

Part 4: Small Group Resources

Written by Bob Stone

Small Group Leader Evaluation

+ Your Year In Review (Name of Leader)

1. Looking back on this year, what would you say were three high points and three low points for your group?
2. Briefly describe your goals and objectives for this past year.
3. How do you feel your group did in light of your goals and objectives?
4. What were some of your challenges this year as a leader?
5. If you were to leave or not be able to lead your group, who do you see stepping in to lead?
6. Do you feel you had enough time with your elder overseer?
7. How might your elder overseer be more helpful to you in the future?
8. What helps would you like to have that you feel may be missing now?
9. How were the VHS meetings helpful to you?
10. What would you like to see covered at a VHS meeting?
11. What are your plans for the summer?
12. What are your plans for next fall?

Small Group Meeting Evaluation

1. Who was present? What needs do you see they have?
2. Who was absent? Why? Did they call in?
3. Did the events of the meeting go as planned? In what ways did it differ from your plan?
4. Were the goals of the meeting met? If not, why?
5. What worked well? Why?
6. What bombed? Why?
7. Did you sense the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit? In what ways?
8. What was the level of sharing? Are members building relationships with each other? How do you see this happening?
9. What was the quality of the prayer or worship time?
10. How did the Bible study go? Were people involved and interested?
11. What were some of the applications to the Bible study?
12. Did anyone talk too much or too little?
13. Did you feel prepared? What could you do to improve?

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14. Looking over the whole evaluation: In what areas are improvement needed? What changes will need to be made?

Date

Small Groups: Foundational Concepts

Introduction

In Acts 20:20 Paul said he "spoke publicly and from house to house." Paul recognized both the importance of large group teaching, interaction and praise, and the need for small groups to meet together and interact at a more personal level.

What is the purpose of Hillcrest small groups? What are we doing? Let's understand clearly that God does not direct us into meaningless activity, nor call us to more "busy work." We believe that small groups have strong reasons for existence in our body, and the following are our specific objectives for this ministry:

15. **Cultivation of new ministry in our congregation** through providing wider channels for the flow of spiritual gifts (1 Cor.12:12-31); greater commitment throughout the congregation (Heb. 10:24-25) and leadership and ministry development (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

16. **Making available a new means by which we may minister unto the multitudes.** Many hungry people could never imagine a church would offer anything vital for their life (Matthew 9:35-38). Many other are reborn throughout the area but have no place in which to

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root their spiritual life. Still others are in our congregation, but will be revitalized when something is a little closer to their home, or in their home. They will have new possibilities for growth, development, and accountability.

17. Establishment of situations in which deeper relationships may be realized (Ephesians 4:16

). The life of Jesus is realized in relationship with Him and other members of His Body. He is the HEAD, but He is only that. He has called us "members" of His Body, and we need to learn to know one another so the Body is coordinated for the action the Head wants to direct.

Putting people into small groups will result in personal relationships being established between more people in the Body. This meets a primary need in every individual's life, and strengthens the church immeasurably as people begin to commit to one another... not just a structure. We can't talk about the church apart from ourselves. In other words, there is no "they," "them," or "it." We have met the church, and it is us. If it has a problem, we all have a problem (and vice versa).

18. Provision of times for worship, interaction, sharing, teaching, and application are expressed in four fundamental ways. We all need times of **worshipping together,**

knowing the Father through worship and giving Him the glory due His Name—Psalm 95:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4,9-10; 1 Timothy 2:8. We have a great need to

fellowship together

: to share, care, and be healed—Galatians 6:2,10; Acts 2:44-45; James 5:13-19. We have all been given specific responsibilities, gifts, and ministries. However, we need to be

equipped together

, to receive instruction and opportunity in order that these gifts and our responsibilities might be developed and God might be given praise—Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17. We have been called to be

sent together,

to be salt and light in this world. The only way this will happen is if we get out of the salt shaker and spread God's grace and love around—Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 2:47.

19. The opportunity for healthy "fun times."

20. The opportunity for greater communication of the important items in relation to our church life—Acts 4:23-31; 5:42; 12:12; 20:20, including principles that are foundational to our corporate life and deepening understanding concerning those things the Holy Spirit might be speaking to us about right now.

Four Fundamental Expressions

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Hillcrest Chapel has **four primary goals** as a church. When we move into small group ministry, there is a greater ability to practically participate in these goals. The listing below is not exhaustive but is a checklist to measure how balanced and creative your group ministry is. Put a percentage next to each category that represents the emphasis your group has given it this quarter.

WORSHIP—Face the Lord

- "body life" worship expressions (spiritual gifts)
- conversational praise
- singing
- responsive scripture readings
- journal writing of prayers
- "Scripture search" on a certain theme (e.g., God's lovingkindness, justice, our faith response...)
- meditation
- prayers according to Biblical characters (e.g., faith like Abraham, integrity like Joseph...)

HEALING (Care/Fellowship)—Face Each Other

- "body life" ministry to one another (spiritual gifts)
- smaller prayer cells (2s, 4s, men, women etc...)
- emotional checkup (how are you doing on a scale of 1 to 10?)
- gift discovery (affirm group members' spiritual gifts, i.e., "I appreciate the way you...")
- meals/desserts together (Mexican, all beef, all veggie, potato bar, men only cook, etc...)
- family nights with children
- hospitality within group (pair up for meals with other group members)
- hospitality with another group (Summer events, Canada "wave pool," etc...)
- day of prayer (or 24 hour prayer chain)

EQUIPPING (Nurture)—Receive From the Lord

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- Bible book
- Bible theme (faith, prayer, parables, etc...)
- Bible character (Abraham, Peter, etc...)
- Sunday sermon response (sermon outline available from office)
- "Need oriented" theme (parenting, personal evangelism, new believer, etc...)
- Book study (*The Pursuit Of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges, *Basic Christianity* by John Stott, etc...)
- Christian doctrine (the Apostles Creed, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, etc...)
- Invite "outside" teacher to lead on theme (See pastors/elders for adult equipping resource people).

SENDING (Mission)—Face Others Together

- Group members report on individual ministries (i.e., how can we help/pray for your ministry?)
- service to the needs of the local church (church "gathered")
- service to the community (church "scattered")
- personal evangelism
- adopt a missionary
- construction projects
- short-term summer mission trips
- elderly ministry

NOTE: These four categories should total 100%.

Small Group Pastor/Facilitator Job Description

Personal Qualifications

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- Maintain Biblically consistent personal/family life (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)
- Keep growing in the "being and doing" aspects of the Christian life
- Be "FAT"—faithful, available and teachable
- Faithfully attend Sunday Services
- Consistently tithe and participate in "faith promise" missions giving
- Be a member of Hillcrest Chapel (see instructional packet)
- Complete "student/apprentice" leadership training school

Length of leadership commitment:

- "Long term" groups (September to September)
- "Short term" groups (varies)

Pastoral/Administrative Duties of the Leadership Team

- Pastor group members according to the "PACE" acronym: **Prayer-Availability-Contact (Care)-Example**
 - Follow up on new visitors and inquirers to your group
 - Participate in VHS (Vision/Huddle/Skill) meetings, Fall Leadership Retreat, and Worker Conference in the Spring.
 - Complete Grapevine ministry report form on a timely basis
 - Attend "All Hillcrest" special events (e.g., Hunger Faire, Annual Celebration, and Deming Picnic).
 - Faithfully serve in Hillcrest administrative functions (e.g., Lawn Duty once per summer, Body Life Communion setup twice per year)
 - Maintain supportive relationship with pastoral "shepherd" overseeing your group.
 - Commit to "multiply" your ministry through training other leaders in your group.
 - Be open to Hillcrest Caregiving and Mission Opportunities (optional) (e.g., adoption of a Hillcrest missionary, or a single parent/children; have a "mission advocate" for your group)
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Small Group Leaders Training

The Student/Apprentice Leader Training Plan

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The best way to train leaders according to many studies is to give a person the training and responsibility to lead a small group. The best entry point for that small group training has proven to be as a "student/apprentice" leader of the small group. Therefore our goal is to have each small group at Hillcrest be led by a team of people, one of which will be a "student/apprentice" leader.

How does one become a student/apprentice leader and receive further training in spiritual leadership? The basic training may include the following:

Student/Apprentice Leaders School

What is the difference between a **student leader** and an **apprentice leader**? We have found one minor flaw/blessing in our present apprenticeship program which was designed to furnish our need for new leaders. Because our apprentices normally come from within our existing groups, they have a bond to the group (blessing) which is not easily relinquished to start a new group (flaw), so that we have fallen a little behind in our releasing of new leaders. The Student/Apprentice Leaders School starts with the assumption that our **Student leaders will not be staying in the groups they train with**, while the **Apprentice Leader may or may not stay in his/her existing group.**

Pick up an application in the office, fill it out and turn it in. Make a follow-up appointment with a small group pastor overseer.

