

**SMALL GROUP OPERATING SYSTEM VIDEO NOTES****1. SMALL GROUPS EVERYWHERE****a. SMALL GROUP SIZE**

- i. The whole infrastructure of the leadership culture and much of the ministry culture is done in small groups
- ii. Each small group setting has a different purpose and needs a different approach

**b. TYPES OF SMALL GROUPS****i. Permanent groups/teams (recruited)****1. Advisory leaders – ruling elders**

- a. 1 Timothy 5:22<sup>22</sup> Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. (ESV)

**2. Worship leaders**

- a. You are the first producer
- b. You create the stage
- c. You pick the music that connects to the people group you are reaching
- d. Watch out for the egotist music worship leaders
- e. Watch out for the volunteer imbalance

**3. Discipleship team**

- a. Recruit those who love mentoring and education of children and/or adults (future elders training)
- b. Run the Christian Education team
- c. Come up with short term small groups and seminars
- d. Lead permanent education offerings

**4. Young Christian leaders – team leaders**

- a. Recruit leaders who will lead in the raising up of young Christian leaders
- b. Team of 2-5 adult who sense the calling
- c. Get the young people together with the expectation that they are the future leaders of Christianity
- d. Create a stage for them to do music and worship
- e. Sign up YCL into CLI

**5. Child care team**

- a. Back ground checks
- b. Always at least two people with the children
- c. Design your offering for the “paranoid” parent
- d. Find leaders with passion
- e. Pay if you need to have high quality care

**6. Finance team**

- a. Recruit money counters
  - i. 2 at each service
- b. Deposit slips
- c. The spending and prioritizing of money is the work of the ruling elders not deacons
- d. Develop a budget
- e. Communicate how the funds are coming in
- f. Communicate experience
- g. Put a pastor salary plan in place appropriate to “one income” of the middle class of the people group of the primary funders and leaders
- h. Salary amount to be decided upfront with senders and advisors
- i. Stair step the salary for bi-vocationals
  - i. 25% 1<sup>st</sup> year
  - ii. 50% 2<sup>nd</sup> year
  - iii. 75% 3<sup>rd</sup> year
  - iv. 100% 4<sup>th</sup> year
  - v. 125% 5<sup>th</sup> year
  - vi. 3-5% 6<sup>th</sup> year increases
- j. Tied to growth in numbers and giving
- 7. Promotion team – evangelism
  - a. Leaders who are called to talk about and execute promotion and evangelism plans
  - b. Emphasis on
    - i. Word-of-mouth
    - ii. Vocal witness
    - iii. Apologetics
- 8. Hospitality team
  - a. Recruit future deacons
    - i. Meet to develop the local plan
      - 1. Schedule hospitality to newcomers
      - 2. Discuss the best practices for assimilation
  - b. Make connection of newcomers with existing participants
- 9. Small group leaders
  - a. Recruit the pastoral care team
    - i. Commission as small group leaders (deacons)
    - ii. Learn the methodology of starting ministry small groups
    - iii. The leaders team is the pastoral care work of the ministry deacons
    - iv. Shepherding the church
  - ii. Short term groups

1. Counseling
    - a. Identify the problems
    - b. Refer difficult matters to specialized helpers
    - c. Connect mentors if possible
    - d. Have clear end dates in mind and communicate this up front
  2. Seminars
    - a. Think of various topics for offering at the church
    - b. Promote the topic
    - c. Attend
    - d. Connect attendee with larger church life
  3. Service projects
    - a. Word or deed
    - b. Discipleship goals
    - c. Christian love to the community
    - d. Keep projects low cost if possible
2. **LAUNCHING SMALL GROUPS**
- a. LAUNCH A TEST GROUP
    - i. Everybody wants to be a part of something exclusive
    - ii. They want to be on the cutting edge
  - b. TESTING AND CHURCH PLANTING GO WELL TOGETHER
    - i. On the creator’s side, test groups help an organization know what works and what does not work
    - ii. They allow an organization to try new things in new ways with new people, without the cost of a full product launch
    - iii. Launching a new line of products drains a lot of resources, and it is incredibly risky
    - iv. Test groups minimize the risk by helping determine – in advance – what will work and what will fail
  - c. TEST GROUP
    - i. A small group of high capacity, influential leaders
    - ii. Meet for a predetermined time
    - iii. Purpose of exploring a new idea to implement
  - d. LAUNCHING A SMALL GROUP
    - i. Model what a healthy small group looks like
      1. According to
        - a. Strategic mission
        - b. Vision
      - ii. Not simply to cast an informational vision
      - iii. Give people a picture of a healthy small group
  - e. HIGH CAPACITY, INFLUENTIAL LEADERS
    - i. Do not recruit just warm bodies
    - ii. Recruit the people who are natural leaders

