



Formation

Module One

DISCIPLESHIP AT IBC

Welcome to Formation

Welcome to the beginning of your Formation journey.

The main purpose of Formation is to help you discover and live out your purpose in community. You will do this through growing deeper in relationships with the people in your group, practicing the rhythms of a missionary disciple, and looking closer at who God made you to be and how he is inviting you into his kingdom work in the world.

Whether you have known the people in your group for years or you are just learning each other's names, our hope is that your Formation group becomes a place of deep and significant community. This will happen over time as you begin meeting together and sharing your lives with each other.

Another mark of a Formation group is the practice of the five rhythms of a missionary disciple. While we may not practice all these rhythms together each time we meet, we hope you will encourage one another to consistently practice these rhythms. This is what we often call "loving accountability." It can take many forms, but the intention is that we would "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24) as we live out the five rhythms of a missionary disciple individually and in community.

Finally, Formation's main purpose is to help you discover and live out *your* purpose. You may already know your purpose and perhaps you are already living it out. That's great! We believe you will speak into the lives of others in the group to help them along their journey. We also believe you will find encouragement and affirmation to keep going in the good work God has called you to. If you haven't yet discovered your purpose or feel that God may be moving you in a new direction, be patient with yourself. Discovering and living out your purpose takes time. This journey will help you, and the Holy Spirit will guide you. While God may sometimes seem mysterious, his will is not meant to be a mystery. When you seek him and his will, he will reveal the next steps to you.

In this first module of Formation, you will start by getting grounded in the process and establishing community within your group. In the second module, you will explore your story as a way to help you know your purpose. In the third module, you will explore where God has specifically placed you, who he has surrounded you with, and what the needs around you are. All these pieces will help you discover and live out your God-given purpose.

We are glad you are starting this Formation journey.

We are praying for you,
Jodie Niznik, Barry Jones, and the IBC Discipleship Team

All Formation videos can be found at <https://vimeo.com/ibcformation>

Group Guidelines and Expectations

To help cultivate and foster authentic relationships in your Formation group, there are a few expectations we ask everyone to commit to.

1. To listen well is to love well. This means we do not dominate the conversation or take the conversation far off topic. We give everyone space to share stories and life.
2. Formation groups are to be a safe place to share. This means we hold each other's confidences and do not share anything outside the group unless we have been given express permission to do so. Because we are committed to confidentiality, we strive to be vulnerable by sharing honestly and appropriately as we feel comfortable.
3. It is not our job to solve or fix problems, give advice, or rescue others. We're here to encourage and love one another well. We seek to leave the work of transformation to God.
4. We all come from different places, backgrounds, and perspectives. This diversity is a beautiful picture of God's design, thus we do our best to honor one another's perspectives and experiences in our conversations.
5. In a Formation group we're all responsible to share the load. While your leader serves as the key communicator and facilitator, there are a few other roles that need to be filled. Please prayerfully consider what your best contribution to your group is.
 - Prayer coordinator
 - Food coordinator
 - Scheduling coordinator
 - Social & external events coordinator
 - Tech coordinator
 - Childcare coordinator (if childcare is provided corporately)
 - Other (as determined by the group)
6. We are all called to care for one another by being attentive and available to each other. This isn't just the leader's responsibility. Being part of a Formation group means we seek to be mutually caring of one another.
7. We lovingly hold each other accountable by asking good questions and speaking the truth in love.
8. We recognize that not only are we are saved by grace, but we're also transformed by grace. Accordingly we constantly point one another to Jesus.
9. While we know life events happen that may necessitate missing a Formation group meeting, we keep our group meeting times set aside as a high priority in our lives.

Session 1: What is Formation?

Notes:

God's agenda is for us to be formed into his image and become like Jesus.

We are formed as disciples of Jesus as we:

Be with Jesus.

Become like Jesus.

Carry on his work in the world.

Formation is the process of becoming like Jesus in the context of authentic community which results in a life of mission.

For further reflection read the following verses:

Galatians 4:19, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29, and Romans 12:2

Discussion Questions

What resonated with you, surprised you, or confused you about the teaching in the video?

What's been your experience in your spiritual formation journey so far? Specifically, what's worked for you, been frustrating for you, or has been missing for you?

What are your hopes for this Formation group/experience?

What are your fears for this Formation group/experience?

Prayer Requests

Session 2: Why Does Formation Need Community?

Notes:

What do we mean by community?

Why does Formation need community?

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Matthew 22:37–39

What are practical ways that we can move deeper into community?

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:42

The early church community did three things together:

1. They learned from the apostles’ teaching.
2. They fellowshiped and broke bread together.
3. They prayed together.

Community also helps us discover and live out our purpose.

Formation groups are modeled around these principles.

Discussion Questions

How does the idea that we are equally family (brothers and sisters) influence or challenge the way you think of community?

When have you experienced deep and authentic community in your life? Why do you think that was?

