

Phase ONE Training Manual



W. Milton Adams

Visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com to watch or download Phase ONE Training videos and to learn about Phase TWO Training



Also used for Growth Groups Training
www.GrowthGroups.us

What is the difference between the two?

Simple Church is for front-line missionaries who want to start a house church to reach people who will most likely not walk into a conventional church. (Approximately 85% in North America and 92% - 98% in Australia, New Zealand and Europe do not go to church on a given weekend.) For more information visit, www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com.

Growth Groups are for people who want to start a mid-week small group and continue to attend a conventional church. For more information visit www.GrowthGroups.us.

The next page provides advanced comparisons between small groups, cell churches and house churches.

How to use this training manual.

For Simple Church Phase ONE Training

Watch the entire training session. This will provide excellent background as you prepare to start Phase Two training and then launch a Simple Church.

Pay special attention to the pages that specifically relate to Simple Church. You will see the Simple Church logo on the following pages:



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- Page 40 - [Blessing List](#)
- Page 63 - [Open Chair](#)
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- Page 62 - [Matthew Parties](#)
- Page 38 - [Relational Bible Studies](#)
- Page 39 - [Milk or Meat?](#)
- Page 84 - [How Do I Get Started?](#)

For Growth Groups Training:

Watch the entire training. This training covers key principles you will need in your mid-week Growth Group.

This training will also give you a suggested outline with step-by-step directions on what to do for your first eleven weeks.

Holistic Small Group (SG) Models					Other SG Models		House Church
Characteristics	5x5	G12	Growth Groups	Cell Church	Free Market	LTG	Simple Church Network
Relational Bib. Study	yes	yes	yes	yes	maybe	no	yes
Freedom to Share	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Service, In/Outward	yes	yes	yes	yes	maybe	yes	yes
Leadership Dev.	yes	yes	yes	yes	maybe	informal	yes
Multiplication Process	yes	yes	yes	yes	maybe	yes	yes
Defining Characteristics	Jethro Organizational Structure	Everyone is a leader in training	Grows out of the Seventh-day Adventist mission	First model to emphasize the people are the church	Interest/hobby centered	2 – 4 people	When one does not "go to" church they have to become the church
Leadership	Leader/Assist. Leader	Co-Leaders	Co-Leaders	Leader/Assist. Leader	Usually one leader	no "leader"	CORE4 Team
Training	One day training	One day training	One day online training	Multiple days over weeks	High maintenance for church staff	Very high accountability	Online training with live coaching
Multiplication	When assistant leader is ready	When someone is willing	When someone is willing	When assist. Is ready	no intentional	When 4 th person is added	When a CORE4 is ready
Miscellaneous	World's largest church uses this model	Grew from a desire to find a way for faster multiplication than 5x5	Recommended by the North American Division	Taught at Andrews University	Uses a verity of interests/hobbies to build friendships	Specific set of accountability questions	Lay-led church planting
Strengths	Systematic	Fast leader development	Developed within the Adventist context	Better cell group & cell church service integration than other models	Good job of connecting with secular people	Small typically grows faster	Can train anyone no matter where you live
	Long history	Fast multiplication	Successfully reaches irreligious people			No "organization" needed	Saves thousands of \$ in building maintenance.
	Develops community; Outreach focused;	Outreach focused;	Relational Bible study			Questions can be intimidating	Empowers laity
Weaknesses	Slow Leader Dev	Not as systematic	Viewed as optional and extra in a Constantian church model	Requires a lot of training to understand	Does not build longterm trust		Fewer controls
	Slow multiplication	Feels "loose"	Limited receptivity in Adventism		No long term commitment		Possibility of disconnecting from the world church
	These models work in conjunction with a Constantine church model which means: public buildings + clergy/Bible workers + multiple programs/ministries = "real" church					Often used in conjunction with house churches	Congregationalist thinking
Resources & Training	www.SerendipityHouse.com	Groups of 12 by Joel Comiskey	www.GrowthGroups.us	www.touchusa.org	<i>Dog Training, Fly Fishing, And Sharing Christ In The 21st Century</i>	Search & Rescue by Neil Cole	www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

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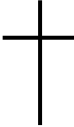
The Big Picture

Groundwork

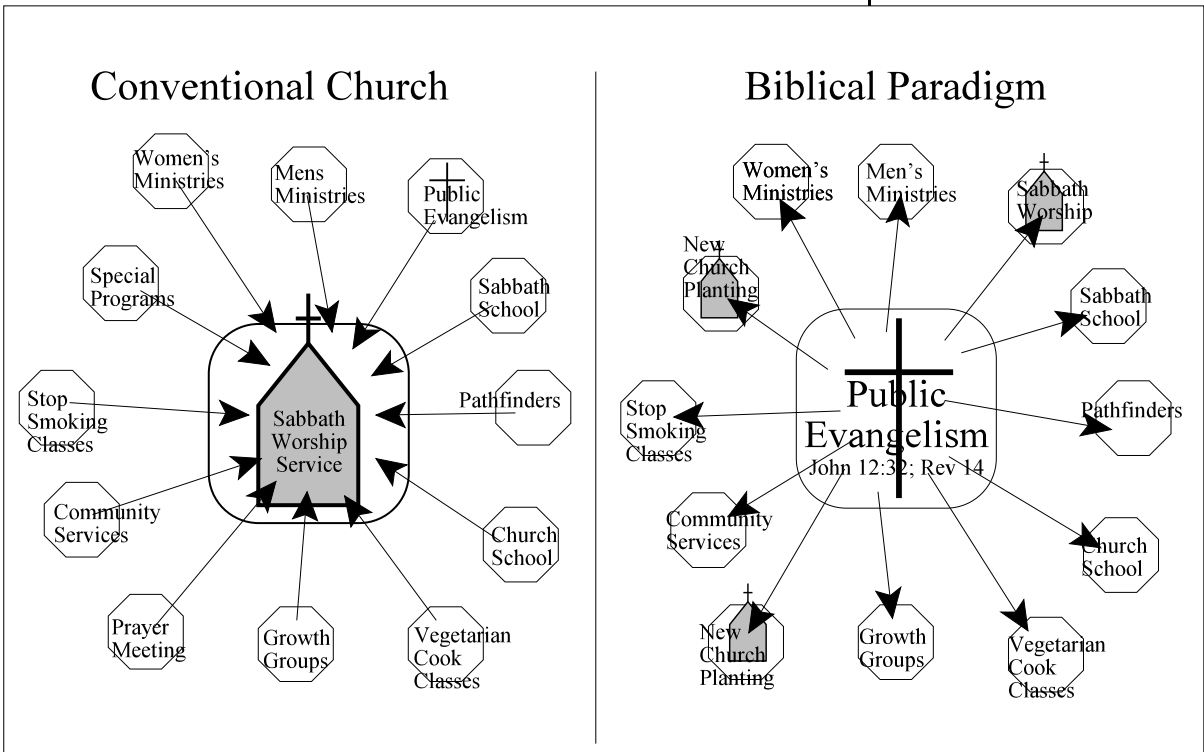
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Laying a Solid Foundation

Groups fit into a **BIGGER** picture

“GO”	GROW
† As Christians: John 12:32 <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> † As Adventist Christians: Revelation 14:6-12 “Eternal Gospel”	† John 10:10 “Life as God has it” † Romans 12:1-2 “Be transformed” † Groups help provide the accountability

Growth Groups



8 Tests Of A New Testament Church¹

The Institutional Test

Is the church a living *organism* or an *organization*? If you were to do away with the building could the church survive? If the church would survive without a building, it passes the first test for a New Testament church.

The Group Test

Is a small group considered the essence of the church? Does the church see the small group as the basic Christian community and the essential unit of the church? If leaders and people would cringe at referring to the small group as the church, then the church is not a New Testament church. Paul himself had no problem calling groups in the homes “church.” (Romans 16:5)

The Photocopy Test

When the model is reproduced, is the new church as clear and bright as the original? Will the model transfer? If the church reproduces itself with only dimmer versions of itself, then it is not a New Testament church. This is not a *numerical* test, but a test of *nature* and *life*. Does it consistently reproduce the dynamic of the original?

The Simplicity Test

Is the church fragmented and complex? As it grows larger, does it get more complex or less complex? A New Testament Church will continue to operate through its simple group leadership structure even if the governing administrative framework disappears. Even with the presence of large numbers of members and leaders, the church will have a simplicity about how it operates.

The Multiplication Test

Does the church show hope of multiplying? Is a structure in place through which exponential growth could happen? Or is the strategy based on addition of new members? A New Testament church can systematically multiply because the point of growth takes place at the integrated group level, not through compartmentalized multiple programs.

“For we are the temple of the living God.”

2 Corinthians 6:16

“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

1 Corinthians 3:9

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”

1 Corinthians 3:16

“And we are His (God’s) house.”

Hebrews 3:6

“He also said, ‘This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.’”

Mark 4:26-29

“I (Paul) planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”

1 Corinthians 3:6

The Adult Test

Does the church reach new adult converts, or is the church sustained by transfer growth from other churches and biological growth by baptizing its own children? An operating New Testament church will reach new adult converts.

The Persecution Test

Suppose the church is forced underground; will it survive? Could the Growth Group survive persecution without the institutional cushion? The New Testament church will survive through its groups of believers no matter what happens politically, socially, economically or internally.

The Truth Test

When Christ gave us the gospel commission we were given a two part job – to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” and – to teach people to “obey everything I’ve commanded you.” This is a question of surrender. Am I willing to obey even when I don’t feel like it, don’t want to, or am inconvenienced? Ephesians 2:8, 9 tells us that God’s grace saves us, and indeed it does. And Titus 2:11 tells us that grace enables us to “say NO to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives....” Grace saves us and grace changes us. And the evidence of God’s saving grace in us is a an increasingly obedient life – the spontaneous result of a heart full of love for both God and man.

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men – men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, me who will stand for the right though the heavens fall”

Education, p. 57

Growth Group Philosophy

Vision And Values

- ❖ [Mission and Philosophy of Growth Groups](#)
- ❖ [Reaching a Lost World for Christ](#)
- ❖ [“Presented By One Who Cannot Err”](#)
- ❖ [7 Guiding Principles](#)

Vision And Values

Mission And Philosophy For Growth Groups

Our Mandate – What are we called to do?

Scripture is crystal clear that we were created to bring glory to God. Scripture is also clear that as believers we accomplish this by bearing much fruit, which shows that we are His disciples.

The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 28

Our Model – Who is our example?

Jesus Christ. He chose twelve people, and developed them into leaders by pouring His life into them, teaching them and equipping them for the work He had called them to do. Then He told them to go and bear much fruit by developing more leaders, more disciples, who would in turn train more disciples, and so on.

Passing by the self-righteous – the Master Worker chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to move the world. These men He purposed to train and educate as the leaders of His church. They in turn were to educate others and send them out with the gospel message.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 17

In all His work He was training them for individual labor, to be extended as their numbers increased, and eventually to reach to the uttermost parts of the earth. The last lesson He gave His followers was that they held in trust for the world the glad tidings of salvation.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 32

“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”

John 17:4

“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

John 15:8

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”

Matthew 28:19

“He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with Him.”

Mark 3:14

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions....”

Matthew 10:5

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them....”

Luke 10:1

Our Method – How will we do it?

Like Jesus did.
 Like the early church did.
 Like early Adventism did.

Christ went into homes to minister to small groups of people.	Matthew 8:14-15 Mark 2:1-5 Mark 2:15-17 Luke 8:51-56
Christ sent the Twelve and the Seventy into homes in towns and villages.	Matthew 10:5-13 Luke 10:1-7
In Acts believers were taught in their homes.	Acts 2:45; 5:42; 10:1-48; 16:25-34,40; 20:17-20; 28:30-31
New Testament Christians continued to meet in homes for study, discipleship, and fellowship.	Romans 16:5 1 Corinthians 16:19 Colossians 4:15 Philemon 2
And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.	See the book of Acts

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”
 2 Timothy 2:2

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”
 Matthew 28:19

One Myth – “I need to work on myself before I’m qualified to lead others!”

“... strength to resist evil is best gained by aggressive service...”
 Acts of the Apostles, p. 105

“Those who would be overcomers must be drawn out of themselves; and the only thing which will accomplish this great work, is to become intensely interested in the salvation of others.”
 Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 208

“In my judgment, nurture-oriented education commits the serious error of making an end out of something that is meant to be a means. By definition it is self-centered and therefore suffers from basic introversion.... The mission-oriented Christian education program holds that the primary purpose of education is to equip people for the growth and outreach of the church.... The church is a training center where the people of God are equipped for their respective areas of ministry and mission. Nurture, indeed, comes as a by-product of being equipped and involved in ministry. My experience in Christian education is that a mission mentality in the church motivates people to training and produces astounding results in personal spiritual growth as well as church growth.

Pastor’s Church Growth Handbook, vol. 1, p. 134.
 Garden Grove Community Church

“I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.”
 Philemon 1:6

He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.
 Proverbs 11:25

After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again ...
 Job 42:10

Reaching A Lost World For Christ

Small groups of people, Growth Groups, are foundational to the structure and success of the New Testament Church. They are small enough to allow individuals to minister to one another, use their spiritual gifts, and be disciplined in the teachings of Christ. They are vibrant life-giving communities where pre-believers can watch loving and compassionate believers in action.

“Presented By One Who Cannot Err”

“In our churches let companies be formed for service. In the Lord’s work there are to be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ’s love.”

“The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members but for unbelievers also.”²

Evangelism, p. 115; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, pg 21.

“To all who are working with Christ I would say, Whenever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity. Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private homes, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.”³

Gospel Workers, p. 193

“Let small companies assemble together in the evening or early morning to study the Bible for themselves. Let them have a season of prayer that they may be strengthened and enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit....

If you will do this, a great blessing will come to you from the One who gave His whole life to service, the One who redeemed you by His own life . . . What testimonies you should bear of the

SURVEY INCLUDES ELLEN WHITE AMONG MOST INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS

The Barna Group conducted a recent study of reading habits of Protestant pastors, of all denominations, in the United States. Ellen G. White is included as one of the most influential authors for today's younger clergy.

"The under-40 pastors championed several authors who were not ranked highly by older church leaders," the survey states. "Those authors included business consultant James Collins, seminary professor Thom Rainer, nineteenth century Seventh-day Adventist icon Ellen White, and pastor John Ortberg."

"The most influential books often fail to reach the bestseller lists," writes a representative of the company. "That's one of several key findings drawn from the list of books that pastors say have influenced them the most in the past three years."

The Purpose Driven Life and *The Purpose Driven Church*, both written by Rick Warren, topped the list as the most helpful books of all for Protestant pastors.

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<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=189>

loving acquaintance you have made with your fellow workers in those precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God. Let each tell his experience in simple words....

Let little companies meet together to study the Scriptures. You will lose nothing by this, but will gain much....”⁴

This Day with God, p. 11

“My brethren and sister, study your plans, grasp every opportunity of speaking to them from books that contain present truth. Show that you regard as of first importance the salvation of the souls for whom Christ had made so great a sacrifice.

In the home circle, at your neighbor’s fireside, at the bedside of the sick, in a quiet way you may read the Scriptures and speak a word for Jesus and truth. Precious seeds may thus be sown that will spring up and bring forth fruit after many days.”⁵

Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 130

“Our Confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old (Bible study); but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience.”

The Desire of Ages, p. 347.

“After we had processed all 4.2 million survey answers, we calculated which of the 170 variables had the most significant relationship to church. If we were to identify any *one* principle as the ‘most important’ – even though our research shows that the *interplay of all* basic elements is important – then without a doubt it would be the multiplication of small groups.”
Natural Church Development: A guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches, pg. 33

7 Guiding Principles⁶

1. Everyone is a potential co-leader.

It is imperative that we see people as God sees them. We must see beyond them by faith, beyond their faults, and see them as healthy, victorious, servant leaders. People live up to how you see them. God will always send you ECR people (Extra Care Required). And it will be difficult to even imagine how they can be co-leaders. But remember, God “chooses humble, unlearned” people whom He trains and educates as the leaders of His church.

