

Soma Immerse Handbook

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1- Intro and Vision

INTRODUCTION

Soma Immerse exists to see young adults thoroughly gripped by the gospel, resulting in a re-orientation of their priorities toward saturating their city with the presence and power of Jesus.

We believe God is calling and preparing many young adults today to bring about gospel saturation in their communities through word and deed. Participating in an Immerse Internship will help young men and women further clarify their calling to God's mission, and equip them to lead disciple-making missional communities in everyday life.

The Immerse experience is about total immersion in the gospel, including classroom training, life-on-life discipleship, and missional service. This training is experienced in the context of living with Soma families, partnering with existing missional communities, and practicing leadership while serving the city with a missional heart.

VISION FOR SOMA IMMERSE

Short term: we want to help create a culture where it's normal for young people to start, build and lead a family of missionary disciples who are passionate for Jesus and his mission wherever they go.

Long Term: We want to create a pipeline for future church planters who plant missional community churches in order to accomplish our vision to see gospel saturation in the cities God has called us to.

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

Because this is a high-capacity leadership level training specific to the Soma paradigm for missional communities, we will primarily recruit those coming from a church context that is committed to missional communities. We will also recruit those who have the gift and call to lead, and desire to live life in a missional community in their context. A reference from local leadership must affirm leadership gifting and calling.

INTERN EXPERIENCE

- Know how to understand the story and context of the city
- To tell personal gospel story (again and again)
- Able to invite, host and lead others through the Story of God
- Help throw a gospel party in the city
- Know why and how we partner with organisation's in the city to serve the city
- Opportunities to serve the body, and leadership of the local church
- Personal development – (reading, writing, and planning)
- Receive processing, coaching and mentorship
- Work as a team: learn the importance and necessity for shared leadership (biblical and practical)

TEACHING CONTENT

- Soma Basics (Story, Gospel, Identity, Rhythms)
- Gospel Fluency
- Spirit Led Life
- Listening to the Spirit on Mission
- Creating a Disciple-Making Environment
- Gospel Shepherding/ DNA

SOMA IMMERSE GOALS

- 1) Learn and experience why and how to start, build and lead an MC.
- 2) Learn and experience your strengths and giftings on an individual and community level. We're going to look at who you are, how far you've come, and then take you to the next place God desires you to go.
- 3) Learn and experience leadership growth and challenges:
 - Importance of serving others and loving others
 - Finishing the work you began well.
 - Take responsibility of personal discipleship.

2- Immerse Administration

TEAM ROLES

Our Immerse leadership team, at this stage is basically our staff with others helping where needed. Factors to consider include long-term roles, short-term roles, number of interns, and gifting of team members.

RECRUITING ROLE

- Establishes communication paths and seeks new connections. Online web presence (and Immerse Facebook?)
- Ensures communication at conferences/retreats, generates message by word of mouth, activates voice of past Immerse students, staff, Immerse hosts, Soma family of churches, Sunday gatherings, and MCs.

COMMUNICATION ROLE

Primary person responding to interest, answering questions, consulting team for feedback, supplying applications, and processing applications.

ADMINISTRATOR ROLE

Creating timelines, spreadsheets to track data, providing data feedback to team, budget oversight, overall scheduling, and weekly class scheduling with lead teacher.

CURRICULUM/ TEACHING ROLE

Responsible to create and organize teaching topics, recruit teachers, teach, manage week-to-week teaching schedule, supply supplemental reading, support documents, and monthly 'pacing' and adjustments.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP ROLE (DAVE)

Plan agenda for Immerse leadership team meetings, coordinate leadership tasks, act as liaison to larger church community, care for leaders, insure adequate assessment and

modification of all aspects of Immerse, empower others to lead effectively, insure fulfillment of vision, plan for multiplication, and utilize team members according to strengths.

HOST FAMILIES OVERSIGHT ROLE

Recruit families prepared to live on mission with Immerse Intern, oversee placement of interns in homes, communicate with families, plan events with interns and families, seek feedback, mediate/problem solve challenges, and offer support and counsel as needed.

HOSPITALITY ROLE

Lead party planner, lead outing planner, and lead food coordinator, for retreats, dinners, and parties. Responsible to inspire and disciple leadership team and interns in this area.

BUDGETING ROLE

Acts as team point of contact for budget info. Responsible to establish and maintain budget, oversee reimbursement payments, communicate with Soma Committee, report to Soma leadership, and ensure accuracy.