Read Acts 2:42-47 which describes how the early church lived in community together. List what they did. If you were a part of this early church, what do you think would have been most meaningful for you? What do you think would have been most challenging for you?

Thinking about your life today, what do you desire that is described in Acts 2? What hesitations do you have about what is described in Acts 2?

Prayer Requests

Session 3: What Are the Barriers to True Community?

Notes:

Four barriers to authentic community:

1. Congeniality – We focus on everyone being happy or nice instead of dealing with what's below the surface, whether that is opening ourselves up and talking about what's really going on in our lives or dealing with the potential of conflict within the community.
2. Cooperation – We focus on staying on task instead of building real meaningful relationships.
3. Counseling – We focus on counseling and trying to fix people's problems. While we want to be able to offer one another wisdom, advice, and counsel, it's important we do that in the right context, with the right people, and when it's been invited.
4. Conforming – We focus on keeping up appearances. We show up and feel like we have to perform or pretend.

What can we do to overcome these barriers?

We need to recognize our own tendencies and be intentional about pressing past these barriers.

(Take a few notes next to each barrier for ways we can overcome them.)

1. Congeniality – A willingness to be real and engage in healthy conflict.
2. Cooperation – A willingness to prioritize people over tasks.
3. Counseling – A recognition that people want to be heard and understood. They want to have a place where they can come and it feels safe for them to be able to share what's really going on in their lives.
4. Conforming – A recognition that we have to be willing to be vulnerable.

Discussion Questions

Which of these barriers or counterfeits have you experienced in previous community? Describe how this impacted you and the community.

Would you add anything to Barry's list of counterfeits? If so, what?

Which of these barriers or counterfeits do you tend to lean toward? How so?

What are some ideas for ways this Formation group can choose to be authentic with one another and avoid these counterfeits in community?

Prayer Requests

Session 4: What is the Place of Community in Living out the Five Rhythms? (Part 1: Scripture and Prayer)

Notes:

Scripture: Missionary disciples love God's word. Therefore disciples seek to know him better by studying and allowing Scripture to shape our lives.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2

What is God teaching you in his word?

Prayer: Missionary disciples need God's presence and help. Therefore disciples pray with fervency and frequency.

"Holy Spirit, I am weak. You are strong. Be strong in me."

*Note: Appendix 2 is a suggested 10-week scripture reading plan you can use individually or as a group. If you decide to use it, tear it out and place it in your Bible for easy reference.

Discussion Questions

Read Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Timothy 3:16. How have you experienced God's word doing what these scriptures talk about?

Describe how you think it will be to discuss regularly as a group what God is teaching us in his word.

Can you think of something that God has recently taught you in his word? If so, share it briefly. If not, why do you think that is?

Barry mentioned the prayer we learned in Foundation, "Holy Spirit, I am weak. You are strong. Be strong in me." Where do you need the Holy Spirit to be strong in you this week? Consider sharing vulnerably with one another and commit to praying for each other every day this week.

Prayer Requests

Session 5: What is the Place of Community in Living out the Five Rhythms? (Part 2: Mission, Church, Worship)

Notes:

Mission: Missionary disciples have compassion for others as Jesus did. Therefore disciples seek opportunities to bless others and live out the gospel, both in word and deed.

BLESS

B – Begin with prayer

L – Listen to the needs of others

E – Eat with others

S – Serve others

S – Share your story

Church: Missionary disciples are committed to the local church. Therefore disciples connect in sacrificial community and seek ways to use their time, gifts, and resources for the betterment of the church community.

Worship: Missionary disciples love God. Therefore disciples seek to passionately worship Him in all that they do, beginning with Sunday worship and extending to all areas of life.

*Note: Appendix 1 contains suggested questions regarding the five rhythms you can use as a group moving forward.

Discussion Questions

Mission

Discuss the practices of BLESS. Are there aspects of BLESS that are easier than others for you? Why is that?

Who do you feel led to BLESS? What's one step you can take this week to begin that process?

Church/Worship

Why do you think we all miss out when we aren't physically present with one another at Sunday worship?

How are you doing with using your time, gifts, and resources for the betterment of the church community?

How can your Formation group specifically encourage you to better live out these three rhythms of a missionary disciple?

Prayer Requests

Session 6: What Does it Mean to Live Your Purpose?

Notes:

What is God's purpose?

Rescue: God rescues us from our sins through trusting in Jesus.

Renewal: God takes our upside down world and begins to turn it right side up through beauty, reconciliation, and justice.

How does our purpose align with God's purpose?

What are the contexts where we live our purpose?

Neighborhoods:

Networks:

Needs:

Discussion Questions

What is one area where you long to see God renew his good but broken creation?

How does (or how can) the work you do contribute to the flourishing of God's creation?

Take a moment to write down some people or places that come to mind for the following contexts:

Neighborhood:

Network:

Needs:

Which one of these do you feel most led to invest in to bring flourishing for God's glory?
How will you do this?

Prayer Requests

Session 7: What are the Primary Ways God Shapes Our Purpose?

