

# → TRANSFORMATION

IN PROGRESS

A Faculty Guide and Resource  
for Iron Sharpening Groups

SY 2022-2023





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ISG FACULTY GUIDE

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# The Big Picture of ISG



## CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER, SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION, AUTHENTICITY

### What is ISG?

The Iron-Sharpener Group (ISG) is a required intentional community designed for students to participate in and experience spiritual transformation. Each student is led by a faculty member or a designated representative. ISG is an informal time of interaction designed to address the spiritual, relational, and ministry areas in student lives in a more intimate group setting. It also provides a great forum for mentoring and discipleship in the context of this smaller community. Students remain part of the same ISG throughout their time at IGSL. ISG is credited as Community Involvement (CI) in Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Manila Philippines.

### Why is ISG important?

The goal of the curriculum at the International Graduate School of Leadership (IGSL) is for students to develop holistically in knowledge, character, and skills to become effective leaders and help to fulfill the Great Commission. As leaders develop greater Christ-like character and experience spiritual transformation in the context of community, they become more authentic servant-steward leaders.

The overarching goal of ISG is to develop a deeper intimacy with God that enables us to live out principles for fruitful ministry (John 15:5) and radically transforms how we live.



## WEEKLY, VARIED ENVIRONMENTS, COMMUNITY, SAFE

### When does ISG happen?

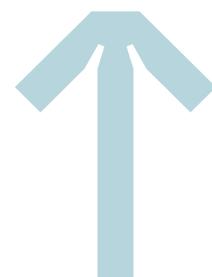
ISG groups meet for at least two hours at a pre-determined weekly time, or as otherwise agreed upon by the ISG group.\*

\*See ISG Syllabus for details

### How does ISG happen?

In the formative environments of weekly ISG meetings, Ministry Weeks, and other ISG events, students will be able to actively love and sharpen one another, and together practice biblical principles such as worship and prayer, surrender and obedience, encouragement and exhortation, care-fronting and conflict resolution, and understanding and appreciating diversity in a spiritually-transforming community. As much as possible, faculty will seek to be available for one-on-one mentoring, spiritual direction, crisis care-giving, counseling and coaching of students according to their personal spiritual needs and particular areas of growth.

# ISG





# THE FOCUS

## THE STUDENT

will discover knowledge, embrace values and attitudes, and cultivate commitment to apply skills that result in an authentic, God-honoring, transforming life.

HE WHO BEGAN THE WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT - PHILIP 1:6

### GOD

Understanding more fully the attributes of God/Christ resulting in truly *living out one's theology and identity in Christ*

Acknowledging one's need for *authentic* and passionate relationship with God, and nurturing that relationship with personal and corporate *spiritual disciplines* of prayer, obedience to God and His Word, walking in the Spirit

### COMMUNITY

Appreciating and celebrating *uniqueness of each person* as they use their *spiritual gifts* to build the body of Christ

Appreciating the diversity of other perspectives, cultures and worldviews in *multi-cultural* community, and committing to its Christ-centered health.

Understand and commit to the value of a *spiritual mentor*, and of *peer-mentoring*, in creating an environment for spiritual transformation.

Learning and applying *Christ-honoring interpersonal relational skills* and *servant-steward leadership skills* in their families, the IGSL community, and ministry contexts.

Developing competency as a spiritual director, peer-mentor and one who genuinely edifies the body of Christ.

### SELF

Acknowledging that personal character and integrity, in addition to competence, are foundational attributes in a transformational leader.

Cultivating a lifestyle of dependence on and walking in the counsel and power of the Spirit for life change.

Embracing and growing in the value of transparency, accountability, and spiritual sensitivity



# THE FOCUS

ISG should be a safe environment for the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work. As such, ISG's should uphold certain *non-negotiable core values* such as **confidentiality, transparency and mutual accountability** to allow for an emotionally-safe ISG context. Students will be encouraged to practice these core values in ISG meetings and within the ISG community as a whole.

HE WHO BEGAN THE WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT - PHIL. 1:6

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Holding all information shared within ISG as sacred and personal. We must uphold high biblical standards to prevent gossip in the ISG, and the IGSL body as a whole. Issues or concerns shared/disclosed by members within the ISG context will not be discussed outside of the ISG, or apart from the presence of the ISG members.

