



SMALL GROUP LESSONS FROM
THE WEEKEND MESSAGE



SADDLEBACK CHURCH

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Section 1
Introduction

Welcome to the Guide

Welcome to the Weekend Message Application Team Training Guide. The Message Application Team is an all volunteer ministry of Saddleback Church under the supervision of Pastor Steve Gladen, pastor over the Membership Department. The Message Application Team has the role of taking the Weekend Message and developing it into a small group curriculum, the Message Application Guide, which can also be used as a devotional guide by individuals. The goal of the MAG is to take the Weekend Message to a deeper level of understanding and commitment. We are excited that you have chosen to understand more about our ministry.

This information is provided with two purposes in mind. Our first purpose is to train our own team writers. Second, we hope to help churches outside Saddleback Church to implement this type of program in their own churches.

In this guide we will briefly discuss the mission and goals of the Weekend Message Application Team, as well as take an overall look at our current writing format by breaking it into sections and defining each of them.

The guide also contains some helpful writing tips and hints, along with several curriculum “do’s and don’ts” for writing effective Scripture Observation, Discussion, and Purpose questions.

It is our prayer that this Training Guide will enable our own MAG writers to find the guidance and skill they need to write an effective curriculum for the small groups at Saddleback Church. We also pray for those outside Saddleback Church that they will benefit from the information provided here as they attempt to implement similar ministries within their own churches.

The Weekend Message Application Team

The History

Every person who committed to the Message Application Team has been an important member of the Team. This volunteer ministry was formed in 1999 by Pastor Steve Gladen at Saddleback Church. The purpose of this ministry is to create a Bible study guide based on the Saddleback Church weekend message that could be used as small group discussion format. Many people choose to use the MAG as a devotional guide to take the weekend message to a deeper level through daily meditation, prayer and journaling. The original ministry name was the Curriculum Writer's Ministry.

The ministry entered its pilot phase in July 1999, and began officially distributing the MAG (Message Application Guide) as the Sermon Application Guide (SAG) to small group leaders in September 1999. In January 2000, the name of the guide was changed to the Message Application Guide (MAG) and was offered on request by email to the entire Saddleback Church family (i.e., church members). We distributed the MAG weekly by email for approximately two years to over 1,700 small group leaders and individuals. Late in 2002 we were able to make the MAG available online at the Saddleback Church website, www.saddleback.com and using the keyword: MAG.

As the small group ministries at Saddleback Church have expanded, the need for providing Small Group Curriculums has increased tremendously. To meet the growing demand for curriculum, Saddleback Church has taken on the task of writing and producing appropriate small group materials, including curriculum. In order to prevent confusion between the role of the volunteer ministry of producing the Message Application Guide and the staff's work of producing curriculum for small groups, the name of the Curriculum Writer's Ministry was changed to The Weekend Message Application Team.

The Weekend Message Application Team is made up of four teams of approximately four to six writers. Each team writes once every fourth week. The team members attend the first weekend service, take notes, and meet after the service to write the MAG. It is then posted on the website and is accessible late that evening by small group leaders and individuals. To a large extent, the ministry is run with Saddleback Church small group principles in mind, including leaders and apprentices, to encourage and provide ministry leadership and personal growth opportunities.

Mission Statement

This is the Weekend Message Application Team's Mission Statement:

"We will develop a small group curriculum based on the Saddleback Church's weekend message that can be used by Saddleback Small Groups, individuals and others in the Body of Christ to help people through application to discover the Purpose Driven Life. We desire to lead Christians to a deeper, stronger relationship with Jesus Christ, which will ultimately honor and glorify the Lord."

Notes:

Section 2
The Format

MAG Format

We have been following essentially the same format for the MAG curriculum that we began with back in late 1999. The format can be broken down into three main sections:

- Opening Paragraph
- Message Points
- Personal Application and Commitment

These sections will be discussed briefly on the following pages.

The **Message Point** section itself can be divided into four subsections:

[Objective]

- Biblical references and Scripture Observation questions
- Discussion questions
- ❖ "Purpose-Driven" questions (the five purposes – Worship (Magnification), Fellowship (Membership), Discipleship (Maturity), Ministry (Ministry), and Evangelism (Mission))

These sections will be discussed as well, and tips on writing effective **Message Point** questions will be illustrated later in the workshop.

