

Multiplying Your Small Group

Multiplication. Some people love it, others absolutely fear it, and many haven't even entertained the idea. As a small group leader, it is your privilege and responsibility to disciple your group into not only viewing multiplication in a positive light, but to lead them in multiplying your group and experiencing the joy and sense of accomplishment it brings!

It Starts with a Vision...

- **Talk about it early & often.** Start talking about multiplication NOW. Even if your small group is just starting or still very small in numbers, start casting vision about multiplication and let people start getting excited about the growth potential. Describe the fact that one of the main goals and purposes of your small group is to raise up leaders who will be sent out to begin new small groups. People are afraid of what they aren't prepared for, so cast your vision regularly and keep them updated on your multiplication status as things progress.
- **Language sets the tone.** Make sure you always talk about multiplication in a positive light. Avoid using words like "splitting", "dividing", and "breaking up" and use words such as "multiplying", "expanding our outreach in Gainesville" and "growing." It may seem trivial, but the language you use will shape the way your small group views multiplication. Your perception, whether good or bad becomes your small group's perception. Cast the vision that excites your small group and shows that multiplication is the norm and that God places in every living and growing thing the ability to reproduce itself. If you're not excited, they certainly won't be. You must be the champion of the joy and benefits of multiplying!
- **See the big picture.** Read Matthew 28:19-20. *Multiplication is how your small group fulfills this command.* The Kingdom of God does not revolve around you and your desire to stay with your friends; it revolves around Jesus Christ. His Kingdom is not about being comfortable - it is about making disciples. In order to bring more people into Kingdom centered communities, we must take on an eternal perspective and see multiplication as a way to make space for more disciples to be made.

When & Why to Multiply

- Our goal is to develop disciples who are winning souls, making disciples, and are living in the green. If we are successful at this, then our small groups will grow and not remain small for long! Remaining small, however, is crucial for maintaining intimacy, accountability, and vulnerability in your small group. The larger you get, the less likely everyone is to participate, share, and be vulnerable.
- If your small group has more than 12-14 people coming on a consistent basis, then it is time to multiply. Unless small groups remain small, they lose their effectiveness and their ability to care for the needs of each member. Small groups must multiply to maintain intimacy among members while continuing to reach out to non-Christians.

- Having an apprentice who is ready to lead is crucial to multiplication. Leadership is a must, which is why constantly training up your apprentice in and out of small group is an essential ingredient to a successful small group and for successful multiplication. The apprentice should stay in contact with you and come to you for advice, encouragement, and support after they begin leading the newly formed small group.

Transitioning Tactics

- Pray about where the Lord wants you to place your members with in the multiplication process, whether that is with you or your apprentice's new small group. Make sure you are led by the Spirit in your decisions and it is not a popularity contest. Sometimes what we want and how God wants to do things is different, and we can only know God's heart in the matter through prayer.
- Have one on one conversations with everyone in your small group and cast vision with them either staying with you or going with the newly formed small group. If there is some resistance, lovingly show them Scripture that points to multiplication being Biblical and fulfilling the call to make disciples like Matthew 28:19 and John 15:8.
- It is important to exercise great care and sensitivity in forming the new group and not alienate members. Form the new small group according to naturally occurring relationships in your small group. For example, if Sally only comes to your small group because she is friends with Andrea, then it is a natural placement to put Sally and Andrea in the same group when you multiply.

Get Creative! Multiplication Methods

There is no set way to multiply. Multiplication is usually tailored to the small group's unique situation. Very rarely will multiplications look the same. Be creative! Find ways that would best fit your small group's situation. Address the specific needs and desires of your small group and lead them in one of the following ways:

- **Traditional Multiplication** – Your small group multiplies into two groups, one which is led by you, the original small group leader, and the other led by your apprentice. The new small group simply takes half of the original small group members and begins a new small group at a different location.
- **Small Group Plant** – If you have an apprentice that is ready to lead their own small group but you don't have enough people to multiply in the traditional sense, then you may want to think about sending them out to plant a small group. Or if you as the small group leader enjoy forming and creating new groups, you can also leave your small group under the leadership of your apprentice and go out on your own and begin forming a new small group altogether. The small group planter may maintain a relationship with the original small group and may even continue to attend the original small group (if it is on a night other than the one their small group meets on.)

- **House Church Plant** – In this scenario, you raise up a new leader and multiply your small group, but the two small groups continue to meet in the same house at the same time. You come together for fellowship and worship but break up into your two small groups for the teaching, prayer, and accountability. You can continue this pattern of multiplication until there is no more room in your house, apartment, or meeting location! Once there is no more room, choose one or two small groups to find a new meeting place and have them move their small group to their new venue.
- **Internal Multiplication** – If there is a member in your small group that consistently invites new members and has already successfully invited four or five people to your small group, talk to them about the possibility of starting up their own small group with the members they have already invited. They can begin their new small group with a solid foundation of preexisting members and have a very strong core who already knows the heart and vision of their new leader. *Make sure that this person is properly trained and apprenticed under you before you send them out!* Just because someone is good at recruiting does not mean they will be a good leader. Use discernment in this scenario!
- **Small Group Launch** – This method of multiplication involves creating and launching a leadership core from your small group and having them start a small group of their own. The launch group will be significantly smaller than the group that remains with the original leader. For example, a small group of 20 might launch a leadership team of 5 to form a new small group while the 15 remain with the original group. This is very similar to Internal Multiplication, but in this case, there is not one person who has invited the other four or five people. The people starting the new group are chosen by the leader to launch out.

Ensuring a Successful Multiplication

- Celebrate Multiplying! This is actually a crucial step in the multiplication process. Be sure to commission the new small group with a big party when you launch your new group. New life should be celebrated! This is a huge win for your small group and the new small group that has just been formed. Let them know it! This is also a great time to recast the vision of multiplication while the excitement and victory is still very fresh in everyone's hearts and minds.
- Make sure that your apprentice is fully equipped before sending him/her out to lead their own small group. If you do not feel like they are ready, then continue to disciple them until you believe they are ready and they feel like they are ready to lead. The worst thing you can do is send out an ill-equipped apprentice doomed for failure.
- Have large group gatherings where both small groups can fellowship after multiplying. This helps alleviate the feeling that the two small groups are never going to see each other again. Make sure you plan one or two "big group" events for the first few months... it helps to ensure a smooth transition.
- Keep in contact with your apprentice. Pray for them and their small group regularly. Meet with them once or twice a month to discuss how their new small group is going. Like any parent, you will desire to know how your child is doing now that he/she is away from home. In the same way, make sure that you are always there for your apprentice, ready to encourage, equip, cast vision with, or whatever other needs they may have.