“There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ’s stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ.”⁷

Desire of Ages, p. 297

2. Everyone can disciple twelve people.

Sociologists tell us that the most introverted person influences at least 10,000 people in his/her life time. Think of those whom you currently influence and just imagine those people whom God would bring into your life if He knew that you were a faithful and obedient servant leader. If everyone has the potential to be a leader, then certainly all are worth the major effort it will take to develop them.

“They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.”⁸

Desire of Ages, p. 294

Jesus poured His life into twelve people, potential leaders. Your faith is a result of *their* faithfulness, and others will come to know Jesus Christ as a result of *your* faithfulness.

God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a life-time.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 39

3. Everyone is ministered to as they minister.

This is essential for healthy Growth Groups. Every living thing God created receives before it gives and gives as it receives. Take a seed – it receives nutrition from the soil, water from the rain, sunlight from the sun, and carbon dioxide from the air on an ongoing basis in order to produce fruit and while it is producing fruit. Take a child – how often do you say “I love you?” How

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

1 Peter 2:9

“Not that we are competent in ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant ...”

2 Corinthians 3:5-6

“Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flower The sun The ocean The mists”

Desire of the Ages, p. 20.

often do you feed them, clothe them, tuck them in at night, etc. To grow and reproduce disciples we need love, encouragement, and support on an ongoing basis. This element is one important key to leadership development and is an element we intentionally build into our infra-structure. Growth Group Co-Leaders *give* ministry to the people in their group, and *receive* ministry from their monthly co-leaders group.

4. Everyone should win souls and develop potential leaders.

Every Christian should be involved in the sowing and reaping cycle, including pastors, church staff, and leaders. Using your Growth Group as a place to invite people and build friendships with secular people, set a personal goal of 2, 4, 8 or 10 people to lead to Jesus each year. Then pray for a harvest. Jesus tells us that His harvest is ripe but the workers are few. Trust God, prepare for hard work, for spiritual warfare, and “go”reap His harvest.

5. Groups open most rapidly when they open as homogeneous groups.

The word “homogeneous” is defined by Webster’s Dictionary as “of the same or similar kind or nature.” In other words, birds of a feather flock together. It is a natural process that people with similar interests, work environments, hobbies, and life experiences are drawn to each other. That is why groups that are made up of people with shared interest grow more rapidly as compared to groups which are geographically based.

6. A person becomes part of my Co-Leaders Group *only* when that individual has started a Growth Group.

This Co-Leaders Group is where Growth Group leaders *receive* ministry, encouragement, and support. It is where they grow as leaders, rub shoulders with other leaders, problem-solve, receive additional training and provide accountability for each other.

Advanced Training

Once one of your Growth Group members completes the Basic Training and has opened a Growth Group, he/she becomes part of a monthly Co-Leaders Group (see principle #3). Either you invite him/her to join the monthly leader group you are attending (if space is available) or, if space is not available (maximum of 12 leaders in a co-leaders group), you would invite him/her to a

“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”

Proverbs 13:20

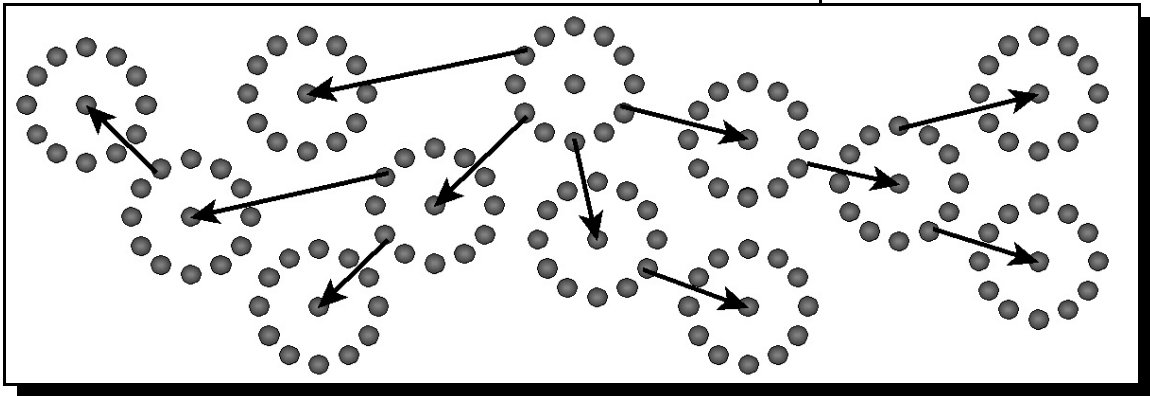
monthly Co-Leader Group which you now begin to lead. Once you have disciplined twelve leaders who attend the monthly Co-Leaders Group you are leading, you may close *your* weekly Growth Group and help your Growth Group leaders grow *their* groups by directing new people to their groups. Help with individual Bible studies, with church-wide harvest events, and simple administration. This principle maintains the spotlight upon disciple making (multiplication) and not on an ingrown process of endless perfection.

7. My Co-Leaders Group are my assistant pastors.

One test of a person's leadership effectiveness is what happens when it is necessary to leave, even for a vacation. If things go on pause or collapse, the leader probably did not work hard enough to develop leaders. If things keep running, or improve, the leader has developed leaders.



A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words



For Example

S	M	T	W	H	F	S
			GG			ALG
			GG			
			GG			LLG
			GG			

1. Join a Growth Group (GG).
2. Begin Basic Training (page 8).
3. Complete Basic Training and with the affirmation of your GG co-leaders, begin your own GG.
4. Attend your Co-Leaders Group (ALG) once a month.

Advanced Training

5. Lead a Co-Leader Group (LLG) once a month (when it becomes necessary) as your Growth Group members complete the Basic Training and start their own Growth Groups.
6. Once the Co-Leaders Group you lead is full (12 co-leaders), you may close your weekly GG and help your GG Leaders grow their groups.

Growth Group Dynamics

Group Formation

- ❖ [Essential Ingredients](#)
- ❖ [Life Cycles of Growth Groups](#)
- ❖ [How to Build Your Core Group](#) (see side bar)
- ❖ [Stages in the Life Cycle](#)
- ❖ [The Group Agenda](#)



Group Formation

Essential Ingredients

Loving



- ❖ Heart of the group
- ❖ Loving *relationships*
- ❖ The process takes time
- ❖ **Danger:** Loving can become a “we, us, ourselves” attitude

Learning and Serving



- ❖ Bible **Learning** forms the building blocks and the test of truth
- ❖ Story of God’s *relationship* with humanity
- ❖ Shows us how to have healthy *relationships*
- ❖ **Danger:** Learning without loving *relationships* is legalism

- ❖ **Serving** is love in action
- ❖ Makes “learning” authentic
- ❖ Makes “*relationship*” real, the proof of the pudding
- ❖ **Danger:** Serving without the Savior can be self-serving

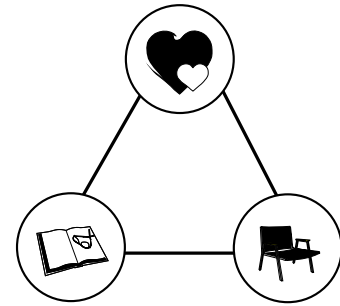
Reaching



- ❖ The reason a group exists
- ❖ Building *relationships* and inviting people to your group
- ❖ Produces the strength to resist and overcome evil
- ❖ **Danger:** Without loving *relationships* people often get discouraged and disappear.

Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.”

Gospel Workers, p. 363



“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:29

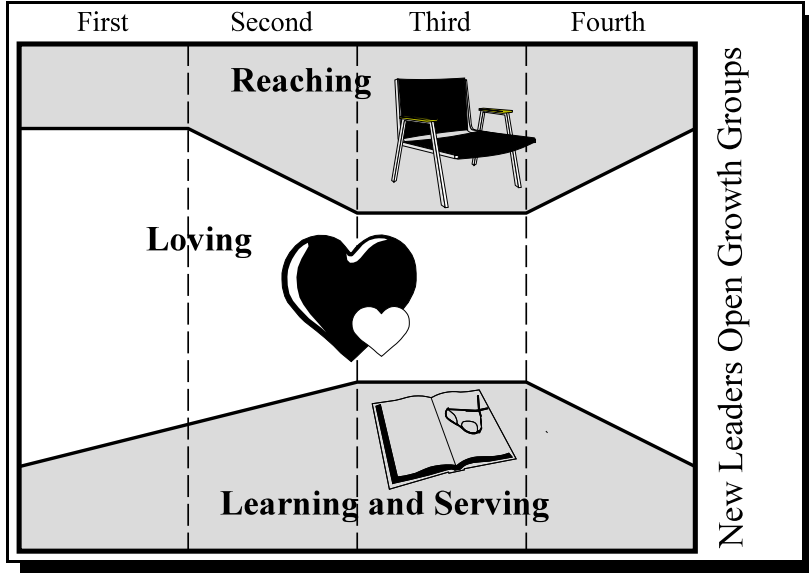
“... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

James 2:17

“If you are not a missionary, then you are certainly a mission field.”

Unknown

Life Cycle Of Growth Groups






First (fall) Quarter Priority - Building Your Core.

The first ten weeks of your group will be unlike any other time in your group's life. There are a number of things you need to focus on. These focus areas will lay a solid foundation for meaningful outreach and Bible study. For now, building a solid core is essential.

During these beginning weeks you will be building the foundation for a healthy group. There are a number of things that must become a “normal” part of your group's life. If you ignore these priorities now, it will be increasingly difficult to add them into your group's foundation.




First understand the concept. Later, in chapter six, we will look at a suggested time line for [Leading Your First Eleven Group Meetings](#).

- 
1. Loving – Can I trust you? Do you love me? Do I belong?
 - ❖ [Ice Breakers](#).
 - ❖ [Group Building Activities](#).
 - ❖ [Blessing List](#).
- 
2. Reaching – Groups exist for those who are not yet in them!
 - ❖ [Open Chair](#) and [Open Chair Worksheet](#).
 - ❖ Plan and have one [Matthew Party](#).
- 
3. Learning and Serving
 - ❖ [Group Agreement](#).
 - a. [Adopt a church Prayer Warrior](#) (“shut-in”).
 - b. Leading [Bible Study using the Serendipity Bible](#).


How to Build Your Core Group

Every group needs to begin with a core. The majority of this core needs to include at least four to five active Seventh-day Adventists who want to provide a safe place to invite their friends. But this core is not limited to Seventh-day Adventists. Invite people who 1) attend your church, 2) backslid church members, and 3) anyone else God brings to your mind. But keep in mind, it will be helpful if the majority of your core are church members who are committed to the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are a people who have been given a special mission, that of sharing the eternal gospel of the three angels messages with the world. Ultimately, we want to share this special message with those we will be inviting to our group. But don't forget, the group is not a place for doctrinal Bible study. (We have not yet talked about this, but we will on page 39, Bible Study - Milk versus Meat. Especially note the side bar on this page.) Groups primary purpose is to provide a safe place where strong relationships are developed. As you mingle, needs will be met, trust will grow, confidence will deepen, and questions will be asked. Then you will have the long awaited opportunity to bid them to follow Jesus - one step at a time.

Second (winter) Quarter Priority - Reaching Out




- 
 1. **Reaching** – Invite, Invite, Invite.
 - ❖ Add people to your [Blessing List](#) once they have come.
 - ❖ Keep an Open Chair in every circle.
 - ❖ Have two [Matthew Parties](#).
- 
 2. **Loving** – The meeting **outside** the meeting.
 - ❖ Visit every group attender in their home. Pray for God’s blessing in their life. (Prayer is your reason for stopping by to see them.)
- 
 3. **Learning and Serving** – Relational Bible study with Life application and Service.

Third (spring) Quarter Priorities Change

- 
 1. **Reaching**– Church-Wide Harvest
 - ❖ [½ Night of Group Prayer](#).
 - ❖ Groups attend Harvest Event as a group. (No weekly group meetings during harvest event.)
 - ❖ Co-Leaders work as assistants to the evangelistic team.

4. Fourth (summer) Quarter Priorities Change



- 
 1. **[Leadership Development](#)**
 - ❖ Prepare potential leaders for planting their own Growth Group in the fall.
- 
 2. **Reaching** – Invite, Invite, and Invite.
 - ❖ Have three [Matthew Parties](#). Do lots of fun social activities with your group.
- 
 3. **Mission Projects** – In the community.

Stages In The Life Cycle



The Group Agenda - 90 Minutes

Understand these concepts. This group agenda will become the norm approximately two months after your group has been meeting. Later we will look at a suggested time line which will automatically lead your group into this agenda, [Leading Your First Eleven Group Meetings](#).



20-30 minutes – for mixing and mingling. If the meeting starts at 6 pm, allow 15 - 20 minutes for people to arrive. *Always* use a [Serendipity Ice Breaker](#) question that will lead your group into the Bible study. *Always* serve water or healthy refreshments. Review [Aesthetics](#).



10-20 minutes – for questions about the Bible. These questions are “safe” questions that ask people to share their thoughts and opinions about the Bible. Use and adapt the Serendipity Bible questions. (The Serendipity Bible uses a “Bible” icon for these questions.) Also read [Bible Study, Preparing for your Group Study](#).)

20 minutes – for relational story. These questions are feeling questions that ask people to share their personal story in relations to the Bible story. Use/adapt the Serendipity Bible questions. (The Serendipity Bible uses a “heart” icon for these questions.)

For groups of less than 10 people. – Stay in one group.

For groups of more than 12 people. – Ask someone ahead of time to facilitate a sub-group. Break into groups of three to four and give each group a copy of the questions to cover. Close sub-groups with prayer and return to the large group for large group closure.



10-20 minutes – As a group. Stand in a circle. Place the Open chair in circle and hold hands as group closes. See side bar for different ways to have the closing prayer. The co-leader is always the last person to pray. Closes with a prayer of blessing and by praying for the people whom God wants us to invite to this group.

It is a nice touch to say [Numbers 6:24-26](#) together:

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.”

The 50/50 Rule

50% for relational questions about the Bible. (Why do you think Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground?)

50% for relational questions where I tell my personal story in the context of the Bible story. (When have you felt “tried and convicted” by the crowd?)

How to Close your Group using different kinds of prayer

Option 1: Co-leader closes with a prayer of blessing and prays for the people God wants us to invite to this group.

Option 2: Co-leader takes prayer requests and prays for these requests, for God’s blessing, and for people to invite.

Option 3: Co-leader takes prayer requests and asks for volunteers to pray for specific requests as they are mentioned. Co-leader closes, asking God to bless the group and prays for the people God wants us to invite to group.

Option 4: Co-leader begins prayer then, while heads are bowed, asks people to share their prayer requests. Before moving onto the next prayer requests, co-leader asks for volunteers who would also pray for this specific request. Co-leader closes, asking God to bless the group and prays for the people God wants us to invite to the group. See [Prayer, Conversational Prayer Guidelines](#).

◆ Chapter Four

Practical Tools

- ❖ [Aesthetics](#)
- ❖ [Anger in Groups](#)
- ❖ [Basic Helping Principles](#)
- ❖ [Bible Study, Preparing for Group Study](#)
- ❖ [Bible Study Curriculum, Choosing the Right One](#)
- ❖ [Bible Study, Using Ice Breakers](#)
- ❖ [Bible Study, Using the Serendipity Bible](#)
- ❖ [Bible Study, Serendipity Ice Breakers](#)
- ❖ [Bible Study, Milk or Meat?](#)
- ❖ [Blessing List](#)
- ❖ [Child Care](#)
- ❖ [Child Protection Policy](#) (Oregon Conference)
- ❖ [Conflict Management](#)
- ❖ [Crisis Work, How to Respond](#)
- ❖ [Group Agreement](#)
- ❖ [Group Agreement, Values Worth Considering](#)
- ❖ [Group Building Activities, For the Young at Heart](#)
- ❖ [Learning Styles](#)
- ❖ [Levels of Communication](#)
- ❖ [Matthew Parties](#)
- ❖ [Open Chair](#)
- ❖ [Open Chair Worksheet](#)
- ❖ [Prayer, ½ Night of Group Prayer](#)
- ❖ [Prayer, Conversational Prayer](#)
- ❖ [Prayer Warrior, Adopting a Church “Shut-In”](#)
- ❖ [Praise and Thanksgiving Worship Service](#)
- ❖ [Roles Group Members Play](#)
- ❖ [Troubleshooting Tips](#)

So How Do I

Aesthetics

- ❖ The Place – How does it feel?
 - ✓ Is it relaxing, inviting, comfortable, warm, appropriate space for people to interact easily?
- ❖ Satan proof your home.
 - ✓ Pets, Radios, TV's, Children, Doorbells, Telephone turned off. Answering machine turned down.
- ❖ Food – Always have something small
 - ✓ Sliced apples, sliced oranges, crackers, juice or water
- ❖ Music – It helps set the mood while people are arriving.
 - ✓ Select soft music that won't offend anybody.
- ❖ Parking – Most people will bring their car. ☺



Anger In Groups⁹

There are two ways of expressing anger in groups. “I” messages are clear and confessional. The person using “I” messages owns their anger, responsibility, or demands without placing blame. “You” messages are most often attacks, criticisms, labels, devaluation of the other person, or ways of fixing blame.

When angry, attempt to give clear; simple “I” messages.

“I” Messages

“You” Messages

I am angry.

You make me angry.

I feel rejected.

You're judging and rejecting me.

I don't like the wall between us.

You're building a wall between us.

I don't like blaming or being blamed.

You're blaming everything on me.

I want the freedom to say yes or no.

You're trying to run my life.

I want respectful friendship with you again.

You've got to respect me or you're not my friend.

Basic Helping Principles¹⁰ *Read this!*

One of the basic premises in a helping relationship is that people are responsible for their own actions. Some people do not want to walk alongside you; they want you to carry them. Your relationship with them must lead them to independence, not dependence.

People may come to you with what they think is the problem (or what they want you to think is the problem) when there is another, deeper issue. Make sure that you gently probe until you find the full extent of the situation.

People come to you assuming that you will keep their problems in confidence. You do not have the prerogative to discuss one person with another unless – perhaps – you need to seek help from someone who is more qualified than you.

On the other hand, never swear or promise your own secrecy when someone asks for it before telling you something. You might need to act on a rare occasion in someone's defense (in the case of suicide and child abuse, for example).

You need to be careful not to get in over your head. You can do a lot as a peer helper, but there are many problems that should be handled by professional counselors. If you feel that you are not equipped to help a person, you should say so and consult your pastor.

It is wise to let men help men and women help women. There is a special kind of intimacy that occurs in many helping

relationships, and sexual attraction can easily complicate things.

It is very easy to want to "fix" peoples' problems, especially when you see that the "answer" is very simple. But what is obvious to you may not necessarily be apparent to the one being helped. You shouldn't try to rush the process of helping just because you think you know the answers. Your job is to empower people to discover for themselves what their problems are and what they should do in response. Until they reach that point, they are not ready to deal with their problems.

As you become involved in helping relationships, you will find yourself wanting to express your opinions. But sometimes your statements will come as judgments. The best way to show people their weaknesses is to ask the right questions (in a sensitive manner) or restate the problem so that they start listening to what they themselves are saying. For instance, a man might be saying about his wife, "She's a real loser, and I wish that she were dead. Why, she's never even tried to love me. I don't know why I stay with her." In response, you could say, "Don't you think you're coming down a little hard on her? My goodness, nobody is as bad as you say." But in fact that response would probably cause him to feel stronger about his original statement because you have attacked his original idea. Instead, you should try this response: "It sure sounds like you are mad at your wife. You are saying that she has never really loved you." This kind of statement allows the speaker to hear what he is saying, so that his next words are directed at his own statements rather than yours.

Please, avoid pat answers like "You just need to pray," or "God loves you, and so do I." People need real relationships with caring friends, not pre-programmed brush-off maneuvers.

Pray with people. You will find that people discover real peace when you pray with them, and this can serve as a model to help them discover restoration with God.

Bible Study, Preparing For Group Study¹¹

This Bible study process is for the group leaders to do on their own, as they get ready for their group. It will add depth to your group study time. It is *not* to be used for the group study. Use/alter the [Serendipity Bible](#) questions.

Most Bible study methods emphasize what the Bible says and what the Bible means. But most of the Bible, read in its context, has

O.K. GUYS—
HOW CAN WE APPLY
THIS TRUTH TO OUR LIVES?



obvious principles to apply to life. **Spend most of your time in application.** Limit your study time to a reasonable passage and spend time meditating and praying about *how* to live the truth. Discuss your thoughts with others who can spur you on to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25).

Observations (What does the text say ?)

Translation

Read the entire passage through several times. Try using several different translations (NIV, NASB, NRSV, NKJV, Living Bible, The Message, etc.) for a fresh look at each passage. This will help you identify key words and develop insights into the text.

Context

Answer the following in writing:

- ❖ Who is writing/speaking and to whom? What is their relationship?
- ❖ What is discussed? What is happening?
- ❖ Where does the event/communication take place?
- ❖ When does this take place relative to other significant events?
- ❖ Why does the speaker say what he does? (What problems were the recipients facing?)
- ❖ How does this passage fit into the context? (e.g., What comes before and after? How is God using this to speak to me?)

Structure

Examine the structure of the passage and make note of any significant connecting words that help you understand the author's argument (e.g., "therefore," "but," "and," etc.). Try to paraphrase the passage using your own words. Are there any key words that help you understand the author's emphasis?

Word study

List all key words of the passage and use a Bible dictionary, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, *Richard's Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, or a good study Bible like the *NIV Study Bible* to understand their meaning.

Questions

Write answers to the following as you read the passage:

- ❖ What are the commands to obey?
- ❖ What are the promises I can trust God to keep?
- ❖ What do I learn about God? about Jesus? the Holy Spirit? about my fellow believers?
- ❖ Are there any repeated words, ideas, themes?

- ❖ Are there any comparisons/contrasts ("flesh" vs. "Spirit" in Rom.8)?
- ❖ Are there any lists (like fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23)?
- ❖ Are there any cause/effect relationships (Rom. 10:14-18)?

Interpretation (What message does the text convey?)

Principles

List specific principles that you derive from your observation of the passage. Bombard the passage with questions in relation to the meaning. Proceed verse by verse, recording your understanding as you ask yourself questions like, "What does this mean? Why is it important to understand this? How did this relate to the original audience? What is the opposite of this truth? When should this be applied? How should it be applied in my life?" Look up references to help you interpret the passage. Also, trust the Holy Spirit as your teacher. Pray, asking Him to reveal God's truth to you.

Commentaries

Consult any commentaries you can and write down insights they have that you might have missed. Call wise teachers or leaders in the church to gain their perspective. Ask people in your small group to look at the passage with you.

Theme

Write down in a sentence the main idea or point you think the author is trying to get across. You may want to write down two or three main principles you discovered that develop the theme.

Application (How will I allow Scripture to transform my life ?)

Teaching

Ask, "How will this truth change my life, my church, my family, my work?"

Reproof

Ask, "Where do I fall short? Why do I fall short? How can we evaluate ourselves as a group?"

Correction

Ask, "What will I do about it? What will I correct? How will others help me do this?"

Training in righteousness

Ask, "What practices, relationships, and experiences will I pursue so that I might train myself to be like Christ?"

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Tim. 3:16-17

Bible Study Curriculum, Choosing the Right One¹²

A Few Tips About Curriculum

Never take your Serendipity Bible into group! The Serendipity Bible is only a resource. Point people to the Bible.

Curriculum should never "drive" a group. It is a mistake to forfeit opportunities for extended prayer or service, or to cut short a necessary community-building activity because "we have to get through the curriculum." Remind group leaders that Jesus did not say, "Go therefore into all the world and complete the curriculum." Your goal is ultimately to make disciples – Christ followers – who are obedient to Jesus, yielded to the Spirit, and loving toward others.

Never substitute a curriculum for the Bible. Curriculum and study guides should be used to enhance the group's purpose and move people into the Scriptures.

Don't feel obligated to finish all the questions. Competent leaders know what questions to use and how many of them to use: If a curriculum has too many questions, then choose a few good ones. I recommend five to seven questions at most. Many times, two to three good questions followed by the right kind of group process are more than enough. Better to have a great discussion grappling with a few good questions than answering all the questions at a superficial level. The goal is to actively engage people with the truth of God's Word as it relates to their own heart and growth.

Make sure the curriculum is "group friendly." Many small group studies are designed for understanding the Bible, not building relationships or generating a deep sense of community and caring. Look closely at not only the questions but also the process. Does the curriculum allow for lots of interaction? Does it ask personal disclosure questions that challenge people to open up and share their lives? Or is it filled with content-based "what" questions, often ignoring personal "why" questions.

An application section that simply asks, "How would this apply to your life?" is weak. But if the writer asks questions like, "It's clear from this passage we need to share our faith with others. And it is clear that we all know how and that it would please God. But let's talk about why it is so hard for you and me start spiritual

conversations with seekers. Are there fears or other barriers you face in communicating the Gospel? How does it feel when you picture yourself talking to a secular person about Christ?" These questions will get at people's motives, thoughts, feelings, and needs. Only then can we truly encourage and pray for one another.



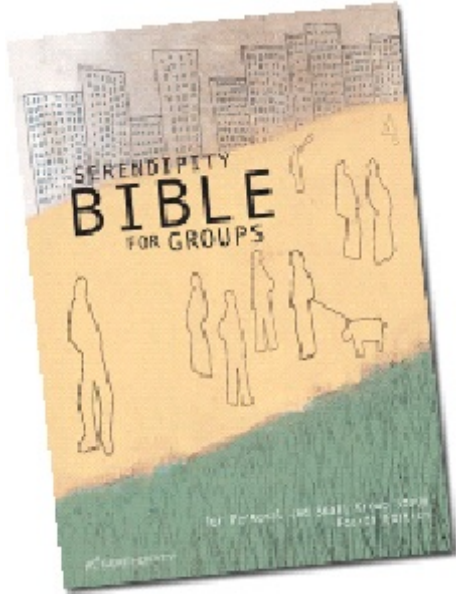
Bible Study, Using Ice Breakers

Ice Breakers help level the playing field. They are something easy that lets the group get to know each other a little better and also prepares them for the study to follow. [Serendipity Ice Breakers](#) are at the beginning of each study. Some times you might want to choose a [Group Building Activity](#).

Use Ice-Breakers at Every Meeting!

- ❖ A co-leader *always* goes first. You set the standard.
 - ❖ This is the *only* time you go around the circle as people answer the ice-breaker question.
- 1) Ice-breakers are NOT a game to fill time.
 - 2) Icebreakers involve a question/activity that helps people feel at ease.
 - 3) They provide a safe way for everyone to participate at the beginning of your meeting.
 - 4) Ice-breaker questions transition your group from social time to study time. See the Serendipity Bible's "cup" questions.
 - 5) They may require each person to say something on a pre-determined topic or for small groups of two or three to accomplish a simple task in a limited time.
 - 6) They bring everyone in the group to a common focus.
 - 7) They help bind people to people, usually on a superficial level, which is what needs to be achieved to set the stage for more substantial group experience.
 - 8) Do not expect too much from ice-breakers; they are important for setting the stage, but are not the substance of group experience.
 - 9) They are extremely valuable both for group members that are beginning to know each other or groups that have been together for a long time.

Bible Study, Using The Serendipity Bible¹³



60 ELT-NEED COURSES



Men



Youth



Women



Marketplace



Singles



Spirituality



Marriage



Special Needs









Parenting



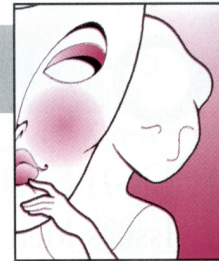
Recovery



				
MEN	WOMEN	SINGLES	MARRIAGE	PARENTING
1 MASCULINITY Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?	7 REAL BEAUTY Living in a World of Glitz	13 LOVE AND LONELINESS Solitaire on a Saturday Night	19 HONEY, I'M HOME Kiss at the Door to Socks on the Floor	25 PARENTING Not Just a Stroll in the Park
				
2 ACCOUNT-ABILITY Beyond Football and the Weather	8 CINDERELLA SYNDROME When Life Is Not a Ball	14 PRESSURES Keeping It Together When It's Falling Apart	20 BALANCING ACT Winning at Work Without Losing at Home	26 FAMILY TIME Making Meaningful Memories
3 DISCIPLESHIP Being a Man After God's Own Heart	9 A WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE Being a Godly Woman	15 THE SINGLE JESUS Becoming a Whole in One	21 COMMUNICATION / CONFLICT Lasting Love	27 STRONG-WILLED CHILDREN Train Up a Child
4 ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT Down but Not Out	10 TRANSITIONS Coping With Change	16 DATING DILEMMA In Search of My Better Half	22 INTIMACY The Gift of Sex	28 PARENTING ADOLESCENTS Hair, Hormones and Hassles
5 MEN AT WORK Performance Anxiety	11 ASSERTIVENESS Holding Your Own	17 SEXUALITY How Do I Handle My Hormones?	23 SPIRITUALLY SINGLE Solo on Sundays	29 CHALLENGING ISSUES Special Kids With Special Needs
6 FOR MEN ONLY Issues Men Face	12 FOR WOMEN ONLY Issues Women Face	18 CHOICES Issues Singles Face	24 MISCARRIAGE Why Our Child?	30 PARENTS IN PAIN When Your Child Breaks Your Heart!



WOMEN



7 REAL BEAUTY: Living in a World of Glitz

"It's a constant battle! My hair, my shape and my clothes are never quite right. I know I don't need to measure up to the glamorous stereotype, but where can I find a role model for real beauty?"



Option 1: BEGINNER: Bible Stories with Guided Questionnaires

TOPIC	SCRIPTURE	PAGE
1 I Don't Measure Up	<i>Amazing affirmation</i> John 7:53–8:11	1490
2 Struggle to Stay in Shape	<i>Leah and Rachel</i> Genesis 29:31–30:24	84
3 Keeping Up My Image	<i>Queen of Sheba</i> 1 Kings 10:1–13	496
4 Finding My Own Style	<i>Stylish love</i> Luke 7:36–50	1434
5 Staying Focused	<i>Wealthy woman stays focused</i> 2 Kings 4:8–37	527
6 Achieving Real Beauty	<i>Mary's song</i> Luke 1:39–56	1418



Option 2: ADVANCED: Bible Teachings with Margin Questions

TOPIC	SCRIPTURE	PAGE
1 I Don't Measure Up	<i>"How great is the love"</i> 1 John 2:28–3:10	1700
2 Struggle to Stay in Shape	<i>Training for godliness</i> 1 Timothy 4:1–16	1654
3 Keeping Up My Image	<i>Unfading beauty</i> 1 Peter 3:1–7	1691
4 Finding My Own Style	<i>"Be imitators of God"</i> Ephesians 5:1–20	1628
5 Staying Focused	<i>Keeping the goal in sight</i> Ephesians 3:14–21	1627
6 Achieving Real Beauty	<i>"You surpass them all"</i> Proverbs 31:10–31	916



John 7:51

1490

their own number, asked, ⁵¹“Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?”

⁵²They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet^a does not come out of Galilee.”

[The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11.]

Describe a time in your childhood when someone tattled on you.

1. How is this situation a trap for Jesus? What would the Pharisees accuse Jesus of if he told them to let her go? If he told them to stone her? How does he spring the trap (v. 7)? 2. How would the woman just caught in adultery have felt? What was the significance of Jesus' question in verse 10? 3. How does Jesus' response to the woman exemplify “grace and truth” (1:17)?

1. How does the way Jesus treated this woman help you face your sins? 2. Jesus accepts you “as is.” Does that free you to

⁵³Then each went to his own home.