Samples

The following two pages are samples of a completed MAG curriculum. Each section of the format will be discussed following these pages.

Sample MAG - Page 1

DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE

Preparing for 40 Days of Purpose

Pastor Rick Warren

September 21-22, 2002

*“Be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise.
Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days.
Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do.”
Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT)*

The exhortation of Ephesians 5:15-17 is to be careful how we live, not careless, but making the most of every opportunity that comes our way. These verses also challenge us to try to understand what the Lord wants us to do. If we are to discern how we can prevent wasting our lives, we must understand why we are here and know what our purpose for being here is. In order to be certain we don't waste our lives we must answer three basic questions: What does God want? What does it take? Why should I do it? Let's look at these questions together.

Open your group with a prayer.

THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE. PICK AND CHOOSE YOUR POINTS.

1. WHAT DOES GOD WANT? YOUR WHOLE LIFE!

[Objective: Lead the group to understand that since God has given us new life as believers, we are to give our lives wholly to Him.]

- *What does Romans 6:13 say to us about our relationship with God? According to this verse, what are we to do?*
 - Since God gave us new life when we became believers, what should our priorities be?
 - What are some of the reasons it is so hard to give our lives fully to God?
- *Read Deuteronomy 10:12. What does this verse say that the LORD wants from us?*
- *Matthew 6:24 starts by saying you cannot serve two masters. Who are the two masters according to this verse?*
 - What do you think serving God and money has to do with serving two masters?
 - The top priorities in our lives indicate who, or what, we are serving. What kinds of things do people typically tend to put first in their lives? What kinds of reasons, or excuses, do people use to justify these choices?
- *Read Proverbs 3:6. What does this verse promise to those who put God first?*
 - What are some reasons why people choose not to make God top priority in their lives?

❖ **Worship (Magnification)** – When we live our lives wholly for God by putting Him first, He is honored and glorified. What one step can you take this week to help move you toward making God the number one priority in your life? Be prepared to share your progress at the next meeting.

2. WHAT DOES IT TAKE? DISCIPLINE!

[Objective: Help the group to realize that giving our lives wholly to God is a continual process that takes discipline and reliance on God daily.]

- *Read 1 Timothy 4:7. What does this verse tell us we should discipline, exercise, or train ourselves in?*
 - What specific things do you think this verse is encouraging us to avoid?
- *According to Hebrews 12:1b what should we strip off, lay aside, or rid ourselves of?*
 - What are some ways can we identify the sin and hindrances in our lives that prevent us from following God's plans for us?
- *Read through Luke 10:40-42. What is Jesus saying to Martha in verses 40-41? What does verse 42 say about Mary's choice in the situation?*
 - We can miss many things because we are wrapped up in our busyness. What good things might we be missing out on because of the busyness in our lives?
 - Mary did the right thing in the situation described in Luke 10:40-42. What did Jesus see in Mary's choice that pleased Him?
- *How is God at work in us according to Philippians 2:13?*
 - God is always with us and ready to help us do the right things if we ask Him. Why do you think we tend to try to handle things on our own instead of asking God to help us?
 - When you have disciplined yourself to do the difficult but right thing in the past, what was the outcome for your life?

❖ **Discipleship (Maturity)** – Growing in our spiritual journey with Christ takes discipline. Thankfully, our disciplines become habits that pattern our lives over time. What spiritual habit do you need to develop in your life? Identify an action step you can take this week to get the process started.

3. WHY SHOULD I DO IT? BECAUSE OF THE CROSS!

[Objective: Enable the group to define what it means to waste our lives and what our lives could look like if we live for God's purposes.]

