

STARTING SMALL GROUPS IN HOMES

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ILLUS: Church tool bag – two big tools

ILLUS: Sunday School tool bag – one big tool

SURVEY QUESTION: Of all the things that helped you grow spiritually, what were the top two? #1 _____ #2 _____

SURVEY: Thousands of church members were asked “What helps you the most to grow?”

1. What are the five Biblical purposes of the purpose-driven church? How can small groups help to achieve some of these purposes?

2. How can a three-part strategy help you invite new people to join your small group and help you create more small groups?

- Worship - _____ - Small Groups – this has worked with thousands of youth groups, and all my adult groups

3. Have you personally been in a home group for more than one year?

4. What were some of your positive or negative observations of being in a home group?

5. Has a small group in a home impacted your life in some way?

6. What are some reasons why you recommend a person should join a small group (at church or in a home)?

7. How will your home small group be different from a regular Sunday School class at church?

8. What is your vision and strategy for your small group in a home?

- a. An informal place where people can be themselves, be open, be accepted.
- b. A group where everyone can be involved – talking, praying, planning, serving
- c. A group where several people share leadership and new leaders are constantly being developed intentionally.
- d. A group where friendship grows and fellowship opportunities are planned and calendared, as well as impromptu.
- e. A group that does service projects together during the year for people inside and outside of the church.
- f. A group where the leader facilitates discussion by creating good questions ahead of time.

9. What is something you learned in High School or college that you are still good at today? Why do you think that is true?

10. Is it possible to have good intentions but still not be very good at something we want to do?

There are many things we could do that would help improve our small group, but the biggest one (in my opinion) is understanding how people _____. We often aren't _____ the way God designed us to _____.
(telling is not teaching; listening is not learning)

ILLUS: Walking to California

What do these verses have in common?

Luke 10:1-9 The Lord ... sent them two by two ahead of him to every town ... heal the sick who are there and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”

Phil 2:22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself ... he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

Mark 9:18 I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.... His disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn't we drive it out?”

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Luke 6:46 Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?

ILLUS: A great illustration of discipleship was our repair man

11. What can we do in our small group to increase real learning?

- a. sit in circles not rows Why? _____
- b. give most time to discussion not lecture; share your ideas, thoughts and questions and listen to others Why? _____
- c. read it yourself and pick out what stands out to you in a passage. Why? _____
- d. talent x effort = skill skill x effort = achievement (effort counts twice) (Grit, Angela Duckworth) Why? _____
- e. ask small group members to explain something to someone else Why? _____
- f. plan times to do something – share a testimony, help the hungry, help a single Mom or widow Why? _____
- g. the leader's job is to make new leaders! Give people small jobs and assignments each week Why? _____

12. How should we think about a small group and the potential impact it can have?

- When the Spirit of God comes into a life, that person's eternity is changed. His approach to relationships, his attitude toward work, his purpose in life and the effects that his life will have on future generations all begin to take a new path.
- A small group gives us an opportunity for one leader to train other leaders. (a weakness in most churches)
- A group helps a person serve others in ways he couldn't do by himself (people inside and outside the church).
- A group can help people make deeper friendships and feel that they truly belong to the local church – that this church is a place where someone knows their name, prays for them, cares about them and will do life with them.
- A small group can be a positive witness to people who have not found Christ yet or don't know how to grow.

13. What are 10 reasons that a church might struggle to have effective small groups in homes?

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14. Some small group leaders struggle to come up with 10 good discussion questions. What are some solutions to this?

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15. What curriculum could you use in a small group in a home?

1. Read and discuss a book of the Bible
2. Discuss last Sunday's sermon using approximately 10 discussion questions
3. Read a Christian book
4. Answer questions in a workbook
5. Use a list of vetted studies or books recommended by the Pastor or Discipleship Pastor

16. Where could you meet?

1. At the church – it is convenient, but the most important question is "What is most effective?"
2. In a home- Generally, meeting at the same house each time is less confusing, but sometimes it's helpful to change the home to divide up the "work".
3. Coffee Shop or restaurant.

17. How long should a small group last?

- At some churches, groups are permanent, like a Sunday School class, taking breaks when needed.
- Some groups are designed to last a semester or a year and then give people the option to stop meeting.
- Some groups take off for the summer.

18. How many leaders should a small group in a home have?

- One or two leaders, but their job is to share the leadership with the whole group or as many as possible.
- The more practice a person gets, the more comfortable they feel as a leader and the greater their skill.

19. What are the options for child care?

1. Child care can be provided by the church (choose a night childcare is already provided) and then your group can meet at church or in a home.
2. It can be provided in the home you meet in or at another home nearby.
3. Each family can provide their own sitter.