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the

^a52 Two early manuscripts *the Prophet*



John 7:53–8:11

For Lite Study
THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

The story of the woman caught in the act of adultery is a good example of an amazing act of acceptance by Jesus. Even though the Pharisees put a lot of pressure on Jesus to go along with the crowd and condemn this woman, he chose to accept her and encourage her to turn her life around.

Optional Ice-Breaker Questions:

- As a child, when were you caught “red-handed” doing something you shouldn’t have?
- Who has really been an encouragement to you?

1. Why do you think Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground?
 - to cool off
 - to divert attention from the woman
 - to give himself time to think
 - to force the accusers to think
 - to write something for the accusers to see
 - other: _____

2. What was Jesus saying when he said, “If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone”?
 - deal with your own sin first
 - you see in others your own sin
 - Your condemnation of this woman is wrong.
 - other: _____

3. What was Jesus’ message when he said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin”?
 - acquittal: “The charges have been dropped.”
 - warning: “I’ll let you off this time, but don’t do it again.”
 - encouragement: “You’re a beautiful person and you don’t have to live like you used to.”
 - challenge: “The evidence of forgiveness is a changed life.”
 - other: _____

4. When have you felt “tried and convicted” by the crowd?

- when I didn’t make a team
- when I didn’t feel good enough to belong
- when I was turned down for a job or a promotion
- when I stood up for my faith
- other: _____

5. What do you do when you blow it?
 - confess it to God and move on
 - confess it to another person
 - try to make up for it
 - shrug it off
 - other: _____

6. When did you come to realize Jesus values you as a person?
 - when I committed my life to him
 - when I fully understood what he did for me
 - when I felt his healing or forgiveness during a difficult time
 - when I discovered acceptance in a church
 - I’m not sure how to answer that.

7. How can this group pray for you?

Two places to order. These Bible have different covers but they are the exact same Bible:

Amazon.com ISBN 978-0310937333 (the cover looks like wheat field)

Way.com ISBN 978-1574940442 (the cover is purple/maroon)



For Simple Church download the free leader’s guides
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com/Downloads/html



Bible Study, Milk or Meat?

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. *For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?*

Hebrews 5:11-14

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. *But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

1 Peter 2:1-3

Therefore, rid yourselves of *all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind*. Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk, *so that by it you may grow up in your salvation*, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Milk is for groups. Meat is for one-on-one Bible studies.

What do you do with doctrinal questions that come up in group?

- 1) **Affirm** – That is a good question.
- 2) **Connect** – I've had similar questions and have found satisfying answers. Let finish our group study and then find a good time to study your questions together.
- 3) **Follow up** – Provide Bible Studies for those who are interested in specific topics.
- 4) **Background** – I'll need to first give you some background information. A Bible study series might best lay background. *(Remember, we want these questions to come up. They are the result of the Holy Spirit leading people "into all truth" and these questions open the door for one-on-one Bible studies.)*

"Prayer meetings are held at the [Health] Institute in which all may take part if they choose, but there is an abundance to dwell upon in regard to Bible religion without touching objectionable points of difference. Silent influence will do more than open controversy. In exhortation in the prayer meetings some Sabbathkeepers have felt that they must bring in the Sabbath and the third angel's message or they could not have freedom. This is characteristic of narrow minds. Patients not acquainted with our faith do not know what is meant by the third angel's message. The introduction of these terms without a clear explanation of them does only harm. We must meet the people where they are, and yet we need not sacrifice one principle of the truth. By thus establishing regular meetings the patients gain confidence in the Institute and feel more at home. And thus the way is prepared for the seed of truth to take root in some hearts. These meetings especially interest some who profess to be Christians and make a favorable impression upon those who do not. Then there is an anxiety to attend the Sabbath meeting. There, in the house of God, is the place to speak our denominational sentiments. There, the minister can dwell with clearness upon the essential points of present truth and with the spirit of Christ, in love and tenderness, urge home upon all the necessity of obedience to all the requirements of God, and let the truth convict hearts."

Testimony for the Church
vol. 3, p. 166-167.



Blessing List

- ❖ Start a new Blessing List each year.
- ❖ This is a list of people who attend your group.
- ❖ It is not a prayer request list.
- ❖ Many groups write the blessing found in Numbers chapter 6 blessing (the part in the right column in bold) in the center of the blessing list and say it together as part of the closing prayer.
- ❖ Poster boards with decorative borders are available. With the Numbers 6 blessing written in the middle, it leaves plenty of room for the names of group attenders to be written. Some have used colorful markers to write names.

Place your Blessing List on an empty chair in your group circle at the *beginning* of your group meeting. It serves as a constant visual reminder during group that we exist to invite those who are not yet part of our group.

As the co-leader closes the prayer time thank God for bringing each one to group this week. **Ask that God will bless and protect each person throughout the coming week.** And close your prayer by focusing on the Open Chair that needs to be filled. **Ask God to lead and guide each of us as we invite people to come to our group.**

What to Pray for Others: Colossians 1:9-14¹⁴

Intercessory prayer can be defined as asking God to act on behalf of someone else. Sometimes we don't know how to pray for our friends and family (or even those who have hurt us), yet we know we should. Paul gave us a pattern of prayer in Colossians 1:9-14 to follow when we pray for others. Read this passage and try using it as a pattern the next time you pray. Watch how God answers.

Pray that:

- ❖ They will understand God's will.
- ❖ They gain spiritual wisdom.
- ❖ They live a life pleasing and honoring to God.
- ❖ They do kind things for others.
- ❖ They know God better and better.
- ❖ They are filled with God's strength.
- ❖ They endure in patience.
- ❖ They stay full of Christ's joy.
- ❖ They always be thankful.
- ❖ They recall God's forgiveness of their sins.

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

**The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his face
shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face
toward
you and give you peace.’**

So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Numbers 6:22-27

Child Care

One of the most common questions regarding the group meeting is what to do with the children when your group includes small children. Since the group is an extension of the family and represents the family of God, children should not be left out. Members are in the process of becoming an extended family, i.e. the family of God. Youth, who have their own groups, need not attend adult meetings, but the children should be a part of it.

Children are too young to participate in such a lengthy meeting where some of the discussions would be unsuitable for them. The children may be taken into another part of the home, a nearby home, or outdoors. Caring for the children should not be thought of as just baby-sitting. The children need to have their own time of relationship building and sharing of needs and problems. Members, including the men, may take turns leading the children. **Childcare volunteers should work in pairs and all group sponsored activities for children should be conducted within the guide lines of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventist [Child Protection Policy](#).** This is not a burden or duty but an opportunity for the bonding of relationships between adult members of the group and the children. You may even consider having children refer to adult members as aunts and uncles.

If the homes of your group members are too small to have room for the children, and it's not appropriate for them to meet outside for weather or other reasons, then have the children meet in another nearby home while the adults meet. You may also be forced to open up the church facility for children to meet during the group time, but this should be a last resort. If there is only one home large enough for both adults and children, you may have to meet in that home every week instead of rotating among the homes.

The children's time should begin with several songs for children followed by an opening prayer. Older children may be encouraged to assist the smaller children. Then the children should have an opportunity to share what is happening in their lives, both good and bad. Usually this will provide an opportunity for other children and the adults to bring in wise counsel and instruction from a Christian perspective. Either during or following this time, simple prayers can be offered.

A significant portion of the time can be spent in unstructured playing. Arts and crafts may be used, but usually this requires more preparation time than some of the unartistic adults may be comfortable with. Diversity in activities should be considered as positive, not negative. A Bible or missions story may be read and briefly discussed. A better way to bring in Scripture is through a teachable moment. As situations arise during playing and talking

about the interests or problems of the children, appropriate Bible verses may be introduced even if the adult can only paraphrase it.

The focus of the play time should be relational rather than content oriented. These relationships may be between the children and God, the children and the adult, and between the children themselves. Sometime during the meeting, very light refreshments may be provided for the children.

As the groups multiply, someone should take the responsibility of planning out a simple curriculum sheet for the children during the adult group meetings. The outline could look like this:

- Opening Prayer
- Ice Breaker
- Songs
- Bible or Mission Story
- Sharing and Prayer
- Playtime or Planned Activity
- Refreshments
- Playtime

It is very important that the children understand the importance of reaching out to new children whose parents are visiting the group. The children should make the visitors the center of attention and make them feel loved and welcome. Children need to be regularly reminded of this. If properly taught, children will recognize this as an important avenue of their service to Christ for the purpose of evangelism to both the new children and their parents.

Groups with children should be creative in meeting the children's needs. Some churches allow children to join the adults for the ice breaker and praise time. Some include them during the Word time.

Child Protection Policy

Child Protection Policy (CPP) and Procedures Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Mission: Our mission is to provide a safe, spiritual and abuse-free environment for every child who attends programs and activities of the _____ Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Objective: It is our objective to prevent any form of child abuse, physical, emotional, or sexual and to protect employees and volunteers from false allegations.

Definition: Child abuse is “any treatment of a child that threatens his safety or leaves in his life physical or emotional scars¹.” It constitutes any inappropriate physical contact, sexual contact or communication by any adult through use of their authority over a child. Abuse can also occur between two children. Even if a child out of ignorance, innocence or fear does not resist, it is still abuse.

Physical abuse is any injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation of the injury.

Emotional abuse is any verbal communication that harms a child, such as harsh criticism, degrading, belittling, threats, disparaging name-calling, unnecessary shouting, demeaning terminology, unrealistic demands for perfection, violent or obscene language, etc.

Sexual abuse violates a child’s sexual privacy whether by fondling, visually or by verbal remarks. It includes fondling of any intimate parts of the child’s body, oral, genital and/or anal penetration by any foreign object, oral, genital or anal sexual intercourse, telling a child to masturbate, exhibiting or showing any genital parts to a child, allowing a child to witness or watch any forms of sexual activity, showing any pornographic materials, etc.

Procedures: All employees and volunteers who regularly work with children, must complete a Children’s Ministry Staff Service Information Form. No changes are allowed on the form without the consent of legal counsel.

New members who desire to work with children and youth must have been an active member of the local church for a minimum of six (6) months before beginning to work with children, unless there has been previous clearance.

All workers shall make a reasonable effort to observe the “two person” rule which means that there will be a minimum of 2 adults supervising any function. Workers will avoid being alone with a child. This protects the child as well as protecting the adult from possible allegations.

Individuals who have committed physical or sexual abuse may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for children.

¹Dr. Grace H. Ketterman, *Understanding Your Child’s Problems*

Any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate shall be reported to the pastor or elder.

No child shall be allowed to roam around the church area without adult supervision. A reasonable effort shall be made to supervise children at all times, especially pre-school age.

Parents are responsible for supervising their children before and after church sponsored children's programs and seeing that their children are picked up at the appointed dismissal time. Every reasonable effort will be made to release children to their parent or designee.

Restrooms are common locations for sexual abuse. No child shall be released to another older child or permitted to go to the restroom accompanied by an older child unless the child is a sibling.

A child shall not be assisted in using the restroom unless there is a second adult near the area who understands the reason for the assistance.

Any discipline administered shall occur within the visual contact of another adult. Any form of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden.

Any meeting conducted off the church premises must have the approval of the pastor, an elder or church board. All overnight activities or miscellaneous trips must have the express approval of the church board. All minor attendees must have a signed parental permission slip for each trip as well as an emergency medical treatment release. Parents must be notified of adults in charge of the activity.

If there is a known sex offender attending church, a deacon or other responsible adult will be assigned to monitor the person while on the premises. The offender shall be informed of the procedure.

Any church knowing that a sex offender is transferring to or attending another church will notify the leadership of the previous history.

***** OFFICE USE ONLY*****

Recommended:	Not Recommended:	Date Received:
Recommended with Conditions Noted:		
Signature of Conference Children's Ministries Director:		Date Approved:

Children's Ministries Staff Information Form

Personal Information

Name:	Social Security # (optional)	Driver's License #
Address:		
Home phone:	Work phone:	Type of service do you prefer? (Growth Group child care):
Church:	Department(s):	
Marital status (please circle): Married Single Divorced Separated		Name of spouse:
Are you a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? (Please circle) YES NO How long?		
List the churches you have attended regularly in the past five years?		
Do you have any injury/sickness that might limit your involvement in Children's Ministries activities? (Please circle) YES NO		
If yes, please explain:		

Education/Training Information

Formal education:
Informal training:
Certification(s) held:

Experience

List all experience (i.e.. Vacation Bible School, Sabbath School, etc.) that might qualify you to work with children:

Position/Type of Work	Church/Organization	Date of Service
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Skills, Hobbies and Interests

List any skills, hobbies or interests you have in which you would be willing to help or teach:

1.	3.
2.	4.

Unlawful Conduct

Have you ever been formally accused, charged, convicted or currently under investigation for any unlawful sexual conduct, child abuse, and/or child sexual abuse? (Please circle) YES NO
(answering in the affirmative does not necessarily disqualify you from working with children)

If yes, please explain by listing type of conduct, date(s), place(s) and circumstances of the accusation:

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? (Please circle) YES NO

If yes, please explain:

If you answered yes to either of the above, please give the name and address of a reference/professional who can verify your suitability to work with children.

Name of Reference/Professional	Street	City/State	Zip	Phone:
--------------------------------	--------	------------	-----	--------

References

List below three individuals (other than family members) who could recommend you for service in Children's Ministries.

Name	Street	City/State	Zip	Phone:
1.				
2.				
3.				

Statement of Accuracy

The above information is accurate to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I understand that this is strictly a volunteer position, and I expect no remuneration for services and time volunteered.

I authorize the Oregon Conference and its affiliates to investigate my suitability for the volunteer position(s), which may include criminal background checks.. I authorize the references and professionals identified above to release any and all of my personal information to the Oregon Conference and its affiliates investigating my suitability for service to the Oregon Conference and its affiliates.

I agree to abide by the Child Protection Policy and Procedures of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

Note: Please be sure you have answered every question and signed your name just above. **Return this form to your church leader.**

It is the goal of every Children's Ministries leader to have the best qualified personnel available for his/her church. This record becomes the property of the Oregon Conference Children's Ministries Department and will be used to evaluate all present and prospective Children's Ministries workers and volunteers. Applicants may request their Volunteer Service Information Form be forwarded to another conference's Children's Ministries Department should they move to another conference.

Understanding the epidemic proportion of child abuse and unlawful conduct, the section on unlawful conduct has been included to protect children in church-sponsored programs from abuse by any staff with a history of misconduct. The confidentiality of volunteers will be respected while also protecting parents, Children's Ministries workers and the church organization.

If the Conference Children's Ministries Director recommends the applicant, the front page will be copied and sent to the local church for their record and will be used to determine staff qualification. When a local church requests a recommendation from the local conference's Children's Ministries Director, the director may not release any specifics and may only respond with "recommended," "not recommended," or "recommended with conditions noted. "

All information on the Children's Ministries Staff Volunteer Service Information Form is required by North American Division and insurance policy. It will become a permanent record and should include updates every three years. In the event of accusations against the applicant, opportunity should be given for response by the accused. This response also becomes a part of the record.

Conflict Management¹⁵

As relationships in groups deepen, conflict is inevitable. A group that experiences no conflict among members is probably either a brand-new group or a group that has not pursued authentic relationships. Let's look at some biblical principles for conflict management and then at some effective conflict management strategies for growth group leaders.

Biblical Principles for Conflict Management

The distinction between quarreling and constructive conflict

Quarreling	Constructive Conflict
seeks win/lose	leads to win/win
tends to divide/choose sides	seeks reconciliation/chooses steps
speaks exaggerations from strife	speaks truth in love
is an end in itself	is a means to an end
tears down	clears path toward something better
usually has a hidden agenda	is only about what is in the open
comes from a person pushing	brought about by necessity in community
is a battle	is work
is usually hard	is usually hard

The Bible differentiates between quarreling and constructive conflict. Quarreling is negative because it refers to vain arguments or disagreements for the purpose of promoting self-worth or causing division. James 4: 1-3 asks us, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. This kind of quarreling is not pleasing to God." Paul told Timothy the same thing in 2 Timothy 2:24, which says, "The Lord's servant must not quarrel."