- *What exhortation does Paul give us in 2 Corinthians 5:15?*
 - How do most people choose what they will spend their time, energy and money on today? Share some examples of how this same pattern could be evident in the lives of Christians.
 - What do you think a life lived for Christ would look like in today's society?
- *From Romans 12:1, why are we challenged to live as living sacrifices?*
 - What do you understand a living sacrifice to be?
 - What would make a Christian desire to live for Christ instead of for self?
- *2 Corinthians 6:1(Msg) says, "We beg you, please don't squander one bit of this marvelous life God has given us!" What is Paul's great concern for the believers in this verse?*
 - Why do you think Paul felt so much urgency in making this plea?
 - What are some good things we might spend energy, time and money on today that could be squandering the life God has given us?

❖ **Ministry (Ministry)** – Christ lived his life by serving mankind and ministering to their needs. It cost Jesus His life and we must be willing to live for the purposes for which he died. As a group, answer the question, "How can you serve God's purposes during the 40 Days of Purpose Campaign or in your everyday life?" Make a plan to follow through.

Take a moment to review any assignments/challenges made during the personal application and commitment section of your previous meeting. Seeing God at work in the lives of those who commit to Him is essential for growth.

Δ PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

[Objective: Bring the group to the realization that recognizing the truth of this lesson is not enough. Lead them to a commitment to live their lives to fulfill God's purposes.]

God wants your entire life, every part of it. What takes first place in your thoughts, your time and money? Living the life God has planned for us requires discipline. What excuses do you offer God for why you fail to discipline yourself and live for His purposes? What good things do you make time for that prevent you from having time to devote to the purposes of God? Examine your life and ask yourself, "What am I doing that is necessary and what is not?" Remember God's provision of eternal life for you cost Jesus his life; he died for you. Living for him will cost you something too. Are you willing to live the life He gave you for what is important to Him? What changes do you need to make in order to have the time to serve God's purposes? Share with your group any changes God is impressing on you through this study.

Notes:

MAG Elements Descriptions

Opening Paragraph

The goal of the opening paragraph is to set the tone and direction of the Message Application Guide. The paragraph should capture the essence of the Teaching Pastor's opening remarks, including some of the first attention-getting statements he makes. These statements may include current statistics related to the message's main topic, personal experiences, and testimonials from others, etc. The opening paragraph should also include the "opening" Bible reference as given on the Teaching Pastor's outline. This reference and the opening paragraph should map the direction the MAG will take.

Message Points

As mentioned earlier, the Message Point section can be divided into four different subsections: Objective, Scripture Observation questions (Biblical references and their related questions), Discussion questions, and "Purpose Driven" questions.

Objective

The purpose of the Objective statement is to summarize the Teaching Pastor's Message Point, as well as provide the group with a direction for the discussion.

Scripture Observation Questions

The goal of the Scripture Observation question is to help the group members look carefully at the passage(s) and determine "what the verses actually say," not what they think they mean. We do not want to try to interpret the Scripture beyond what the Teaching Pastor presented.

In the MAG, **Scripture Observation** questions are represented by this symbol - □.

For example: □ *What does Genesis 1:27 say about how God created the human race?*

Discussion Questions

The goal of the Discussion question is primarily to promote a meaningful discussion that will help the members of the group understand not only what the Scripture means, but also how they may begin to apply the principles found in the passage to their own lives. **Discussion** questions are represented by • (bullet symbol) in the MAG.

For example, here is a Scripture Observation question with a good follow-up **Discussion** question:

Scripture Observation question: ◻ Consider Proverbs 14:7, 19; 15:18; and 29:22. What do we learn from these verses about uncontrolled anger?

Follow-up Discussion question: • What kind of losses can we bring on ourselves if we don't control our temper?

Suggested Resource: *How to Ask Great Questions* by Karen Lee-Thorp, NavPress, 1998

Purpose Driven Questions

The **Purpose Driven** questions are related to the "Five Purposes of the Church" - Worship (Magnification), Fellowship (Membership), Discipleship (Maturity), Ministry (Ministry) and Evangelism (Mission) - as put forth by Pastor Rick Warren in his books, *The Purpose Driven Church* and *The Purpose Driven Life*.

These questions are designed to develop balance and spiritual maturity in our Christian lives, and they enable us to recognize some practical ways to include the "Five Purposes" in the life of a small group and in our personal lives. We can challenge group members and individuals to WORSHIP Him as a group or as an individual with our lives; CONNECT (Fellowship) with other believers; GROW (Discipleship) to spiritual maturity; SERVE (Ministry) God and others and SHARE (Evangelism) the Good News of Christ with those who don't know Him.