- iii. The people who, if they buy into the idea of your small group, more will too
- iv. Have natural leadership ability
  - 1. They have followers
- v. May or may not be in significant leadership in your church
- vi. You know they are leaders because where they go others want to be around them
- f. FOR A PREDETERMINED TIME
  - i. The test group should not last forever
  - ii. The goal is to equip the people and turn them loose
  - iii. Making your way through one or two rounds of curriculum should be adequate
  - iv. If you choose to not use curriculum, a couple of months should be long enough
  - v. Make sure to end at a time where it is strategic to launch new groups
  - vi. Those in the test group can step right into group leadership
- g. IMPLEMENT: LET THEM GO
  - i. If you have 4 couple in your group, then you should plan to launch 4 small groups
  - ii. Use a 1:1 ratio
  - iii. The test groups understand the idea and strategy you are implementing better than anyone else in the church
- h. START PROMOTIONAL CONVERSATIONS
  - i. Tell people that you are going to start a new small group
  - ii. Presume God's favor to do something huge in and through the group
  - iii. Let them know that you would be honored and excited for them to join once things get going
  - iv. Give them a chance to clear their schedules
- i. START RECRUITING
  - i. Recruit people to join, even before you launch
  - ii. Get commitments from group leaders
  - iii. Get commitments from a co-leader
    - 1. Someone who will help lead the group with you
- j. LEAD WITH CURRICULUM CHOICES
  - i. Pick out a handful of curriculum choices
  - ii. Potential group members want to know that there is some sort of plan and structure in place
    - 1. Not just a dinner club
  - iii. The group will have a component of studying together
- k. STARTING
  - i. Plan a start date
  - ii. Most strategic times to launch a group tend to be in the months of August and January

1. August works because many public-school systems start during this month
  - a. Our culture tends to think “new” and “start” then
2. January works because we tend to think about resolutions for the year
- iii. Other times a group could start, but August/January tend to be the most strategic
1. CONSTANTLY RECRUITING
  - i. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of recruiting leaders
  - ii. Get the right people
    1. Small groups can soar
  - iii. Get the wrong people
    1. Taint small groups for every member joining those groups
    2. It will be very hard to convince people that their next experience will be better than the last
- m. INTENTIONAL APPRENTICING
  - i. A great way to recruit and deploy leaders
  - ii. Apprentices will have on-the-job training for months (or years)
  - iii. Speeding up apprenticeship
    1. Increase the number of apprentices in each group
    2. Decrease the training time
- n. RECRUIT WITH EXISTING GROUPS THAT ARE ENDING
  - i. Whenever a group is getting ready to end
    1. Sit down with the leader and ask for names of other potential leaders
  - ii. The leader of the group knows who has what it takes to lead a new group
- o. RECRUITING THOSE WHO “CAN’T”
  - i. Will always get a response that
    1. Not enough time available to attend a group
    2. All of the other groups meet too frequently
    3. All of the other groups do not meet frequently enough
  - ii. Offer to have that person start a group of their own
- p. NEW GROUPS FOR NEW PEOPLE
  - i. Launch a men’s breakfast group
  - ii. Start a “construction” group
  - iii. Start a women’s book club
  - iv. Kick off a group that meets for Sunday lunch
  - v. If you define what you your goal is, it is easier to step out and launch groups
  - vi. Starting new types of groups is a way to get new leaders
  - vii. Stretches and challenges people who think that they do not fit in your system
- q. TEAM STAFF MEMBERS

