



GROWING CHURCH NETWORK

THE SIMPLE SMALL GROUP DISCIPLE MAKING MODEL



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Introduction

Simple Small Group *Discipleship Model*



Let me be bluntly honest here: Few small groups make disciples – either more of them or even better disciples. Sure, we get better educated or make better friends, but in studies of small group participants, many report that they're still less-than satisfied with their spiritual lives. And fewer still are sharing their faith with those outside the church.

The following is a model I developed and have shared with many of my clients. I've seen – and they've reported – that the Simple Small Group Disciple Making Model has shown life transforming results. Group members report praying more, reading more Scripture, being freed from destructive behaviors, and even sharing their faith more often with others.

This model was designed to be simple, effective, and easily replicated. In fact, if you use the model as intended, every small group participant will be trained to lead a small group in fewer than twelve weeks. Once everyone is trained, I've often invited the group to join me in prayer that the Holy Spirit will raise up a new leader for a new group – and I've rarely had to wait more than five days before someone has reached out to start something new!

The instructions are simple. It takes zero church experience or Bible knowledge to lead a group effectively. I don't think it's gets much easier than this!

THE END IS IN THE BEGINNING

THE REASON MOST small groups don't produce mature disciples is because the purpose of the group was fuzzy to begin with. Although you can start a group with multiple purposes, if there isn't ONE DRIVING OUTCOME then the group will most likely become a fellowship group. NOTE: There's *nothing* wrong with a fellowship group, but the one thing fellowship groups do NOT do is make disciples. That said, effective small groups exist for a specific purpose – and that purpose is kept at the forefront of the weekly activities.

Choose Your Small Group's Primary Outcome

Relationship Building

To build relationships, focus on fellowship and conversation during the small group time. Make between-session encouragement calls, texts, and emails. In addition, make arrangements to spend time outside of the group together.

Discipleship Making

Discipleship isn't about what you know, it's about what you do. To that end, disciple-making groups are focused on encouragement, accountability, and behavior. Effective disciple-making groups depend on high-trust, deep relationships, and transparency.

Christian Education

To deepen biblical and theological understanding, focus on a curriculum. It is helpful if there are daily homework assignments to further the educational process. Consider using multimedia curricula and between-session discussions to enhance learning.

Life Transformation

Life transformation groups are often based on the Recovery Group model. These can be some of the most powerful groups in the church because participants generally come to the group already knowing they're "broken" and need help.

Spiritual Connections

To deepen spirituality, focus on prayer, meditation, and practicing an expanding repertoire of spiritual disciplines. Be sure to encourage between-session practices and a rich daily devotional life.



T H E

Simple Small Group

D I S C I P L E - M A K I N G A G E N D A

The beauty of a Simple Small Group is that "if you can read, you can lead." No prior study or lesson preparedness is necessary. The following disciple-making agenda is easily implemented and replicated.

1

Gathering & Fellowship

2

Key Discipleship Q&A

3

Bible Passage Selection

4

Discovery Questions

5

Discovery Commitments

6

Prayer Time

7

Assignments

8

Fellowship & Leaving

1. Gathering & Fellowship



Come in
Get comfortable
Reconnect
Have a meal or a snack
Just remember to save the "best
seat in the house" for guests

2. Key Discipleship Q&A



When the "Gathering & Fellowship" conversations devolve into sports scores and sitcom plots, it's time to pull the room together for some serious discipleship.

Discovery Commitment Question

From last week's Group Notes (page 13), go around the room and ask each participant "How did it go with your commitment last week?" There may be opportunities for Just In Time prayer during this share time.

Biggest Challenge Question

Ask each member of the group, "What was your biggest challenge facing you last week?" A discerning facilitator will know when to bring an out-of-control share to a close or when to shift the focus of the group to a learning/discipleship moment.

Key Discipleship Question

The Key Discovery Question should be asked each week.* Ask each member of the group "What did you read this week in Scripture that intrigued you?" (Substitute *troubled*, *excited*, *confused*, *frustrated*, etc. for the word "intrigued" as desired.) Facilitator: Listen to those conversations that generate the most energy.

Additional Discipleship Questions

Ask an additional Discipleship Question occasionally to deepen participant's spiritual practices and maturity. See page 12.

**There will be times with the Discover Commitment Question or the Biggest Challenge Question may dominate the group's conversation time. However, always keep in mind the desired outcome of the small group and guide the conversation to that end. It is exceptionally easy to allow a group's collective "mercy gift" to permanently derail a group's purpose by trying to solve a member's problems or allowing the group to focus on being supportive. If the goal is disciple-making, look for opportunities to redirect the conversation.*

3. Bible Passage Selection

When people share their readings, listen carefully to see which conversations get the most energy. Choose one of those for the evening's Bible study.



Chuck says, "Pay attention!"

4. Discovery Questions

Read the selected passage aloud in at least two different translations. Then ask the following questions to each participant.

1

WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

2

WHAT DID YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

3

WHAT DID YOU NOT UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

4

WHAT NEW THING ABOUT GOD DID YOU LEARN?

