



HOW TO LEAD COACHING CIRCLES

Jesus teaches his disciples in community. He does very little 1-to-1 ministry. For the 12, being Jesus' disciples means living in a "learning community" pretty much all the time. We too can practice "learning community" together, in which everyone has something to offer, and everyone is getting better at a skill or value. One very practical way to experience learning community is through Coaching Circles. Let's look at one of Jesus' important habits that helps set up a learning community dynamic? Jesus loves to train his disciples by making them answer questions before he offered them answers. Jesus creates felt-need training! For example, in John 6, Jesus creates a learning moment for his disciples by intentionally asking them a question.

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Philip goes first in this learning circle. His worldview and perspective is now on display for all to learn from. Next comes Andrew.

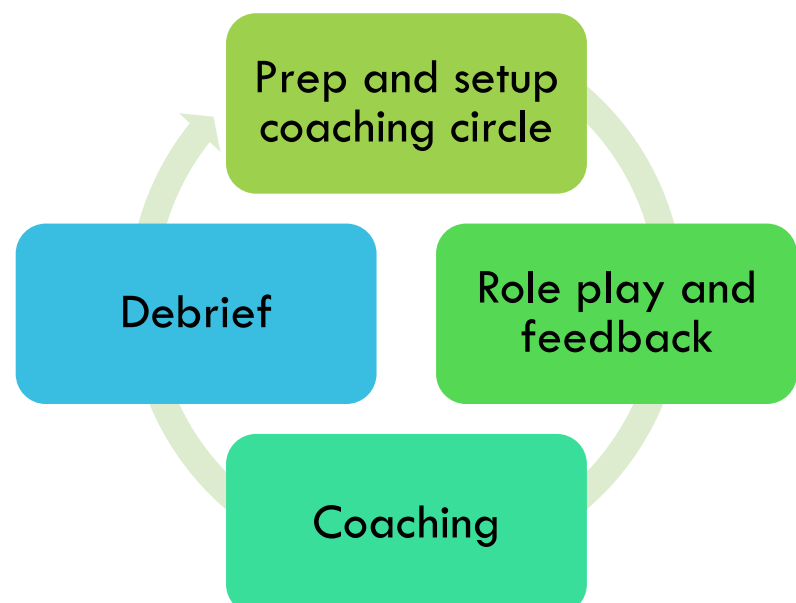
⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" (NIV)

The learning continues. The third person in this "learning circle" is Jesus. Because he goes third, everyone is paying far more attention than if Jesus just did the miracle first. Jesus wants them to feel the ministry tension acutely, before he relieved the tension. Sometimes we want to protect people from feeling these tensions or seeing the gaps in their thinking, so we do not ask them to answer the question first. Why don't we try being more like Jesus and train our folks in this type of learning community?

Before you invite people to participate in Coaching Circles, please cast vision for the power and importance of practicing learning community together. Now, let's get practical. are made up of our easy steps:

- **Prep and setup**
- **Role Play**
- **Coaching**
- **Debrief**

Prep and Set up help students and staff come in prepared and willing to learn together. Role play allows our students to enter into the ministry tensions and consider what they will do in real ministry situations. Then staff can model through role play. Be sure to give some positive feedback after the role play. The third step is Coaching, where the staff can then help the student grow in a particular skill or ministry value. Last but not least, debrief allows everyone to go deeper in the learning and take to heart what God is trying to teach us.



COACHING CIRCLE CASE STUDY

Coaching circles are versatile and can be run in a variety of ways paying attention to important cultural dynamics and values. Below is a story of a coaching circle used to equip Native students at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Prep and Setup Coaching Circle

At Haskell Indian Nations University, InterVarsity has had a chapter for 1 semester. The chapter has 5 members (in 1 SG) and 2 student leaders. The entire campus population is Native American. Crystal is one of the 2 student leaders. She is a junior and new believer. Half Native and half Latina. She knows everyone in her dorm. She creates a party just by being in the room.

Staff: Rhiannon, second year staff is planting by herself. This is her first time ever leading NSO, not to mention the first ever NSO at Haskell. She is multi-racial, white, Latino, Native. She has never coached students before. She is afraid of shaming them.

AD: Jamie, white woman

It is time for Club Night. We want to have a great tabling experience. We hope to meet 50 people and get 25 contact cards. The AD overhears the bland invitations that the students are giving, "Want to join our Bible study?" Most people just walk right on by. The staff tries yelling over the roar of the crowd, "Come get your water bottles!" They mostly get ignored. What would you do?