In the MAG, **Purpose Driven** questions are represented by a diamond symbol - ❖.

For example: ❖ **Evangelism (Mission)** - Sharing Christ with others is an important aspect of every believer's life. How can we tactfully approach our friends, family, and neighbors with the message of Christ? Who can you share the message of Christ with this week? Plan to share the results with your group at the next meeting.

Personal Application and Commitment

The goal of the **Personal Application and Commitment** section is to help each individual examine himself/herself; recognize the need for change; make a commitment to change; and be willing to be accountable to the group or someone else for that change in their lives.

This section should consist of a sentence or two to challenge them personally concerning one or more points from the message; then follow up with personally directed questions that will lead them to accomplish their goals.

In the MAG, the **Personal Application and Commitment** section is represented by a triangle symbol - △.

For example: △ **PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:**

In order to have honesty with others and with God, we must first address honesty within ourselves. Are there areas in your life in which you are blind to the truth revealed in God's Word? Are you communicating with others in truth and love? Ask God to help you answer these questions honestly. What specific action(s) can you take in the next week to move toward more honesty in your life? Are you willing to be accountable to the group (or someone else) concerning your progress in this area?

Sample

Please see the next two pages for a look at the MAG format broken down into its various elements -- specifically the different subsections of the **Message Point** section, and the **Personal Application and Commitment** section.

This breakdown represents a template for how these sections should be written; then helpful examples are given on the following page.

Summary of MAG Format

DESIRED FORMAT FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOAL: Promote reflective discussion of truths offered in the Weekend Message which will encourage life-change in group members

1. MAJOR POINT FROM MESSAGE OUTLINE.

[Objective: Provide the group with direction for the discussion.]

- **SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION QUESTION – *What does the Bible say?***
Using the teaching pastor's Scripture references, ask a question that can be answered from the text. This is merely asking them to observe what the text itself says-- no interpretation or analysis here.
- **DISCUSSION QUESTION – *What does it mean? How does this truth affect everyday life?***
 - Ask: What does the Bible mean by this?
 - Ask: What are the implications of this in our lives today?
 - Ask: How can this change our lives?[All 3 types of questions are not required; use whatever is appropriate.]
- ❖ **PURPOSE DRIVEN QUESTION – *Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, or Evangelism*** Ask: How can the message point and Scripture verses influence our lives to achieve this purpose of God in our lives? This question can be a group activity or commitment. It can be personal and should be application-oriented.
- △ **PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:** Apply the truth. What does this truth mean in our lives? How does it apply to us? What do you need to do with these truths? What practical steps can be taken? What step of accountability are you willing to make to the group?

Summary of MAG Format (continued ...)

DESIRED FORMAT EXAMPLES

[Objective: Make clear how to obtain salvation and the importance of living in light of eternity.]

- According to Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:27-28, 4:16 and 10:9-10, what do we have to do to receive God's gift?*
- What is God's promise to us in Romans 10:13? Who can be saved?*

- Can sinful people be saved?
- What stops us from sharing the Good News of salvation with our family and friends?
- Where does the power to live a Christian life come from, and how can we obtain that power in our daily lives?

❖ **Discipleship (Maturity)** – Mature Christians recognize relationships hold the potential of affecting eternity. What are some ways we can affect eternity through our relationships? What practical change can you make this week to maintain an eternal focus as you look at those around you?

△ PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

[Objective: Stress the importance of strong relationships with believers as a benefit to spiritual maturity.]

Are you honoring the Lord with your life by making time to be connected to other members of the body of Christ? Commit to make at least one phone call this week to another member of your small group or to another believer, to offer encouragement and/or prayer for a need they have. Plan to report your progress at the next meeting with your group.

