Session 1: What is Formation?
Welcome

Welcome to Module 4 of Formation: Spiritual Conversations.

The main purpose of Formation is to help you discover and live out your purpose in the context of authentic community. You will do this through growing deeper in relationships with the people in your group while practicing the five rhythms of a missionary disciple: scripture, prayer, mission, worship, and church. The call of every missionary disciple is to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and carry on Jesus’ work in the world.

In this module, we will be focusing on the rhythm of mission. Christianity has always been an evangelistic faith – a faith characterized by sharing the good news of Jesus. However, “evangelism” can often be an intimidating concept. How do I share my faith authentically without relying on a dry, canned formula? How do I respond to people who ask me difficult questions? What is necessary for me to communicate when sharing my faith? These are all valid questions which we will be addressing in this module.

Rather than using a tract or pre-packaged formula for sharing our faith, we hope to engage in authentic, ongoing, and free-flowing spiritual conversations with our friends and neighbors. Spiritual conversations are simply dialogues about spiritual things – conversations that point to Jesus. In this module we will be working through why we should be having spiritual conversations, discussing a helpful framework, confronting our own fears and hesitations, addressing how to talk about sin and the hope of the gospel, and examining how to live the rhythm of mission in our everyday lives.

Our hope and prayer is that by working through this module you will feel equipped and empowered to share the hope you have in Jesus with your friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

We are praying for you,
The IBC Discipleship Team
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.

6. We are all called to care for one another by being attentive and available to each other. This isn’t just one person’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, so 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: Introduction to Spiritual Conversations

Summary:

Barry made 3 main points in the first video:

1. Spiritual conversations are conversations about spiritual things that point to Jesus by explicitly communicating the gospel of Jesus.
2. The good news of the gospel is truth that has the potential to change someone’s life for now and for eternity.
3. When we communicate the gospel, we should seek to communicate the human predicament, God’s provision, and our response.

Personal Notes:

For further reflection read the following verses: 
1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 1 Peter 3:15-17; Matthew 28:16-20.
Discussion Questions:

What surprised you, confused you, or challenged you about what Barry shared in this video?

Who introduced you to the good news of Jesus? What was that experience like?

In your experience, have evangelistic conversations been primarily positive or negative?

Who do you know that you could begin having spiritual conversations with?

Prayer Requests:
Session 2: Fears and Hesitations

Summary:

Chad shared 5 common fears or hesitations in this video:

1. I don’t have enough time.
2. I’m not good with people.
3. I don’t know enough/have the training.
4. I don’t want people to think I’m weird.
5. I don’t know where to begin.

Personal Notes:

For further reflection read the following verses:
Discussion Questions:

Which one of these fears/hesitations do you struggle with? Why that fear in particular?

Is there a fear or hesitation you have that was not mentioned in this video? If so, what?

How will you go about confronting that fear with the truth of the gospel? How can your Formation group help you in doing this?

What part of your story might be a good place to start when entering into a spiritual conversation?

Prayer Requests:
Session 3: How to Talk About Sin

Summary:

Chad discussed how to talk about sin in this video:

1. Remember that spiritual conversations are dialogues, not a monologues, that occur in the context of authentic relationships.

2. Begin by discussing what we all can agree on: the world is not the way it is supposed to be (the cosmic nature of sin).

3. Move to areas where you personally have contributed to the brokenness of the world or where you have failed to live up to who God has called you to be (personal nature of sin).

Personal Notes:

For further reflection read the following verses:
Romans 8:18-25; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12-14.
Discussion Questions:

What did you find to be surprising or challenging from this video?

What questions would be helpful to ask others about God or spiritual matters?

Do you have any experience talking about sin with others? What were those conversations like?

What are some areas of personal sin that you would be willing to talk about with someone?

Prayer Requests:
Session 4: How to Talk about the Gospel

Summary:

Sissy discussed how to talk about the gospel in this video:

1. The gospel is a story of hope – the story of God's provision
2. Believing in Jesus involves more than intellectual assent – it involves repentance and faith.
3. Sharing your own story is often the best way to communicate the gospel – “Before Jesus I was _____, but now I am _____.”

Personal Notes:

For further reflection read the following verses:
**Discussion Questions:**

What about God’s provision (the gospel of Jesus) excites you?

As Sissy discussed the concepts of repentance and faith, what surprised or challenged you about those two ideas?

What does turning from sin and embracing the grace of Jesus look like in your own life?

Using the pattern found in John 9 (“Before Jesus I was_______, but now I am _______”) how will you go about telling others about how God has been at work in your life?

In Session 1 we asked you to identify someone to begin having spiritual conversations with. How have those conversations been going? If you haven’t started those conversations, what next steps do you need to take?

Do you feel more confident about being able to share your faith having worked through the previous 4 sessions?

**Prayer Requests:**
Session 5: Living the Rhythm of Mission

Summary:

Sissy shared 3 primary areas where we can live out the rhythm of mission in our day to day lives:

1. Hospitality
2. Justice
3. Work

Personal Notes:
Discussion Questions:

Which of these three areas are you most drawn toward as you think about living out the rhythm of mission?

What are some unique ways you might be able to practice hospitality as a way to love your neighbors in word and deed?

What needs or burdens of your community might you be able to take up in order to work toward justice?

If you work with others on a regular basis, what might be some natural ways to begin having spiritual conversations with your coworkers?

As this module concludes, spend a few moments encouraging and affirming one another by pointing out the unique ways God has formed, gifted, and equipped each group member to carry on his work in the world.

Prayer Requests: