*A ministry supported by the Baptist Collegiate Ministries*

Back to the basics

Student-led Ministry Description Manual

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*Special Note: The materials and meeting outlines can be received by emailing emanoel\_white@yahoo.com or calling the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at University of Central Arkansas.*

Written by Cris Bratu-Ene

… offering meetings where international students and Christian Americans can come together, bind, and learn about Christ.

***What is Back to the basics all about?***

**Statement of purpose:** To build sincere relationships through which international students are nurtured towards knowing Jesus Christ and seeing God’s sovereignty in various life circumstances.

**Brief history of Back to the basics Ministry**

*Back to the Basics* started in the Fall of 2009 as part of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry in Conway, Arkansas. When the leaders realized that the students they were targeting did not even know that God existed, there focus became studying the moral basics of life – those moral values that people don’t talk much about in the classrooms or on the streets. From this, *Back to the Basics* came into being, with the strategy of talking about a certain moral value in the secular-social perspective the first half of the meeting, and then presenting the same value from a biblical point of view and significance. The leadership team was led by Chris Bratu-Ene, Wesley Bowlin, Russell Denette, Amy Cantrell, Jessica Kongenske, and Kasey Barinski.

Chris Bratu-Ene developed this material. Chris has since been tragically killed in a drowning accident and is currently celebrating in heaven with Jesus. It is our fervent prayer that this material will be a part of the legacy that Chris leaves behind, and that countless students will come to a saving faith in Christ as people use this study. At Chris’s Memorial Service, there were people from all over the world in attendance, a true testimony of his heart for the nations.

The *Back to the Basics* ministry was developed with a price. It cost each of the leaders their time, their emotions, their hopes of seeing fruit, and for some, their own comfort zone. This group is meant to organize meetings of quality, coming from the Truth in our hearts. There was and there will be a cost for showing Jesus Christ to some people that may only get to know God through us!

***Back to the basics 1 – Fall 2009***

Back to the basics 1 had 12 meetings during the fall semester of 2009.

**Strategies used:**

The major strategy was to discuss one or two moral values per meeting from a secular/social point of view in the first half and from a Christian point of view in the second half of the meeting time.

Summaries - Since English is not the first language of an international, we provided summary handouts of what was talked the previous week. In this way, they could look up words or things they may not have understood.

Handouts – At each meeting we gave out one or more handouts. Besides the regular handout for that week’s meeting (containing some of the main ideas of the evening), sometimes we gave out some special handouts dealing with themes such as “How does God speak to us”.

PRAYER – All things took place because of God’s work in this and time spent praying for these students.

**How did people find out about this group?**

During orientation, when the new international students came to our university, we had 3 social events aka parties with no alcohol where we played some games and had a good time. At our third social event, we served pancakes and advertised this group as a time where we will talk about those moral values that make us be a blessing to other people. Those interested signed up on a list with their name, phone number, e-mail addresses, classification (IELP, undergraduate, exchange, etc.). Any further communication with them was through emails.

All of these events were advertised among the international students during orientation and by posting advertisement posters in the apartment complex where they lived.

**Calendar of meetings:**

1. *Justice* – this meeting had more of a lecture style to it with the main ideas being somewhat commented on by those in the room.
2. *Sacrifice and love* – at this meeting, we started with a game, then we split into two groups and followed the handout. The conversations were led by the leaders. In the second part, we ended up sharing the full Gospel with these students.
3. *Forgiveness* – at this meeting we split into two groups and started the conversation by playing a card game. In the second part, one of the leaders shared his testimony of how important forgiveness seemed to him only after he lost a parent. The last part of the evening was to show a video found on Youtube at hhtp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXIMhjEeEg called *The Worth of Sacrifice.* Through this testimony, the purpose was to show how a real life can be affected by what seemed to them at the time, a fairy tale.
4. *Relaxation activities* – this week, we organized a scavenger hunt around Conway and the university campus.
5. *Trust* – we split into two groups to have our conversations and at half time, we played the trust fall game.
6. *Skill developing activity* – at this meeting, we offered a personality test and later in the meeting, we played a couple of random games.
7. *Hang out evening* – we had a surprise birthday party for one of the students coming to the meetings. All we did was relationship bonding.
8. *Control over addictions* – we had the meeting at one of the leader’s homes. The program is described in the hand-out.
9. *Halloween Party* – we played some random game followed by a group discussion on hope. There wasn’t any handout this week, since all the leaders had to share a verse about hope (in various life circumstances and in Christ) and try to engage the students in a discussion by posing helping questions.
10. *Quality in our relationships* – we sat in a circle and shared about what a relationship with God means to us.
11. *Omission of doing good* – the meeting did not take place because of lack of attendance
12. *Thanksgiving Party* – we joined the Thanksgiving party held by the Baptist Collegiate Ministry and only tried to get across to the international students that we care for them.

**Leadership responsibilities**

The leaders did whatever was necessary for each meeting without having an assigned set of responsibilities. We met for 2 hours on Wednesday to plan the meeting and split responsibilities.

**What was the overall direction in our meetings?**

We started by introducing them to their sin problem and to God’s grace. Knowing that all we said to them sounded like a fairy tale, we tried to provide some evidence to believe that God is real. We had the Trust meeting which was more of an apologetics meeting, then the Hope meeting in which we presented God as our hope, then the Relationship meetings (last ones) in which we showed that what we believe change our lives and because we love them, we want to help them understand.

**Materials:**

Week 2

Accepting others into our Bubble

Love and sacrifice

Activity no. 1: The moderator will ask for 4 or 5 volunteers. Those that want to play this game will go in a separate room for a couple of minutes, and will come out one at a time, when they are called. When you (as a volunteer) come back in the room, you will have 60 seconds to pick up all of the things that the moderator tells you (things that are on the table) and put them on another table, as indicated by the moderator.

Activity no. 2: You will be a second ticket with a number on it. Group up with those having the same number as you and go to the table indicated by the moderator. At each table you visit you will receive a handout with all that you will talk about.

Activity no. 3: After you are done with visiting the two tables, come back in the middle and have a seat. Enjoy the skit.

See you next week when we will talk about forgiveness. Although it is hard to forgive and forget, it is an essential part of our lives (whether that part refers to marriage, friendship, or simple acquaintanceship). We will talk how people “function” and what are they thinking (or not thinking) when they do mistakes against us (sometimes we ask why did someone do something bad to us – we’ll talk about that next week).

Well, see you next week!

Talking about… LOVE - handout

Activity I: Play “The Dumb Priest”. The moderator at that table will explain the card game to you. When you lose, you receive a new ticket with a question. Think about that question as you wait for the others to be done.

Activity II: Lets talk.

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”* (from 1 Corinthians chapter 13:4-7)

We all have a personal space. We let others know us as much as we want them to. We show others what’s nice about us (or what we think it’s interesting about us); this is why when we become friends with someone we think he/she is “cool”, we end up realizing that he/she is actually not as great as we initially thought.

They say you cannot choose your parents, but you do get to choose your friends. That’s why it is not surprising that we want to be friends with *certain* people because (1) we want to be like them (as cool/interesting/hot-shot as they are), (2) we may think they’re like us, (3) we may think that being friends with them makes us a better/cooler/more interesting/more successful-looking kind of person. We build images (opinions) about people around us and we choose to ignore some persons, and desire the friendship of some others (even if those “some others” behave really mean with us). That is not fair and not equal. This is called “friendship based on interest”.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Friendship based on interest | Friendship based on love |
| Disappointment due to falseness of image (that person we wanted to be friends with is not what/how we thought he/she is) | Risk of being hurt because of the person we want to befriend does mistakes against us or he/she fails our hopes/expectations |
| High degree of selfishness | The chance of investing in others, improving their lives, or simply making a difference in their life |
| Not dependable (when others see that we care more about our image than quality in our relationships, they will tend not to trust us) | People will regard you as a friend they can rely on |
| Risk of ending alone with no friends to rely on | “Risk” of making life-long relationships |

*“If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls down and has no one to help him up.”* (from Ecclesiastes chapter 4:10)

*Sacrifice – the ability to give up what we are for what we could become*

Activity I: Play “The Dumb Priest”. The moderator at that table will explain the card game to you. When you lose, you receive a new ticket with a question. Think about that question as you wait for the others to be done.

Activity II: Lets talk.

*The remarkable thing is that we really love our neighbor as ourselves: we do unto others as we do unto ourselves. We hate others when we hate ourselves. We are tolerant toward others when we tolerate ourselves. We forgive others when we forgive ourselves. We are prone to sacrifice others when we are ready to sacrifice ourselves.* (by Eric Hoffer)

We all go through different experiences. We learn from those experiences what we need and who we are at that moment. We set limits to what we can do and what we can become. Other people do the same. This means that they also have needs and questions. From what we learn from our experiences, we can teach to others.

*The opposite of selfishness is sacrifice.*

In the society we live today, people don’t expect any kindness or selflessness from the ones around them. Regardless of our interest in our own lives, helping a person that is in need can lead to a potential friendship (either just of a professional, social, or close-to-the-heart kind).

By sacrificing your time, attention, help, affection, for the fulfillment of another person’s need, you set a common ground with them. You bond with them. In some cases, this may lead to trust, friendship, better understanding.

*Sacrifice is the clearest, most undeniable proof of love.*

Prayer

What is prayer?

Prayer is the way people can talk to God. Because God is more than real, He can hear our prayers and answer them by helping us in our problems. Prayer is like talking to a very good friend. In a prayer, you tell God what your problems are, in what problems you need His help, you thank Him for the help he might have given you (for the answers to a previous prayer request regarding a problem you told Him about).

How to pray?

In the Bible, it says that the disciple of Jesus Christ once asked Him how to pray. We find Jesus’ answer in the book of Matthew, chapter 5, verses 9 through 13:

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,   
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

When you pray, you should include the following ideas:

* *Our Father in heaven* – this part says that when we pray we should remember the relationship we have with Him. We are praying to a God that loves us and that sacrificed a lot for the forgiveness of our sins. This is why when we start our prayer, we should say what He represents to us (example: my Father, my friend, Healer, Comforter, my God almighty which I love, etc.)
* *Hallowed be your name* – this part implies that we should give Him praise for what He is and what he has done. In other words, you should include in your prayer words of thanks giving for the help He has given you, for the new day/thing/blessing/trial he has given you.
* *your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* – in this part, we ask that His will be done in our lives and in the lives of others. The will is of God is for the best of man. Remember that God is love and that He is good, therefore what He wants to happen in our lives is for our own good. You should ask Him in your prayer that He may allow things to happen for your good, that His will be done in your life.
* *Give us today our daily bread –* in this part we ask for His help for our problems. Remember that God is everything good in this Universe (He is love, kindness, good, healer, almighty, etc.), therefore He has the power to do help us in our needs and problems. God created the world; He is more than able to help us in our problems if we ask Him.
* *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors –* here we ask for forgiveness for all the mistakes we have done (debts = mistake = sin). Here we also ask Him to give us power to forgive those who have done us wrong (who did something bad against us). More clearly, you remember in your prayer to ask for His forgiveness for what you have done wrong, and also for the power to forgive others.
* *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one -* in this part, we ask God to give the power to not do as many mistakes as before, and to become more like Him. Remember that all the things we like in a dear friend are also found in Him. He has been a true blessing for us. This is why in our prayer we should remember to include asking Him to make us more of a blessing for the other (more like Him).
* End your prayer with thanking Him again. Most prayers end by saying *AMEN* which means “So let it be”.

Observations:

* When you pray, don’t feel like you your prayer is not complete if you forgot any of the above points. We learn things as we practice them. Same way with prayer.
* You don’t have to pray like a fixed poem to God. Remember that He loves you and that when you talk to Him (aka when you pray), you talk to a very good friend that wants what is best for you.

Example of a prayer:

*My Father, You are the God almighty who wants the good of all people.*

*You have been very good to me and I thank you. I thank you for your help with that test at school, with the problems at home. I thank you for your love and for all the happy moments that I had today.*

*God, You are good and you want that all people be happy and prosper, and that all human beings would hear about how great you are. I ask that you would fulfill your will in my life for your will is what is good for me and my life.*

*My (dear) friend, I ask for your help with the test I have tomorrow at school. I pray that you would give me wisdom and help me do my best on that test. I also ask your help for this problem I have with my credit card.*

*You have been good to me, and I am sorry for all that I have done wrong against you. I apologize for not obeying my parents (when they told me not to leave the door unlock). I am sorry for every lie I told today.*

*Also, please help me forgive Jeremy for stealing my pencil.*

*You are good always and I ask you that you help me be more like You. I ask for your help as to be more and more a blessing to the people around me.*

*I thank you for everything. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Talking about love – summary

As we grow up, we interact with other people around us, whether it is at school, at home, or in any other place. We build relationships with other people because we need people in our lives. We could not imagine ourselves living alone without talking and spending time with others. No wonder we fear loneliness.

While interacting with other people, we don’t behave in the exact same way with everybody. With some we are just acquaintances, with others we are friends, and even family. Our behavior with all of the different people in our lives has different characteristics as according to the situation. With some we are more patient, with some we are kind, with some we are happy when they are happy and sad when they are sad, and so on. In other words, we show different levels of love with different people based on what they are to us and what we think about them.

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”* (from 1 Corinthians chapter 13:4-7)

One key element in a relationship with other people is trust. Whether it is a co-worker at our job, classmate, close acquaintance, or friend, we tend not to rely on those that are selfish and are looking only after their own good. If they are interested in only what is good for them, then we cannot depend on them to help us with what we need or how we need (to be helped) in a problem we may have.

Selfish people are not dependable. We don’t like selfish people, but we appreciate those people that show altruism to us.

When we meet people we build certain images about them in our minds. We think that they are in a certain way because we saw how they behave and talk for just a little period of time. People tend to show what is nice about them and hide the things that are not as nice for later. Others such as you and me, we see them and we think they are interesting/cool/kind/with high standards. Then we try to become friends with them, but they may ignore us. As time goes by, we end up realizing how they really are inside as a result of them ignoring us. Ignoring a person means you either don’t like him/her, or you don’t want to be around that person because your values and standards are not alike.

Relationships are painful sometimes, especially if we put too much affection into them. From time to time, we meet people that are friends with us only when they have a need. Not as much of a friend in the good times. As you can tell, if a person comes to you only when he/she has a problem, then they only want to benefit from you. That is called a friendship/relationship based on interest. The interest of such people is not in you, not in bonding with you, not in caring for you, but more in what you can do for them. Check the table on the handout with some of the differences between those who are interested in your services and those who are interested in you.