ONLINE PRESENCE

Our Soma Family of Churches web presence is our best recruiting tool and our Soma Blue Mountains website is how most interns research our version of Immerse and apply.

COMMUNICATION

Our e-mail communication is the first exposure that interns have with the Immerse leadership team. Ongoing, regular communication is important for future interns who may be deciding between multiple options.

Helpful tools for more effective communication:

- Develop an online brochure - if possible, using photos, quotes, etc, from past interns
- Sample support letter, schedule, etc
- Create an acceptance package and include expectations doc, visa and financial information

RECRUITING

We want the interns to be people who are about to launch into leadership and need more training, instead of people who need more intensive discipleship. We rely on leaders in our Soma church family to communicate via social networks and in person at conferences and in their churches. We could also provide previous interns with tools to recruit.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Our process is as follows:

- Email their enquiry after being referred, or seeing us online, etc
- An Immerse team leader (at the moment, Dave) emails back the Immerse application and references (which is also on website).
- Immerse team reads and responses
- Set up Skype or visit
- Send acceptance/denial information
- Work through the *Expectations document* with the intern (It's online)
- Work through the online personal questionnaire (Stuart is great for this)

3- Immerse Experience

HOST FAMILIES:

Host families make Immerse unique and help shape the intern's perspective on what it looks like to be a family on mission. Below is training material used for both hosts and interns, but presented at separate times.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GUESTS

- Expect to be served, taken care of
- Are on the outside of the family
- Don't share an equal voice
- Aren't invested in the family's well-being
- See issues as someone else's problem to solve
- Expect others to take interest in them
- Must be careful what they say and do
- Are unclear about family rules, dynamics, expectations (not disclosed)

CHARACTERISTIC OF FAMILIES

- Serve each other
- Create a welcome atmosphere for one another
- Make it safe for people to be themselves—honest, transparent
- Take interest in one another's lives
- Take time to care, listen, pray for, and counsel one another
- Everyone is valued as an equal
- Everyone serves by sharing responsibilities
- Everyone works as a team. This causes individuals to be invested in the culture they create together. From *me* to *we*.
- Families practice grace

HOW TO GO FROM GUEST TO FAMILY?

- Out-serve each other
- Share responsibilities: work as a team, rotate chores
- Everyone gets to play

- Everyone gets to rest
- Speak the truth in love. Problem solve issues together
- Bend for each other: practice flexibility, compromise
- Communicate clearly, regularly
- Communicate expectations
- Forgive failures

NUTS AND BOLTS

- Personal possessions vs. public property: which is which?
- Kitchen rules—safety, values, etc. Teach what you know and learn from each other.
- Food - communicate: meal times, food to expect, budget challenges, decision-making process
- Showering: frequency, length, time-frame. Be specific about needs and expectations.
- Night owls and early risers: Night time hours, morning hours. Communicate needs.
- Forgive failures
- Initiate hard conversations
- Pursue interns
- Share phone numbers with all household members
- Offer neighbourhood and personal safety guidelines
- Show our city/mountains off. What do you love to do?
- Include interns in family activities, when possible.
- Offer rides, when possible. Share bikes, helmets, locks etc.

MCS:

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PLANTING INTERNS IN MCS?

- We want them to see mission in context of community
- Develop understanding and clarity of leadership
- Point of entry to share the gospel with the world
- Experience MC life
- Learn to cook for 16+ people on a budget

WHAT TO DO?

- Line MCs up before interns arrive

- Plant in MCs that have enough scheduled
- Ask MCs to give interns some position or responsibility so they can practice leading

OTHER BEST PRACTICES

- Foster a strong connection between Soma Family and Immerse interns
- Care for host families
- Don't put all the interns in one MC so that burden/gift of hosting is shared among a community
- Set expectations for MC leaders for how interns should interact with follow up
- Coach interns and MC leaders

DNAS:

Once interns arrive, our goal is to have them in DNAs asap. As soon as possible an Intern should have a go at leading a DNA session alongside of the DNA leader and then begin to lead regularly... and then eventually lead their own DNA group.

DNA isn't just about the time they meet together but is most importantly about how they care for one another outside of the DNA time. DNA meetings are simply structured care to help better facilitate care for one another in everyday life.