## TRANSPARENCY

We seek to cultivate an atmosphere of transparency within ISG. Transparency means being "real" and disclosing setbacks and struggles as well as victories and successes. It means removing the mask that we use to cover up how we are really doing and sharing our inner person with others in the group.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Lovingly being our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Helping others in the ISG to walk faithfully and rightly before the Lord by upholding them in prayer, asking the tough questions, and coming alongside (without judgment) during the challenging times.



## THE COVENANT

Each ISG develops a covenant according to the needs and personal preferences of the group. However, each covenant should include at minimum three core values of: confidentiality, transparency and mutual accountability. \*See HELPS for Covenant making process and sample.

# ROLES OF THE ISG LEADER

HE WHO BEGAN THE WORK IN YOU, WILL COMPLETE IT. -PHIL. 1:6



## SPIRITUAL GUIDE

As a spiritual guide, he or she provides pastoral care, shepherding, spiritual direction (helping members understand what God is saying and doing), and an environment to experience God and grow in Christlikeness.



## COACH

As a coach, he or she provides motivation to enhance skills and discover opportunities to grow in life: academics (course or program advising), relationships (marriage, family, co-workers, friendships), or ministry (during ministry week, internships, TAM or in their particular ministry area).



## CRISIS CARE-GIVER

As a crisis caregiver, he or she provides timely emotional support, encouragement, help, advice, and correction in the midst of critical needs. The ISG leader is the key point person/the first responder to journey with them in the crisis. If not able to provide the help needed, he or she ensures that the ISG member receives the appropriate assistance and care in coordination with LM.

# MINDSET OF THE ISG LEADER



## PROTÉGÉ APPROACH

Identify the strengths and gifts of each student and help them to specifically develop in those areas and capitalize on how God has created them. In addition, encourage the ISG members to affirm one another as everyone freely exercises their spiritual gifts and natural talents in community. Further, faculty will seek to train and develop the students to facilitate ISG and other small groups



## MENTORING FOCUS

Try to purposefully refrain from a primary teaching focus in ISG and instead take on the role of a co-sojourner, and even a wounded healer, as different topics are explored, discussed and reflected upon in ISG.



## NO-GOSSIP ZONE

Ensure that confidentiality, honor and respect for one another are vigilantly maintained. Together, as a faculty and student body, we must uphold high biblical standards to prevent gossip in community -- the ISG, and the IGSL body as a whole, need to be "no-gossip" zones. Issues or concerns shared/disclosed by members within the ISG context will not be discussed outside of the ISG, or apart from the presence of the ISG members.



## INTENTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

As a faculty mentor, schedule a minimum of one face-to-face meeting (perhaps at home, a local coffee shop or restaurant) every semester with each student to develop the relationship and engage in focused and individual mentoring, coaching, spiritual guidance, prayer, etc. Be proactive and seek out students depending upon their needs.

# MINDSET OF THE ISG LEADER



## PEER MENTORING.

The ISG environment should emphasize peer-mentoring as well as mutual encouragement and support of one another. It will help if the faculty member tries to assume the role of a facilitator, coach and co-sojourner rather than advisor and teacher.



## EXERCISE CREATIVITY.

Vary the physical environment where the ISG meets (office, nipa hut, prayer garden, local coffee shop, quiet restaurant, etc.). Also, attempt to use physically creative expressions of food, worship music, sports activities, watching a movie to illustrate a topic, different games to catalyze a sharing time, creative props, reading a book together or unique projects/crafts to help members express themselves. All of these activities should help contribute to a purposeful discussion with the ultimate goal of spiritual transformation.



## SAFE ENVIRONMENT.

Work to maintain and strengthen the emotional/spiritual safety of the ISG context. This involves an intentional process of cultivating an environment that helps members to be open/sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to one another, and allows God to accomplish His life-transforming work.



## BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

It is expected that a biblical model of conflict resolution as described in Matthew 18, with an emphasis on caring confrontation and accountability (not criticism and gossip), is followed in the ISG and overall IGSL contexts. In the case of conflict, faculty and students should approach one another in love, and be primarily concerned with another person's growth and genuine reconciliation within the body of Christ. (Matthew 18:15-20; 5:23-24 and Galatians 6:1-5)

# THE PATH

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## GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FOR A FRUITFUL ISG

➤➤➤ **Attendance and punctuality.** The ISG meets for a total of fifteen (15) meetings per semester. Only two (2) excused absences will be allowed. If a student incurs more than two (2) absences, he will be required to re-enroll and pay for the credit again. Tardiness can also affect his attendance, so encourage him to arrive at ISG meetings on time. If he must be absent, he must contact the ISG leader in advance.

➤➤➤ **Attitude of holy expectation.** Encourage the student to make the most of each ISG meeting by arriving with an attitude of holy expectation to witness the Holy Spirit working in and through you to impact your ISG by preparing her heart before she attends ISG. Recall the words of a Quaker saying: "What shall I do? I expect to pass through this world but once. Therefore, any good work, kindness or service I can render to any person, let me do it now. Let me not neglect or delay to do it, for I will not pass this way again".

➤➤➤ **Intimacy with God.** When a student is in right relationship with God, and walking closely with Him, one is able to serve as an instrument to affect life-change in his ISG members. When one walks intimately with God he can use be used mightily to bless the ISG as well as use the ISG to reveal Himself personally.

➤➤➤ **Participation.** The participation of each ISG member is an essential part of the spiritual growth process in the ISG community. Your presence and participation contributes to both the personal and corporate process of spiritual transformation. Participate with your ISG members by listening well and being supportive when others share, helping/serving them in times of trial, praying for them regularly, pursuing relationship with them, fulfilling all responsibilities assigned to you, and practicing affirmation and loving exhortation of one another.

# THE PATH

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## THE WAY ISG/CI CREDIT IS EARNED

Students will receive one (1) ISG/CI credit per semester enrolled in ISG if the ISG requirements are met in full. In order to graduate, a student must complete a total of six (6) ISG/CI credits for the MDiv program and four (4) ISG/CI credits for an MA program. To receive one (1) ISG/CI credit per semester, a student is expected to fulfill the following requirements:

- Attend and participate in weekly ISG meetings.

- During each academic year, attend and participate in the following: monthly Community Chapel Time, Prayer Times, Annual Community Retreat, Spiritual Retreat, Ministry Week, Day with the Lord, and other scheduled ISG activities.

If a student is not able to fulfill a Ministry Week requirement, or does not attend a Day with the Lord, the Community Retreat or the Spiritual Retreat, he/she should fulfill that requirement at the next available opportunity per the guidance of the ISG leader. The ISG leader and student may together develop an action plan in order to ensure the requirement will be fulfilled in a timely manner and the student will be able to graduate according to plan. This requirement is exempted in the case of a legitimate excused absence (by the ISG leader) for a significant illness, hospitalization, death in the family, etc.

# THE PATH

The Two-Year Suggested Schedule of ISG Themes and Topics

YEAR 1 SEM 1

HE WHO BEGAN THE WORK IN YOU, WILL COMPLETE IT. -PHIL. 1:8

**SEMESTER 1:** Goals are to get to know one another and establish parameters of a safe community, building relationships by establishing trust and transparency. There will be an emphasis on the personal, relational and spiritual growth of each ISG member.

**Form an ISG Covenant and Values.** Together as a group, discuss core principles the ISG will value and apply, as well as ISG core values of transparency, accountability, confidentiality, safe environment and spiritual sensitivity. Talk about the importance of creating a redemptive environment and healthy boundaries.

**ISG Bonding. Invite ISG for dinner in faculty home.** Use getting-to-know-you activities. Seek to meet individually at least twice this semester with each student. Discuss any specific issues recommended by the Admissions Committee. Faculty may share part of personal life story including struggles and weaknesses, failures and successes to model ISG core values. Opportunity to model spiritual depth, vulnerability and safety of ISG.

**Adjustment to Philippines and IGSL.** Follow-up FIT discussion on life transitions, living in a multi-cultural community and learning to appreciate and celebrate differences. Discuss how internationals can best communicate/interact in the Philippine culture; national students may help international students.

