercise a year from now, what would we want to be different about our map?"

Facilitator follow-up ideas

- Revisit the map in 6–12 months to see how it's shifted.
- If the team surfaced a clear gap (e.g., no one being developed toward Older Sibling), consider making that a standing agenda item rather than a one-time fix.
- If several teams within a larger organization run this guide separately, compare maps across departments, patterns that show up organization-wide are worth raising with senior leadership directly.



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