20. Who is invited to be in a group?

- Should it be church members only or are others invited to come as well?
- Shouldn't we always expect a group to be made up of both Christians and seekers and plan accordingly?
- Should we assign people to a group? Usually not a good idea. Invite, don't assign.

21. What kinds of groups are ideal to meet in homes?

Middle school,	high school,	college,	single adults,
young couples,	senior adults	divorce recovery,	neighbors,
new members,	new Christians,	a support group,	men's group,
ladies group,	prayer group,	multi-generational	

22. Is a home group accountable to the church, or are the home groups on their own?

1. Accountable to report names of those signed up, how many attended each week to church office by email
2. Accountable to keep church staff updated on significant needs (hospital, death, out of work, divorce)
3. Accountable to use the agreed curriculum for your group. To teach what your church believes doctrinally.
4. Accountable to communicate with your group members weekly by email or phone call.
5. Accountable to not let someone take over the leadership and teach in a controversial way.
6. Accountable to use the strategy of worship, large monthly fellowship, and small groups.
7. Accountable to identify your small group with your home church, (even though friends from other churches might be welcome to attend). "Our church has small groups that meet in homes and at the church building."
8. Accountable to invite people to be in your group and explain how a group works.

VIDEO – from SS at a church

Practice some of the things a real small group would do:

Tell a scripture story in your own words. Tell the story of the Prodigal Son in your own words. Group can add info later.

Example of a Discussion Question: What would be five ways we could show love to people in our neighborhood?

Pray for the person sitting next to you.

Scripture memory practice – Practice saying this by memory to the person next to you.

Rom 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Ice breaker questions "Tell about a time when God surprised you."

Share a testimony about a person who has influenced your life spiritually.

Read [Romans 12:3-16](#) and then think of a discussion question for the group to discuss:

³ Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your ^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, ^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. ⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. ^[c] Do not be conceited.

Examples of small groups my wife or I have been involved in:

1. In one T-group my wife met with two women for 2 years, developed lifelong friendships, prayed for one another in raising a newborn, cystic fibroses complications and other family concerns. We took turns teaching the lessons, learning as we practiced writing questions, and seeing the Lord answer our prayers and walking with us daily.
2. Presently, my wife meets with 2 women neighbors at our apartments (the last 2 ½ years)
3. We had a Mom's in Touch group that met and prayed together each week and one of the women couldn't come very often and never prayed aloud. Since we had another mom to lead the first group, I began meeting with this other woman at a time she was more available. In the smaller group setting she would pray aloud and share her concerns.
4. When my older brother and I were in college we had anywhere from 3-5 single guys and girls follow us home every Sunday for lunch and stay all afternoon. My Dad was teaching them how to repair their cars. At the dinner table there was talk of college classes, work, and family. Mom and Dad would make simple comments about living your life for Christ, sharing the gospel and praying for those you have relationships with. If you asked my parents if they ever mentored or discipled anyone, they would answer, "No". But if you asked these students if their lives were changed and influenced by being included in our family, they would say, "Yes"!
5. When my husband and I taught Singles, he would visit different men at their businesses. Their visits would stretch out as their friendship developed. He would listen as they shared their struggles, showing an interest in their work, and encouraging them in their walk with Christ.
6. When I was a college student, one of the men in our church invited me to be in his small group of 5 people that met every Friday night. There were about 25-30 adults who met in that home for a large group singing time and then split up into small groups. They kept meeting for about 20 years. We practiced quiet times, praying, scripture memory and sharing the gospel. People in the group were encouraged to start their own small group or meet with someone one-on-one.
7. A lady in our church asked me to be her partner to learn how to share the gospel and make visits to homes. Every week we read a chapter, answered some questions, memorized a verse, practiced sharing our testimony and the gospel, and we made a visit to a home to share the gospel.
8. A Sunday School teacher and I went to visit a young single man who was not a Christian. He accepted Christ, joined our small group, became a Christian husband and father, taught Sunday School and was a deacon during the last 25 years. (Rodney)
9. A church was frustrated because they tried to start a single adult group and only a handful would come. We announced that we were starting five groups for different age targets and 100 people started attending.
10. A church had a Sunday School class for singles of all ages and only two attended. We announced that we were starting a new group for singles between 22 and 28 yrs old and ten attended the first week. That group of 10 grew to almost 200 attending six groups (at church and at homes)
11. I joined a small group for middle-aged men that met in a home at 6:00 a.m. in the morning. That group has continued meeting for the last 18 years in that same home.
12. We have been members at two churches that started small groups in homes; one now has 35 groups and the other has 50 groups.
13. One church stated in a living room with a few college students. With only a worship service on Sunday in rented buildings and small groups in homes, they grew to 1500 attending with about 35 groups in homes. (City Church)