**Living in a Multi-Cultural Community.** Share and appreciate one another's cultural values, traditions, food, etc. Each week one person may share about home country, culture and food. ISG asks questions to learn, understand and pray. May also note what is offensive in each culture, and how to respect/honor one another.



# THE PATH

The Two-Year Suggested Schedule of ISG Themes and Topics

YEAR 1 SEM 1

HE WHO BEGAN THE WORK IN YOU, WILL COMPLETE IT. -PHIL. 1:6

**Life Map.** A personal life map identifies issues such as calling, integrity, spiritual life development, family impact, personal life issues. Leader will model first, then have students share their life maps with the group to show their life story and how God has shaped them. After each person shares, the rest of the group will pray for that person. (This activity may take several weeks.)

**Spiritual disciplines and the Spirit-Filled Life.** Ask questions to determine how ISG members are doing in their walk with Christ and in personal spiritual disciplines. Discuss maintaining their walk with God when under stress. Encourage reading the Bible in one year, journaling, listening, growing in prayer, etc. Together, practice different spiritual disciplines, i.e. contemplative prayer.

**Assess Theological Foundations.** Explore students' views of God and His attributes. Help ISG members identify how false/incorrect views of God impact worldview and ministry. Examples: suffering, why bad things happen to faithful Christians.

**Assess ISG Members' Personal Development.** Identify areas where students want individual mentoring from faculty. Guide students in discerning/living out priorities and managing time and resources. Assess strengths and weaknesses; help develop a personal growth plan.

**Explore the "One Another" Principles in the New Testament.** Discuss practical ways to implement these principles in the ISG context.

**Ministry Week Preparation and Coaching.** Prepare members to take new faith steps in ministry.

**Ministry Week Leadership Evaluation.** Debrief lessons learned. Note successes and discuss areas for growth and development.



# THE PATH

The Two-Year Suggested Schedule of ISG Themes and Topics

YEAR 1 SEM 2

**SEMESTER 2: Goals are to grow in trust and transparency as a group, with an emphasis on personal integrity, mutual accountability and peer-mentoring.**

**Adjustment to Life at IGSL.** Follow-up on any cultural stresses, health issues, academic challenges, and relational adjustments, and determine issues that remain a struggle. Continue to discuss what encourages, edifies, and shows respect in each culture, and yet how we can best work together in our distinct multi-cultural "IGSL culture". Discuss biblical conflict resolution in the context of multi-cultural community.

**Identity in Christ.** Discuss as a group the biblical view of "true self" (our identity in Christ) and the sin of comparison. Many ISG leaders choose to discuss identity in Christ together with the principles in Neil Anderson's *The Bondage Breaker*. After the group discussion, you may go through the "Steps to Freedom" with each student individually.

**Biblical Conflict Resolution.** Discuss following Matthew 18 for conflict resolution and reinforce the importance of the biblical model.

**Interpersonal Relationships.** Continue to assess and discuss as an ISG the health of interpersonal relationships in family, ministry and IGSL community. Ask where they have seen growth in the past months. Pray for/counsel one another in dealing with interpersonal difficulties.

**Self-Leadership.** Knowing oneself and areas of weakness and temptation. Discuss investing time and energy to know ourselves well and strengthen the inner person for a fruitful and successful ministry defined by integrity.



# THE PATH

The Two-Year Suggested Schedule of ISG Themes and Topics

YEAR 1 SEM 2

HE WHO BEGAN THE WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT - PHIL. 1:6

**DISC Assessment.** Discuss how awareness of personality type/profile relates to their family, marriage and ministry. Explore new realizations and how understanding of oneself impacts family, marriage, ministry and other relationships. How might their personality design complement different personalities of others?

**Servant-Steward Leadership.** Discuss specific character qualities of a servant-steward leader and priorities for growth as a leader. In what areas of leadership do they need to develop? How might leadership gifts complement gifts of team members?

**Attributes of God.** Continue to explore together the topic of God's character. Particularly emphasize the core attribute of the love of God. Emphasis on understanding and integrating God's unconditional love into life, the theology of suffering as it relates to divine love.