*“If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls down and has no one to help him up.”* (from Ecclesiastes chapter 4:10)

We all meet new people and have them as friends for short periods of time. It is more beneficial to be a friend and have an interest in them than to be only interested in what they can do for us.

We need friends. We were born with this desire to interact with people, and as we interact with these people in our lives, we show different characteristics of a behavior of love (with some we are more patient, with some we are more forgiving, etc. – see definition of love above). Some may take advantage of us, but some may not. Be careful not to let others take advantage from you without you benefiting in any way from them. Be careful not to give up those friends that are interested in you.

Friendship is hard to find, but if we manifest a behavior characterized by love and sacrifice, then we should be surprised to see other people enjoying our company and maybe wanting to become our friends.

Week 3

Talking about forgiveness and bitterness

Value no. 3:

Forgiveness

Activity 1: The whole group will split into two, and one half will go to one table, the other to another. Both tables will talk about the same principles. Once you get that table, you will play a game called “Macao” (short version). The moderator will explain this game to you. As you win, you will have able to choose whatever question you want.

Activity 2: Let’s talk…:

* *Understand that forgiving does not mean giving permission for the behavior to be repeated. It does not mean saying that what was done was acceptable. Forgiveness is needed for behaviors that were not acceptable and that you should not allow to be repeated*.
* *In some situations, a negative response from your part to a behavior/mistake (response such as you being angry, upset or bothered by what happened) can lead to the other person changing his/her attitude for the worse. But this does not always happen. Part of the responsibility (blame) belongs to us.*
* *When we choose not to forgive, the burden is more on us. The result of not forgiving is you becoming bitterer (as in “more bitter”). People fear bitter people.*
* *You don’t need to know “WHY?” in order to forgive someone. That mistake hurt you and caused a pain in you at a time when you didn’t know the answer to “why?”. Knowing the reason for which someone did something bad to you won’t always make it easier to forgive them. Don’t expect the person that did wrong to you, to know exactly why he/she did it.*
* *It is rare when knowing the answer to “why it happened” helps to forgive someone. This doesn’t happen all that often.*

Suggested steps to forgive someone:

* Take a piece of paper and write down what from the actions of the other person hurt you. Don’t write how you felt/feel, but what action of his/her bothered you.
* *Unfortunately, you won’t always be the only victim.* Think about what you did and whether any of your actions could have led him/her to do that mistake (or have that behavior). For instance, When he/she did that mistake, did you seek peace by reassuring the person who mistaken you that everything is ok, or did you hide the pain caused in you and left when you should have stayed?
* Now think about what you gained from that relationship. If that behavior/mistake was repetitive, then you kept staying in that relationship for some reasons. What were those reasons? Think about whether those reason’s are sufficient enough to make you carry on this relationship.
* Do this exercise: on another piece of paper write ALL your feelings towards that person. Write both about the things that hurt you and the things that you enjoyed in your relationship with him/her. Also, write about any feelings of gratitude for what he/she has done in the past, or any reasons you may have for not have shared any of your thought with him/her concerning his/her behavior.
* If you feel like or think that you want to continue that relationship with that person, then go them and tell them that you forgive them.
* Get rid of the papers you wrote your thought on (suggestions: burn them, throw them away in trash can/river/out the balcony, etc.)
* And most important: *don’t look back with anger.*

*If we learn to be more thankful, we will be able to be more forgetful of the mistakes of others around us.*

Activity 3: Go in the middle and take part in the conversation.

Next time we will meet for a FUN NIGHT! Expect a lot of surprises, fun activities, and many memories to share with others later.

*See you next week!*

Week 5

Trust means to believe.

“I trust you” means I have no doubt in my mind

about your honesty, integrity and credibility.

~ Trust ~

Activity no. 1: Welcome!

Activity no. 2: Let’s talk…

Every relationship begins with trust in each other. Without the initial trust, the relationship will not progress much from the start itself. In the beginning, one believes the other person without much proof. It is love and some assessment of how trustworthy the person is. As the relationship grows, fissures start forming because of doubts about whether the other person is trustworthy or I was fooled.

Children learn how to build trust in a relationship with their parents or caretakers early in their development. If parents are consistent in responding to their child’s needs, then that child will learn to trust them and their environment. As a child gets older, trust takes on a different form because children can process why they trust and why they don’t. It’s especially important for children to grow up in a trusting environment so that they learn how important trust is. This knowledge carries over in their attitude toward the world and all of their future relationships.

Trust may seem like an obscure concept, difficult to define. Sometimes you can’t tell if you truly trust someone, especially when you have no past experience to base it on. Trust isn’t an emotion. It’s a learned behavior that we gain from past experiences. It is hope and dependability, and putting confidence in someone. Trust is a risk.

Unfortunately, we’ve all been victims of betrayal. Whether we’ve been stolen from, lied to, misled, or cheated on, there are different levels of losing trust, some more devastating than others. Regaining trust can seem as likely as winning the lottery. Although it is hard, here are some *suggested steps to regain the trust in a friendship*:

**Learn to really trust yourself**

If you don’t trust yourself, meaning your ability to have good judgment and to make good choices, how can you trust someone else? Having confidence in yourself will help you make better choices because you feel more capable and can discern what the best outcome would be for your well-being. Just keep in mind that once your trust has been violated, your defenses start working overtime to protect yourself. Pay closer attention to your instincts and keep working on building trust in yourself.

**Grieve**

When a loved one dies, the natural grieving process tends to come in five stages: denial, anger, bargaining (negociation), depression, and acceptance. These five stages can also occur when you lose trust in someone. Don’t fight any of these stages. You’ll usually get through all of them – with time. **Forgiveness** can also be added as the sixth stage in regards to trust. If you can find it in your heart to forgive, then you’ll be able to release anger and hurt.

**Stop labeling yourself the victim**

If you’ve been betrayed, you are the victim of your circumstance. But there’s a difference between being a victim and living with a “victim mentality.” At some point in all of our lives, we’ll have our trust tested or violated. Some people choose to live in the pain of betrayal while others make an effort to overcome it. If you choose to become a live with the hurt of being betrayed, you will slow down your ability to truly heal because you’ll end up angry and blaming everyone else for something you actually have more control over than you think.

**You didn’t lose “everything”**

When we are severely betrayed, such as being cheated on in a relationship, we tend to feel like we have lost everything that means anything to us. Once trust is lost, what is left? Instead of looking at the situation from this hopeless angle, look at everything you still have and be thankful for all of the good in your life. Seeing the positive side of things doesn’t mean you’re ignoring what happened. Instead, it’s a healthy way to work through the experience to allow room for positive growth and forgiveness.

**Keep your expectations high**

Avoid situations that share the same pattern of circumstance where your trust was violated. On the flip side, it’s also important to recognize that just because you’ve been violated before doesn’t mean it will automatically happen again. You have to stop the harmful belief that any new relationship will end up the same way. If you fall into this way of thinking, not only will you sell yourself short, but you may also throw away a great possibility because you’re too scared of being hurt again. Also, remember that when you give someone the best, you deserve the best in return. Don’t settle for anything less.