However, there is much admonition in Scripture for leaders to use constructive criticism and exhortation in order to bring about spiritual growth. In 2 Timothy 3:16 this is referred to as "rebuking," and in

"Confrontation is not a matter of tact, diplomacy, and smoothness of tongue. It is basically simplicity of speech, empathy in attitude, and honesty in response."
David Augsburger
Caring Enough to Confront

other places as “admonition” or “exhortation.”

Strategies for Managing Conflict

There are several approaches to conflict management, each having its own benefits. In growth groups, however, the strategies of compromise and collaboration are probably the most effective.

Avoidance (*the turtle*)

Avoidance is an effective strategy to use with conflict when

- ❖ the issue is trivial
- ❖ the situation will take care of itself
- ❖ saving face (yours or someone else's) is important
- ❖ time is limited

Avoidance is not an effective strategy to use with conflict when

- ❖ the problem is important
- ❖ the problem will not resolve itself (and may worsen if neglected)
- ❖ credibility would be lost by avoidance
- ❖ there is a larger, underlying issue that is important to address

Competition (*the shark*)

Competition would be an effective strategy to use when

- ❖ a competitive interaction would result in a better solution
- ❖ you want one person/position to prevail over another but you cannot declare your sympathies publicly
- ❖ the issue outweighs the relationship
- ❖ encouraging competition will clarify the issue and expose weak spots

Competition is not an effective strategy to use when

- ❖ long-term relationships are important
- ❖ conflict is likely to become personal rather than remaining issue-oriented
- ❖ it is important to avoid a win-lose situation or public defeat

Accommodation (*the teddy bear*)

Accommodation is an effective strategy to use with conflict when

- ❖ the relationship is more important than the task
- ❖ the issue is trivial
- ❖ small concessions will reap further gains (i.e., choose your battles)

Accommodation is not an effective strategy to use with conflict when

- ❖ your actions could be interpreted as being condescending
- ❖ its use would set an unwise precedent (e.g., fee bargaining)

Compromise (*the fox*)

Compromise is an effective strategy to use when

- ❖ there is no simple solution
- ❖ both parties have strong interest in very different facets of the problem
- ❖ there is not enough time for a truly collaborative solution
- ❖ the situation is not critical and an adequate solution is good enough

Compromise is not an effective strategy to use when

- ❖ a dangerous precedent would be set by failure to hold one's ground
- ❖ an optimal resolution is possible
- ❖ it is important to avoid concessions of any kind

Collaboration (*the owl*)

Collaboration is an effective strategy to use when

- ❖ the task and the relationship are both very important
- ❖ the time, information, and willingness to collaborate are present
- ❖ the outcome is exceedingly important
- ❖ sufficient trust exists between the parties

Collaboration is not an effective strategy to use when

- ❖ time, trust, and resources are not available
- ❖ the issue is not worthy of the investment of time and energy

Crisis Work, How to Respond¹⁶

From time to time in a growth group, an emergency or crisis may occur. As a growth group leader, others will look to you in times of crisis.

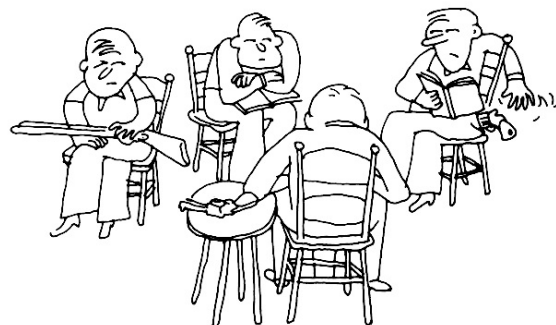
Suicide Hotline
1 800 560-5535

Handling a Crisis

In cases of impending physical danger

Contact the police immediately. Such crises would include:

- ❖ Life-threatening situations
- ❖ Severe accidents or emergencies
- ❖ An attempted or threatened suicide
- ❖ Present threats of violence by a person to him or herself or to others



Though it is very unlikely that you would ever experience any

of these in the context of a group meeting (or even with members of your group), please be aware of the possibility and know that you should contact the police immediately.

Other serious situations

If you have a serious situation that may require further help and guidance to address (e.g., child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, et cetera), contact your co-leaders group leader immediately for help in discerning the severity of the crisis and for assistance in reporting the incident to the proper authorities (if needed).

Remember, in most situations, your first point of contact should be your co-leaders group leader. If your leader is unavailable, contact one of the co-leaders who attend your leaders group. But if there is any threat of violence or danger, call the police immediately.

Supporting versus Counseling

As a growth group leader, you are expected to provide support and encouragement to members of your group. However, you are not trained to be a professional counselor, so you should not assume such a role. Instead, your responsibility is to provide opportunities for your members to receive the appropriate care they require.

Situations that may require professional help:

- ❖ Serious marriage problems
- ❖ History of past abuse
- ❖ Addictions
- ❖ Severe personality disorders
- ❖ Mental disorders or dysfunctions

If you should encounter anything that resembles the examples above, contact your co-leaders group leader to see what steps should be taken. Together you can determine a plan for encouraging a group member to participate in counseling or another type of help. As you talk with your co-leaders group leaders you could say something like this, “I have a hypothetical situation I would like to talk with you about.”

This is one way of telling your group leader that this is a *real* situation where you need advice and to maintain confidentiality.

Just because you think someone is in need of counseling does not mean they will be willing to participate in counseling.

Work with your co-leaders group leader to determine how to approach an individual with the suggestion of counseling or other help.

Group Agreement

All groups operate according to certain values and expectations. Often these go unspoken or unwritten. In order to foster open communication and clarity about the purpose and values of the group, it is important to develop a written group agreement.

- ❖ Make a new Group Agreement each year.
- ❖ The values around which a group makes a group agreement must be generated by the group, not imposed by the leader.
- ❖ Group Agreements should always be in the form of "I" and "you" statements as opposed to "we" statements. Agreements are more personal if "I" is used.
- ❖ Group Agreements must be reaffirmed throughout the year so that members remember their commitment.
- ❖ Group Agreements clarify logistics and values.

A Process for Making Group Agreements that Create Community

Meeting #1 – Distribute 3 x 5 cards and [Group Agreement Values Worth Considering](#) handout. Ask group members to write down on the 3 x 5 card the two or three values they think are most important for this group. Also ask group members to write down their hopes, dreams, and goals for this group.

Meeting #2 – The co-leaders compile a list of values from the last meeting and put them all on a sheet of paper. Give a copy of values to each attendee and ask him/her to choose the top five.

Meeting #3 – The co-leaders prepare a draft Growth Group Agreement and give a copy to each attendee. Read through it as a group, making final changes.

Meeting #4 – The co-leaders hand out copies of the Growth Group Agreement. Ask members to put their name, phone number and birthday on their copy of the agreement and then pass it to their right. As the agreements rotate around, everyone will end up with a group directory listing all names, phone numbers, and birthdays. Leave one copy (the group's copy) of the Group Agreement next to the refreshments after members have signed it. This serves as a visual reminder.

Group Agreement Values Worth Considering

Group Handout

Priority. I will give the group meeting priority and if I am unable to attend or am running late, I will call ahead.

Affirmation. I will help create an atmosphere where my group affirms and encourages one another, building each other up in Christ, and helping each other grow.

Availability. I desire to help my group as much as is possible. My time and insight, as well as my material resources, are a gift from God for me to use to serve others.

Prayer. I will pray with and for my group on a regular basis. I will commit to prayer and Bible study on a daily basis as part of my personal spiritual growth.

Openness. I will choose to be open with my group, realizing that openness promotes honesty and makes it easier for others to also share feelings, struggles, joys, and hurts. Authentic God-honoring relationships begin with my willingness to share of myself.

Honesty. I must speak the truth in love, so that I “will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Eph. 4: 15) . Honesty with each other is critical for authentic relationships to develop and trust to be built within my group.

Confidentiality. I promise that whatever is shared within the confines of my group will not be repeated elsewhere. Confidentiality promotes trust and openness.

Sensitivity. I will be sensitive to the needs, feelings, backgrounds, and current situations of my group and will help build relationships in my group.

Accountability. I will welcome the accountability, support and encouragement my group provides. I will invite my group to lovingly press God’s World into my life as I continue to grow in my relationship with Jesus.

A Safe Place to Grow and Invite Others. I will do my part in providing a safe place for people to grow as I and other group members invite friends. All it takes is for one person to be critical, judgmental, argumentative, condemning, “say-it-like-it-is,” or tactless and the atmosphere of a safe place for people to grow is destroyed.

Inviting Others. I will look for those people God is placing in my path and extend multiple invitations for them to come with me to my group. Keeping in mind the reason Growth Groups exist – to “go” and make disciples – I look forward to seeing my group start new groups.

Other Values

Our Growth Group Agreement

Today's Date ___/___/___

We will meet:	Co-Leader Names	Phone Numbers
Day: Monday	Janice Kobow	_____
Time: Noon - 2:00	_____	_____
Place: Upper Room @ Newport Church		

As I come together to share my life in prayer, study, fellowship, praise, confession, and thankfulness, I commit to the following group values:

Prayer. I will pray with and for my group on a regular basis. I will commit to prayer and Bible study on a daily basis as part of my personal spiritual growth.

Priority. I will give the group meeting priority and if I am unable to attend or am running late, I will call ahead.

Confidentiality. I promise that whatever is shared within the confines of my group will not be repeated elsewhere. Confidentiality promotes trust and openness.

A Safe Place to Grow and Invite Others. I will do my part in providing a safe place for people to grow as I and other group members invite friends. All it takes is for one person to be critical, judgmental, argumentative, condemning, “say-it-like-it-is,” or tactless and the atmosphere of a safe place for people to grow is destroyed.

Availability. I desire to help my group as much as is possible. My time and insight, as well as my material resources, are a gift from God for me to use to serve others.

Our Group Directory

Name, Phone Number, Birthday & Email Address

Group Building Activities (for the young at heart)¹⁷

The purpose of these exercises is to build the relationships in your group by encouraging fun, communication, honesty, transparency, authenticity, and shared experiences. As relationships grow, community will be enhanced.

“He is able” celebration

Ask your group members to bring to your next meeting a tangible item that represents how God has proven Himself able in their own lives recently. Ask them to be prepared to explain how God has been able, and how that item represents God's ability to act and bless.

- ❖ It should be a physical item that they can hold up and talk about
- ❖ They should talk about their own experience (not someone else's)
- ❖ You may wish to close this time by all singing the song, "He Is Able."

Variation: "God Answers Prayer" celebration

"Remember when"

In the Scriptures, we often see God's people recounting the past experiences they have had or remembering God's deeds. This can be done in a variety of ways.

- ❖ Remember how you first heard about Christianity
- ❖ Give your testimonies
- ❖ Remember times when God answered prayer
- ❖ Remember when God brought you through a difficult situation
- ❖ If your group has been together for a while, remember things you have been through together, and what they meant to you
- ❖ Retell the story of first coming to your church and explain what the church has meant to you

This experience builds a sense of "history" with your group if you've been together for a while. Recounting God's character or your experiences can be a prelude to a time of worship.

Two truths/One lie

Give everyone in the group a sheet of paper and a pen or marker. Have everyone write down two true things about themselves and one lie. These can be in any order. (Have them write big enough so the paper can be shown and seen around the room.) Then have someone read their three items. Everyone must guess which item is a lie. The person then reads each item and explains why it is a

truth or a lie. Have everyone take a turn.

Questions in a hat

Before your meeting, fill a hat (or bowl) with opener questions on individual pieces of paper (one question on each piece of paper). Have at least as many questions as there are people in the group. Vary the depth of the questions to be appropriate for your group. Add the following "special" things on separate pieces of paper and put them in the hat:

"Pass to the Right" "Pass to the Left"
"Boomerang (back to you)"

At the beginning, state that everyone always has the right to "pass" on any question (to put people at ease and not feel put on the spot). Someone (let's say Mary) picks a question out of the hat. Mary can ask anyone in the room (but just one person) to answer that question. She asks John. After John answers the question, he then picks a question and asks anyone in the room except Mary, and so on.

If you pulled the "Pass to the right" or "Pass to the left" pieces out of the hat, save them and use them when you are asked a question. If you use a "Pass to the right," then the person on your right must answer the question. If you have the "Boomerang," then the person who asked you the question must answer it. (Of course, anyone can pass if they wish.)

"Who am I?"

During the week before your meeting, collect one unknown fact about everyone in the group. This should be something the group members will not mind being told. The leader types a list of these facts (including one for himself/herself). Enough copies are made so everyone has a list.

At the meeting, the lists are handed out. The objective is to find out which fact matches which person. You may approach someone and ask about only two items on the list. (" Are you the one who. .." If not, then " Are you the one who. .."). After two inquiries, you must move on to someone else.

After a time limit (or as soon as someone gets them all), the game stops and you read through the list, identifying everyone.

Draw a time line of your life

Give everyone a long sheet of paper and pens or markers. Have each group member draw a time line of his or her life, showing three to five major life events. The number of events can vary, depending upon how much time you have. Then let each explain what he or she drew.

Draw a self-portrait

Give everyone a large sheet of paper and markers or crayons. Have each person draw a self-portrait. Collect all the self-portraits, hold them up one by one, and guess who each represents. When you figure out who it is, have that person tell a little about themselves.

Introductions

When introductions are needed, instead of everyone introducing themselves, let someone else in the group introduce them. If it is a couple's group, have the spouses introduce each other. This can be very affirming.

Videos

Videos can be used for times of worship, praise, or singing. Or use a home video camera to film "A Day in the Life" of a group member.

Sub-grouping

If your group is large enough, break them up into smaller groups, even pairs, for various activities. This is especially useful for times of prayer, sharing on a personal level, allowing relationships to deepen, and dealing with sensitive subjects.

Names of God

Ask, "What attribute of God has been especially meaningful to you lately?" (For example, "I really appreciate God's faithfulness to me because...")

Have the leader and each person in the group talk about this.

Variation: Don't talk about it – go right to prayer and pray through it.

Their names in a verse

The leader, ahead of time, picks a topic, and chooses verses on that topic – one verse for each member of the group and for him/herself. During prayer time, have each person read his or her assigned verse with their own name in it and pray through that verse.

For example, the topic is "God's love for us." Verses chosen could be Psalms 13:5-6, John 15:9, Romans 5:5, etc. One of the group members, Mary, reads aloud Psalm 13:5-6: "But I, Mary, trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I, Mary, will sing to you Lord, for you have been good to me."

Serve each other

Look for opportunities to serve each other outside of group time.

This will really go a long way in developing your relationships with each other. How about

- ❖ painting someone's house (inside or out)
- ❖ doing a large cleaning project
- ❖ bringing meals when help is needed

Serving others together

Look for opportunities to serve as a group, providing help, support, or encouragement to someone else. Here are a things you can do:

- ❖ help a needy family or person(s)
- ❖ serve at church for a special event (i.e., childcare for Easter service)
- ❖ look into an international ministries opportunity

Celebrate

Search for things to celebrate: groups starting, birthing, growing; personal accomplishments; the end of a season of your group; a successful experience. Be creative in the way you celebrate. Enjoy being together!

"It's a wonderful life"

In advance, the leader secretly asks three close friends (may include the spouse) of each group member to write out what the world would be like if that person had never been born. Before reading these aloud, the leader cues up the scene from the classic movie when George Bailey tells the angel it would be better if he had never lived, and the angel Clarence has an idea to show him how the world would have suffered. After viewing the video, read the three letters aloud for each person. Allow time for the group to comment.

Gauges

Each person is given a white sheet of cardboard. These have been prepared in advance with the following categories on the left margin:

Emotional	(Am I in touch with my feelings ?)
Relational	(What is the quality of my family relationships and friendships?)
Physical/Recreational	(Am I healthy? Am I having any fun?)
Ministry Fulfillment	(What is my joy level in ministry?)
Spiritual	(How honest and growing is my relationship with God these days?)

Colored pieces of tape or colored markers are then made

available. Each person takes time to analyze each dimension of his or her life and put a piece of tape or wide band of color next to each gauge. Colors have the following meanings:

Green I am flourishing in this area.

