

Women's Ministry Reimagined

Course Description

As ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ we are always endeavoring to expand the Kingdom of God and enrich our communities. In this workshop we will explore components of an innovative mindset that will help us reach beyond barriers and fuel the development of new ministry methods and strategies. We will discover creative ideas in ministering to women even in the middle of social distancing, in a way that helps to break through the pervasive sense of loneliness and isolation and build a sense of community.

Introduction:

- 1 - Many of us felt 2020 was a time of unprecedented change as we were confronted with situations we never expected to encounter.
- 2 - Today I would like to spend some time exploring ways to be innovative in ministry that honors the person and purpose of God, the heart of our mission and the power of the Gospel.

Defining Innovation

- 1 - **“Innovate”** means “to make changes or to do something in a new way.”
A - It is derived from the Latin verb, “Innovare” that means “to renew.”
- 2 - **“Innovation”** means “to effect a change in something or to introduce something new.”
- 3 - **“Innovative”** means “to make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas or products.”
- 4 - Innovation involves
A - Daring to do something that has never been done before.
B - Daring to do things differently than they have been done before.
C - Daring to reimagine things that already are.
- 5 - I have discovered that when we become committed to pursuing innovative ways of ministering, the only limitations are those that we often impose on ourselves.

Core Elements of an Innovative Mindset

- 1 - What is an Innovative Mindset?
A - We have already defined **“Innovative.”**
B - **“Mindset,”** is define as “the established set of attitudes or beliefs held by someone.”

- C - So an innovative mindset is a particular way of looking at the world that is open and curious. It envisions new possibilities. It is able to look at situations from different angles and creatively solve problems by thinking “outside of the box.”
- D - It is able to look at things from different angles and multiple perspectives.
- 2 - People with an innovative mindset reflect some significant components that impact how they see and respond to circumstances of life.
 - A - **Curious:** They love new ideas and have a strong desire to know more.
 - 1 - They look at people, situations and processes with a sense of wonder and openness.
 - 2 - They strive to understand and foster a learning environment.
 - 3 - Employing the power of observations they create connections with the world around them that cause them to think in new ways and create the awareness of new possibilities.
 - 4 - More information fuels effective innovative strategies.
 - 5 - Openness to new ideas is the atmosphere that births innovation.
 - B - **Empathic:** An innovative mindset seeks to understand and even share the feelings of others.
 - 1 - They are sensitive to the problems experienced by others both in their daily lives and in their social context.
 - 2 - By getting in touch with the struggles, needs and joys of others they are better equipped to imagine new options and solutions.
 - 3 - By understanding who they are creating new things for they are enabled to think in broader ways.
 - C - **Creative:** An innovative mindset is imaginative and demonstrates originality.
 - 1 - Innovative people are open to new and even unconventional ideas. Some even say that this type of mindset is playful.
 - 2 - It is open to new ideas and welcomes new ideas from others.
 - 3 - It seeks to create new innovative partnerships recognizing that “isolation is the enemy of innovation.”
<https://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/4783>
 - 4 - Innovation often evolves from ideas shared in a synergistic atmosphere and enhanced through brain storming within a creative network.
 - D - **Problem Solving:** An innovative mindset is willing to look below the surface to discover deeper needs and issues.
 - 1 - People with this mindset learn how to ask good questions.
 - 2 - Innovation is born from a question, not an answer.
 - 3 - Problem solving can become a springboard for innovative solutions.
 - E - **Courageous:** The innovative mindset is not afraid to take risks and try new things.
 - 1 - Innovative people are risk tolerant, knowing that the outcome has the potential to produce incredible results.
 - 2 - They are not afraid to break away from traditional methodologies and to think outside of the box.

- 3 - They refuse to be limited to attitudes like, “this is the way it has always been done.”
- F - **Resilient:** An innovative mindset is flexible and able to recover quickly from challenges.
 - 1 - Innovators simply refuses to give up. If the first attempt didn’t work, they return to the drawing board and try again.
 - 2 - They reflect on outcomes, exploring what happened, what didn’t work well and what did. Then they are able to find new steps forward in solving the challenge.
 - 3 - They believe in possibilities and continue to explore new methodologies.
 - 4 - They view mistakes and setbacks as opportunities to learn.
- G - **Opportunistic:** They challenge the status quo and seize opportunities to unleash innovative approaches.
 - 1 - They are willing to explore new paths, with some that have never been charted before.
 - 2 - They choose to capitalize on opportunities by responding quickly and decisively.
- H - **Hardworking:** They recognize that creative ideas are not enough. Those creative thoughts must be partnered with hard work in order to truly create innovative solutions.
 - 1 - Absolutely nothing will result from ideas alone, they must be put into action.
 - 2 - People who are innovative tend to be highly energetic. They love to see their ideas in motion with transformation unfolding in response to new solutions.
 - 3 - An innovative mindset is fully committed to actually realizing the new ideas.