**Integrity and Character Development.** Explore the topic together as an ISG. Let each member answer the following question: "What areas of your character is God refining?"

**Purity in Marriage and Singleness.** Discuss God's unique design of men and women. Discuss honoring and respecting others in mixed-ministry contexts. Discuss what students are learning about purity and specific life applications/action points. How has their learning impacted conduct within family, ministry and IGSL community contexts?

**Contemplative Prayer.** Spend time together reading and reflecting/meditating on a Bible passage. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct the reflection/processing of how God is speaking to each person. Encourage ISG members to make it a lifestyle.



# THE PATH

The Two-Year Suggested Schedule of ISG Themes and Topics

## YEAR 2 SEM 1

**SEMESTER 1:** Goals are to integrate new members and for old members to get to know one another better. Continued emphasis on safe community, building relationships, and the personal, relational and spiritual growth of each ISG member.

**Review ISG Covenant and Values.** Review ISG core values of transparency, accountability, confidentiality, safe environment and spiritual sensitivity. Discuss creating a redemptive environment and healthy boundaries. Allow 2nd and 3rd year members to explain the principles to the new members. (If no new members this year, review the covenant/values for all members.)

**Continue ISG Bonding Activities.** Invite ISG for dinner in faculty home. Seek to meet individually with each student at least twice this semester. Faculty and 2nd and 3rd year ISG members may share part of personal life story including struggles and weaknesses, failures and successes to model ISG core values. Opportunity to model spiritual depth, vulnerability and safety of ISG.

**Integrating first-year students:** If you have first-year students, you will do "Adjustment to Philippines and IGSL," "Living in a Multicultural Community," "DISC Assessment" and "Life Map" each year. Have second and third-year students lead these activities.

**Ministry and Academic Direction.** Faculty provides guidance related to courses and emphases in program based upon knowledge of student. Encourage ISG members to affirm gifts and passions of one another. This is a form of peer-mentoring.

**Continue to assess theological foundations.** Talk together about students' views of God and His attributes. Help ISG members identify how their views of God have changed since their first year.

**Healthy life balance.** Balancing life responsibilities and creating good margins/boundaries to prevent burn-out.

**Ministry of mentoring.** Discuss the purpose, foundational principles, process, practice of mentoring types, and developing mentoring skills. Encourage members to peer-mentor one another, coach them in skills of asking questions, active listening and effective communication.

**Ministry Week Preparation and Coaching.** Prepare members to take new faith steps in ministry.

**Ministry Week Leadership Evaluation.** Debrief lessons learned. Note successes and discuss areas for growth and development.

# THE PATH

The Two-Year Suggested Schedule of ISG Themes and Topics

## YEAR 2 SEM 2

**SEMESTER 2:** Goals are to continue to grow in trust and transparency as a group, with an emphasis on personal integrity, mutual accountability and peer-mentoring.

**Assessment of ISG member's personal development.** Identify areas where a student still wants individual mentoring and help from faculty mentor. Ask questions such as, "How specifically would you like to grow and develop before you graduate?" "As your mentor/spiritual coach, how can I help you to accomplish this?"

**Realities of ministry.** Establishing God-ordained expectations and surrendering our own, discussing the realities and challenges of spiritual warfare in ministry, conflict in relationships, transitions, disappointments, disillusionment, failure and success, etc. Perhaps have follow-up discussions regarding Steps to Freedom in Christ (from classroom) and pray for one another.

**Understanding People.** Importance of understanding people to strengthen ministry skills. How to sharpen discipleship and counseling practices by asking the right questions and making accurate observations.

**Biographical study or focus.** Study the life of a pioneer of the faith and discuss/unpack biblical principles to integrate into life and ministry. Examples: John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Brother Lawrence, etc.

**Five love languages.** Conduct assessment of 5 love languages, learn languages of one another, and discuss application to family, ministry and other relationships.

**Integrity and character development.** Continue to discuss as a group deeper issues regarding personal character development, weaknesses, growth, etc.

**Spiritual Direction.** Discuss and have ISG participate in training as a spiritual director and growing in spiritual discernment. Explore assessing spiritual needs of others, using Scripture to meet needs and sensitivity in the Asian context.