Gray I am doing okay; nothing too great, nothing too bad.

Yellow I have growing concerns for this area. Caution!

Red I am in trouble in this area. It requires serious attention and correction. Then each person holds up their card and explains the gauges.

Hot Seat

The leader calls each group member, one at a time, to sit on a seat in the room, facing everyone. Then the person on the hot seat chooses a question from a pile and answers it. Members of the group pose follow-up questions or discuss the person's responses for the next three to four minutes.

Sample questions for the above exercise might include:

What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?

Lately I am becoming more _____

The feeling that best describes where I am at right now is _____

If there was one person in the world that I could spend a day with, that would be _____

Group member appreciation night

Each member of the group has a piece of paper with their name at the top of it. Lines are drawn on the paper to create enough boxes for all of the people in the room. At the top of the sheet is the sentence, "I appreciate this person because he/she. .." Pass these sheets around the room, asking each member to complete the sentence by filling in one box. After all the sheets have been passed to everyone in the room, return the sheets to their owners. Then have members share what impresses them most about the affirmation they received from others in the group. (This will take approximately 30-45 minutes.)

Life story

Over the period of several weeks, each member of the small group can be assigned to spend fifteen minutes telling his or her life story. Then, fifteen minutes of discussion and interacting can occur. The point of the exercise is to find out exactly where people have come from. Often, it is hard to appreciate people until we understand their past and some of the significant events in their lives.

Three key material possessions

Set up the scene as follows: Explain to the group that they have just discovered a major fire in their home. Assuming they have

been able to safely get their family out, what three material possessions would they take with them from their burning home? Have members explain why they would take the items they chose. Then generate a discussion to discover the value behind each of these possessions and why we hold certain possessions so dear.

Group photo

The purpose of this exercise is to have each member take a "picture" of the group. In other words, have each person draw or describe what the group looks like using a word-picture. For example, the group could be described as any of - the following:

- ❖ A hospital (a place where wounds are healed)
- ❖ A gas station (a place to be refueled spiritually)
- ❖ A fortress (a safe place where struggles can be shared)
- ❖ A battleground (a place where we can work on who we are becoming in Christ)
- ❖ A mountaintop (a place to gain perspective and be encouraged)
- ❖ A valley (a place of discouragement and trial)
- ❖ A carnival (a place for fun, enthusiasm, and excitement)

These are just some examples, but have members either draw or describe the kind of group environment they need or see.

Fill in the Blank

Ask various members of the group the following "fill in the blank" questions:

- ❖ Tomorrow, something I will most likely take for granted is ...
- ❖ Last year at this time I never would have thought God would ...
- ❖ The person I am most thankful for this year is ... because ...
- ❖ One specific attribute of God which I most appreciate is ...
- ❖ The following people have been especially used by the Lord to enrich my life this past year are ...
- ❖ I want to specifically thank the Lord for giving me the gift of ... so I can use it to serve Him and His church.
- ❖ Considering the standard of living of most of the world's population, I am rich because I have these material blessings:
- ❖ If I could stand up and shout anything to the rest of the group tonight, I would tell them that ...
- ❖ My God is ...

Learning Styles¹⁸

Adult educators and trainers often refer to certain “learning styles.” There are three major types of learning styles utilized by members of your group. An effective leader should use a variety of presentation and discussion techniques in order to communicate effectively to each learner.

Visual Learners – the “see-ers”

These people respond well to charts, diagrams, and other visual stimuli. They tend to like handouts and enjoy parables and stories. They are visual thinkers; that is, they respond well to word pictures and to stories that are vivid and descriptive and allow them to “picture” what is happening.

Tips for the leader: Use handouts, newspaper articles, story boards, paper and crayons, and objects to keep the attention of your visual learners.

Auditory Learners – the hearers

Auditory learners enjoy learning by hearing. They would rather be in a discussion on an issue than read a book about it. Some of them may be avid readers, but in general, they would rather listen to a story than read one.

Tips for the leader: Use subgroups to allow full participation by all members in discussions. Allow members of your group to respond verbally to questions and decisions. Use background music during prayer times or at the beginning of the meeting.

Kinesthetic Learners – the doers

These folks like to touch and feel things. They like to participate in the action. They learn by doing. While a visual learner might be motivated to help the poor by seeing a picture of the poor in an issue of Newsweek, the kinesthetic learner would be motivated by a field trip to the inner city.

Tips for the leader: Utilize objects and experiences for your group. Plan outings and events that allow people to experience truth in action. Allow kinesthetic learners to learn by trial and error, rather than by simply telling them the answer to something.

Levels of Communication¹⁹

Level 1: Cliche Conversation

Discussing “safe” public information takes place during the first few minutes of a meeting: weather, family, friends, current affairs.

Level 2: Information or Facts

People talk generally about events, ideas, and facts, but not about themselves, their commitments, and their beliefs about Scripture.

Level 3: Ideas and Opinions

This deeper level of communication involves a willingness to talk about personal ideas and opinions. Some risk-taking.

Level 4: Feelings

People are willing to risk telling group members what they *feel*, not just what they *think*. Less protective and more open.

Level 5: Peak Communication

The deepest level of communication involves openness, transparency, and self-disclosure. It is a risky and rare but powerful level of communication. Think of a close relationship you have; what you most remember is probably peak communication.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3 & 4	LEVEL 5
<p>Mary : Hi</p> <p>Rebecca: How was the weather in Florida?</p> <p>Mary: Most of the time it was just great.</p> <p>Rebecca: You must have had a great time.</p>	<p>Mary: Yes, I did, but you know I was thinking about the famine in Ethiopia, and it really made me think about the serious problems in the world. Do you think much about the fact that many people die for lack of food?</p>	<p>Rebecca: Yes, for me it is a very sad situation. When I see all the hungry people on television, it really makes me sad. Especially because we're not doing more to change the situation.</p>	<p>Mary: For me, the famine is not something that I just see on television. My sister became anorexic. Last month, she died.</p>

Deeper Levels of Communication – Model It!

1. The group leader must *share personal struggles*, not just the victories
2. The group leader must model good listening skills. *Listen to understand*, not to provide answers.
3. The group leader must *respond positively*, even if someone’s answer is wrong. If the leader criticizes a response, others will be more hesitant to share. (Also see, [Trouble Shooting Tips](#), issue #4)

“Learn to admit your mistakes in the presence of the group and to apologize sincerely when things go wrong or do not turn out the way you expected. Admitting failure in the midst of success is a key to good leadership. Learn to be open and honest before others. They’ll love you for it (or at least fall over backwards out of shock!).” David Hocking



Matthew Parties

“While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement but for a purpose. There are souls to save.” *Evangelism 495.*

As far as possible, have your Matthew Parties on the same day, at the same time, and at the same place as your weekly Growth Group. This helps to build bridges, break down barriers, and provides a natural next step for inviting people to your group. If a person is able to come to a birthday party on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m., then there is a good chance that their schedule will be “free” when you invite them to your regular group.

Remember that Matthew Parties are not places for “sin to abound.” They should be wholesome activities around which to build God honoring friendships and share experiences.

- ❖ Quarterly birthday party
- ❖ Open house – Every year move your Growth Group to different member’s home and have an open house for the neighborhood.
- ❖ Special dinner - Valentines, Thanksgiving, Christmas
- ❖ Sabbath afternoon potluck/hike
- ❖ Community service project

“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ He told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and ‘sinners’ came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what His means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

Matthew 9:9-13



Open Chair

Growth Groups are never closed! If the co-leaders do not make this part of the group's life, it will *never* happen. You must intentionally teach the fish, the people, how to be fishers of men and women.

Before you begin inviting people

1. Involve everyone in the process. Everyone in your group should be taught how to invite people to the group.
2. Every week remind people *"this group exists for those who are not yet here."*
3. Every week pray for the people who will be invited.
4. Prior to each Matthew Party take 20 minutes during group to ask God to bring to your minds the names of people He wants you to invite to the group. When a name comes to mind, write it down. Assume that God is answering your prayer and giving you names of people. Give each person a copy of [Open Chair Worksheet](#) for this exercise.

How to invite new members

1. Invite them to a [Matthew Party](#). Introduce them to others at the Matthew Party who attend your group.
2. During the weeks following the Matthew Party, ask God for a Divine appointment where you can learn about a need or problem they are facing in their life.
 - A. Listen to them and empathize with them.
 - B. Ask them, "Do you remember that open house/potluck/birthday party at so-and-so's house? There is small group of people who have continued to meet each week at the same time. Do you remember meeting ____ and ____? They come each week"
 - C. Tell them how your group has provided support, encouragement, and prayer for you as you have faced difficulties in life.
 - D. Ask them, "Would you be interested in something like that?"
 - E. Pick them up and take them with you to group or meet them somewhere so they can follow you to group. Avoid planning to meet them at group. They may get cold feet and not come on their own.

Introducing your friend to the group.

1. You be their personal host or hostess.
2. Introduce them to everyone. It is your job to make sure they are comfortable.
3. Call them a couple days later to stay in touch..

The "Man of Peace" Principle

"Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Matthew 10:11-16

"Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call sinners not so spend my time with those who think they are already good enough."

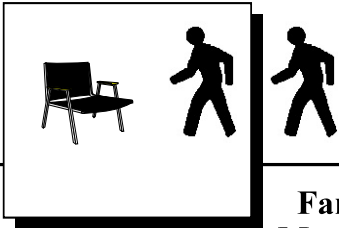
Luke 5:31-32



Who could I invite?

For He wants *everyone* to be saved and to understand the truth.

1 Tim. 2:4 NLT



Family Members

Church Family who are missing

People from Work

People who live in my Neighborhood



Prayer, ½ Night of Group Prayer

(Use during spring quarter in preparation for church-wide harvest event. Or adapt for a special group prayer focus)

An Outline for Prayer – ACTS

Personal Prayer of Adoration and Confession (8:00 pm to 9:30 pm)

1. **A – Adoration** (Psalm 100)

Practical Suggestions:

- A. Choose one of God’s attributes.
- B. Paraphrase a psalm.
- C. Pray back a psalm.

2. **C -- Confession** (1John 1:9)

Practical Suggestions:

- A. Take inventory. Is there anything that displeases the Lord?
Is there anything that needs to be made right?

Group Prayer of Thanksgiving and Supplication (9:30 pm to 12:00 pm)

3. **T -- Thanksgiving** (Luke 17:11-19; 1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Practical Suggestions:

List your blessings using the following categories:

- A. Spiritual
- B. Relational
- C. Material

4. **S -- Supplication** (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 John 5:14-15)

Practical Suggestions:

Categorize the harvest event under the following headings:

- A. People receiving advertising
- B. People who have attended [Matthew Parties](#)
- C. People on group’s [Blessing List](#)
- D. My friends, relatives, family
- E. People I will personally invite
(Take 30 minutes for people to make a list.)
- F. For each person present that God will provide “God opportunities” to personally invite the people on the lists.
- G. For the speaker and counselor teams
- H. Meeting logistics (place, supplies, equipment, etc)
- I. End with the Lord’s Prayer

Prayer, Conversational Prayer Guidelines

It takes time for a group to become comfortable with prayer. Give your group the time they need to grow in this area but have a plan in mind so your group does indeed grow into deeper levels of group prayer. As co-leaders you decide when your group is ready to move on to the next level. Once your group is comfortable with these styles of prayer, use different styles each week.

Option 1: Co-leader closes with a prayer of blessing and prays for the people God wants us to invite to this group.

Option 2: Co-leader takes prayer requests and prays for these requests, for God's blessing, and for people to invite.

Option 3: Co-leader takes prayer requests and asks for volunteers to pray for specific requests as they are mentioned. Co-leader closes, asking God to bless the group and prays for the people God wants us to invite to group.

Option 4: Co-leader begins prayer then, while heads are bowed, asks people to share their prayer requests. Before moving onto the next prayer requests, co-leader asks for volunteers who would also pray for this specific request. Co-leader closes, asking God to bless the group and prays for the people God wants us to invite to the group.

Eight Guide Lines for Conversational Prayer:

- ❖ Never pray around the circle
- ❖ Encourage and model how a group can surround a prayer request with many people praying for the specific request before moving on to another prayer request.
- ❖ Supporting prayers (“Amen;” “yes, Father;” “please, Father;” Bible promises, songs)
- ❖ Favorite songs, Bible promises, and poems add a nice touch.
- ❖ Silence is ok
- ❖ Sit, kneel, stand, prostrate
- ❖ Encourage use of singing, Bible passages, silence, etc.
- ❖ Close with the Lord's Prayer

...AND ALSO LORD PLEASE BLESS
ALL THE NICE MISSIONARIES IN
KENYA, UGANDA, ETHIOPIA, LITHUANIA,
GUATEMALA, BRAZIL, INDONESIA,
TAIWAN, KOREA,
BORA BORA...



Once you have experienced conversational prayer in your group, use a variety of prayer styles from week to week.

Prayer Warrior, Adopting a Church “Shut-In”

- ❖ Train your group to refer to their shut-in as their Prayer Warrior.

As co-leaders:

1. Make a list of prayer warriors you know in the church.
2. Prioritize them according to who most needs help.

As a group:

1. Talk with your group about adopting a prayer warrior.
2. Bring two or three recommendations to the group to choose from.
3. Begin calling. Ask if they have already been adopted by a Growth Group yet. (If they have, congratulate them and move on to the next one.)
4. Explain to them that your group wants them to be part of the group even though they will not be able to attend the weekly group meetings and that the group wants to (*See below for examples*)
5. Explain to them that their commitment to the group will be to:
 - Pray for the group while they meet each week.
 - Pray for each person in the group every day.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ❖ Birthday parties | ❖ Help with transportation to medical appointments |
| ❖ Christmas dinners | ❖ Basic car care |
| ❖ Send group card on anniversary day | ❖ Send church calendar/bulletins |
| ❖ Send group card on the day they lost their spouse | ❖ Yard care |
| ❖ Sunday work-bee each summer | ❖ Pet care |
| ❖ Phone calls throughout the week | ❖ etc. |

Praise and Thanksgiving Worship Service

Songs (2 or 3 songs, *ask people to stand*)

Call to Worship, Ps 8:1 – 9:2

Prayer (Say the Lord's Prayer together)

Song (Jesus Loves Me) *Ask people to sit*

(Children's Story)

Tithe and Offerings

Song (Give Thanks)

Ps 95:1-2 or Ps 100

What are you thankful for?

Song (Give Me The Bible)

Ps 119:105

Choose of your favorite Bible verses and share it with us.

Song (What a Friend We Have in Jesus)

Phil 4:4-7 or Ps 95:6

What prayer requests you would like to bring before God?

If you have an unspoken prayer request, raise your hand.

Silent Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray for the requests you have heard mentioned

Pray for your own silent prayer requests

Song (Nearer Still Nearer)

Song (Day By Day and with Each Passing Moment)

How has God been working in your life this past week?

Song (Doxology)

Acts 2:42

We will continue our worship service next door as we fellowship and eat together. We are dismissed.

So here's what I want you to do. When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight. If prayers are offered in tongues, two or three's the limit, and then only if someone is present who can interpret what you're saying. Otherwise, keep it between God and yourself. And no more than two or three speakers at a meeting, with the rest of you listening and taking it to heart. Take your turn, no one person taking over. Then each speaker gets a chance to say something special from God, and you all learn from each other. If you choose to speak, you're also responsible for how and when you speak. When we worship the right way, God doesn't stir us up into confusion; he brings us into harmony. This goes for all the churches – no exceptions.

1 Corinthians 14:26
The Message

There are times when it is fitting for our ministers to give on the Sabbath, in our churches, short discourses, full of the life and love of Christ. But the church members are not to expect a sermon every Sabbath.

