Contextual Model of Formation Inventory

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Street Psalms serves a network of partners who share a common dream of creating cities of peace for all people where everyone belongs, especially the most vulnerable. To this end, each partner (e.g., churches, non-profits and networks) has its own contextual model of formation that frees its stakeholders to love and serve in the shape of its own specific mission.

This inventory helps an organization exegete and assess its capacity to do that incarnationally as practiced by the Street Psalms community.

Broadly speaking, what makes a contextual model of formation incarnational is that it embodies the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and what that means for building communities of human flourishing. This gets worked out not primarily through ideas and concepts transmitted through classical forms of "teaching." It gets worked out incarnationally, with the spiritual technology of the Incarnation – the mystery of Word made flesh. The spiritual technology of the Incarnation reveals that humans become human, humanly – through the long slow process of induction. There is no shortcut to becoming human. We are inducted into our humanity **in community**, **over time** and **in context**. And because humans are highly social, mimetic creatures who are formed in and through desire, we practice what one writer calls the "non-coercive rearrangement of desire" **in community**, **over time** and **in context**.

Street Psalms has been practicing this incarnational approach in vulnerable urban communities since 1998. Street Psalms' description of this approach is found in our Incarnational Framework. It functions as a diagnostic tool derived from the life of Jesus. It asks questions regarding Jesus' way of seeing, doing and being that free us to love and serve. You will see these questions embedded within this inventory.

How to Use this Resource

Complete the prompts for your organization to articulate its contextual model of formation.

This inventory works best when engaged in conversation with your own local leadership team, as well as Street Psalms' leadership team.

To get started, select an option that best describes your contextual model of formation today. Underneath each indicator, use the space provided for further reflection. You can get specific about where the opportunities or challenges are in your current model.

Use this scale to reflect on your contextual model of formation:

Celebrate = we are meeting or exceeding what's needed to accomplish the mission.
Watch = there are signs of vulnerability that could trend towards health or un-health.
Act = interventions are needed to accomplish the mission.

If, after engaging this inventory, your organization is interested in exploring how to apply the Incarnational Framework to your contextual model of formation, please contact Street Psalms.

(1) Name the Shape of Your Formational Model

Contextual models of formation take a variety of forms often embedded simply as a function within an organization. Which organizational structure is the container of your model?

- ☐ Religious Non-profit
- ☐ For-profit
- ☐ Church
- ☐ School
- ☐ Center
- ☐ Agency
- ☐ Other: _____

Is it a recognized function within your organization with dedicated leadership and budget?

(2) Name Your Customer(s)

Your contextual model of formation has a clear "customer," whether that be members of your organization, or leaders in the broader community, or those in a particular network.
Examples: within an organization, within a neighborhood, within a city, within a region.

Name your primary customer(s) in order of priority:

(3) In Community:

Your model of formation takes seriously that humans are social creatures and become fully human in the context of community. We are primarily relational creatures before we are rational creatures.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

How does your community participate in the ongoing work of formation?

(4) Over Time:

Your model of formation recognizes that humans become human over a long period of time.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

How does your formational model honor the long slow process of becoming human?

(5) In Context:

Your model of formation is worked out in your local context – taking the particularities of your context seriously. There is no one size fits all program of formation.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

How does your context inform your formational model?

(6) Incarnational Framework

Assess your contextual model of formation using Street Psalms' Incarnational Framework:

(6a) See:

Your formation models ways of seeing that call people out of the myth of scarcity into the liturgy of God's abundance.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

(6b) Do:

Your formation models ways of doing that call people from theory into embodied practice.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

(6c) Be:

Your formation models ways of being that call people from rivalry into peace making.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

(6d) Free:

Your formation frees people from fear to love and serve.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

(7) Community in Mission:

A Community in Mission has a large enough mission to warrant community, and a strong enough community to sustain the mission. In the end, your formation frees people in the shape of a Community in Mission which holds the creative tension necessary to love and serve your context.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

Reflect on and list three areas of strength and areas for improvement for the following statements:

- You have a large enough mission to warrant community.

- You have a strong enough community to sustain the mission.

(8) Leadership Team:

Your contextual model of formation has a leadership team with a point person that is responsible to induct its "customers" with a menu of formational rhythms, opportunities and resources customized for its context.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

Name the leadership team:

(9) Rhythms of Formation:

Your contextual model of formation has clear rhythms of formation (list the rhythms below).

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

- Daily: _____

- Weekly: _____
- Monthly: _____
- Quarterly: _____
- Annually: _____

(10) Programs/Curricula:

Your contextual model of formation has programs/curricula that are specific to your context and needs: It includes perspectives and practices and skill building.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

List them here:

(11) Ongoing Leadership Formation:

Your contextual model of formation has a clear strategy to provide ongoing formation for the leadership team responsible for the formational task of our community.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

List them here:

(12) Conversation Partner(s):

Your contextual model of formation is being worked out alongside a vibrant network(s) which provides an ongoing conversation and a learning community that helps develop, grow and nurture your model of formation.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

What are the networks that keep you on the cutting edge of your community's call and work?

Past:

Present:

Future:

(13) Growing Capacity:

Your contextual model of formation has the capacity and resources it needs to free leaders to love and serve.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

List three key capacity issues that need to be addressed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(14) Evaluation:

Your contextual model of formation has a clear way of evaluating its impact on both the leaders you serve and the organization in which you are embedded. There are multiple ways to gauge your impact – some quantitative, some qualitative.

- ☐ Celebrate
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Act

List what concepts or outcomes you will measure (e.g., number of leaders, reactions to a particular program, etc.). Note that both quantitative and qualitative evidence is helpful:

List what assessment tool(s) or process(es) you will use (e.g., standardized survey, interviews, ongoing record of some activity, etc.):

Note: For those who are interested in developing their contextual model of formation in light of a God in whom there is no violence, we encourage you to engage the Street Psalms Seminary. Our seminary is designed to free leaders to love and serve in the shape of a "community in mission" as modeled by Jesus. We have built a suite of resources dedicated to this specific application, including the book "See.Do.Be.Free." and a series of workshops and resources designed to help our partners create cities of peace where everyone belongs, especially the most vulnerable. Learn more at www.streepsalms.org/seminary.