Losing trust in someone can have a devastating effect on your relationship, as well as your sense of self-worth, but building trust in a relationship again is possible. It takes a willingness to work on both yourself and your betrayer, but trust can be won back. And when trust in a relationship is regained, it is truly healing.

What about *building trust*? Suggested things to take into consideration:

**1. Let go of the past.**

Almost every one of us has had a past relationship that left us feeling wary of loving or trusting anyone again. Tune into your current situation and allow yourself to move on from those old hurts. This may require acknowledging the ways that the past comes up for you in the present. Breathe and remind yourself to let go of the past and focus on what’s currently going on.

**2. Be yourself.**

Sometimes we hide habits, tendencies, even desires that are important to us because we don’t trust that our friend will approve of them. We undercut intimacy by keeping this barrier up to hide what we think won’t be loved. In effect, we don’t feel lovable as our true selves. Make it a goal to appreciate yourself—bad and good sides—and then allow every part of you to be seen by your friend.

**3. Listen and understand.**

Communicating is vital. When situations come up that challenge your trust in the other person, stop and ask him or her questions about what appears to be happening. It is likely that your perceptions are not accurate. Listen with an open heart and allow yourself to understand what is going on for the other person.

Activity no. 3: Trust fall (game)

Activity no. 4: Let’s talk (again)…

George Wald, professor in Biology at University of Harvard, stated:

“There are only two possibilities in which life could have appeared. One of them is a spontaneous self-generated cell (based on this you get the evolution theory); the other one is that life is the creation of a supernatural God. There is no third possibility. The theory according to which a cell was generated by chance, was disproven a long time ago by Louis Pasteur and other scientists. What is left is that life was created by a God in supernatural ways. I choose not to believe this last possibility because I don’t want to believe in God. Therefore, I choose to believe in something I know that it is scientifically incorrect: the self-generated self as a result of chance.”

- When we think about the Universe, it is hard for us to imagine that it has no limits. We think everything has some boundaries, some limits, some walls. What is beyond those limits?

- The famous Big Bang theory says that the Universe is a result of a major explosion of an extremely condensed particle. Who or what created that particle of super-condensed matter?

- What about evolution? What doesn’t make sense in the evolution theory?

Scholars refer to two types of evolution: microevolution and macroevolution.

*Microevolution* refers to the ability of an organism to adapt to certain conditions of the environment, and to pass those adaptations to his offspring. That animal/plant/organism does not become totally different species. Example: the ability of rabbits to grow fat under their skin in order to resist very low temperatures. Microevolution did happen. It was proven.

*Macroevolution* refers to one species to evolve into another species(so it changes looks and physiology). This was not proven practically. This did not happen. Some scholars try to give a theoretical explanation, but there are some incoherencies in their logic:

1. The evolution theory implies that order could have its natural cause in chaos. In other words, the first cell (which presents a high degree of order) could be caused from chaos. The second law of thermodynamics states: In a system, a process will tend to increase its entropy (the amount of disorder). In other words, things go from an ordered state to a more disordered state.
2. Evolution implies that all life forms appeared from dead matter. In biology, the cell theory (which is more of a law) states that cells (which are alive) can be born only from other cells. Life can be born only from live matter.
3. Evolution implies that the human intelligence and ration evolved from dead matter. In other words, when the Big Bang occurred, all things were not-intelligent (dumb, stupid), and from those not-intelligent organisms evolved the human brain which is a supercomputer, more advanced than anything the modern technology was able to create.

CONCLUSION: In order for evolution to be possible, some of the laws of nature must have stopped for small periods of time, although we have no record that these laws (cell law, second law of thermodynamics, etc.) have ever stopped working.

Why is it hard to believe there is a God that created the universe? There are no witnesses that can testify to the creation other than God and the angels.

What does the Bible say about this?

John chapter 1, verses 1 to 4 says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not put it out.

What do you think these verses mean?

A rational step of faith leads us to the certainty that God exist.

*What about Jesus Christ*? Did he exist? Why is He the only way to God?

Jesus made some great claims. His credibility is given by His resurrection from the dead.

Accepted historical facts by all scholars:

* Official sources show that there was a man named Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, performed miracles, was a rabbi, and died by crucifixion.
* Official sources show that the tomb of Jesus Christ was found empty after the third day.
* The Bible says that all of his disciples of Jesus Christ saw him alive (resurrected) after his crucifixion. It is impossible for all of his disciples to have had the same hallucinations.
* If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then his disciples would have not accepted to die as martyrs.

What is faith? The apostle Paul wrote: “Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities that are not yet shown.” (Hebrews 11:1) Our faith makes us sure that everything God promises in his Word is as good as done. It is as though we possessed a deed proving that we own certain property. Faith is also “the evident demonstration” regarding unseen things. Our mental perception and heart appreciation convince us that such things are real, although we have not seen them.

To many, “faith” simply means having a religious belief or following a form of worship. As used in the Bible, however, “faith” basically means total trust, complete, unshakable confidence in God and his promises. It is a quality that marks a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Week 6

Let’s get to know some stuff about ourselves and the one around us…

Social skills developing activities

Activity no. 1: SURPRISE!

Activity no. 2: The following test is called the Septalogos; based on your answers, this test will analyze your personality from ten perspectives. Fill out with your answers, and at the end, give it back to Cris. The report with your results will be given to you at the next Back to the basics meeting. Enjoy!

**Background**

Name:

Email/Cell phone:

Age: \_\_ years

Please indicate your level of formal education: \_ highschool,\_ some college, \_ attending college, \_ college graduate, \_graduate school, \_professionally active

Major in school:

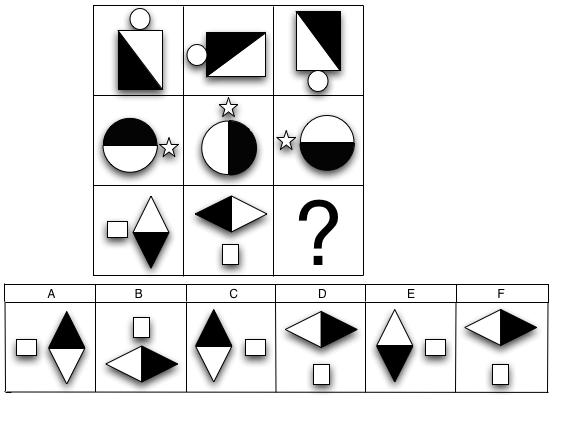
1. The Turknett leadership group section

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree | Moderately agree | No opinion | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |
| When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place. |  |  |  |  |  |
| When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them. |  |  |  |  |  |
| If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person |  |  |  |  |  |
| I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am often quite touched by things that I see happen. |  |  |  |  |  |
| When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his/her shoes" for a while. |  |  |  |  |  |

