

Leading with a Vision

Effective small group leaders don't just "lead a small group." They raise up leaders to reach the world. When a leader shares the dream of health, growth, and multiplication, that dream changes people. Once they buy into the dream, members will pray for the small group. They will not want to miss a meeting. They will invite others. They will more easily care for, share with, and appreciate one another." – Dave Earley

I Have A Dream!

- As a small group leader, one of your primary functions is to lead... but more importantly you are *to lead with a vision*. As George Barna says, "If you want to be a leader, vision is not an option; it is part of the equipment of a real leader." You need to ensure that you have a vision, a direction, and a dream for your small group. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Do you have a vision or a dream for your small group? If so, what is it?
 - How is your vision motivating your members and compelling others to join?
- Having a dream will keep *you* motivated as well. It is easy to get in a routine and have your small group just become another appointment on the weekly schedule. Make sure that *your* heart is filled with passion for the vision and goals that you have for your group!
 - Yonggi Cho once said, "When I began to dream that the church was packed with people, people began to pour into the church... keep on dreaming. You are only going to grow as big as your dream."
- **Read Ephesians 3:20.** God can use YOUR small group to do even greater things than you can even imagine... but you need to have a vision for God to exceed! If you set the bar low, then you will get mediocre results. If you are chasing a vision that sets the bar high, than it allows space for God to show up and your small group to rally behind it!
 - If you don't have a vision, don't feel like you have to reinvent the wheel! Even if you are simply recasting the vision of First Assembly, people will respond to that.

Sample Visions

- Vision of a discipleship legacy starting with the growth and multiplication of your group
- Winning Gainesville to Christ by loving the lost and least of these
- Being a missions outpost that sends out missionaries into Gainesville and the world
- Making real disciples not part-time believers through a mentoring community
- Being a safe place where holistic healing and restoration is available and takes place weekly

Get Out of the Way

- Acts 5:38–39 says: “For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.” When people believe and know you have heard from the Lord, they will follow your leadership because when God is creator of the vision and purpose, it is an unstoppable force! But you have to let them know what it is God put on your heart.
- Let the vision lead your small group. People should not want to meet because they want more of you. A good leader is one that is able to let the vision lead the small group. One of your greatest assets as a leader is the ability to describe and give life to your vision. People (sometimes literally) live and die because of their belief in a vision. You need to be able to pass that dream onto someone else so they can take up the torch, internalize it, make that dream their own, and lead others accordingly.
- People don’t want to be on board a sinking ship. They want to be heading somewhere. Your small group members need to feel like they are a part of something that is going somewhere. They want to feel like they are part of a bigger cause that has a future, a purpose, and is making a difference. Having a vision is the way to keep people involved!

Not the *Back* of Your Mind...

- A vision has to be kept alive through constant repetition. The vision of your small group should not be in the back of your members’ minds, but in the forefront, always right in front of their eyes and engrained in their minds and hearts.
 - Take at least two minutes every time you meet and reiterate your vision to your small group. Don’t just bring it up once and make a big deal only to let it die five weeks later! You have to be the *constant* champion of the groups’ vision.
- Your vision should dictate everything you do. Be intentional with your time and effort! Center your small group around your vision and what it is going to take to make that vision a reality in the life of your small group.
 - If you want to win the lost, then your small group should be custom tailored to make that vision a reality with a heavy emphasis on evangelism.
 - If you want to multiply, then you need to spend a lot of time training apprentices and teaching your group to recruit members.
 - If your vision is to make disciples, then you need to have a passage like Acts 2:42-47 that you constantly refer back to and make your small group accordingly.