- i. Require staff members to be in groups
    - ii. Church staffers have influence with others
    - iii. They can recruit leaders for
      - 1. Ministry
      - 2. Teaching
      - 3. Leading
    - iv. Staff members can fill groups without help
      - 1. Will be filled with people who are brought into the character and reputation of that staff member
  - r. **GIVE BREAKS**
    - i. Give leaders the option to take a season off from leading a small group
    - ii. Without breaks
      - 1. Frustration
      - 2. Burn-out
  - s. **SHORT TERM GROUPS**
    - i. Once or twice a year start a new short-term focused small group
    - ii. Have it line up around a sermon series
    - iii. Gives people a more manageable timetable for leading
3. **SMALL GROUP MAKING PRACTICES**
- a. **THE KEY STEPS OF SETTING UP SMALL GROUPS**
    - i. Helping people find a group and physically connecting them with others
    - ii. Ensuring a great group experience
      - 1. Spiritually
      - 2. Emotionally
      - 3. Experientially connecting with others
  - b. **RELATIONSHIP SET UP SMALL GROUPS**
    - i. The best way to form a small group is purely through relationships
    - ii. Not through
      - 1. An event the church puts on
      - 2. An online sign up
      - 3. A church-wide initiative
  - c. **PREVIOUS RELATIONAL TRUST IS KEY**
    - i. With a prior relationship, there is a trust that has already been built
    - ii. A small group's success (or failure) is contingent upon trust
      - 1. What is said in the group stays in the group
  - d. **CELL GROUP FORMING WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP CAPITAL**
    - i. Make connections for people with groups through an event when there is not a prior relationship available between a person and a group
    - ii. The event is a chance to launch multiple small groups at the same time
    - iii. People will meet group leaders and commit to a new small group
    - iv. Consider not a Sunday morning event
      - 1. Will not get as many people interested
      - 2. However, those that do show up will most likely join a group

3. Retention rate will be higher than the Sunday morning event
- e. HOW TO SIT AT MEETINGS
    - i. Circles are better than rows
    - ii. Circles promote
      1. Group growth
      2. Group unity
      3. Combined synergy knowing God
      4. Encouraging others
      5. Correcting each other
      6. Pushing each other towards God's best
  - f. THE ROLE OF FOOD
    - i. Drinks and desserts can help any group
    - ii. Meals give a natural reason to congregate together
    - iii. It is psychologically important eating together
    - iv. Food contributes to attendance
    - v. Sharing the responsibility for bringing food gives others the ability to contribute to the group
    - vi. Prioritize eating together
    - vii. Meals force you to be people oriented
    - viii. Plan to eat together
  - g. HOW CLEAN SHOULD YOUR HOUSE BE
    - i. Clean your house but do not be overly paranoid about it
    - ii. Invite people into your life
    - iii. Do not feel like everything has to be perfect
    - iv. This shows that people can come as they are
      1. They can be who they are
      2. They can bring their victories
      3. They can bring their struggles
    - v. Shows others that your house is a safe place to be real
  - h. ABOUT PRAYERS
    - i. The greater use of theologically technical words encourages people to shut down during prayer time
  - i. MAKE SMALL GROUPS FUN
    - i. If it is not fun, people will not come back
    - ii. It is easier to get more information at a more convenient time through
      1. Podcasts
      2. Books
      3. Blogs
      4. Forums
    - iii. The difference is the relationship, face-to-face aspect
    - iv. If your group is intensely serious, it can drain the life right out of people
    - v. If there is no laughter, people are missing out on great medicine

1. Proverbs 17:22 <sup>22</sup> A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (ESV)
2. They need to laugh together
3. They need to laugh at themselves
4. Laughing helps to melt away stress and anxiety
5. Laugh so hard you embarrass yourself
6. Laugh so hard you even forgot what you were originally laughing about
7. Others join in just because you are laughing
- vi. When we have fun together, we show others that we serve a good God
  1. Psalms 126:2 <sup>2</sup> Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” (ESV)
  2. When our mouths are filled with laughter, others are convinced that God has done great things among us
- vii. Laughter builds community
  1. Can help your group bond in a rich way quickly
  2. Do not neglect times of fun and laughing
  3. Having fun together help set the stage for deep discussions
    - a. Building trust among those in your group
- j. DEVELOP OWNERSHIP
  - i. Everyone brings something
  - ii. Key component to leading an effective group is sharing ministry
  - iii. Allow other in the group
    1. Lead worship time
    2. Lead the study
    3. Bring refreshments
    4. Host the group
  - iv. Cultivating group ownership is important if members are going to feel needed and appreciated
  - v. Helps to keep from burning out
    1. Ephesians 4:12 <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (ESV)
  - vi. Task for ownership
    1. Hosting – someone to coordinate the rotation of homes
    2. Prayer requests – someone to distribute them via email
    3. Food schedule – someone to make sure the meal happens
    4. Serving schedule – an outreach coordinator for quarterly service projects
    5. Fun weeks – someone to make sure the group keeps laughing