1. “Big five” personality survey

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I… | Very accurate | Moderately accurate | | Slightly accurate | | Slightly inaccurate | | | Moderately inaccurate | | Very inaccurate | |
| Am the life of the party. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Insult people. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am always prepared. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Get stressed out easily. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Have a rich vocabulary. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am prepared. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Often feel uncomfortable around others. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am interested in people. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Leave my belongings around. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am relaxed most of the time. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am guilty. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Feel comfortable around people. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am not interested in other people's problems. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Pay attention to details |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Worry about things. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Have a vivid imagination. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am procrastinating. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Keep in the background. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Sympathize with others' feelings. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Make a mess of things. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Seldom feel blue. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am not interested in abstract ideas. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am sluggish. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Start conversations. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Feel little concern for others. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Get chores done right away. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am easily disturbed. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Have excellent ideas. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am wakeful. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Bottle up my feelings. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am on good terms with nearly everyone. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Find it difficult to get down to work. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Feel threatened easily. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Catch on to things quickly. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am quiescent. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Feel at ease with people. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Have a good word for everyone. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Make plans and stick to them. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Get overwhelmed by emotions. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Can handle a lot of information. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am placid. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am a very private person. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Show my gratitude. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Leave a mess in my room. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Take offense easily. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am good at many things. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am susceptible. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Wait for others to lead the way. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Think of others first |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Love order and regularity. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Get caught up in my problems. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Love to read challenging material. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am strong. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Am skilled in handling social situations. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Love to help others. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Like to tidy up. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Grumble about things. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| Love to think up new ways of doing things. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| At this moment, I am persistent. |  |  | |  | |  | | |  | |  | |
| In the following number series, what number comes next? 64 81 100 121 144 | | | 154 | | 156 | | 162 | 169 | | 178 | | 196 | |
| Please mark the word that does not match the other words: | | | cardinal | | eagle | | parrot | penguin | | hawk | | Toucan | |
| If you rearrange the letters ATNHIDLA, you will have the name of a: | | | plant | | river | | country | bird | | mountain | | desert | |
| If Jerks are Perks and some Perks are Lerks, then some Jerks are definitely Lerks. This statement is: | | | true | | false | | neither |  | |  | |  | |
| How many total legs do two ducks and three dogs have? | | | 10 | | 12 | | 14 | 16 | | 18 | | 20 | |

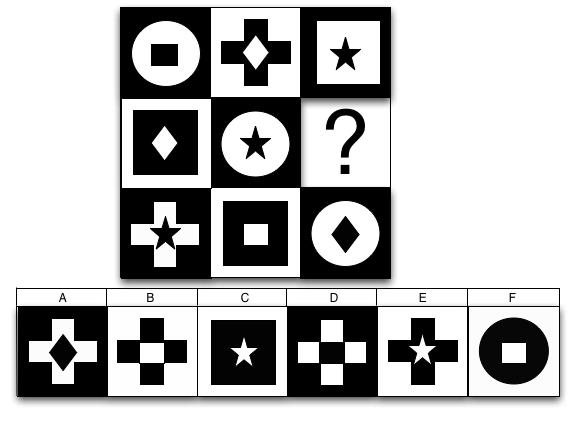
Please indicate which is the best answer to complete the figure.



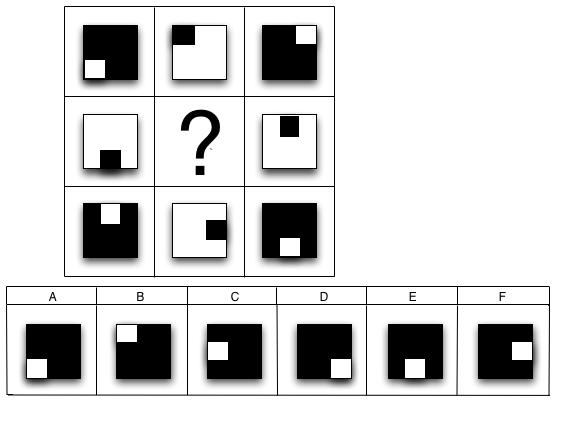
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your answer | A | B | C | D | E | F |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| In the following alphanumeric series, what letter comes next? C, F, I, L, O | Q | R | S | T | U | V |
| If some doctors are teachers and some teachers are lawyers, then some doctors must be lawyers. This statement is: | TRUE | FALSE | NEITHER |  |  |  |
| The opposite of an "ambiguous" situation is a/an "\_\_\_\_\_" situation. | suspicious | vague | unequivocal | intelligent | dubious | genuine |
| How many total legs do three cows and four chickens have? | 16 | 18 | 20 | 22 | 24 | 26 |
| Please mark the word that does not match the other words: | Hawaii | Bermuda | Crete | Jamaica | Honduras | Puerto Rico |

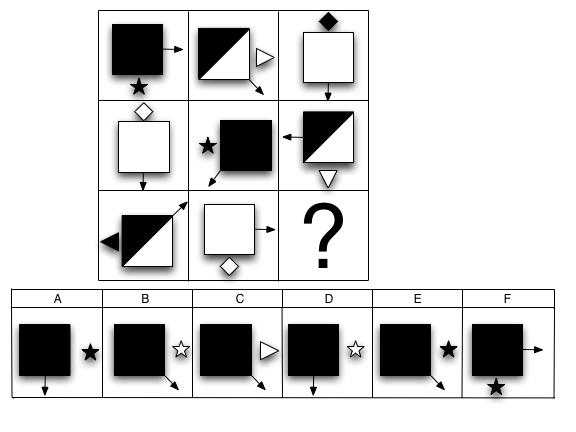
Please indicate which is the best answer to complete the figure.



|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your answer | A | B | C | D | E | F |



|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your answer | A | B | C | D | E | F |



|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your answer | A | B | C | D | E | F |

1. Alienation section

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I agree strongly | I agree | I am neutral or I don’t know | I disagree | I disagree strongly |
| I don't understand the way people behave nowadays. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't want what most people seem to want. |  |  |  |  |  |
| The future of mankind looks pretty hopeless. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Most people act as if the end justifies the means. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't get much satisfaction from my work (or school work). |  |  |  |  |  |
| It's a lonely life for more and more people nowadays. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Things don't make much sense to me anymore. |  |  |  |  |  |
| My values are different from society's values. |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is little room for personal choice anymore. |  |  |  |  |  |
| There just aren't any definite rules to live by today. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I wish I could feel more involved in my job (or school work). |  |  |  |  |  |
| I wish people would be a lot kinder than they are. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel confused about the world a lot. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Most people don't have the same priorities that I do. |  |  |  |  |  |
| You can only get ahead if you get some lucky breaks. |  |  |  |  |  |
| It seems that right and wrong are pretty ambivalent nowadays. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sometimes I just feel like a robot at work (or school) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sometimes I feel all alone in the world. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't know what the purpose of life is anymore. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't identify with my culture's values. |  |  |  |  |  |
| There are so many decisions to make that I could just scream. |  |  |  |  |  |
| It seems as if you have to play dirty to win. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't have much opportunity to be creative. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't get to go out with friends much anymore. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Life has become less and less meaningful to me. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Everybody seems to have a different idea of success than I have. |  |  |  |  |  |
| It is (or would be) scary to be responsible for a child nowadays. |  |  |  |  |  |
| It often seems that it's the nice people who lose. |  |  |  |  |  |
| It's frustrating if you really care about the quality of your work. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't see my family as much as I'd like to. |  |  |  |  |  |

If you haven’t finished this test and want to work on it sometime later, then during the next week, come by the BCM and leave it in the box labeled *Septalogos tests – Back to the basics*. Have a good week and see you next time!

How does God speak to us?

