

## **Centre for Christian Studies** **A Planning Process for Planning Teams**

The planning teams at the Learning Circles are an essential part of the Centre for Christian Studies program. The process asks participants to work on two levels simultaneously.

**Task** -Students are being asked to lead a session to facilitate others' learning in a specific subject area. There is expectation that group members demonstrate a grasp of the material and also present the content in a competent and educational fashion.

**Process** -There is also expectation that the planning team be conscious of group dynamics and leadership issues. Participants will be asked to offer feedback and insight into the style and gifts of their colleagues for diaconal ministry.

### **Preparation before the Learning Circle**

- Before the planning team meets, become familiar with the theme:
  - Start researching your topic.
  - Gather resources and watch videos related to the topic.
  - Brainstorm ideas for your session -- like music, movies, scripture, etc.
  - Be in contact with others on your planning team.
  - Ask others for input into your topic (learning facilitator, mentor, local committee, etc.)
- Think about what you want to learn:
  - about theme content
  - from planning these sessions
  - -from leading these sessions for the rest of the community
- For each student led session topic, develop learning goals.
  - These will be collected during the learning circle and
  - Distributed to each planning team so they can design based on the group's hopes and expectations

### **Planning Sessions**

#### **Roles**

- Name a person to be the facilitator for the team's meeting.
  - This person assists the team to make progress, move past blocks, ensure all participate, reach decisions.
  - Some groups have had success taking turns for half the planning session; then using the time of transition for evaluation and check-in.
- Name a person to be the team's memory for the next time
  - This person acts as recorder, keeper of newsprint and materials.
  - Decide if you want to rotate the role of recorder amongst the team members.

#### **Team building**

#### **Who are we? (Team)**

- Briefly check-in with one another.
- Talk about the feelings and biases you bring to the topic.
- Acknowledge what you bring (experiences, knowledge, gifts) that may be useful for this topic.
- Share your learning goals for this topic and for planning/leading.
- Agree with one another to give the support/challenge/accountability you each need.
- Discuss your observations about, and learnings from, the readings for this session.

#### **Constituency**

#### **Who are we planning for? (Group)**

- Discuss the expectation the group brings to this topic

- Look at the group learning goals
- Think about the learning styles in the group and how these effect what you will do
- Anticipate the potential response to the topic (openness, fear, boredom).

### **Purpose**

### **Why?**

- Write a purpose statement to answer the question: Why are we studying this...
  - Why this is an important subject for us (in ministry)?
  - What need will these sessions answer?

### **Goals**

### **What?**

- Write several goal statements to answer the questions:
  - What do we want people to know, to have experienced, to learn?
  - What do we hope to do in these sessions?
  - What does the purpose statement suggest we do?

### **Program Design**

### **How?**

- Share research you have done
- Brainstorm possible ways to engage the group in learning
- How will you go about meeting the goals?
- Make a realistic estimate of ideas and resources you have shared
- Decide what you will do. Does the design match the constituency, the purpose, and the goals (the who, the why and the what)?
- Assign responsibilities for leadership and preparation of materials
- What if? Think about possible problems which might arise.
  - How will you meet these?
  - Where can you build in flexibility?
  - Alternate process?

### **Program Event**

### **It happens!**

### **Evaluation**

### **Looking back and looking ahead**

It is expected that some time will be devoted to evaluation during the actual session; giving student colleagues an opportunity to share affirmations and feedback (usually involving some evaluation in written form). As well an evaluation meeting involving staff and the planning team, is usually scheduled for immediately following the session.

The process for this evaluation session usually follows a standard format:

#### 1) Centering

- a time of silence or prayer

#### 2) Check-in with Students re: Session

- students are asked, in turn, to share their assessment of the session
  - How well did the session meet the purpose and goals?
  - To what extent did you meet your own personal learning goals for planning and leading? What further work is necessary?
  - What was effective or not...in the processes used, in the leadership, in the group learning?
  - What might you do differently next time? What do you need to do/learn in order to do it differently?

#### 3) Check-in with Students re Teaming and Planning Process

- students are then asked, to comment on the teaming and planning process
  - What dynamics were present on the planning team? in the planning process?

#### 4) Check-in with Students re: Feedback for Colleagues

- students are then asked, to comment on the gifts and areas for further work they see in their teammates

-What affirmations and encouragements do you have for individual team mates?

5) Feedback from Staff

-staff offer observations on the session and leadership

6) Centering

-a time of silence or prayer

7) Review of Written Evaluations from Colleagues

-written evaluations from student colleagues are circulated at this point amongst the planning team, initialed, and eventually forwarded to staff

**Time Line**

There are three planning sessions designated for this preparation. It is a suggestion that:

-by the end of the first session, groups will have worked on community building issues and had an initial attempt to articulate purpose and goals

-by the end of the second meeting, groups will have a rough sketch of the process design

-during the third session, groups will work on the details and further preparation

It may not be possible to complete all the work in three meetings. Individuals or teams may need to work on specific segments of the process at other times.