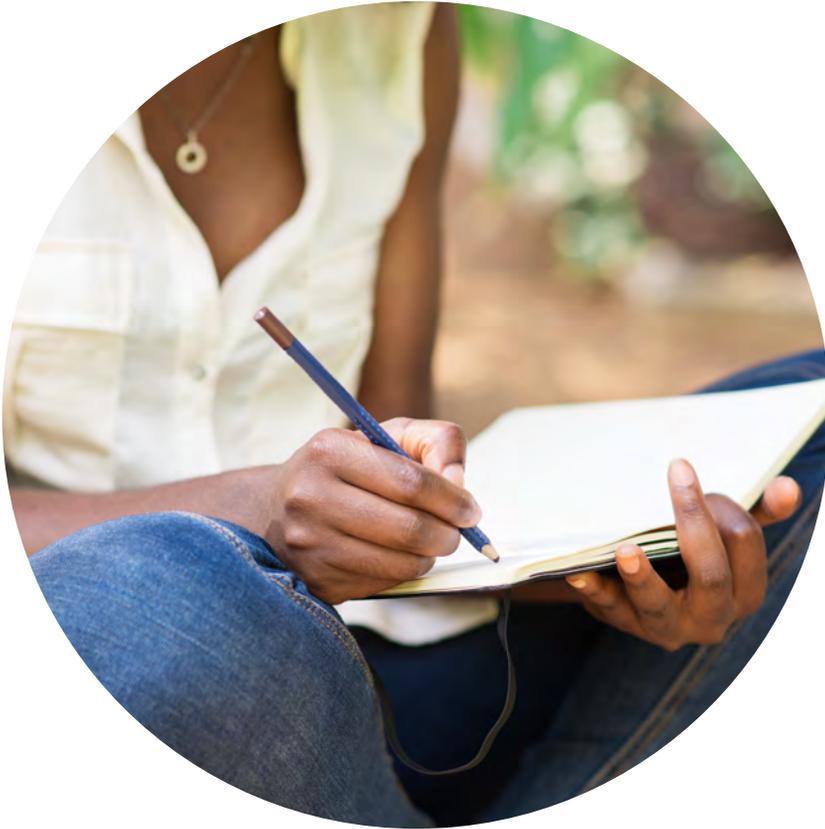
5

WHAT IS GOD ASKING YOU TO DO AS A RESULT OF WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED?

6

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? *This is the Discovery Commitment Question. See the next agenda item for instructions.*

5. Discovery Commitments



Record each participants response to the Discovery Commitment Question

Example

Bob C.

To talk to Ted at work about his outbursts without sounding judgmental.

Jen S.

Spend 30 minutes a day in personal study and prayer - read the Gospel of Mark this week.

6. Prayer Time

Teaching Disciples to Pray

In today's church, there are two troubling realities when it comes to prayer.

1. Small groups have a proclivity to talk a lot about prayer and then either spending time repeating all the prayer requests (as if God wasn't a part of the conversation in the first place) or else giving short shrift to the prayer time.
2. Many church members aren't comfortable "praying aloud."

The following practice will alleviate both of the issues.

Small Group Prayer Time Instructions

1. Announce that you will be leading prayer by saying "Let us pray."
2. Remind the group that if they have, or know of, a prayer need, that they should please be sure to share that aloud during the prayer time.
 - The need can be shared by just mentioning a name aloud, the circumstances, a combination of the two, or they can pray more fully.
3. Share only one prayer need at a time.
4. Allow other group members the time to address the prayer need either silently or aloud before sharing another prayer need.
5. Anyone may share another prayer need after a short period of silence.
6. When the silence becomes uncomfortable (or the time for prayer is complete), the prayer leader will close the prayer time with "In Jesus' name, Amen."

7. Assignments

The key to a simple, replicating small group model is to ensure every single person is trained to lead every part of the small group experience. At the end of each gathering, the Facilitator asks group members to take on one of the roles for the following week. Every member should serve in every position until everyone is comfortable leading every responsibility.

| Name | Responsibility |
|-------|---|
| <hr/> | Welcoming <i>Intentionally greets people as they arrive.</i> |
| <hr/> | Meal/Refreshments <i>Provides/coordinates</i> |
| <hr/> | Facilitator <i>Gets things started and leads the Key Discipleship Q&A and makes assignments</i> |
| <hr/> | Study Leader <i>Leads the Discovery Questions</i> |
| <hr/> | Prayer Leader <i>Leads the Prayer Time</i> |
| <hr/> | Recorder <i>Records the Discovery Commitment Responses</i> |
| <hr/> | Encourager <i>Checks in with all the group members during the next week</i> |
| <hr/> | <hr/> Other |

8. Fellowship & Leaving



Have a Good Chat
Help Tidy Up
Greeter Leaves Last
Don't Forget To Say "See You
Next Week!"

The Discipleship

QUESTIONS

The Key Question

What did you read this week in Scripture that intrigued you?

(Substitute *troubled, excited, confused, frustrated, etc.* for the word "intrigued" as desired.)

Faith Encouragement

Who have you encouraged in the faith this week?

(Check in on someone; ask about their walk with Jesus; offer to pray for them. Etc.)

Quiet Prayer

What have you heard from God in your listening prayer time this week?

(There's more to prayer than offering a monologue. It's important to listen.)

Worship

How have you engaged in personal worship of the Lord this week?

(Attending a worship service isn't enough. The key to the question is "how" have you engaged?)

Service

Who's life has been touched because of your service in Jesus' name this week?

(Anonymous acts of kindness are "nice," but we're also called to be sure God gets the glory and the credit.)

Disciple Making

With whom did you share your faith with this week?

(The primary mark of a disciple is that they make more disciples. That won't happen if disciples don't share.)

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