Testimonies, vol 7, p. 19

Roles Group Members Play²⁰

Also see [Troubleshoot Tips](#)

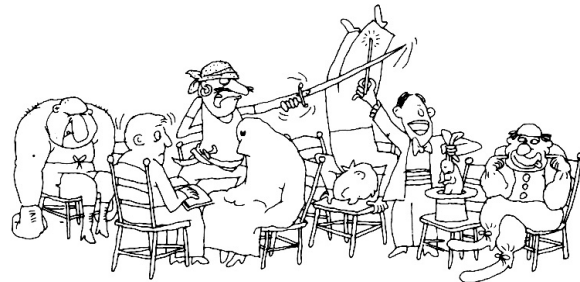
Often members take on certain roles (sometimes consciously and sometimes without really knowing they are doing it). People will take on different roles at different stages of your group. Below are some supportive and destructive group roles you might want to be aware of.

Supportive roles

1. **Information seeker** – asks other members to tell more of their story.
2. **Opinion seeker** – takes an active interest in what others in the group think
3. **Initiator** – offers new ideas, new ways of doing things. Often sets the pace in a discussion.
4. **Elaborator** – adds more than just the facts in a story. Adds “color” to the discussion.
5. **Tension Reliever** – often uses gentle humor to relieve tense situations. Uses “identification” to keep the tense person from feeling alone: “I understand. I feel that way many times myself.”
6. **Reviewer** – tends to provide summary statements and clarity statements.
7. **Consensus seeker** – looks to see what the group is thinking and whether or not there is agreement on issues or decisions.
8. **Encourager** – finds ways to build up others in the group.
9. **Standard Bearer** – holds forth the values of the group and defends them.

Destructive roles

1. **Aggressor** – insults and criticizes others. May show strong jealousy.
2. **Rabbit Chaser** – consistently focuses on stories or issues irrelevant to the topic at hand.
3. **Recognition Seeker** – tends to focus primarily on his or her own achievements or successes.
4. **Dominator** – monopolizes group interaction. Tries to control discussions.
5. **Special Interest Pleader** – tends to focus on personal pet peeve regardless of the topic or direction of discussion.
6. **Negativist** – might be a perfectionist who is never satisfied with anything. Quick to point out the “down side” of any issue or topic.
7. **Quibbler** – focuses on details. Often loses the forest for the



sake of the trees.

8. **Practical Joker** – rather than using humor positively, tends to distract people with jokes and comments. This is often a defense mechanism, and is used whenever a discussion gets too personal.

Your job as a leader is not to “peg” each person in order to figure out what their role is. Roles may change from time to time. You simply need to be aware that these kinds of roles exist in a group. Listen to each person with a sensitive spirit and heart. Ask probing questions that help get behind each role. If you have problems working with any one particular type of person in your group, consult your co-leaders group leader for ways to solve the problem and deal with the relationship.

Troubleshooting Tips²¹

Creating safe places where life change can be maximized is not easy. Sometimes it's reassuring to know that all growth groups undergo some type of relational difficulty. If group members expect to grow, people will have to be vulnerable. Anyone who has ever led or been a part of a nurturing growth group will tell you that where people are emotionally transparent, problems will come to the surface. When they do, it's the leader's job to help steer the group in the right direction.

Two principles guide a leader's attempts at successful troubleshooting. First, any solution must promote the health and wholeness of the individual. Second, any resolution must also promote the health and wholeness of the total group. The following troubleshooting tips were garnered in part from discussions with leaders. They should go a long way in helping your group deal with problem situations with grace and insight. Remember no technique is 100 percent successful in solving the crisis your group may encounter, but with prayerful attention, sensitivity, and caring interaction using one or more of these tips, your group has a good chance of not only making it through your particular barrier, but realizing true community and maturity on the other side of it.

Issue #1 – The Overly Talkative Member

If not moderated properly, what often begins as a trickle of friendly patter can turn into a virtual flood of words. The Talker is rarely shy, and usually very uncomfortable with long periods of silence. Typically, what's behind this need to fill in the pauses is the fear of intimacy or personal disclosure. The Talker is very quick to move on an item and can very easily unsettle a group's

spacing if there is not some type of sensitive intervention. Here are some tools that you may find helpful.

Establish ground rules for your group

- ❖ Set the rule that no one can speak a second time unless everyone who wants to talk has had a chance to speak. Often in the case of a Talker who is married, the spouse is silent or appears introverted. Use the situation to your advantage. Each person may speak a second time only after their spouse has been given an opportunity. You would be amazed at the positive response from overrun mates.
- ❖ Make (or reiterate) the rule that no one can overrun someone else while they are speaking (translation: “NO INTERRUPTING!”).
- ❖ Go systematically around the group, allowing each person a chance to talk. Remember at the onset to be sensitive with members who are either unaccustomed to or feel uncomfortable with speaking in a group setting.
- ❖ Assure the talkative member privately that you value his or her sharing but that you wish to hear other people's comments as well. In front of the group, state that you would like to hear more about the person's items of interest after the meeting.
- ❖ Agree at the beginning of the meeting to save some issues for the end, after everything else has been discussed (this only works after you have seen the Talker verbally camp on certain subjects repeatedly).
- ❖ Here's a creative solution: throw a football or some other object around the room. Only the person with the object in his or her hand has the right to talk in the group.
- ❖ During the discussion, simply interject and sensitively direct a question to another person.

Meet individually

- ❖ Spend some one-on-one time with the Talker. Attempt to ascertain the driving issues that are making it necessary for the person to dominate the meeting.
- ❖ Firmly and sensitively confront the person in private. Begin with the positive contributions the person has made in the group and the need for others to be given the opportunity to make a similar impact. Use the confrontation time as an important affirmation moment as well.
- ❖ Ask for the Talker's help in drawing others out. Suggest he or she end his or her comments with a question like, “So what do the rest of you think?”

Issue #2 – The Answer Person

For too many years within the Christian community, spiritual fruitfulness has been wrongly determined on the basis of how much you know. This measure stands in sharp contrast to the biblical notion that “fruit” for the believer is defined by what you do and by who you are. Because of this misinterpretation of Jesus' teaching, knowledge has preceded action on the list of preeminent Christlike virtues. It is not hard to see, then, why many sincere group members see nothing wrong with throwing around easy answers, simply quoting a Bible verse, or becoming wrapped up in some minute theological trivia having nothing to do with the group discussion. These group members are often argumentative and have very little tolerance for outside interpretation of feelings or biblical passages. They often will go to great lengths to make sure their opinions are heard and validated.

Answer people all too quickly dismantle safe places. Other members should not have to experience the pain of non-attention, judgment, or an argumentative spirit. Here are some helpful ways to provide what the Answer person needs and keep the group process on track.

Take action during the meeting

- ❖ Backtrack to the original idea, question, or thought shared.
- ❖ Refocus on the passage or material being used and collect more information from everyone; then summarize.
- ❖ Lovingly redirect the discussion to the other group members: “What do the rest of you think of this passage?” or “How do the rest of you feel?”
- ❖ Affirm what is right about the “always right” person's answers, but look for other points of view.
- ❖ Be a model of true empathy yourself so the Answer person can see a better way to help others.
- ❖ Remind the group of the importance of silence.
- ❖ Avoid arguing about who is right or wrong.
- ❖ Before the meeting, share how “pat” answers or oversimplified responses make others feel. Ask the group to monitor themselves. Do not feel afraid to call members on this after you have set the ground rules.
- ❖ Direct the group to prayer.

Speak to the Answer person

- ❖ If it's a continuing problem, talk with the person outside the group. Describe to them what their sharing in this manner does to the group. Tell the truth in love.
- ❖ Affirm the person for what they do know, but also let them know how their knowledge may not be what is needed or appropriate.

- ❖ Let the person know they need to let the communication of others stand on its own without judgment or immediate correction.
- ❖ Ask the insensitive member to share more feelings rather than thoughts (“I think ...”).
- ❖ Ask the Answer person to help summarize or rephrase points of the discussion.
- ❖ Attempt to find out from the person privately what drives him or her to always appear “in the know.”

Issue #3 – The Member with an Agenda

All of us struggle from time to time with the issue of wanting to maintain inordinate control over aspects of our lives. Groups can become the arena where our sinful power struggles play out. Some individuals will be especially prone to repeatedly trying to prove themselves and will try to redirect some facet of group life their way for no apparent reason other than their own preferences.

A person presenting this problem leaves telltale language clues. Look for phrases such as “yes, but” or “Well, I think.” Often this person is critical of the group process, even with items considered tabled by the group. Here are some hints to aid you in dealing with this individual.

Reaffirm group covenants while you're all together

- ❖ Reaffirm, recast, reestablish, challenge, redefine – use whatever word you want, but remind everyone of the agreed upon guidelines for group involvement.
- ❖ Discuss these standards with everyone in the group to affirm the purpose and values of the gathering.

Speak to the person with the agenda

- ❖ Confront the person privately and attempt to discern the underlying problem.
- ❖ Suggest that the person work with the other members to find a proactive solution that solves the problem yet doesn't violate the boundary established by the group.

Issue #4-Superficial Discussions

Beginning relationships often have a period where facts are shared more easily than feelings. Not much is bartered in terms of emotional risk and therefore not much is gained at this stage. Early on, this surface-level communication is normal and shouldn't be cause for alarm.

Often though, a group struggles to break through the strong ice of superficiality and go deeper, even after many meetings. This hesitation can be the result of a leader's direction, or because

someone else is impeding progress in group members' bonding. Whatever is keeping the group in a “functionally frozen” mode, you can easily prepare yourself to handle this problem.

Surface communication can also be a sign that you are attempting to go too deep too fast. Mentally take a step back and ascertain whether this is so. If you sense you have gone too quickly, admit your error and be willing to proceed at a more realistic pace. By humbling yourself in this way, you model vulnerability rather than harming the relational chemistry of those gathered. Your openness actually works to center the focus and unite the participants for future growth together.

Improve your questions

- ❖ By far, the number one way to open up a group is to lead by example. “Speed of the leader, speed of the team,” could easily have been first postulated in a growth group. Usual rule of thumb is to speak as deeply and openly as you would like the others to share.
- ❖ Have specific applications and questions. Don't be afraid to challenge the group.
- ❖ Ask “feeling” questions rather than just “opinion” or “fact” questions.
- ❖ Where appropriate, be more directive. Sometimes ask closed-ended questions that will elicit specific answers rather than open-ended questions.
- ❖ Restate and rephrase the question. Often silence means group members are simply unsure of what was asked of them. (Silence may also indicate they're thinking, not that they're reluctant.)

Create a safer climate

- ❖ During initial minutes of the meeting, remind members of confidentiality guidelines.
- ❖ If your group is too large, break into smaller sub-groups.
- ❖ Contact the group members outside of the meeting to see if anything could have made the questions easier to answer.

◆ Chapter Five

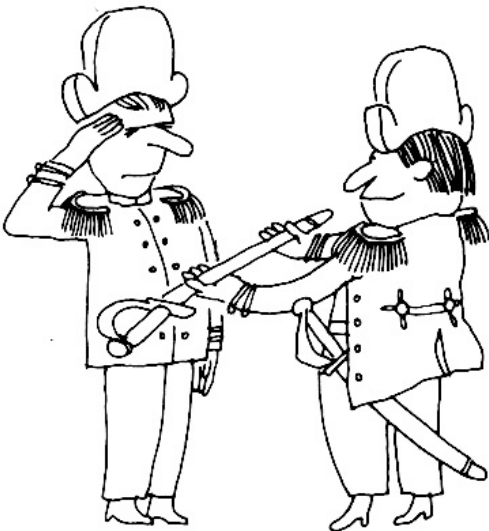
The Making Of A Leader

Biblical Leadership

- ❖ [Qualifications of Growth Group Leaders](#)
- ❖ [Motives for Leadership](#)

Leadership Responsibilities

- ❖ [Job Description for Leaders](#)
- ❖ [Survey Summary](#)



Biblical Leadership

Qualifications Of Growth Group Leaders²²

Leaders are servants who communicate God's truth and lead their groups in prayer, ministry, and spiritual growth. As a leader, you model the Christian life to others. In order to mature as a competent Spirit-filled leader, check yourself against the following biblical characteristics. Use these qualifications as a guide for your spiritual development, and devote yourself to prayer, reading of Scripture, fellowship, the filling of the Spirit, and servanthood so that you might develop as a leader.

Christ Follower – Having a Passion for Christ

Our goal as believers is to become complete in Christ (Col. 1:28). Though a leader is not expected to be superhuman, one is to be mature as described in Ephesians 4:13, which says, "...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Here are some areas in which to grow in maturity:

- ❖ Turn from sin in your life (1 John 1:9; Rom. 6:6)
- ❖ Spend time in God's Word and in prayer (Col. 3:16; 1 Peter 2:2)
- ❖ Be filled with the Spirit – let the Spirit control you (Rom. 7:6; Eph. 5:18)
- ❖ Use your gifts in ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
- ❖ Learn to persevere in adversity (Rom. 5:3-5; Phil. 1:29; 1 Peter 4:12-14)

Character – Paying Attention to the Heart

Depth of character is a matter of becoming more like Christ and less like the world. It also refers to the spiritual qualities or characteristics listed below:

- ❖ Being transformed into the image of Christ instead of conformed to the world (Rom. 8:28-30; 12:1-2; Phil. 1:9-10)

- ❖ Developing a character worthy of leadership (1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:5; 3:1-15; 6:11; Titus 1:5-9)

Calling – Shepherding God's People

Leaders have a heart for being caregivers. They see others with compassion, as Christ saw them in Matthew 9:36-38 – distressed and downcast, in need of a good shepherd who will protect them and provide nurturing care for them. Deep in their hearts, leaders are convicted about the need to do ministry and use their gifts to shepherd others (Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Competence – Able to Lead and Guide a Group

Leaders set direction, keeping the group focused and guided toward its purpose. Leaders also take the time to develop the skills they need to effectively facilitate a Growth Group (Matt. 4:19; 9:36-38; Acts 6:1-7).

Commitment – Doing What it Takes

Spirit-led leaders are committed to the vision of the ministry, to Christ, to their calling, and to helping develop the members of their groups. They realize that leadership requires commitment, not convenience. Leaders are committed to seeing people grow in Christ and to reaching new people for Christ as they are able (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 16:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:2).

Capacity – An Ability to Serve People and Provide Care for Them

Leadership is serving others and doing whatever it takes to accomplish the ministry. This means having time, energy, and resources at your disposal. Leaders must free themselves from unnecessary commitments and distractions so that they have the capacity (spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical resources) to do what God has called them to do (1 Tim. 3:4-5,12).

The Growth Group leader who is committed to developing and growing in the areas listed above will faithfully fulfill the mission Christ has given His church.

“I have not been called to be successful, but to be faithful.”
Mother Theresa

Motives For Leadership²³

Appropriate Motives for Leadership

Glorify the Lord

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Col. 3:23-24).

Bear fruit in your life

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples" (John 15:8).

Keep watch (shepherd) others

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Be an example

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Use your gifts to serve one another

"It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

Give God's message of reconciliation

"...that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:19-21).

"The spiritual leader will choose the hidden pathway of sacrificial service and the approval of His Lord rather than the flamboyant assignment and the adulation of the unspirited crowd."

J. Oswald Sanders

Wrong Motives/Hindrances to Leadership

Self-exaltation

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips." (Prov.27:2)

To feel important or gain prestige

"We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else " (1 Thess. 2:4-6).

Because someone pressured you

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be" (1 Peter 5:2).

Having a short fuse or exhibiting outbursts of anger

James tells us that the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:19-20). God's work is accomplished by one who listens attentively, speaks only when necessary, and is slow to anger. Leaders manage their anger or channel anger appropriately. Anger is to be put aside or properly managed (Gal. 5:20; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8).

Unconfessed sin

We are commanded to confess our sins. John says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Any sin that has control of us (Rom. 6:16) must be confessed and brought under the lordship of Christ (Acts 2:38). If there is any outstanding sin in the life of a leader and it is not dealt with appropriately, this could disqualify a leader.

Biblical error or false teaching

Paul wrote Timothy and warned him to watch for false teachers who lead people away from the words of the faith and of sound doctrine: "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

"I believe it might be accepted as fairly reliable rule of thumb that the one who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader."

