MICROGROUPs | going deeper questions

ILLINOISIV SUMMER 2020: OASIS

# Module 1: Ceasing

## Week 1: silence and solitude

1. *(Adapted from Spiritual Disciplines Companion book)*

*Being quiet before God requires that we get rid of distractions and quiet down the "voices" in our heads.*

Here's some examples of what the "distraction committee" could contain:

* Looking Good Kid - who says to you: "Excel! Be smart! Look great! Achieve, achieve, achieve!"
* Rescue the World Crusader, who says to you: "Help folks to the extreme, even if they don't want it."
* Critic, who scolds you and evaluates everyone around you, saying, "Why aren't they doing what's right or what you want?"
* Leisure Junkie, who says to you: "How long until your favorite TV program? Why don't you stop and get a doughnut, or ten doughnuts?"

**Which of these (or other) inner committee members come up most often for you in silence and solitude? How can you gently ask them to leave this week?**

2. (*Adapted from Spiritual Disciplines Companion book)*

*A common experience in solitude is to recall a certain person who is an adversary or challenger and criticize that person. If we consciously invite God's presence, a shift may occur. God confronts us about our character or our need to die to self and trust God completely.*

**Is there a person in your life who you feel fearful of or opposed to or that comes up negatively in silence and solitude? How is God inviting you to confront your own character and meet you in your fear/anger/anxiety?**

(See Jacob's life in scripture and his relationship with Esau and solitude with God)

## Week 2: FASTING

*(Adapted from Practicing the Way practicingtheway.org/practices/fasting)*

1. **If you have not fasted yet, how are you feeling about the prospect of fasting? Does it feel high stakes? Are you excited? Are you hoping to receive something from God?**

**If you have fasted, what was your experience like?**

1. **Fasting as a response to local, national, or global issues can bind us as a faith community. What issues of justice or social concern so move you that you could respond with a personal fast?**
2. **As you see it, what are UIUC’s biggest issues of justice?  How might your microgroup begin to pray and work towards undoing injustices on our campus?**

## Week 3: Casting Your Cares

1. **What anxieties, fears, or areas of unbelief have come up more this past week?**
2. **Which ones feel the hardest to give up and trust Jesus with?**
3. **What are the obstacles/what is the internal resistance to handing them over to Jesus?**
4. **Community is another big part of casting our cares!**
   1. First, we can share our cares with each other and bear the burden together (we experience God’s care and burden carrying in more tangible ways through community.)
   2. Second, and probably more importantly, we encourage and remind each other to actually give the burdens to God (which is especially helpful for how forgetful we are, and for the areas that are particularly hard to give up and trust Jesus with.)
   3. Here’s a tangible way to practice this in microgroups! Do the casting your cares exercise – but instead of you writing down your list (or maybe along with) – say them out loud and have another person/the rest of your group write them down. Then have them pray for help handing those things to Jesus, and have them rip up the papers (alongside with you/the group.) (We can’t only count on this – because we are not able to force each other to trust God and hand over things internally, this must be in our own hearts. But the act of being helped/doing it together can really help us when we are weak!) (Another way is you could do the regular exercise but rip your own papers together at the same time and pray for each other.)

# Module 2: SCRIPTURE

## Week 4: READING SCRIPTURE ALOUD

1. **As you have read the Bible throughout your life have there been passages, books, or genres that were hard to accept, confusing, or not what you expected?**
2. **On the other hand, have there been any passages, books, or genres that have been important, life giving or encouraging in your faith journey?**
3. **Can you think of any parts of scripture that you’d be interested in going back to because they were either challenging or important to you?**

From here, there are two options: Pick a few passages that you have been discussing and read them aloud to one another. Conversely, pick a person to read aloud Philippians or 1 Thessalonians.

## Week 5: Quiet Times

1. **What obstacles do you have that keep you from quiet time and studying the Bible more on your own?**
2. **Which one of the study ideas sounds interesting and you want to be challenged to try this week?**
3. **What concepts/specific commands/parts of Scripture are you confused about, feel lacking of, or feel resistant to? Why (what’s the fear, anxiety, concern, apathy, etc. underlying this for you?) What would it look like to go deeper in studying and understanding this part of God’s Word?**
4. **Watch one of the Bible Project “how to read the Bible” videos and discuss!**

## Week 6: Memorizing Scripture

1. **What do you think about meditating and memorizing Scripture? Is this something you already do? Have you ever done this before? When?**
2. **Have you started trying to memorize any scripture? What’s been easy or hard?**
3. **If you have started memorizing, have you experienced a moment of your mind being “renewed?” Has a verse(s) come into your mind at an opportune time?**
4. **Any thoughts, creative ideas, or feedback on this coming week’s Practice? Is there anything new you want to try? Or something that has been helpful to you in the past that you’d like to share?**

# Module 3: Prayer

## Week 8: PERSONAL PRAYER

1. **How are you praying on your own regularly? What obstacles keep you from praying regularly? How might regular prayer impact the rest of the summer and start of the semester?**
2. **Examen – what helpful rhythms of examen could help you be present to God and follow Him this upcoming semester? Talk about what impact this could have on the semester.**
3. **Listening prayer – what helpful rhythms of listening prayer could help you be present to God and follow Him this upcoming semester? Talk about what impact this could have on the semester.**

## Week 9: Corporate PRAYER

**Share about the questions about the upcoming semester in microgroups:**

1. **How are you feeling about the coming semester? What are you excited for? What are you anxious or stressed about?**
2. **How do you want to see God at work in your life this upcoming semester? In your community? In the campus around you?**
3. **What do you need prayer for as you prepare your heart and mind and soul for this upcoming semester?**
4. **What typically makes up your daily patterns of life? What differs from a life of worship? How could your daily patterns more reflect a daily life of worship and prayer to the Lord?**

**Practice the call and response liturgy together and/or do something musical worship together and/or do intercessory prayer for the campus and each other.**