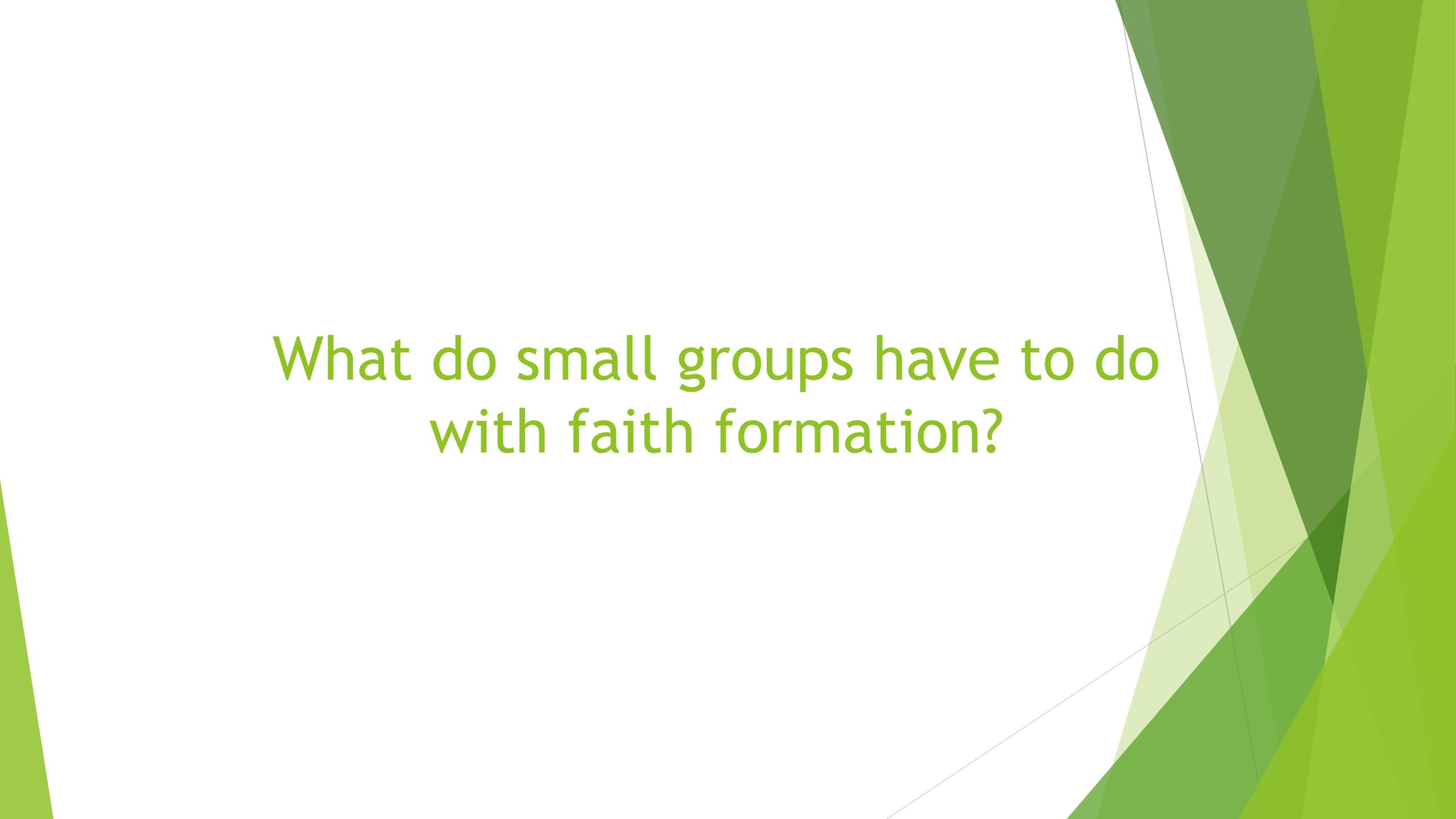


# Reimagining Faith Formation In Small Groups

# Small Groups

- ▶ What have small groups been like/meant in your life?
- ▶ Can you think of a time when a gathering of a small group of people has affected your experience or understanding of God or church?
- ▶ What role have small gatherings of people played in your life of faith/spiritual journey?
- ▶ What were the specific characteristics of those experiences that impacted you, both positively and negatively?