We speak to God through prayer. God speaks to us through:

1. **Bible** (synonyms: Scripture, word of God)

2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 16-17:

*All Scripture is God-breathed (*inspired by God*) and it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12:

*For the word of God is living and active, (…) it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

The Bible is the oldest book in literature, and it was the first book to be printed. Although there are many other religious books, there are far more people that suffered for the truths contained in the Bible.

The Bible is formed of two big sections called The Old Testament and The New Testament. In the Old Testament, Jesus has not come yet. There are many prophesies about the coming Messiah (Messiah means Savior, in reference to Jesus Christ). The New Testament talks about the life of Jesus Christ, from His birth as a human being, to His death and resurrection. The Bible is a compilation of smaller “books” or sections which are written by different authors under the inspiration of God. Each book/section is split into chapters and verses for an easier handling for future references.

1. **Conscience**

Feelings of Conviction – means that you are aware of what you have done wrong, but you have hope to be forgiven.

Feelings of Condemnation – means that you are aware of what you have done, but you don’t have any hope to be forgiven, or don’t know about any possibility of being forgiven.

1. **People**

In 2 Samuel chapter 12, we have a recording of when Nathan (an old wise man) confronted King David (king over Israel at that time). Here is the text:

*The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'*

1. **Circumstances**

Open doors versus closed doors.

God opens opportunities for us and closes other opportunities because those may not benefit us.

1. **Creation(nature)**   
   Psalms chapter 19, verses 1-2:

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.*

Week 7

*GIVING up an addiction is like moving from the house you were raised in. Even if the house is old and dilapidated, leaving it is difficult. It was your home. When you lost that self-control, your addiction becomes your emotional home. Although it is a chaotic place to be, it feels like it’s part of your identity.*

*Control over addictions*

*Today’s schedule:*

* Arrive at Wesley’s place!
* Welcome – opening and announcements
* Double circle exercise (fun deal, you’ll see!)
* Let’s talk about addictions and self-control
* Family circle: our addictions and our true identity (*extremely* informal)

*Let’s talk about addictions and self-control*

* What is self-control?
* What do you think an addiction is? What are some characteristics of an addiction?

*Craving or compulsion, loss of control, and continued use even when use has severe negative consequences*

* Let’s do the following exercise:

On a piece of paper, write down at least 2-3 things from the following categories:

* Helpful/productive activities from your daily routine
* Fun activities from your daily routine
* Unproductive things you do (during the day) when bored

How often do you engage in the unproductive activities mentioned? Is it “what you do when there isn’t anything else more entertaining”? That/those things that you do often and keep you from being productive are your addiction(s).

* In your opinion, how bad is it to be addicted to a certain activity, thing, or person?
* How long would you wait to get rid of your addiction?
* In your opinion, what steps should you take to get rid of your addiction?

*Admit you have that addiction (don’t deny it).*

*Find some other activities or social circles to replace those addictions.*

*When you are emotionally down, don’t go back to your addictions.*

*Talk with someone you trust about your addiction – addiction works in silence.*

*Any association, activity or relationship that reminds you of that activity should be avoided*

*Don’t expect your addiction to go away instantly – it’s a process.*

*Pray about it.*

* Sometimes we relapse (go back to our addiction).

*Unresolved emotional pain is a primary health condition...a leading cause of all addictions*

What do you think about the quote above?

*Family circle: Our identity and our addictions – time to share!*

**DISCLAIMER:** Not all content for Back to the basics 1 was written by me. Some was taken from various sources. This group was meant to use free resources.

**Back to the basics 2 – Spring 2010**

This semester we ended up making some major changes such as: each leader had a defined set of responsibilities, the meetings had more structure to them, our evangelism was more intentional, and the leaders grew more as Christians and personalities. We employed different strategies. We did not use as much the handouts since we noticed that people would not take them home afterwards.

**Strategies:**

*Teach them and allow them to teach what they understood* – we used this strategy for two of our meetings; on one of these meetings we divided the group into two and had a debate between them on the theme: “Is God an angry God?” We allowed them to read a set of verses we provided for them, spend some time with their team and formulate some arguments to their team’s side, and then we had these international students be the representative on the debate to share their team’s arguments and defend their side based on their understanding of the verses. Obviously, they were helped to understand those verses by the leaders and the whole debate was supervised. The two sides of the debate were “Yes” –He is (explaining God’s justice) and “No” –He is not (explaining God’s grace).

*Conversations –* most of the early meetings had the students split into groups at different tables, and the conversations were initiated and kept within decent boundaries by the teaching leaders (see leadership positions below).

*Surprises –*we intended to build relationships with them and so we made it a costume to have a surprise birthday cake whenever someone’s birthday came around (and we had many birthday kids).

“*The tradition*” *–* after each meeting we would hang out in the building and later go to some place to eat or just have fun. This became our “tradition”. This helped build better relationships.

*Prayer –* we spent rather more time prayer for this ministry on our preparation meeting on Wednesday, and we also met 2 hours before the Friday meeting to pray for that evening.

NOTE: I believe that relationships are in part being built by the amount of time people spend together. For this reason, we provided plenty of occasions for memories to be made and for inter-relational inhibitions to be decreased.

**Leadership meetings**

These positions are explained as if an actual leader would pick a position:

*2 (two) leaders in charge with the games* -responsibilities will consist of having a game or two prepared for each week's meeting. This game will have to be related somehow to the topic of the week and also to help those who will take part in the game to connect more with each other. We want these people to enjoy these activities and also to start enjoying doing things together with other people of different backgrounds too.

-warning: to treat these internationals as people! There will be other Americans there too, but do NOT forget that some things are not acceptable for some internationals.

*2-3 (two-three) leaders in charge with leading the small group conversations*

-responsibilities will consist of leading the small conversation groups. Suggestions of how you should go about it: take the material for that week and try to make a set of questions that you can ask so that everybody get's a chance to talk, get involved, laugh!!!, and also, not have to listen to a sermon. You're main duty is to make that conversation entertaining enough/appealing to the internationals so that they would want to come back to the next meeting. As said above, do not make it into a sermon because those are boring! They get plenty of lectures in classrooms. I should also say this: if you think something would help the conversation (some trick, some joke, some illustration), then go ahead and do it!

-extra: from time to time (we may have 4 of these), we will have family circles instead of small groups (family circle=everybody sits in a big circle and we talk). During these conversation, it would be great (also needed and greatly appreciated) if you can help the conversation have a natural flow. Suggestions for this: use different lines/words/questions that would stimulate the conversation.

*2 hosts for the weekly meetings*

-when the weekly meeting starts, 5 minutes after the official start time, you will have to get up, welcome everyone, invite them to take a sit or get ready for a game or whatever the situation may be, and eventually give a summary of that week's meeting if necessary. Later on, you should make the transition between activities (between game, group/family circles, the final moment of the evening) by simply directing the folks to the next place or telling them what we're about to do. At the end, you should wrap up everything, maybe make the announcements for the next week. The way things will work for you in this position is that from the preparation meeting you will have a list of the order of the activities of the coming meeting. Based on that, you can go come up with what to say. This position is not hard as you will notice that the meetings are rather informal.

-I must tell you this: to a certain extent, you will help the floks (internationals and Americans alike) feel welcomed and involved.