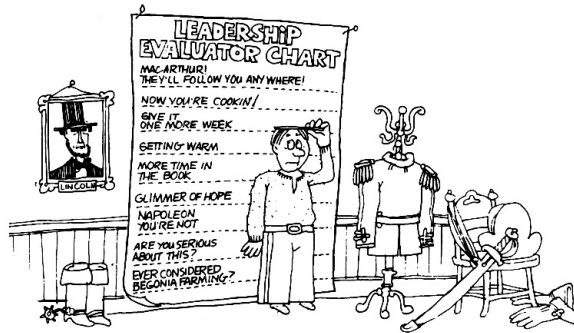
A. W. Tozer

Leadership Responsibilities

Leaders Job Description

Before a person can become a leader, some prior conditions must be met. Basic Training must be completed (as it is developed). Those who want to lead a Growth Group must be in complete agreement with the following statements:

- ❖ I confess that Jesus Christ is my Forgiver and Leader (Savior and Lord).
- ❖ I regard the Bible as the authoritative guide to my faith and life.
- ❖ I am a participating member of this church (or am actively pursuing membership with a baptismal date set).



Responsibilities:

<p>Personal Leadership Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Strive to model Christlikeness ❖ Attend my monthly Co-Leaders Group ❖ Find a co-leader ❖ Model accountability ❖ Manage group logistics ❖ Be a team player 	<p>Shepherding Members (pastoring)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Minister to peoples hearts ❖ Visit group attendees in home and in the hospital ❖ Seek first to understand, then to be understood ❖ Resolve conflict ❖ Serve one another ❖ Pray with and for your group members as often as possible ❖ Adopt a church Prayer Warrior
<p>Conducting Weekly Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Plan meeting with co-leader ❖ Choose curriculum ❖ Plan ice breakers ❖ Use the Bible in your group ❖ Ask good questions ❖ Trouble-shoot ❖ Pray creatively in group ❖ Fill out monthly summary report 	<p>Multiplying your Growth Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Plan Matthew Parties ❖ Use the Blessing List and the Open Chair as visual reminders ❖ Attend Growth Group training seminar with potential leaders. ❖ Help with church-wide harvest events ❖ Lead a monthly Co-Leaders Group when needed

Survey Summary²⁴

These results come from a study of groups from eight churches around the world. More than 700 group leaders completed the 29-question survey, designed to determine why some group leaders succeed and others fail at evangelizing and developing new leaders to lead more groups. “This statistical analysis helped keep my bias at bay and enabled me to unlock common principles across diverse cultures.” says researcher Joel Comiskey.

Factors that *do not* affect multiplication:

- ❖ **The leaders’s gender, social class, age, marital status, or education**
- ❖ **The leader’s personality type.** Both introverted and extroverted leaders multiply the groups
- ❖ **The leaders’ spiritual gifting**

Name of Church	Location	Number of Groups	Number of Worshipers
Bethany World Prayer Center	Baker, LA USA	500+	7,000
Christian Center of Guayaquil	Guayaquil, Ecuador	2,000	7,000
Elim Church	San Salvador, El Salvador	5,500	35,000
Faith Community Baptist Church	Singapore	550	6,500
International Charismatic Church	Bogota, Columbia	13,000	35,000+
Love Alive Church	Tegucigalpa, Honduras	1,000	7,000
Living Water Church	Lima, Peru	600	7,000
Yodo Full Gospel Church	Seoul, Korea	23,000	153,000

Factors that *DO* affect multiplication:

- ❖ **The leaders' devotional time.** Those who spend 90 minutes or more in devotions per day multiply their groups twice as much as those who spend less than 30 minutes.
- ❖ **The leader's intercession for the group members.** Those who pray daily for group members are most likely to multiply groups.
- ❖ **The leader spending time with God to prepare for group meetings.** Spending time with God preparing the heart for a group meeting is more important than preparing the lesson.
- ❖ **Setting goals.** The leader who fails to set goals that the members remember has about a 50 percent chance of multiplying his or her group. Setting goals increases that chance to 75 percent.
- ❖ **Training.** Group leaders who feel better trained multiply their groups more rapidly. However, training is not as important as the leaders's prayer life and goal orientation.
- ❖ **How often the leader contacts new people.** Leaders who contact five to seven new people per month have an 80% chance of multiplying the group. When the leader visits only 1 to 3 people per month, the chances drop to 60%. Leaders who visit eight or more new people each month multiply their groups twice as much as those who visit one or two.
- ❖ **Exhortation in groups to invite friends.** Leaders who weekly encourage members to invite visitors double their capacity to multiply their groups – as opposed to those leaders who do so only occasionally or not at all.
- ❖ **Number of visitors to the group.** There is a direct relationship between the number of visitors in the group and the number of times a leader multiplies the group.
- ❖ **Outside meetings.** Those groups that have six or more social meetings per month multiply twice as much as those who have only one, or none.
- ❖ **Developing leaders.** Those leaders who gather a team double their capacity to multiply the group.
- ❖ **Level of pastoral care.** Regular visitation by the leader to the group members helps consolidate the group.

◆ Chapter Six

Relax - You Don't Have To Be A Superstar

Starting A Growth Group In a Home

- ❖ [How to Get Started](#)
- ❖ [Leading Your First Eleven Group Meeting](#)
- ❖ [Monthly Growth Group Report](#)



Starting a Growth Group in a Home

How To Get Started



Simple Church missionaries, continue your training by go to this web page and follow the 4 steps, www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com/Training.html

1. Pray.
2. Choose a co-leader.
3. Review the [Co-Leader's Job Description](#).
4. Make a list of people God has prompted you to invite. Review [How to Build Your Core Group](#).

❖ *Each co-leader should invite about 25 people*

5. Invite people in person and give them an Invitation Post Card.

An Invitation	Directions
Date:	
Time:	
Place:	
General Theme: (see page 35) <i>We look forward to seeing you!</i>	

6. Send a reminder post card to arrive 2 days before your meeting begins.
7. Call 1 day before and leave a voice message reminder.
8. Plan your 1st meeting with your co-leader.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.” Zechariah 4:6

“Experienced group leaders have found that you usually have to personally invite 25 people for 15 to say they will attend. Of those 15, usually only 8 to 10 people will actually show up, and of those, only 5 to 7 will be regular attenders after a month or so.”

Home Cell Group Explosion

Leading Your First Eleven Group Meeting - a *suggested* time line.

- Week 1:** Provide a light supper. Choose two or three [Ice Breaker](#) questions. Plan for next weeks potluck.
- Week 2:** Have a light supper together, potluck style. Choose a few more Ice Breaker questions. Introduce the [Blessing List](#).
- Week 3:** Choose a [Group Building Activity](#). Add core member names to the Blessing List. Begin developing your [Group Agreement](#).
- Week 4:** Ice Breakers. Continue the Group Agreement process. Facilitate a study on Luke 14:15-24 (The Great Banquet), using the Serendipity Bible. Introduce the [Open Chair](#).
- Week 5:** Ice Breakers. Continue the Group Agreement. Hand out a copy of the [Open Chair Worksheet](#) and give people 20 minutes to write down names that God brings to mind.
- Week 6:** Ice Breakers. Complete your Group Agreement. Facilitate a study on Luke 15:11-32 (The Prodigal Son).
- Week 7:** Ice Breaker. Facilitate a study on Matthew 28:1-20 (The Great Commission), using the Serendipity Bible. Introduce and plan your first [Matthew Party](#).
- Week 8:** Ice Breaker. Finalize Matthew Party plans, see Week 10. Hand out Matthew Party [Invitation Cards](#) for your core members to give to people as they invite people listed on their Open Chair Worksheet. Give your group three Serendipity Bible study sub themes. Ask your group to choose one, to begin Week 11.
- Week 9:** Ice Breaker. Hand out Bible study sub theme Invitation Cards, see Week 11. Spend this group time talking about and praying for the people who have and who will be invited to the first Matthew Party. You might want to follow the [ACTS prayer outline](#)
- Week 10:** The Matthew Party. (Same place, time, & day, if possible)
- Week 11:** Begin the chosen Bible study sub theme. Your group now *invites, invites, and invites* people who came to the Matthew Party, inactive and active church members, or anyone that God prompts them to *invite* to come to a group meeting. Don't forget to adopt a [Prayer Warrior](#). Review the [Group Agreement](#)

Remember

The first three months of your group will be unlike any other time in your group's life. There are a number of things you need to focus on. These focus areas will lay a solid foundation for meaningful outreach and Bible study. These focus areas must become a "normal" part of your group's life. If you ignore these priorities now, it will be increasingly difficult to add them into your group's foundation.

If you follow the outline on this page you will be well on your way to building a healthy Growth Group.

6 DNA Essential for Growth Groups.

1. Yearly Group Agreement.
2. Regular Matthew Parties.
3. Open Chair.
4. Blessing List.
5. Milk versus Meat: Groups are for the Milk of the Word. They are relational Bible Study
6. Attend Monthly Co-Leaders Meeting.

Keeping Your Groups From Derailing

Starting Groups In Your Church

- ❖ [ABC's of Starting](#)

Monthly Co-Leader Meetings

- ❖ [Meeting Agenda](#)

Other Stuff

- ❖ [Feeling Faces](#)
- ❖ [Our Co-Leaders Group Agreement](#)
- ❖ [Monthly Growth Group Report](#)
- ❖ [Select Bibliography](#)
- ❖ [End Notes](#)

Starting Groups In Your Church

ABC's Of Starting

1. Preach a sermon series on community, *Nobody Stands Alone*
 - ❖ Pastor Milton Adams is willing to share his series.
2. During the last two sermons invite people to register for the training seminar by putting their name, address, phone number and a big G on tithe envelope and place it in the offering plate.
3. Hold training seminar
 - ❖ We will need a Serendipity Bible sign-up sheet.
 - ❖ I will encourage people to begin talking with each other about co-leading a group together.
4. Set up an appointment to deliver the Serendipity Bibles. (Assume they are planning to co-lead.)
 - ❖ Review how to use the Bible and show how easy it is to lead a group study.
 - ❖ Ask them who they would *like* to co-lead with.
 - ❖ Invite them to a co-leaders meeting, Sabbath afternoon at your house. (Provide a light supper.)
5. Your first co-leaders meeting
 - ❖ Ask people to introduce their co-leader. Those who come with no co-leader, try to “prophetically” pair them together.
 - ❖ Give co-leaders 15 minutes to determine the starting date, the time and location and general theme (see pg 35) of their weekly meeting. See the [Invitation Post Card](#).
 - ❖ Ask co-leaders to share their starting date, the time of their meeting, and location with the entire group. (You take notes.)
 - ❖ Have prayer as a group, asking God to bring to our minds then people He wants us to invite. Give co-leader 30 minutes to individually make a list of 25 or more people they could invite. If you will hand out a copy of the [Who Could I Invite worksheet](#), you will train them how to use it in their group.
6. Call all co-leaders each week until next months meeting.

“Experienced group leaders have found that you usually have to personally invite 25 people for 15 to say they will attend. Of those 15, usually only 8 to 10 people will actually show up, and of those, only 5 to 7 will be regular attenders after a month or so.”
Home Cell Group Explosion

The Monthly Co-Leaders Meeting

Co-Leaders Meeting Agenda

Check In

How are my co-leaders doing spiritually? (See [A Typical Co-Leader's Meeting](#))

What gets measured gets done.

Turn in [Monthly Growth Group Report](#)

Re-training

Comes from questions co-leaders are asking.

Things I want to review.

Things we as co-leaders need to plan for. (Harvest events)

Why we do what we do!

People lose the vision in 28 days. (The Nehemiah principle)

Closing

Use varies types.

Supper

This is the meeting after the meeting. And this is the most important meeting!

A Typical Co-Leader's Meeting

Check In – *Use a variety of these questions.*

- ❖ What has your group been like over the past month?
- ❖ How many new people did you personally invite to group?
- ❖ Choose one feeling word to describe how group is going?
- ❖ Where do you sense God is leading your group?
- ❖ Where do you sense God is leading you?
- ❖ How did God work through you this past week?
- ❖ How do you feel your devotional time with God is going?

Check In – *These questions are for co-leaders just starting.*

- ❖ What is/was your start date?
- ❖ Describe your [Blessing List](#).
- ❖ Where are you in the [Group Agreement](#) process?.
- ❖ [Matthew Party](#) report and next month's plans.
- ❖ Who has your [group adopted](#)?

Turn in monthly group report.

Continued Training– *These topics have included*

How to Build Your Core	Choosing Bible Study Material
Group Agreement	Relational Bible Studies
Open Chair	Leadership Motives
Blessing List	Stages of a Group
Co-Leader Responsibilities	Next Growth Group Training
Co-Leader Group Agreement	Crisis Work
Matthew Parties	Reclaiming Inactive Church
Group Agenda 60-90 Minutes	Members
Group Agenda with 10+ People	Evangelism Preparation
Amazing Results	
Prayer Warrior Adoption	
Members Roles	

Why we do what we do!

Closing

Prayer requests, people volunteer to pray
Circle with open chair, Group leader closes with focus on open chair

“A student is not above his teacher, not a servant above his master.”

Matthew 10:24



EXHAUSTED



CONFUSED



ECSTATIC



GUILTY



SUSPICIOUS



ANGRY



HYSTERICAL



FRUSTRATED



SAD



CONFIDENT



EMBARRASSED



HAPPY



MISCHIEVOUS



DISGUSTED



FRIGHTENED



ENRAGED



ASHAMED



CAUTIOUS



SMUG



DEPRESSED



OVERWHELMED



HOPEFUL



LONELY



LOVESTRUCK



JEALOUS



BORED



SURPRISED



ANXIOUS



SHOCKED



SHY



Afraid



Angry



Anxious



Apologetic



Ashamed



Bored



Confused



Depressed



Disappointed



Disgusted



Embarrassed



Enraged



Frustrated



Grateful



Grieving



Guilty



Happy



Hopeful



Hurt



Insecure



Insignificant



Jealous



Joyful



Lonely



Loved



Misunderstood



Nervous



Overwhelmed



Pressured



Regretful



Rejected



Relieved



Resentful



Sad



Sympathetic



Unappreciated



Unimportant



Unloved



Used



Violated



Vulnerable



Worried

Our Co-Leader's Agreement

Today's Date ____/____/____

We will meet:

Group Leader

Phone Number

Day: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

I will agree to the following primary values for this group: **Today's Date** ____/____/____

Priority: I will give the group meeting priority, and if I am unable to attend or am running late, I will call ahead.

Participation: I have the right to my own opinion. There are no "dumb questions or dumb answers!"

Confidentiality: I will never repeat anything of a personal nature that is said in the meeting.

Open Chair: This group stays open to new co-leaders (people currently co-leading a Growth Group) until we reach 12 co-leaders at which time we will close this group to new co-leaders.

Team Player: I agree to come into the Growth Group structure and fulfill the responsibilities of a co-leader.

Our Group Directory

Name, Phone Number, and Birthday

Monthly Growth Group Reports

Co-Leader _____
 I completed this months report

Month _____ Year _____

Co-Leader _____
 I completed this months report

Co-Leaders Group Leader _____

Instructions: Co-Leaders, please fill out this form each week. Bring to Co-Leaders Group meeting.

Attendance Record	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	<i>leave blank</i>
	Meetings:					Summary
Total Attendance (total # at meeting)						
Number of <i>new</i> people co-leaders invited						
First time guests						
Returning/Other Guest						
Regular attenders present (have signed Group Agreement)						
Regular attenders absent						

Has anyone left your group over the past month? Yes No

If yes, please provide their name and reason for leaving..

Name

Reason for leaving

How did you intentionally teach your group to reach out beyond themselves this past month? (For example: Matthew Party events, taking time for people to complete the Open Chair Worksheet, etc.)

What has been most rewarding or encouraging part of co-leading your group this past month?

What has been the most frustrating or discouraging part of co-leading your group this past month?

What is the big idea, *the message of hope*, found in the group study that you want people to take with them.

Week 1:

Week 5:

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

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