What Happened When We Reimagined Women’s Ministry?

- 1 - In March of 2020 we were faced with the unthinkable.
 - A - Shelter in place regulations seemed to shut the door on our options.
 - 1 - How could we minister to the women of our church when we couldn’t even gather?
- 2 - We dove back into the vision that God had given us for our ministry.
 - A - “To inspire, equip and empower women to live extraordinary lives in Christ Jesus.”
 - B - We looked at our existing methodologies.
 - C - We reviewed our goals which were to transform lives through these interactions.
 - D - Holding tightly to our vision and leaning into our goals we began to imagine new ways of accomplishing these things.

- 1 - We prayed and asked God to lead us and guide us in our next steps.
- 2 - We explored what other ministries were doing for ideas.
- 3 - We had to muster up the courage to take some really scary steps.

The Changes We Implemented

- 1 - We expanded and enhanced our use of social media.
 - A - Built a team of younger women to work with social media.
 - B - We updated our logo and re-branded our Facebook and Instagram Pages.
 - C - We updated our “look.”
 - D - We developed ways for women to connect through our social media pages.
 - 1 - WOW (Women of Worth) Sister Spotlight
 - 2 - We presented questions and invited women to respond in the chat.
 - 3 - For Black History Month we featured significant Christian African American Women throughout history.
 - 4 - We are doing the same thing in a broader way since March is Women in History month.
- 2 - We started using technology to continue our Bible Studies.
 - A - We set up conference call lines and moved some of our Bible Studies to this venue, especially for those groups of women who were not comfortable with more advanced technical options.
 - B - We started hosting workshops and smaller Bible Studies on Zoom.
 - 1 - We started new classes that met on alternative dates and times in order to make Bible Studies available for women who are not able to meet at more traditional times.
 - 2 - We started a new Small Group Bible Study specifically for single moms and led by a single mom via zoom.
 - C - We began livestreaming our weekly WOW Bible Studies and sending them to multiple Facebook pages and to our church YouTube Channel.
 - 1 - We have women engaging with other viewers on chats and making them feel welcome.
 - 2 - Following the teaching time we have small group discussions led by different women on various conference call lines.
 - D - In addition to Bible Study sessions we also use livestream to interview ladies in panel discussions as a vehicle for them to share their testimonies.
- 3 - We developed a monthly newsletter full of interesting articles and information that includes links for all past Bible Studies.
- 4 - We livestreamed our first “Moms & More” luncheon last May.
- 5 - We Livestreamed our Christmas Luncheon.
- 6 - We did a drive-by Spaghetti dinner.
- 7 - We recently did a Pajama & Hot Chocolate Party.
- 8 - We have invited women to plug in to group devotional studies through the “You Bible” app that allows us to read the same plan and share comments.

- 9 - We are developing an online educational platform that will allow us to record trainings and classes that women can watch at times that are convenient for them.
- 10 - At first, we tried offering our Women’s Exercise Class virtually, but now the ladies are meeting in a local park Saturday morning at 8:30am, strictly observing social distancing, yet able to exercise and fellowship together.
- 11 - In 2021 we are praying that we will be able to open up for face-to-face events again, but we believe that God has demonstrated that it is time for us to continue to do ministry in new and innovative ways.
 - A - Our plan is to offer hybrid services by continuing to use the virtual environment as well as face-to-face services and events.
 - B - We are thinking of having the 2021 Christmas luncheon that will have some women physically present but with cameras moving throughout the audience capturing different tables and sharing with those women watching virtually.
 - C - Ideas for upcoming virtual events include
 - 1 - Women’s Conference
 - 2 - Self-care Saturday
 - 3 - A God Bless You Service
 - 4 - A Women’s Retreat
 - 5 - A virtual Dinner Party (sharing a recipe for everyone who participates to cook at home, and then sharing the meal together online).
- 12 - We are also looking at ways of maximizing other options available.
 - A - Using our existing web page for a blog featuring different women and then opening up opportunities for discussions.
 - B - Inviting women to submit short video recordings that will be turned into a video collage that will highlight various topics.