*1-2 (one-two) "surprise-factor" leaders*

-each meeting will have something unique about it; it may have the character of a scavinger hunt, opera, etc. Or, the evening may have a third moment (after game and group talk), called an "epic moment" in which you can teach a song, sing a couple of songs, bring a testimony, have someone (even guests) bring a testimony. In this position, you will be in charge with either singing (you may need to know how to play an instrument or to sing well) or bringing some people as guests, or arrange that meeting in that given style, or whatever may be on the list. Soon I will post the calendar with the meetings and details for each. In the details I will include some suggestions for what you could do for the "epic moment"

*1 (one)secretary*

-you will have to make sure that each week the handouts are ready (printed and stuff); you will be collecting the prayer requests from all the co-leaders and FI Americans (FI=friend with an international; these are those involved in section two of the program); you will post these requests on the prayer blog (I will give you the address and login info); also, you will have to take care or make sure that the extra shopping is done; you will send reminders via email to everybody about the coming meeting and events; you will also have to make sure the building is arranged (chairs and stuff) as planed during the preparation meeting; and that is pretty much it, I think. Don't be scared, it's not much...

**Calendar:**

1st Meeting - Talk to me about yourself

* At this meeting, we had one game to get to know each other, and then we split into 3 groups and discussed the “Topic of the week” on the handout. This meeting was purely relationship building. We also had a birthday surprise for two of the students.

2nd Meeting - Circulation rules in relationships

* At this meeting started with a game and went on to small group conversations in which we shared the Gospel based off the verse printed in the handout.

3rd Meeting - The true friendship: the brotherhood of the weak

* At this meeting we played two games to get to know each other and we spent some time in small group conversations based on the handout. We carried on to sharing the Gospel with these students during the conversations as we felt led.

4th Meeting – Ecclesiastes carnival

* We started the evening with a sad song. After the welcome moment, the students visited 3 tables (in whatever order they wanted) at which they played some type of game and talked a little bit about Money, Marriage/Sex, Friends. The small talk was strongly supported with verses from the book of Ecclesiastes. After 20 minutes of them visiting the tables, everybody went to the Death table, the message shared there being that even death will become a memory. Afterwards, we all sat in a circle and talked about our different cultures with the purpose of showing that almost all lives are characterized by food, pleasures, work, and death. We ended the conversation by sharing Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. The purpose for this evening was to help them understand that everything without God is meaningless.

5th Meeting - Solving conflicts

* At this meeting we had the debate described above. The debate ended with the team of leaders sharing the Gospel, this time also using a short drama play.

6th Meeting - Scavenger hunt

7th Meeting - Emotional surgery: forgiveness

* We shared about the life of Jesus Christ and how the sacrifice on the cross is relevant to them (since it was Good Friday). We showed some clips from the movie “The Passions of the Christ” and we ended the evening with singing a few worship songs.

8th Meeting – Earth, Fire, Water, Wind, Heart

* At this meeting we had 3 games followed by a time of sharing the Gospel with the students again. At this time, most students are stressed with school hence the games, and at the same time, we wanted to remind them of the problem of sin and God’s grace. No handout.

9th Meeting – Chromatic dynamite concert

* We had 3 solos and about 2 group songs, all sang by the leaders. The program also included a short monologue about “how “good” people go to hell and repented bad people go to heaven”, and the life testimony of one of the leaders (former atheist, gone through the experience of losing a parent and a best friend within 1 month apart). No handout.

10th Meeting - Goodbye party

* We played a set of games followed by pictures and birthday cake.

**What direction were we going with all of this?**

The students understood with their minds the Gospel. We wanted to build relationships we these students and to show them that God changing our lives is the proof of both his existence and his love to save sinners. This is why we had quite a few games to help build memories and to also show that we are interested in them as people and not as numbers. Our purpose was not to provide entertainment to these students, although it may seem so, but to help them clear their mind from other worries and things and help them to focus on the message of the evening. I have to say one thing: regardless of what was done, God was the one to prepare their hearts and to talk to their hearts.

**What did we include in “sharing the Gospel”?**

We did not follow certain methods. We spoke about the Gospel as we understood it. Here are the main points we covered:

* There is a God.
* All people sin. And God is not ok with that due to His Law.
* We do good things occasionally. We sin regularly.
* God’s Love: The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.
* Faith is what is needed to have a relationship with God.
* God’s gift is real because it changes your life once you take Him to His word.

We tried to avoid telling them to accept God for His blessings; instead we put a great emphasis on the problem of sin and the reality of the sacrifice on the cross.

**Materials:**

**1st Meeting - Talk to me about yourself….**

Welcome! We are happy to see you here!

Let me ask you something:

Do you think you’re normal?

I know you’re not. I have never met a person that was truly normal. And this becomes more obvious when I get to know you more.

Despite how different/weird we are, we need friends. To belong to a group of friends is one and the same with being known by the others, cared for, loved, helped, and entertained.

*Topic of the week: Letting others know things about you*

3 stages of revealing yourself to others:

*Precautious communication*- sometimes it’s simply best not to tell others exactly what you are thinking.

*Be yourself everyday*-you don’t want your significant other or friends to wear mask while being around you. Trying to control what somebody else thinks about you is same as wearing a mask or make up. Each one of us is trying our best to hide behind a shield: too talkative, too silent, too brave. People will be convinced by your mask only when you’ve taken it off.

*Full transparency towards those friends you trust*- You are loved only as much as you let others know you. You can be loved 100% if you’re known 100%. If someone in a close enough relationship, can talk about his hidden things, then that person will never be alone wherever he/she may be.

*Warning signs in conversations saying that you should Shut Up!*

Using humor in an improper way- some people feel embarrassed by the sincerity of another person and so they try to escape this feeling by using humor to create a certain distance between the two or to tease the one who is being sincere about himself. Once this happens, masks are put back on.

Accusations or rushed advice-some people may be absurd in their response to what you are going through.

Deceiving your trust-even so, remember that life is not worth living if we don’t have trust. Relationships are in a constant change: they either become deeper or more superficial.

**2nd Meeting- Circulation rules in relationships**

Welcome to a new meeting of our fun group. Be prepared to discover how awesome people once you know some of the rules of communication with others. So prepare yourself for an evening full of mixed emotions.

*Topic of the week:” You shut up and let me talk! STAT!”*

“Circulation rules” in dealing with people:

1. Stop

Proverb 10:19: When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.

If we apply this proverb, we’ll start to learn some amazing things such as the ability to live without having the last word, without trying to control what others think about us, without necessarily winning an argument, without attracting attention only to ourselves, or needing to super impose our point of view in a matter of decision taking.

Proverbs 25:11: The right word at the right time is like a custom-made piece of jewelry, and a wise friend’s timely reprimand is like a gold ring slipped on your finger.

Be wise about being silent. Daniel Goleman says: “listening is the most important skill one could develop. To ask deep questions, to be open minded and understanding, without interrupting other’s talk, always searching for suggestions. This way, we tell people they’re important. “

1. Testing your alcohol level! = your level of seriousness.

Proverbs 15:30: A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.

It is hard to have a good relationship with someone when you have to always be right, in control, or superior. People starve for happiness, they need friends that make them happy. Happiness and laughter are usually found when people are with others. Funny thing is that when we see someone doing something dumb or silly, we want even more to be friend with them.

