



1—Project Name: Apologetics Certification

2—If this grant is being requested on behalf of an external organization, what is that organization's name and connection with Texas Baptists?

N/A

3—Please request the minimum amount needed—with a maximum of \$20,000 possible—in order to accomplish the project's goals.

\$15,000.00 (*budget attached*)

4—Overview: Give a one paragraph description of the project.

The A.C.E. (Apologetics Certification in Evangelism) program is for ministerial staff and lay leaders within the local church who have a passion for apologetics in evangelism but have no formal education in these areas. The overall design and goal of this program is two-fold: (1) To train the ministry leader to live and become a skilled practitioner of apologetics in evangelism for any culture, campus, church, or conversational situation they may find themselves in. (2) To certify the ministry leader to teach, train, disciple, and mentor others to do the same. By the end of the course, graduates will be expected to launch and lead a small group for the training of apologetics in evangelism in their local church—continuing to multiply the impact of this training (this is a requirement for graduation). Additionally, the course will consist of a 10-hour average minimum of "in the field" apologetics in evangelism (implementing what they've learned), and the same will be expected for each disciple in the small group that the ACE graduate will start in their church.

5—STRATEGIC: How will this project make Texas Baptists stronger?

First, this is for the local church. Ideally, I would love to see every TxB church have a trained apologist as their "A.C.E. in the hole." That is, a certified leader in the area of apologetics in evangelism who can serve as the "go-to" person for these areas (e.g., evangelism, apologetics, or consultation with those struggling with doubt, etc). Second, as alluded to above, the leader will start and lead a small group for the training of apologetics in evangelism in their local church as a requirement for graduation (now teaching what they've learned). This will strengthen (1) the graduate's ability to lead, teach, and train others (which they will learn and sharpen in the program), and (2) strengthen the church's biblical strategy for growth—evangelism. Hence, the program is intentionally designed to make disciples who make disciples.

6—SIGNIFICANT: What is the anticipated long-term impact of this project?

Given what's been said above, I expect the long-term impact to be as long-lasting as the ACE graduates (and the small groups they start) remain alive and active members of their church.

7—SUSTAINABLE: How will the grant help this project become self-supporting?

This ACE program will be brand new for Texas Baptists. Other programs within our Center for Church Health have been so successful that students are put on a waiting list for future years. I expect the ACE program to be no different.

8—INNOVATIVE: How will this project break new ground?

In the history of TXB, there has never been a certification like this one. Given the statistics of young people leaving the church, the "rise of the nones" (non-religious affiliated/unchurched), and other factors such as the deconstruction movement (an online movement encouraging young people to "deconstruct" their faith), the need for apologetics in evangelism is no longer an option or luxury (e.g., only for "smart people"). It has now become an essential aspect of evangelism in our culture. Moreover, most evangelism trainings focus on (or are reduced to) mere Gospel presentations (and seem to largely ignore the art and discipline of navigating Gospel conversations). This program is designed to fill that void. That is, equipping believers to start and maneuver Gospel conversations within our skeptical culture today (e.g., dealing with questions or objections). While apologetics in evangelism itself is not "new ground" (Jesus and Paul did it!) the formalized aspect of focused training in this area will be.

9—INVOLVING: How will the churches served by Texas Baptists be included in this project?

Each ACE student will be from a different church. The mentality here is for the church to approve and choose a leader/lay leader for the training. This accomplishes two things: 1) a pre-vetted endorsement of the ACE student, and 2) the pastor/church's acknowledgement and support of the outcome (as described in the answers above). In other words, aside from having a certified ACE apologist in the church, the "return on investment" outcome will automatically be a church that engages in evangelism (as described in answer #4, the ACE graduate will not only train their their small group, but also take them out for "in the field" evangelism implementation/practice). Thus, if each of the 15 ACE graduates starts a small group of 10 people (likely a conservative number), then that automatically guarantees that 150 local church members will be actively living and participating in evangelism (and, of course, the ACE graduate can do this annually, and/or, the church can make this part of a "new membership" class). Simply put, this creates intentional evangelism in the local church.

How many churches will be involved? Part of the design of the course will not only be to personally disciple and train the ACE students in apologetics in evangelism, but to also "do life" with them and develop personal, stronger connections as a mentor and friend. Due to this intimacy, we will likely be limiting the course to 15 leaders. This ensures the desired intimate, relational mentorship. However, in promotion of (and creating awareness for) this new program, I will be doing numerous mini seminars and workshops as a "taste" of the course. On average, this encompasses about 100 churches annually.

10—INTERESTING: How will this project produce helpful stories and encourage donor engagement for future ministry support?

1) Each local church represented by the ACE graduate will be able to report the real-time effects and numbers of both those participating in evangelism and the number of people they will reach through gospel conversations. 2) This will produce stories of believers who were not actively engaged in evangelism due to fear or a lack of confidence into stories of those same people living a lifestyle of evangelism and kingdom impact. For example, one person commenting on the textbook material for this training said that it has "completely changed my view of evangelism and gave me the confidence to start conversations knowing I don't know all the answers." 3) It will inevitably lead to changed lives, salvation stories, and baptism stories (as sharing the gospel in evangelism always does).

11—Has this project received previous TBMF grants? If YES, list years and amounts.

N/A

12—Is this request for an ongoing project with a new name? If YES, what was the former name of the project?

N/A



Detailed budget

Other Funding Sources:

- 2026 A.C.E. student registration = \$3,750

Budget for 2026:

- Travel to churches for promotion, training, and branding/brand awareness for the A.C.E. program = \$10,000
- Books/Curriculum:
 - o The Lazy Approach (the program textbooks) = \$300
 - o Program Workbooks = \$500
- **A.C.E. Student Package** (will be used for evangelism outing during class and for leading their small group)
 - o Polo shirts with A.C.E. logo = \$600
 - o Book marks = \$100
 - o Travel missions backpacks with embroidered A.C.E. logo = \$1,500
 - o Jacket w/logo = \$1,050
 - o Clipboards = \$30
- **Materials for teaching**
 - o Whiteboard + accessories = \$175
 - o Wireless microphone for online teaching sessions = \$110
- **For Graduation**
 - o Certificates = \$50
 - o Certificate folders (in bulk) = \$915