Conclusion Creating an Innovative Mindset

- 1 - In our world we are now facing challenges that we never anticipated. However, we also get to choose how we will respond to them.
 - A - Will we press into the Lord and learn these new ways to respond and minister or will we stand still, embalmed in the old ways of outreach?
- 2 - I know that someone watching today is thinking, “But I don’t have an innovative mindset.” I know that because I didn’t think I had one either.
- 3 - The fact of the matter is that there are definite steps that we can take to help become more innovative.
 - A - Be willing to hear the challenges of others and be touched by the pain they those challenges cause.
 - 1 - The problems you face can be a spring board to powerful new possibilities.
 - B - Don’t just be open to change. Welcome it!
 - C - Make room for creativity, and invite others to join you.
 - D - Think in bigger ways. Look beyond the immediate and envision a future that you have the opportunity to create.

- E - Demonstrate courage. Be willing to risk failure, recognizing that it is a vital step in learning and moving forward.
- F - Think and act fast. Seize opportunities as they arise, they may not come again.
- G - Cultivate collaboration rather than competition.
- H - Redefine and become comfortable with failure.

<https://www.ericsson.com/en/blog/2018/5/5-key-steps-to-creating-an-innovation-mindset>

Characteristics of Innovative Leaders

- 1 - Visionary. They see very clearly the vision that God has placed on their heart and working strategically to make it happen.
 - A - This is key, by returning to the power of the God-given vision for your ministry you are able to imagine new possibilities and methodologies to accomplish your goals.
 - B - They are focused on the future while navigating the demands and needs of the present.
 - C - They are making choices in the present to shape the future and bring God's vision for the ministry into existence.

- 3 - Risk Tolerant – They are willing to take risks knowing that the outcome has the potential to be incredible. They are not afraid to break away from traditional

methodologies and to think outside of the box. They are able to manage change and navigate through obstacles.

- 3 - Filled with Integrity
- 4 - Global Thinkers
- 2 - Self-Aware. They understand who they are, who they want to be and what they bring to the table.
- 2 - A Servant's Heart. Motivated by a deep longing to minister to others and see them set free to be all that God had created them to be.
- 3 - Empower Others. They build strong teams filled with people who are passionate about the vision. Innovative leaders value and respect these people, and empower them by giving the opportunities to work to their strengths, help them grow and clearly communicate their roles and responsibilities. They also empower them by giving them permission and space to be creative.
- 3 - Value Trust. Innovative leaders endeavor to be trustworthy and to build trusting relationships with the others.
 - A - First and foremost they trust God. Taking risks is a huge part of innovation, they must cultivate a deep relationship with God and then trust Him to guide them forward into those areas that stretch far beyond their comfort zone.
 - B - They build trusting relationships with their team and lean on them to navigate the pathway forward.
 - C - Create strong external partnerships. They build relationships and networks that invest in collaboration.
- 4 - Loyal. They are fiercely loyal to doing what is right. First in the sight of the Lord, and then for their ministries and the people that God has called them to serve. They are committed pursuing the highest good of the ministry.
- 5 - Open to New Ideas. Innovative leaders are open and listening for new ideas. They look beyond the traditional sources and welcome ideas of unexpected places and people. Loves collaborative inquiry.
- 5 - Value Diversity. Innovative leaders love diversity
- 6 - Persuasive

7 - Reach High. They consistently set new goals for themselves and for the ministry. They help to encourage others to reach for goals they never before imagined.

8 - Action Oriented. They are focused on getting the job done and moving forward as expeditiously as possible.

A - Reality focused, results driven. St. Francis of Assisi “Start but doing what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

9 - Communicate Well. Innovative leaders are clear, concise and straight forward in their communication. Their team can count on straight answers from their leader.

10 - Inspire. While holding on to a very clear sense of the purpose and meaning of the ministry they inspire others.

A - They model ways to behave, think and remain accountable. Henry Doss said;

“It is who you are, rather than what you do that will matter.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/henrydoss/2015/09/16/five-character-traits-of-innovation-leaders/?sh=4ca8aadc76e6>