1. Be careful! Construction Zone!

Each relationship is a construction zone. They don’t prosper all by themselves or without us giving some attention to them. Not paying enough attention to our relationships leads to those relationships breaking apart, conflicts staying unresolved, teams splitting up, families tending to become more “busy”, people starting to loose and fail.

**3rd Week - The true friendship: the brotherhood of the weak!**

Welcome to a special meeting of Back to the Basics 2! We are happy you came! You will experience a mixture of emotions: the joy of a new year (three styles), the reminder of hope, and the excitement of a passing a new milestone!

(You will figure out what we’re talking about soon enough!)

*Topic of the week: Learning to trust people by examining their intentions*

The truth is that every person has a set of weaknesses: something that represents an image of their fragility and imperfection. It’s the part that’s not ok and that we so wish to hide it. Friendships are formed when we support each other’s mat. But don’t imagine that you can deepen a relationship by giving only tad bits of our super busy schedule. Wise people don’t use the microwave with their friends, families, and children. Relationships require that we devote time into genuinely getting to know the ones around us.

*The ideal community does not exist.* The community is formed by people with all of their interior richness, but also with their weaknesses and needs. The community is formed by people that accept each other as they are and that forgive each other, people that are vulnerable to each other to a certain extent. At the foundation of such a community, only humbleness and trust stand, and not perfection. The community is not a purpose all by itself. But it is an invitation to preserve, to go on, deeper, reminding people of their call to love one another. When you are part of such a group, the problem of your sin (mistakes) will always show up.

There is a huge difference between being friendly with someone as long as he/she serves your purposes, and being a true friend to someone. People can hurt other people and only people can heal other people. When someone is a true friend, their main concern is the good of your character, soul and being.

The true joy of life is to have a goal which means the whole world for you, to be a child of God, and not a little cloud of discontentment, selfish and worried, that always complains that the world’s purpose is not to make you happy.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen, it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1-2

**4th Week - These are times of peace!**

Welcome! We are happy you came! Tonight we will be taking about conflicts and war! But don’t worry, there’s hope!

*This week’s topic: solving conflicts*

Suggested steps to solve conflicts:

1. Admit there is a conflict! To live to be in conflict with someone or something.
2. Assume your responsibility you don’t have to be the guilty one to be the first to try and repair the situation.
3. Talk to the person with whom you are in conflict. Don’t avoid them! Sometimes you have the right to be angry about the conflict but be wise about how you manifest your anger.
4. No intermediates. Solve the problem with that person and not other people who are not involved.
5. Be sensitive and seek to be in good relationships with that person once more.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wreath, for it is written: “

It is mine to avenge: I will repay, “ says the Lord. On the contrary: “ If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. “ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:17-21

**Do you want to start a Back to the basics group on your campus?**

When you will start a Back to the basics group, you need to know the following:

* Follow the leadership system of *Back to the basics* 3 – or BttB 3 (described below). Planning each meeting of *Back to the Basics* 1 and 2 takes high amounts of time. This spring we made some adjustments so that it would be easier for us to work in this ministry. Even so, the model of BttB 3 includes valuable suggestions to what responsibilities each leaders should have and how the meetings should look like, all with the purpose of enabling yourself and the other leaders around to not get tired fast.
* The materials are not necessarily the key of the ministry. They may provide a discussion platform between you and the internationals. The important part is allowing them to see how Christ changed your life and how you truly believe in what you share with them.
* You may any combination of strategies listed in this manual. But never forget about prayer.
* The meetings should have an outline, a structure. You may either choose to alternate game and conversations like in Back to the basics 2, or you may want to prepare each meeting in a more family type of atmosphere.
* In conversations don’t share too many point with them. Most times they will retain in their memory only a couple of major ideas. You may offer many ideas on the handout, but emphasize only a couple.
* Each week send emails reminding them about whether you will meet or not that week. Also, talk with them when you see them.
* Advertise this group every now and then using posters around the campus or by actively inviting international students to come.
* Share the responsibilities with other leaders. From time to time, have different people share about their relationship with God at these meetings.
* Most importantly, do not be afraid to work with international students. They may not be so secure about speaking English, but if you keep trying to talk to them and befriend them, they will start listening to what you have to say!
* Also, you didn’t understand something they said, it is not a problem to ask them to repeat again. They will be way too focused on trying to answer your question rather than to feel any embarrassment.
* Anytime you need help, pray! If you have any questions or need any materials, just send me an email at emanoel\_white@yahoo.com

**Back to the basics 3 – Fall 2010**

*Back to the basics 3,* or BttB 3, differs from previous semesters through the following:

1. The meetings last for one hour, one hour and 15 minutes at the latest. The meeting is preceded by 30-45 minutes in which the international students can come and play some ping pong, card games, or just chat. The meeting will always start on time (7:30 p.m. on Friday) without any delays. The purpose is to help people build a costume out of coming to BttB meetings on time. After the meeting, there will be about 1 hour of hangout time when anyone can leave whenever they want to. During this hour, the leaders and other American Christians will have an opportunity to build relationships with the internationals.
2. The actual meeting will include the following moments:

* Welcome
* A game that pertains to the message of the evening, or a memory building activity that (again) aids the message
* The “message” – either in small groups or with everybody in the big room, the teaching leader will actively talk with various students in group and send across only 2 or 3 major ideas.
* Some short, fun, college-style video (3-4 minutes) that will add more character to the evening.

1. The leaders and Christian Americans will go through a training in which they will learn:

* How to actively converse with a relatively large group of people in an efficient way, without ending hearing only himself talk,
* How to actively talk to an international student in order to befriend them faster via occasional dialogues,
* How to put together games that will aid the message of the evening.

1. The leaders will meet on Wednesday for 2 hours or less, to prepare themselves for Friday evening (for approximately 30 minutes) and to pray for about 30 more minutes.
2. The leaders positions are the following:

teachers (2-3 people) – whenever we break into small groups to lead them, or to lead active talking, or to simply share things in a manner that ensures that no one zones out or gets bored (many tips will be given during training),

leader responsible for games/fun activity/ connecting activity (1-2 people),

host (1-2 people) – preferably an American and an int'l person,

tech person (1 person) – will take care of the microphones, videos, audios, he/she will also print out any handouts for each evening and advertise each BttB 3 meeting (on Facebook, emails, posters in apartment complexes, etc.),

the “help” man (1-2 people) –they will arrange the tables and chairs as needed for each meeting, and they will also, make sure everything is put back to its place, and that the building is clean,

hangout people (unlimited) – any of the leaders can come and hang out with the international students before and after the meeting on Friday. There should be at least 2 leaders during those times.

1. Responsibilities set for the main leader:

- make the calendar with themes and messages for each meeting

- take care of drinks/cakes/food for each meeting

- take one of the positions above if left uncovered

- plan and hold the training

- mediate relationships with other people/ministries

- ensure regular feedback to each leader in a constructive manner

- offer answers/direction whenever needed or confusion arises

1. The group will ask for the support in prayer of at least 2 churches in town and will give regular feedback on the group’s progress.

All that will be done will be according to the statement of purpose:

*To build sincere relationships through which international students are nurtured towards knowing Jesus Christ and seeing God’s sovereignty in various life circumstances.*

The Materials, Training materials, and Meetings outline will be sent to you as soon as they are edited. You can receive them for free by emailing emanoel\_white@yahoo.com or calling the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at University of Central Arkansas.