**Discerning God's will and direction.** Provide spiritual direction for students at life decision points. Encourage ISG members to affirm, pray and support those who are graduating and transitioning into fulltime ministry.

# THE HELPS

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## HOW Does Relational Bonding Occur in an ISG Context?

As faculty, the “relational aspects” of ISG dynamics require intentional effort prior to launching into discussions on various topics. Strong relationships are the foundation for a fruitful ISG experience. Howard Hendricks says this about mentoring, “Mentoring relationships require genuine chemistry to work; relationships are not just a mechanical pairing of people together.” (Hendricks, 2007) It helps if faculty members invest both time and energy into creating relational chemistry with ISG members and take responsibility for maintaining those relationships. That said, ISG members are ultimately responsible for their own spiritual development; a faculty mentor can participate in the process of spiritual transformation only to the extent that each student will allow.

According to Bobby Clinton (Stanley and Clinton, 1992) there are three (3) critical dynamics to a vital mentoring relationship.

**1. Attraction Stage** – This is the necessary starting point. As part of attraction, work on building relationships, trust and confidence. Seek to meet with individuals and be sensitive to cultural and family backgrounds. As attraction increases, trust and confidence will develop, and mentoring subjects will naturally surface and further strengthen the mentoring relationship and ensure empowerment of the mentoree.

**2. Responsiveness Stage** – In this stage, try to help the mentoree assess their own development and ask them to identify areas where they wish to be mentored. Important to ask the question, “How do you want to be corrected?” The mentoree must be willing and ready to learn from the mentor. Attitude of the student and attentiveness on the part of the mentor are critical in this phase of the relationship.

**3. Accountability Stage** – In this final stage, the individuals and group have probably adjusted well to one another, so the concept of peer-mentoring can be a focus. This type of mutual responsibility for one another in mentoring ensures progress and good closure. Sharing expectations between mentor and mentoree, and conducting a periodic review and evaluation of progress, will help to accomplish God’s agenda and facilitate continued empowerment of the mentoree.

Clinton’s critical dynamics in a mentoring relationship may be viewed as a step-wise process to progress through within each subsequent semester during an academic year. For example, during the 1st semester, work to establish strong relationships and pursue building genuine trust and confidence in the ISG (attraction stage). In the 2nd semester, focus on creating responsiveness in students to encourage them to take ownership of their spiritual formation in ISG. And, finally, in the 3rd semester, the ISG may incorporate more peer-mentoring dynamics since relationships, trust and accountability should be quite well-established by the 3rd semester.

# THE HELPS

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## WHAT Specialized Resources are Available?

If at any time a faculty believes a student will benefit from specialized help or intervention outside the scope of the ISG context, LM is available to help faculty connect students to additional resources. Special resources available to IGSL students include professional counseling services (some available on campus), the Living Waters programs, other specialty counseling programs, and coaching services. In the following special cases, it will be considered acceptable to break confidentiality rules (outside the bounds of the definition in the IGSL Student Handbook), for the welfare of the student or others:

- When a student might be a danger to himself/herself as indicated by expressed suicidal thoughts or has stated a desire that the Lord would “take them home.”
- If the student has actually harmed himself/herself in some way.
- If an eating disorder has become known.
- When a student threatens to harm another person in any way.
- If a student is abusing another person (spouse, child, an elder, or anyone else). This could include physical, sexual, or verbal abuse.
- If a parent is obviously neglecting a child.

It is understood and expected that faculty will exercise the utmost discretion and discernment to protect confidentiality of the individual at all times while connecting the student with the best and most appropriate resources to maximize their spiritual/emotional growth and honor the best interest of the student.

# THE HELPS

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## WHAT is an ISG Covenant? How do we write one? What does it look like?

### ISG COVENANT

An ISG operates according to certain values and expectations. Some of those are structured by IGSL (especially task expectations). Others develop from the uniqueness of the students and leader (especially relationship values). Often these expectations and values go unspoken, unclarified, and unmet. If stated, there may not be group ownership of the values. Unless there is clarity about the purpose and values of the group, and mutual ownership of those values, communication will not be open and the group will be struggle to find cohesiveness and direction.