Notes:

The three primary ways God shapes our unique purpose is through our:

Story -

Temperament -

Gifting -

As we get to know ourselves more, we can also ask three questions that help us discern God's purpose for our life.

What fits you?

What moves you?

What scares you?

Discussion Questions

What kind of temperament tests have you taken, and how have they contributed to your self-awareness?

Our gifting is a distinct ability bestowed by God that gives us the capacity to make an impact on others through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Do you know what your gifting is? If so, how did you discover it? How are you currently able to use your gifting?

Take a few minutes to think through each of these questions:

What fits you? (Are these some needs and/or opportunities in the world that just make sense for the kind of person you are?)

What moves you? (What kinds of things stir, grieve, and motivate you?)

What scares you? (What do you feel God might be inviting you into that scares you?)

Choose one of these things and share it with the group.

Prayer Requests

Session 8: What is the Role of Community in Finding and Living Our Purpose?

Notes:

What role does community play in helping us find our purpose?

How does community help us live our purpose?

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.” Hebrews 10:24-25

Discussion Questions

Have you ever been a part of a community that has contributed to you finding and living out your purpose? Describe what this community was like and how they helped you do this.

What do you think it takes for a community to get to a place where they know each other well enough to speak truth into each other's lives regarding living out our purposes?

Read Hebrews 10:24. What stands out to you about this verse?

What are some specific things others can do that help you feel encouraged to keep discovering and living out your purpose?

Prayer Requests

Session 9: Defining the Relationship

Discussion Questions

What has been most meaningful to you about the Formation journey so far?

What, if anything, has been lacking for you in the Formation journey so far?

Do you want to continue being in this Formation group? If so, are there any changes you want to suggest to the group that you feel would make the group better?

(Note: There are several acceptable reasons why you might need to be in a different group that have nothing to do with the people in your group: time, location, and meeting rhythm are a few. However, please note that we are still building the Formation ministry and may not have a group near you that has completed this module that you can join.)

Additional Notes

Appendix 1: Five Rhythms of a Missionary Disciple Questions

Scripture:

As you read God's word this week, what did he reveal to you about himself, yourself, or the world around you? Is there a step you need to take in response to this truth? How will you do this?

Prayer:

How can your Formation group be praying for you this week?
How can you be praying for your Formation Group?
How did you see God answer prayers this week?

Worship:

At Sunday worship this week, what did the Lord teach you about himself, yourself, or the world around you?

Mission:

How is the Lord inviting you to BLESS your neighbors? How's it going?

Church:

How is the Lord inviting you to use your time, gifts, and resources for the betterment of the IBC community this week?

Appendix 2: 10-week Scripture Reading Plan

Acts, Colossians, and Philipians

Week One:

- Day 1: Acts 1
- Day 2: Acts 2
- Day 3: Acts 3
- Day 4: Acts 4
- Day 5: Acts 5
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Acts 1-5

Week Two:

- Day 1: Acts 6
- Day 2: Acts 7
- Day 3: Acts 8
- Day 4: Acts 9
- Day 5: Acts 10
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Acts 6-10

Week Three:

- Day 1: Acts 11
- Day 2: Acts 12
- Day 3: Acts 13
- Day 4: Acts 14
- Day 5: Acts 15
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Acts 11-15

Week Four:

- Day 1: Acts 16
- Day 2: Acts 17
- Day 3: Acts 18
- Day 4: Acts 19
- Day 5: Acts 20
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Acts 16-20

Week Five:

- Day 1: Acts 21
- Day 2: Acts 22
- Day 3: Acts 23
- Day 4: Acts 24
- Day 5: Acts 25
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Acts 21-25

Week Six:

- Day 1: Acts 26
- Day 2: Acts 27
- Day 3: Acts 28
- Day 4: Reflect on Acts 26-28
- Day 5, 6, & 7: Reflect on all of Acts

Week Seven:

- Day 1: Philipians 1:1-11
- Day 2: Philipians 1:12-26
- Day 3: Philipians 1:27-29
- Day 4: Philipians 2:1-11
- Day 5: Philipians 2:12-18
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Philipians 1-2:18

Week Eight:

- Day 1: Philipians 2:19-30
- Day 2: Philipians 3:1-14
- Day 3: Philipians 3:15-21
- Day 4: Philipians 4:1-9
- Day 5: Philipians 4:10-23
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Philipians 2:19-4:23

Week Nine:

- Day 1: Colossians 1:1-14
- Day 2: Colossians 1:15-23
- Day 3: Colossians 1:24-2:5
- Day 4: Colossians 2:6-15
- Day 5: Colossians 2:16-23
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Colossians 1 & 2

Week Ten:

- Day 1: Colossians 3:1-11
- Day 2: Colossians 3:12-17
- Day 3: Colossians 3:18-4:1
- Day 4: Colossians 4:2-6
- Day 5: Colossians 4:7-18
- Day 6 & 7: Reflect on Colossians 3 & 4