AD decides to do a quick training. "Hey Crystal and Rhiannon. I think there may be a better way to get people to stop and learn about InterVarsity. Let's work together to come up with an invitation we would love to give to the students tonight. Let's all take a moment and think about why we love being a part of InterVarsity. Then we'll take turns sharing our 30 second invitations. Together we will come up with the version we want to share with students tonight. "Rhiannon, you start out as a non-Christian student. Crystal, please get Rhiannon's attention and share your invitation."

Role Play and Feedback

Crystal: "Hey, do you want to hear about the best club on campus? R: sure! C: I'm a part of a lot of clubs, but InterVarsity is like my family. It is the best part of my week to go and have fun, eat good food, and learn together about Jesus. Before I joined I thought faith was kinda dumb. But, in InterVarsity I got to ask my questions and faith became meaningful to me." Then the CSM and AD both shared.

Jamie says: What did you do well? How do you want to improve?

Crystal said: "I need to remember to ask people if they want to join IV!"

AD: "So, what should our invitations include?"

Coaching

AD: "Ok. Rhiannon, let's take 5 minutes and do a little more coaching.

Crystal says she wants to get better at making an invitation. Please take 5 minutes to coach them and help them before they go out to do this.

Rhiannon: Ok Crystal. Give it to me again and remember to put an invitation at the end. I'll respond either yes or no. Keep the role play going and show me what you're going to do next.

Debrief

AD to Rhiannon -- "What did you do well as a coach?" Crystal, what did she do well?

AD: "Rhiannon and Crystal -- how do you want to grow as coaches?"

AD: "Rhiannon-- you should run role plays with all your students!"
"How can you help your students also talk to strangers?"

The students got 30 people (out of about 60) to sign up for InterVarsity. They were so excited about sharing their stories they went into the dorms and shared until they had 75 contacts.



Prep and Setup Coaching Circle

PREP:

For the Student: Make sure they have looked carefully at the Invitation to Faith worksheet and are ready to role play it. Be in a quiet spot for the zoom video.

For the CSM: Carefully review the Invitation to the Faith worksheet, and be prepared to role play it. Tell the student to be in a quiet spot for the video.

For the AD: Get a 15 minute prep call with the CSM beforehand. Cast vision for why this is important (fostering cultures of response). Help the CSM pick the right leader and SG (2+ non-Christians already attend). Take the pressure off of the CSM and student, "we are going to work together to come up with the best version of an invitation to faith for our campus." Schedule a debrief with the CSM after the student does the invitation to faith.

SET UP COACHING STACK: 5 MIN

AD: "Thanks _____ for being willing to join our coaching circle. CSM and I want to work with you so that together we can all contribute to developing a great invitation to faith you can give during your small group. CSM and I also want to grow as coaches, so we will debrief coaching lessons at the end of our time. We would love for you to join and share with us what was most helpful for you about our time together."

Role Play and Feedback

AD: We are each going to role play an invitation to faith right now. Let me frame the moment. We are at the end of the Bible study on the Prodigal Son. In a second, you are about to invite us to respond. CSM is going to be a nice non-Christian listening to you. We are going to role play twice with a different response each time. (First time CSM should say yes. Then CSM should look down and say nothing.)

ROLE PLAY STUDENT WITH CSM (6 min)

Run the scenario above

ROLE PLAY WITH CSM AND AD (6 min)

Immediately run the same role play (AD is the SG leader, CSM or student is the nice non-Christian)

AD WITH EITHER STUDENT OR CSM (6 min)

Immediately run the same role play (AD is the SG leader, CSM or student is the nice non-Christian)

FEEDBACK (5 min)

AD: Thank you! Now, let's give some feedback:

- What did you like? what did you do well? (student goes first. Affirm the student)
- CSM and AD go next
- What would you like to improve on? What would you like to incorporate from someone else's role play?
- Affirm their desire to grow

COACHING

CSM COACHES STUDENT (5 min)

AD sets it up: "CSM, the student said he/ she wants to grow in _____. Take 5 min to do the role play again, this time working on that area."

CSM: "Let's role play again, this time I want you to make sure to _____."

AD RUNS DEBRIEF ON COACHING (5 min)

AD to student and CSM: "What are we all learning about being good coaches? How does role play help us coach?" Student shares first.

AD to CSM: "CSM, what did you do well in coaching ____? How do you want to grow as a coach?"

AD COACHES CSM (5 min)

AD: Helps the CSM get better at coaching. You may either run a role play, reverse role play, or Lewins.

DEBRIEF (5 min)

AD: What was your favorite part of the coaching circle? What was most helpful?