At the start of the ISG each year it is helpful to discuss the purpose of your ISG and help the group to create a list of values and expectations to which they will be committed. These should be expressed in an ISG covenant signed by the members. The goal is mutual ownership of the group's values and mutual commitment to seeing them lived out. Although students may comply with prescribed task expectations due to the threat of not receiving credit; only trust, love, and loyalty will bring about the relational cohesion (unity, bonding) needed for real "iron sharpening."

### Values

Here is a sampling of values that are important for ISG members to commit to in developing quality relationships. It is important, however, that the group actively develop their own list, not passively receive it from the leader. Thus the ISG covenant will not focus on the prescribed task goals of the group so much as the relational values.

Attendance - each member, including the ISG leader, is expected to make the ISG a high priority, to plan other commitments around it, and to notify the ISG leaders if there he or she cannot attend.

Acceptance - sensitivity to feelings, encouragement, helping each other grow is emphasized.

Availability - members share their time, their attention and insights, their resources to meet needs. Each group member gives full attention to the other when sharing. Members initiate praying with and for each other between meetings.

Openness – honest sharing of feelings, struggles, joys, and hurts. The goal is authentic relationships (Eph 4:15), truth shared in love.

Confidentiality- whatever is shared of a personal nature will not be repeated outside the group.

Accountability – voluntary submission to other group members for support, encouragement and help in a particular area of life. This may be a problem area or an area of growth such as one of the spiritual disciplines.

Mentoring – the faculty leader of the ISG and the senior student assistants will initiate one-on-one time with each student to encourage personal character, ministry skill, and ministry philosophy development. This will include developing a personal plan for growth with the student. The leader and student will discuss and agree upon the kind of mentoring relationship desired (see Clinton and Stanley – Connecting).

Worship – Christ is the center of the ISG, so worship, prayer and seeking His empowering is primary.

Fun, socials – periodic ISG meetings will be replaced by fun times or socials with family members for the continuation of relational bonding.

## **Process**

The ISG covenant should be formed gradually over the first few weeks of the first quarter through a process that involves everyone. The covenant includes the basic logistics of the group and its core relational values. The values portions of the ISG covenant is best worded in the form of “I” statements as opposed to the less personal “we” statements. Covenants should then be reaffirmed (modifying them as necessary) at least at the start of each quarter so that ISG members remember and renew their commitment to each other. Here is a suggested process for developing an ISG covenant.

Meeting #1 – Ask the students to discuss how God has used small groups in their lives to encourage their growth. What made those groups effective? Discuss your general vision of what the ISG is (as prescribed by the school) and how it fits into IGSL. Hand out 3x5 cards and ask students to write two or three values or behaviors they want to see the group commit to in order to make the ISG a life changing experience. OR instead of using the 3x5 cards brainstorm a list together. Remember to help them think through relational values as well as ministry skill development expectations.

Meeting #2 – The leader compiles the list from the last meeting, puts all values on a sheet of paper, and copies enough for the group. Have the ISG break into subgroups of two or three people and rank the values in order of priority, identifying the top five values. You may want to discuss the conclusion and reasoning of each group.

Meeting # 3 - The leader presents the highest ranking values compiled from the previous week and presents a final list of the top five. (It is hard to remember more than five or so values. Try to focus on the key values.) Have each sub-group write a statement for one or two of the values so that all the values are covered. They present their statements to the group for clarification, and then again in a final form. This doesn't have to be done in one meeting. OR you might discuss as a whole group one or two of the values over a two or three week period developing a statement for each value together. The goal is to have the group understand and "own" the values, thinking of them in concrete behaviors to which they will commit themselves.

Meeting #4 - The leader writes the covenant based on the values the group compiled. Each member signs the covenant agreeing to operate by these values.

**SAMPLE ISG COVENANT**

**Purpose:** The purpose of our ISG is . . .

**Meetings:** We will meet on Thursdays at 11:45 for lunch in classroom three as a group followed by the ISG meeting that will last until 2:00. We will strive to start and end on time. This will be our regular pattern unless there is an agreed upon rescheduling or cancellation of the meeting.

