
Module 1: Identity and Culture
The Journey of Surf Church Porto

Welcome to the Journey!

Hello! We're so happy you've chosen to embark on this journey with us. The goal of this course isn't just to share information, but to explore the heart and soul of our community together. In this first class, we're going to dive into our origins to understand not just *what* we are, but *why* we exist. Get ready to discover a story of faith, passion, and a call to do things differently.

1. The Beginning of Everything: Our Story

Every good story starts with a question. Ours begins with one that still moves us today:

How can we connect with people who love the sea, the sand, and freedom, but who might never feel at home in a traditional church?

Surf Church was born as an answer to that question.

The Energy Behind the Wave

Our story doesn't start with a building, but with a passion and a restlessness. In 2012, an American missionary, **Troy Pitney**, looked at the beaches of Porto and saw more than just waves; he saw a culture and a community. His method was radically simple: **relationship**. He went surfing, had coffee, listened to stories, and shared his own.

Shortly after, God brought two other crucial families into the equation. The **Cianelli** family, who shared the same missionary vision, joined Troy. And the **Waters** family, a creative German couple with a great talent in **media**, joined to support and serve. Together, this international founding core began to gather people, sharing meals, friendship, and God's Word in a way that made sense for real life.

It was in this environment that our core philosophy was born:

"Do what you love for the One you love."

This phrase is revolutionary. It says that your passion is not a distraction from your spiritual life, but the **stage** for it. It's an invitation to reorient our purpose, using the gifts and passions God has given us as an act of worship, for His glory.

2. Our DNA: The GPS Called FAROLIM

An inspiring story needs values to sustain it day-to-day. Our DNA, our internal GPS that guides us, is called **FAROLIM**. Each letter is a pillar that holds up our house.

- **F – Fidelity (Biblical):** The Bible is our map and our anchor. In a culture with a million opinions, God's Word is our final authority.
- **A – Authenticity in our Witness:** No more masks. This is a community where being authentic doesn't mean being perfect, but being honest in the journey. This is where true connection happens.
- **R – Renewal and Continuous Growth:** No one here is a "finished product." We are all a work in progress. Following Jesus is a journey of constant transformation, and we celebrate progress, not perfection.
- **O – Orientation (Christ-Centered):** It's all about Jesus. Period. He isn't just part of the story; He *is* the story. Everything we do should point to Him.
- **L – Liberty in Spiritual Innovation:** Our faith is meant to be celebrated with joy, creativity, and life. We aren't bound to a *form*; we are committed to the *heart* of worship.
- **I – Inclusion (Transformational):** Our motto is: "come as you are." You are 100% welcome. But because we love you, we also believe that an encounter with Jesus transforms us. It's a safe place to belong and a brave place to become more.

- **M – Management (Environmental Stewardship):** If we love the Creator, we take care of His creation. If the sea is our playground, taking care of it is a practical and essential act of worship for us.

3. The Living History: Your Part in the Wave

The story of Surf Church is like a wave. It didn't start with people, but with the energy of the Spirit of God. Our founders —the Pitneys, the Cianellis, the Waters— didn't *create* the wave. They were the first ones who, with courage and faith, **joined in as the wave began to form.**

But a wave isn't made of a few drops; it's a massive movement of countless drops together. Today, that wave continues to grow, and every person who joins the community adds strength and purpose to this movement.

Their story has become our story. The next chapter is blank, waiting for your contribution.

Current Chapter: My Part in the Wave

The story of Surf Church isn't finished. It's being written right now, through people like you. Think about your journey, your passions, and God's call on your life. What could your contribution to this movement be? How can you "join the wave" and add your drop of water? Use this space to dream, write, or draw your part in the living history of Surf Church.

4. Questions for Group Discussion

Use this time to talk, listen, and connect. The goal isn't to answer every question, but to have a quality conversation.

Core Questions:

1. How does the founding story of Surf Church inspire you personally?
2. Choose one of the letters/values from **FAROLIM** that stood out to you the most. How can you apply that value in your life this week?
3. What does the philosophy "*Do what you love for the One you love*" mean to you in practice?

Deeper Questions:

4. Have you ever felt a similar restlessness about how the church connects (or doesn't) with your generation?
5. Think about your main profession or hobby. What is the biggest **challenge** and the biggest **opportunity** to apply the Surf Church philosophy in that area?
6. Of the FAROLIM values, which one do you think is the **most challenging** to live out authentically today? Why?
7. The value of "Authenticity" is very strong. In practice, what would it take for you to feel 100% safe to be 'real' and honest about your struggles in a faith community?