

CHRIST-ENLIVENED STUDENT AFFAIRS

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 1

WHO ARE WE?

Understanding Our Christian and Professional Identities

1. As noted in this chapter, “our data indicates that many . . . professionally trained staff see themselves as administrators, mentors, and educators and not as pastors or friends” (p. 35). In articulating one’s moral identity, how can student affairs leaders (SALs) move beyond their administrative, mentoring, and educational roles and add a distinctly faith-based dimension to their work? In other words, how can SALs overcome a perceived disconnect between faith identity and professional identity?
2. What are some practical ways for faith-based institutions to promote the identities of steward and disciple, rather than only those of administrator, educator, and mentor?
3. How can SALs use narrative as a means of discipleship with students in personal and professional contexts? Should SALs continue to use this tool when students seek more professional relationships? Are there ways that it can be used in both contexts?

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING THE DEVELOPERS

Caring for the Souls of Student Affairs Leaders

1. What is that balance between high expectations and soul care for student affairs professionals? What checks should be in place to prevent extremes (burnout versus expensive retreats all the time)?
2. Although fellowship with supervisors and colleagues can build trust and improve department relationships, what boundaries should be set in place? How close is too close?
3. What is one immediate action you could take within your department or division to foster better soul care among the staff with whom you work most closely?

CHAPTER 3

DOES GOD MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS?

The Christian Story in the Literature

1. This chapter mentions three types of practices that help SALs accomplish the “how” of Christian higher education: (1) professional practices, (2) spiritual practices, and (3) virtue practices. In what ways can the virtue practices influence both the professional and spiritual ones?
2. Based on the Christian student affairs literature, which of the identities listed at the beginning of the chapter stood out or was most relevant to you? How does that identity make a difference in how you work with students?

CHAPTER 4

WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

How Christ Animates the Explicit and Implicit Views of Student Identity

1. How does the Christian belief in the Trinity influence our understanding of who students are, and inform our foundational philosophies and practices in student affairs?
2. How can the term *Imago Dei* guide student affairs professionals to unite a diverse student body, considering each aspect discussed this chapter? (e.g., gifts, calling, etc.).
3. What are some practical ways student affairs divisions can cultivate faith-animated wholeness—a wholeness that helps students situate growth within the context of their whole life?

CHAPTER 5

THE END OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSION

1. This chapter suggests that “if one seeks to develop someone or something, one needs some *specific* idea about the final ideal to which one’s development aims” (p. 87). Taking this into account, what does a well-developed graduate from your institution look like? Which of the ideals listed on page 94 most resembles your institutional goals? Which ideal resembles your goals the least?
2. What are some tangible ways your institution works to realize this ideal? What are some practices that detract from realizing this ideal? Which, if any, of your practices works to realize a different ideal altogether?

CHAPTER 6

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO TEACH STUDENTS?

Students Affairs with Substance

1. Which areas of your work are the easiest to think about through the theological narrative? Which areas are the hardest?
2. How does the reality of sin factor into student affairs work? How can SALs bring issues of sin to the forefront of their discussions about nurturing and growing the souls of our students?

CHAPTER 7

THE HOW(S) OF CHRIST-ENLIVENED STUDENT AFFAIRS

1. Christian institutions claim that corporate worship in the form of chapel is an integral part of Christ-enlivened student affairs. However, chapel looks vastly different at each institution. What chapel practices are the most effective and enriching for spiritual formation?
2. What is one area at your institution that uses a Christ-added or Christ-assumed approach that could be transformed by a Christ-animated approach? What might that transformation look like in practical steps?

CHAPTER 8

HOW CHRIST ENLIVENS RESIDENCE LIFE

1. In this chapter, the authors suggest that “student affairs divisions must allow residence life staff to draw boundaries” (p. 145).

Considering the importance and demand of their work, how can residence life staff, who are often overworked, maintain good boundaries? How can their divisions support them in this endeavor?

2. In our research, only a few student affairs leaders described their roles as being “pastors” or shepherds. Why do you think this is? To what extent do you believe that using this terminology would remind residence life staff of the “redemptive portion of the larger Christian story” (p. 138)?

CHAPTER 9

HOW CHRIST ENLIVENS STUDENT CONDUCT AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION

1. As a Christian student affairs practitioner, how would you apply God’s narrative when dealing with campus alcohol violations, especially at a public institution?
2. Why is a simplistic rule-based approach to alcohol education not enough in Christian higher education? How can SALs improve a simplistic rule-based approach to alcohol education in Christian higher education?

CHAPTER 10

HOW CHRIST TRANSFORMS THE CAMPUS RACIAL CLIMATE

1. One of the four specific barriers that SALs refer to as a hindrance in their efforts to create hospitable racial environments on their campuses is the lack of faculty and staff of color (p. 170). How can higher education and student affairs graduate programs

- help assist their universities in ensuring a more diverse faculty and staff?
2. How could institutions in predominantly white areas and communities retain faculty and staff of color? What strategies could they adopt?
 3. What strategies can be adopted to ensure that the responsibility of creating hospitable environments on campuses does not just rest on one office?

CHAPTER 11

THE STEWARDSHIP AND REDEMPTION OF OUR SEXUAL SELVES

1. In your undergraduate experience, did the college or university staff and faculty facilitate conversations about sexuality? If so, how?
2. Based on this chapter, how would you adapt or implement sexuality focused programming?
3. In your current department, have you addressed the topic of sex with students? If so, how were you equipped to do so? What are some helpful next steps your department, or you individually, could take?"

CHAPTER 12

SEXUAL JUSTICE IN A BROKEN WORLD

How Christ Enlivens Title IX Practice

1. How can Christian SALs broach the topic of consent from a Christian worldview? How can Christian SALs maintain and advocate for Christian standards on sex and sexuality while still helping to take protective, practical steps on behalf of students?

2. What are ways that Title IX issues could become more freely discussed, instead of being viewed as taboo?

CONCLUSION

FAITH ASSUMED, FAITH ADDED, FAITH ANIMATING

1. In what ways does the student affairs practice at your institution reflect the strengths and weaknesses found in national research? In what ways does it diverge from these findings?
2. Since a great number of higher education professionals do not have a degree in higher education, how can a Christ-enlivened approach encourage all higher education professionals to utilize, develop, and research theory? What should motivate calls for additional research in the field and in faith-based higher education specifically?
3. How can faith-based institutions be a source of restoration in the world and practice “Christ-enlivened” education regarding topics that are viewed as secular or political?

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