**Key Values:** I will comply with IGSL requirements related to the ISG. Together I further commit to the following values in order to encourage the relational quality we strive for:

**1. Attendance** - I will give the meeting priority and schedule other activities around it. If I must miss the meeting I will notify my ISG leader for permission and/or to give an explanation.

**2. Availability** - I will . . .

**3. Openness** - I will seek to share honestly of my feelings, struggles, joys and hurts; and to encourage my brothers [sisters] when they likewise are open by accepting them as they are, while pointing them to Christ. I commit to keeping personal matters shared by other confidential.

**4. Mentoring** - I will seek to be a peer mentor to my brothers [sisters] in ministering to them and entering accountability relationships as appropriate. I will seek out my ISG leader and/or senior assistant to share my life with them. Together we will define the kind mentoring relationship desired.

**By God's grace I commit myself to being a faithful, involved member of this ISG.**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Group Members:**

**Phone or contact means:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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# THE HELPS

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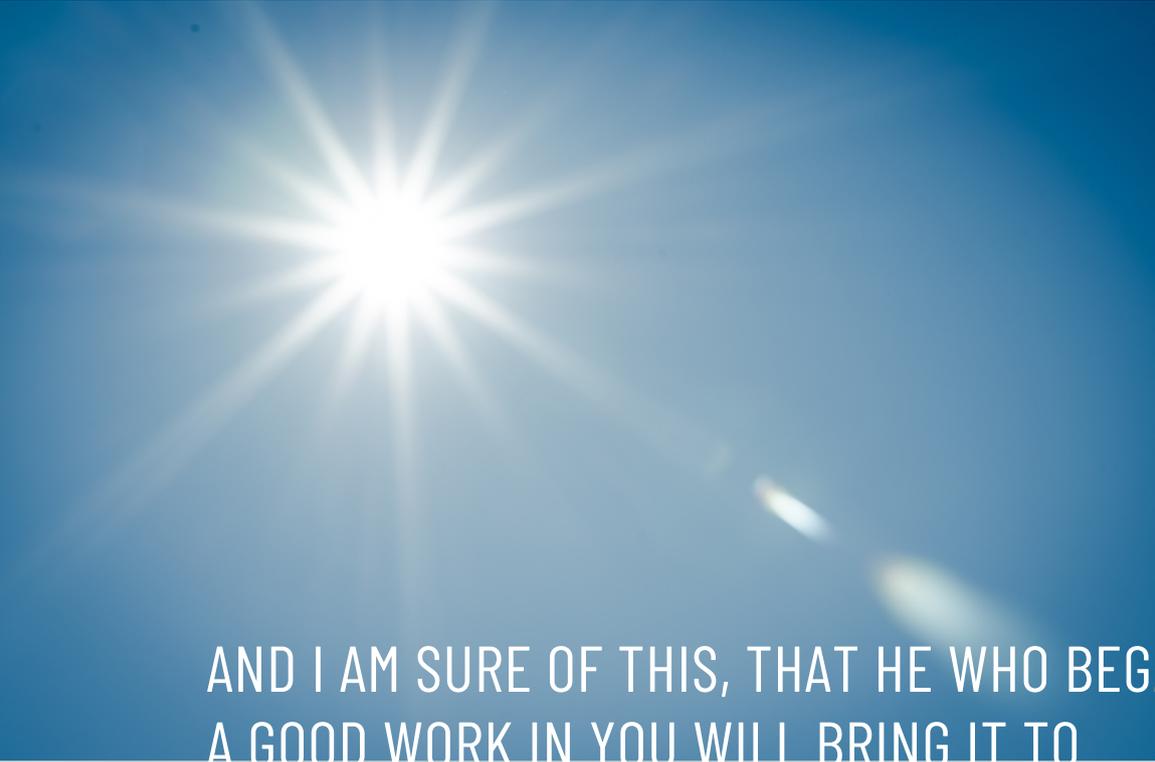
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AND I AM SURE OF THIS, THAT HE WHO BEGAN  
A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL BRING IT TO  
COMPLETION AT THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST.

-PHILIPPIANS 1:6 (ESV)