

Defining Christian Formation

What is Christian Formation?

Christian formation is our continuing journey of being transformed by the Holy Spirit towards the likeness of Christ, experiencing and expressing love for God and others.

(See also Romans 8:29 and 2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

A Philosophical Shift

Historically, the church has provided a learning environment based in large part on the public educational system. As a result, the focus has leaned more towards head knowledge rather than a heart change, one that would be evident in a visible and continual life change. As leaders, we need to provide a new perspective and create a new environment in which the Spirit can work to transform lives.

This requires a philosophical shift in our way of planning for ministry in three areas – shifting from...

1. A primary focus on program to a focus on transformation.
2. A primarily segmented to a more integrated and holistic environment.
3. Emphasis on the head (or the cognitive dimension of learning) to an integration of head, heart and hands.

G.R.O.W.

In addition to these shifts, there are four formational elements which can help us to be receptive to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to grow in our relationship with God. We have prepared this *Ministry Planning Tool* with the emphasis on a process of GROWth, moving one towards spiritual maturity.

God's Word – shaping our actions and our lives

Interacting with God's Word

We are people of the Word, who value Scripture as the only perfect rule for our lives. We desire to know, understand and live out the truths of the Bible. Our passion is to see the Scripture come alive among God's people.

Relationships – nurturing our growth

Fellowship

Healthy and effective spiritual growth takes place in the context of relationships...both within peer groups and across generations. We encourage people to be in discipling, mentoring, or small group relationships that produce growth – giving witness to the Good News both inside and outside the church.

Obedient Living – using our gifts in witness and service

Service and Mission

We believe that discipleship to Jesus implies radical obedience to all of his teachings. Such obedience, together with the Spirit's work in us, equips us to do kingdom work...responding to injustice and serving others in Jesus' name.

Worship – interacting with and experiencing God

Worshipful Life

Knowing that God desires an intimate relationship with us, we are committed to a lifestyle of worship characterized by both individual and corporate expressions of devotion. Our daily worship practices empower us for living an obedient, abundant and joy-filled life in Christ.