

FaithTalk facilitator training

Introduction

Welcome to FaithTalk facilitator training. This introductory lesson gives an overview of FaithTalk groups with an emphasis on the main priorities for these groups.

We begin with a summary of the primary information contained in the introductory video and then provide some follow up assignments.

1. Why small groups?

a. They provide Trinitarian community. In small groups, people experience and share the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

- Father, Son and Holy Spirit live together in perfect “community” (John 17:21-22)
- God's desire, and his purpose for creating humanity, is to share his life with us and he calls us to share that life with one another (John 14:20; 15:4, 11; 17:21-23; John 10:10; 15:17; 17:11, 21-23; Ephesians 4:2-3)
- Small groups provide an ideal environment for people to experience this Trinitarian community.

b. They advance mission and maturity. Small groups are one of the most effective means available for facilitating participation in Jesus’ mission and growth in Christian maturity:

- Scripture provides many examples of people experiencing Christ-centered community as they gathered in small groups to fellowship, worship, pray and study. In small groups people served and encouraged each other.
- Throughout Christian history, small groups have been effective means for experiencing Christ-centered, grace-based community and for making new disciples.
- Small groups continue to serve as one of the most effective ways to facilitate growth in Christian maturity, develop new leaders and make new disciples.

2. The importance of being “missional”

Understanding the term “missional” begins by understanding the term “mission.” Mission is Jesus’ activity in the world, by the Holy Spirit, to draw people back to the relationship with God for which they were created. Jesus created the church and commissioned it to participate with him in his mission (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). The church does not have a mission; Jesus has a mission. In union with Jesus, the members of his body, the church, participates in Jesus’ mission by the power, gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"Missional" vs "Mission-minded"

To be "mission-minded" is to have a concern about mission. But to be “missional” is to be engaged actively in Jesus’ mission in the following ways:

- Learning about and understanding the cultural context, mindset, needs, hopes and concerns of non-Christians within a specific geographical location or people group.
- Engaging actively with these non-Christians through relevant service leading to the development of authentic (more than superficial) relationships.
- Sharing the gospel within those relationships with the intention of helping people experience God’s love and grace, leading to them becoming and growing as disciples of Jesus.

3. Two priorities

FaithTalk groups, being fully missional, emphasize two priorities:

a. Evangelism: Reaching unchurched Christians and non-Christians for the purpose of sharing the good news of God's love, forgiveness and inclusion of all people in the life of the Trinity and helping them mature in Christ.

b. Multiplication: Developing new ministry leaders who start more FaithTalk groups that make more new disciples. Many existing small groups are good at providing care, support and spiritual nurturing for church people (those already active in a local church). But often these groups do not connect with new (unchurched) people, and thus do not multiply disciples and small groups.

Because evangelism and multiplication are vital, it is the goal of GCI's FaithTalk initiative to help existing congregations and church plants start small groups that embrace both priorities. Though the resources provided on this blog are specific to FaithTalk groups, they are useful in helping all types of small groups become missional by:

- Incorporating unchurched or non-Christian people, leading to the multiplication of new disciples of Jesus
- Helping these disciples grow in Christian maturity
- Developing new ministry leaders
- Multiplying more missional small groups

4. Assignments

Having watched the main video, please now do the following:

- Read chapter one of [How to Lead Small Groups](#) by Neal F. McBride
- Read pages 373-380 of [Atonement](#) by T.F. Torrance (Robert T. Walker, editor)
- Watch the three short videos posted on the introduction page.
- Using the comments feature on the introduction page, or in an email sent to [Randy Bloom](mailto:Randy.Bloom@gci.org) Randy.Bloom@gci.org, do the following:
 - 1) Describe your initial thoughts about the material covered in this introductory lesson, including the assigned reading and videos
 - 2) Share your questions and/or concerns about this material
 - 3) Describe your initial vision for starting a FaithTalk group

5. Final thoughts

You are encouraged to continue this online FaithTalk facilitator training. Additional lessons are found on other pages of the FaithTalk blog. GCI also provides day-long FaithTalk group facilitation training seminars - for information contact Randy Bloom <Randy.Bloom@gci.org> or your District Pastoral Leader.