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping green triangles of varying shades, creating a sense of depth and movement.

# What do small groups have to do with faith formation?

# What is faith formation?

- ▶ More than content
- ▶ the process of being formed as/transformed into disciples
- ▶ it has more components than just teaching/learning/content
- ▶ what are the components of forming disciples that exist in the church now, and the elements that the tradition tells us are essential

# What do we mean by small groups?

- ▶ not just a multi week small class
- ▶ what is a church, the difference between a house church and a small group that meets in someone's house

# Why does a small group structure lend itself well to this spiritual journey?

- ▶ how do small groups address the components of faith formation
- ▶ communities of practice

# Case Study: St. Luke's Young Adult Mentorship Program

# FTE Young Adult Mentoring Grant

- ▶ THE FORUM FOR THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION (FTE) IS A LEADERSHIP INCUBATOR THAT INSPIRES YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD THROUGH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.
- ▶ The Mentoring Grant brings together experienced, gifted leaders who have a history of mentoring to work with talented young adults exploring their purpose and call. These mentors guide and support, cultivating space for young people to consider what their vocational journey holds.

# St. Luke's Young Adult Mentoring Program - Grant Proposal

- ▶ We propose to develop a young adult mentoring program for up to five young adults a year that will serve as part of the core team of a small-group based new church start called the North Park Project (NPP). Each young adult participant will be paired with one experienced Christian leader for monthly check-ins on individualized vocational discernment plans. The program coordinator will also facilitate an opening and closing retreat for participants. Participants will serve as full members of the core leadership team that meets weekly for worship, reflection, and joint decision-making. Each of these young adult participants will spend the program year working alongside their mentor as she or he develops a small group. At the end of the program year, program graduates will be offered the opportunity to lead the small group on which she or he was working, or develop a new small group on her or his own. Choosing to continue in this way is an optional next step and would come with a modest stipend.

# St. Luke's Young Adult Mentorship Program - What Actually Happened

- ▶ Year 1 - March 2017 to December 2017
  - ▶ 4 member cohort
  - ▶ Each had a specific calling they would explore
    - ▶ Iconography, Foster Youth, Human Trafficking, Homelessness
  - ▶ Each member matched with a mentor
  - ▶ Beginning retreat (May 2016)
  - ▶ Ending Retreat (December 2016)
- ▶ No Small Groups Started
- ▶ Formed separate group from main leadership group
- ▶ Gathered weekly as a group for sharing, discussion and prayer (plus food)

# The Evolution of the Group

- ▶ Original Emphasis
  - ▶ Mentoring Relationships
  - ▶ Project/Create Small Group to explore call
- ▶ What the Emphasis Became
  - ▶ The weekly gathering
  - ▶ The space the group created for sharing and growing together
  - ▶ As well as for discernment (more general) and transformation/formation

# Group Meeting

- ▶ Opening Retreat
  - ▶ Group formed rule of life around spiritual practices and meetings
- ▶ Tuesday Night from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
  - ▶ Gather (7:30-7:45)
  - ▶ Reading and Discussion (7:45 - 8:15)
  - ▶ Sharing Consolations/Desolations (8:15 - 8:45)
  - ▶ Prayer (8:45)
  - ▶ Dessert (8:45 - 9:00)
- ▶ Closing Retreat
  - ▶ Group did review of year and visioning for new cohort year

# Year Two Learnings

- ▶ Began inviting people with help of current group members in fall 2017
- ▶ People were excited to invite others into the space
- ▶ Four new members joined group
  - ▶ Many more could be invited
- ▶ Moving to peer to peer mentor/sponsor
- ▶ Group discernment of mission of group itself
  - ▶ What will next year hold?

# What to Take With You

- ▶ The adult generation of the 21st century is showing us what the church of the 21st century looks like.
- ▶ What might this look like at your church with younger adults? Older adults?
- ▶ How can you nurture the life of faith of young adults through a formational small group?
- ▶ What does an alternative space within the faith community look like?