Ideally, the DNA leader will lead the first few meetings and then have the interns lead regularly and give feedback to the Interns at the end of the quarter on how they led DNA time and how they led outside of DNA.

DNA leaders must also remember that they are coming alongside these Interns to equip and care. Take the position of a servant, speak the gospel at every opportunity possible (inside and outside DNA meeting time), and equip them for ministry. Give residents tools to succeed on mission with Jesus: teach them how to pray, show them how to listen to the Spirit, answer their questions, challenge them in their faith, teach and motivate them to rely on Jesus for all their needs!

SOMA COMMUNITY:

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATING WITH THE LARGER CHURCH BODY?

- Allow the interns to learn to serve in a church body
- Exposure for our body to new people, fresh energy

- Connection to the church body (more relationship)
- Because Jesus says so

WHAT TO DO TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE LARGER CHURCH BODY?

- Have Interns share up front
- Serve with purpose/alongside a strong leader
- Don't just stick with people you know at gathering

OTHER BEST PRACTICES

- Foster strong connections between interns and church body
- Set up serving rotation for gathering logistics and kid's ministry
- Don't just fill gaps, but put interns in places where it's an 'alongside' situation
- Informal Q&A time with elders
- Goal: for the larger church to see the Interns as part of their family and vice versa

SERVICE PROJECTS:

In other Soma churches interns have participated in various service projects. These have included once-off activities like Sacred Space and Artist Showcases or year-long serving with local not for profits like Network Tacoma and MCs with active schedules like Dope Church.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SERVICE PROJECTS?

- Practical application of the gospel
- Team and leadership development

HOW TO FIND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES?

- See what ways the church is already serving and ask to join
- Connect early with other leaders to plan the service time well

OTHER BEST PRACTICES

- Integrate service projects with MCs
- Ensure that the intern's schedule doesn't get too bogged down with things to do (teaching rest and healthy boundaries)

OUTINGS & CELEBRATIONS:

Activity ideas to promote relationship and enjoy the surroundings: hikes, BBQ's in various locations, girls night out, dinners, fire pit evenings, weekly evenings for open discussions,

teaching, telling stories, or receiving prayer. Retreats ideas: opening weekend, Story of God retreat, camping/cabin retreat, guys weekend

'PILLAR' EVENTS

- Welcome Dinner: First night gathering of Immerse staff and other Soma leaders to welcome Immerse interns and cast vision for the internship.
- Closing Dinner: outdoor extravaganza utilizing hospitality and cooking gifts within team.

4- Immerse Curriculum

For a full teaching schedule, download the Immerse Resource Folder.

Some best practices include:

- Weekly teaching slots each week
- Providing a regular, weekly processing time
- Create blocks of time for independent outings
- Teach on practicing rest, perhaps on the front end
- Give assignments that interns process with host family / or others outside of Immerse to encourage learning and engaging with larger community

5- Immerse Follow-up

INTERN EXIT SURVEY

These surveys can be created in Google Drive to collect intern stories and ways to improve. Majority of processing and debriefing is done in person. Best practice is to ask the interns to create questions they believe are important to answer. Include these in the survey.

STAYING ON

Some interns want to stay in the Blue Mountains/Penrith following their internship. To ensure the best care for them, consider the following:

- Create exit plan through exit interview and follow up, including who is considering staying in the Mountains/Penrith
- Define staying in the area: What does re-entry look like?
- Team counsel/permission required for intern to remain plus interview with a pastor
- What are they leaving (or wanting to leave behind)? Be sure to ask this.
- Hand intern off to MC to insure they remain connected.
- Do they have a job/plan for employment, place to live, etc?

POST INTERNSHIP CHECK-IN

- Assign Immerse staff member who will do this
- Assess what they learned and how it is impacting their lives now

6- Other factors to consider

- Who are the applicants we are looking for?
- What does the MC Immersion look like?
- How to match interns and host families - consider tidiness level, maturity, needs of family, need of intern, etc.
- Clear expectations. Program rules & expectations shared early and upfront - dating, alcohol, drugs, caring for other people's stuff, host family relationships, cost sharing.
- Ask the residents how they would like to spend time with us.
- Story - make sure to get through the Story of God early and hear their story
- When do we start charging tuition for interns?
- When will it be due?
- Intern asks their local church to help them raise support
- Host family can waive stipend, thereby supporting intern