Classroom Studies 1

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- Session #1—Foundations for Small Groups
- Session #2—Small Group Beginnings and Lifecycles
- Session #3—Basic Group Communications and Dynamics
- Session #4—Small Group Leadership
- Session #5—Overcoming Group Problems

Complete a book report on *How to Lead Small Groups* by Neal McBride.

Student/Apprentice Leader Requirements

- Meet with your elder advisor for group placement.
- Meet with your group leader supervisor.
- Begin attending/observing small group (12 weeks)
- Meet weekly with group leader supervisor for a debriefing.
- Lead one meeting in prayer/worship.
- Lead one meeting in Bible study.
- Lead one meeting in sharing/caring.
- Lead one meeting in fellowship/social.
- Meet with group supervisor and elder advisor for evaluation.
- Attend VHS Meetings.
- Attend Eagle Flight Seminar.
- Attend Workers Conference.

Classroom Studies 2

- Session #1—Evaluating Your Group
- Session #2—Planning a Meeting, a Quarter, and a Year
- Session #3—Team Building
- Session #4—Bible Study Methods
- Session #5—Worship In Your Small Group

Complete a book report on *The Pursuit Of God* by A.W. Tozer

Final Evaluation With Elder Advisor

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Graduation Banquet

Sunday Night Assimilation Program

For a minimum of 11 weeks, e.g., *Beginnings* (Overview of Hillcrest Chapel) and *Basics* (Introduction to the Christian faith).

From 6 to 7 p.m. each Sunday, the apprentice will co-lead a small group with another leader. The format for these small group meetings is a standard six-week curriculum geared for people new to small groups and/or to Hillcrest Chapel. Here the apprentice gets "hands-on" training through leading, under the care of experienced leaders.

From 7 to 8 p.m. all apprentices meet with these leaders to debrief their experience that night, and to discuss leadership skills and pastoral issues.

Midweek Training

(Midweek practical experience and training through apprenticeship with the small group leader of their midweek group)

The apprentice can do this in the following ways:

Work with his/her NMC/small group and help that group multiply by:

- "Graduating" the large group into 2 smaller units to allow for growth—maybe just take

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two others from the larger group to start the new group. (Note: It is helpful to maintain relationship with the new group starting by means of periodic social activities, or group meetings.)

- Or the existing leader passes leadership of the group to the apprentice and he (she) is then free to establish a new group with a few members of his/her group. In other cases the apprentice will want/be encouraged to do the following:

Take a group of people from Sunday night and/or their own contacts and establish their own mid-week, long-term NMC.

Become involved in Hillcrest's "Caregiving" ministry. This is a great option, especially for many potential leaders who cannot for various reasons take on a leadership role. The "caregiving" ministry will allow them to reach out beyond themselves and take responsibility for others.

It is essential, however, that they maintain a relationship with a small group, a spiritual friendship, or a ministry team during this time so they will have continuing care themselves.

The student/apprentice leader will also receive leadership training through

Affirmation, Correction, and Modeling

by small group leaders and pastors

Classes and Seminars

designed to train in small group techniques: philosophy and supplemental classes that will help to mature them in overall ministry prowess (e.g., Scribe School, For Workers Only conference).

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Supplemental Reading

A book list will be available and updated often to assist in the training of apprentices and to keep training small group leaders.

Other Ministries

Some apprentices will bring to the program experience in other programs that may be equivalent or preparatory to their small group leadership at Hillcrest—e.g., Caregivers, Peer Group teacher, core group leader in college ministry, counselor in High School ministry, support group leadership, parachurch involvement. While there may be differences between our program and their experience, it is helpful to build on the positive experience each individual has had.

Goals for Hillcrest Small Groups

Every small group leader will have an apprentice.

Every small group will birth a new small group each year with its apprentice leader, and add at least two members to the group.

Every small group will be open to new members unless by special permission.

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Every small group apprentice and leader will go through Scribe School.

Every small group will work toward seeing the following ministry assignments in their group: a mission advocate, a host/hostess, an apprentice, a prayer coordinator, a leader.

Every small group leader and apprentice leader will have a quality time with their overseeing elder each month.

A continuing education and training program will be established for small group leaders, apprentices, and potential leaders.

Every small group leader will attend the "For Workers Only" conference each Spring and the leadership retreat each fall.