

Why Lead Small Groups

Purpose: to discover the factors contributing to small group success, grasp the benefits of a leading a small group, and encourage people to start one

Objectives: By the end of this lesson you will:

1. Be able to describe five crucial elements to an effective small group
2. Be able to articulate five factors influencing the growth of a small group
3. Be able to explain three benefits of a small group
4. Have a greater appreciation for the small groups

Key Verse: Hebrews 3:12-13

I. Introduction

Small groups are like gardens. Each plant is different, with differing needs. Likewise, each member of a small group is different, with differing needs. The gardener needs to attend to the garden if it is to grow. The small group leader must care for the group, not just prepare lessons. Sometimes the best way to understand a familiar thing is to look at it through an unexpected window, to look at it from a different angle, from a different story. Think about growing a garden.

What's essential for a garden to become all that it was meant to be?

What factors influence a garden's growth?

II. Crucial Elements for Small Group Success

Write a summary of each of the following verses.

A. Quality Biblical Content (1 Peter 2:1-2)

Summary:

In gardening, this would correspond to plant food. In leading a small group, it is ultimately the application of the word that changes lives. Without the teaching of the Word, there is only the sharing of interesting ideas.

B. Good Reason for Existence/Vision: A purpose larger than the group itself (Matt 9:36-38).

Summary:

Gardeners have a reason for what they do (beautiful yard, food, produce to sell, etc.). God created things to reproduce, and anything that does not reproduce will die. In our small groups, people who are self-absorbed shrivel up. It is in giving that we receive.

C. Community/belonging (Rom 12:4-5)

Summary:

Some plants grow better when planted in clusters. Similarly with our small groups, we were never meant to be alone. God designed us to live with others. We open up as we sense that we belong. The deeper the sense of community the more stable the group.

D. Godly Leadership (1 Timothy 3:2, 8, 11)

Summary:

For the gardener to accomplish his/her objective, there is the need to schedule in weeding, pruning, pest management, fertilizing, harvesting, etc. The Bible describes us as sheep. Sheep need a shepherd. Without one they wander into all kinds of problems. Groups need someone to lead the group, pull it together, and keep it going in the right direction. Ambiguity destroys a group.

E. Application-Oriented (James 1:22-25)

Summary:

All of the gardener's efforts are aimed at the goal: harvest (or a beautiful yard). God made us to work. Without the sense of production/application, we wonder what the purpose of something is and typically wander off to something else that will challenge us to grow.



Which of the previously mentioned points have you seen applied or neglected (in small groups - not gardening) and their results?

What points do you need to implement more?

How will you do this?

III. Factors Influencing Growth

A. Time to Develop. Be patient, groups need time to develop

B. Ability to Recognize, Value and Know how to Deal with Differences in People.

People bring personalities, experiences and abilities to a group. All of these affect how the group will grow.

C. Willingness to Learn

The leader and the group must be willing to grow. A know-it-all leader will soon suffocate the group. If the group stays with him, it's because they have dependent personalities. The group, too, must be willing to apply what they are learning, if they are to grow.

D. Preparation (2 Timothy 2:15)

Both the leader and the group must be willing to put the work into the lessons, etc. The group will be as exciting as the amount of effort put into it by all the stakeholders.

E. Regular Attention

An unattended garden quickly fills up with weeds, is attacked by bugs or suffers from lack of essential nutrients. So it is with a small group. It is far more than a one-hour meeting, once a week. It is discipleship, development, and growth.



Which of the previously mentioned points have you seen applied or neglected and their results?

What points do you need to implement more?

How will you do this?

IV. Benefits to Leading a Small Group

A. Reach more people (spiritual multiplication v. spiritual addition).

Spiritual multiplication v. spiritual addition will be covered more in a later session "Biblical

Calling for Making Disciples.” In summary, to accomplish big things, it’s better to train others to do the same work you’re doing and let them help you - rather than you doing it all by yourself. Fulfilling the Great Commission is a “big thing” that can not be accomplished by any one person - it must be a team effort.

B. Symbiotic: disciples teach disciples without trying.

The disciples can learn from one another, and not just from the teacher.

C. Develops a sense of belongingness/family with the corresponding controls (accountability).

V. Application

Discuss with your mentor your personal experience with small groups and begin to plan how you can start one.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you describe five crucial elements to an effective small group?
2. What five factors influence the growth of a small group?
3. What are the three benefits of a small group?
4. How has this talk helped you have a greater appreciation for the small groups?