Notes:

The Role of Prayer

Before the team begins their writing session for the evening, the Team Leader should open the time with prayer. Ask that the Holy Spirit guide you to an understanding of what will help people grow in their commitment to God. *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."* (John 16:13 NIV)

Our goal is to help people respond to life the way Jesus did. Ask the Lord to give you the mind of Christ as you work together to create the MAG curriculum. *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"* (Philippians 2:5 KJV)

If you come to a place of difficulty in knowing how to bring a point to light, don't hesitate to stop and pray again. We want our reliance to be on the Holy Spirit as we work. *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. {6} But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."* (James 1:5-6 NIV)

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; {6} in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV)

All our work should be bathed in prayer, reflecting our total reliance on the Lord to complete the task of writing the Message Application Guide. *"...pray continually; {18} give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

(1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 NIV)

Curriculum Guidelines

We must remember that the MAG is being used by many people in their small group Bible study time and not all leaders are experienced. Therefore, it is important to keep the following guidelines in mind as you develop the different sections of the MAG.

1. Keep the wording simple and easy to understand.
2. Avoid using “Christianese” -- doctrinal terminology used by a certain teacher that only people who are familiar with that teacher would understand. Avoid any terms that new believers may have difficulty understanding (i.e., “Sanctification” -- use something like “spiritual growth or maturity” instead).
3. Avoid making references to South Orange County lifestyle.
4. When referencing verses that the Teaching Pastor puts in the Saddleback Notes (the teaching outline), be sure to check the wording and context of the passage in other translations before adding it to a Scripture Observation question.

The wording of the translation that the Teaching Pastor used may work for the message, but not be quite as good for use in a Bible study discussion. Also, always make certain the Biblical reference given for the verse is the correct reference (e.g., John 3:17 - “For God so loved the world...” - **the reference should be John 3:16**).

5. As you write, don’t assume that the leader of the Small Group has the Saddleback Notes (teaching outline) available. If verses included in the outline are necessary to answer your question, include the verse references in the question.
6. Avoid using references to the name of the Teaching Pastor such as “Pastor Rick said ...”. Instead, always use just “the Teaching Pastor said ...”.

Curriculum Guidelines (continued ...)

7. Most questions should be asked in the second person, “we”, or just use references to people in general. This keeps the discussion from being threatening. It will be up to the leader of the Small Group to assess the needs of their group and ask the questions accordingly.

The **Personal Application and Commitment** questions should be written as personal questions using the word “you,” because the purpose of that section is to direct group members to apply the message in their own lives.

8. Scripture Observation questions need to be questions. Don’t tell them to read or consider a passage only. Ensure that after you reference a Bible passage, you follow it up with one or more meaningful questions about that verse.

9. Avoid adding Scripture references to your questions unless it is necessary to make the point valid. Please do not eliminate verses that were given by the Teaching Pastor in the Teaching Outline unless there are numerous verses making the same point or the translation used makes it too difficult to ask a reasonable question.

10. If you need to use a reference to make the Pastor’s point and the translation used doesn’t seem to work in another translation, you may quote the verse giving reference to the translation used and then ask the question. For example: *“Proverbs 23:23 in the Living Bible says, “Get the facts at any price!” What does this verse say about the importance of gaining all the facts?”*

11. Make sure that any Scripture references that are used in your questions are accurate and valid for that question and the corresponding message point.

12. Avoid using the same words and/or phrases repeatedly. For instance, do not start every Objective statement with “Help the group ...”

13. Do not include questions that you or the other members of your writing group cannot easily understand and answer.

Notes:

Section 3
Helpful Writing
Tips

Creating a Good Objective

The **Objective** is an important tool to help groups focus their discussion in a positive direction that addresses the intended meaning and application of the Teaching Pastor's message. The Objective should take into account how the Message Point fits into the overall message. It should ask for an outcome.

Although words like "discuss," "investigate," and "probe" may lead to an outcome, these words would be poor choices in the Objective statement because they do not specifically point to an outcome. Words like "understand," "challenge," "encourage," "learn," and "motivate" are examples of words that require an outcome for the discussion time.

The **Objective** must:

- Follow the Teaching Pastor's intended message
- Be stated in the positive
- Ask for an outcome

Good Objective

Examples:

1. CHOOSE TO WALK ALONE OR BE WITH OTHERS

[Objective: Help the group understand the importance and benefits of building meaningful relationships with others.]

2. CHOOSE TO PRETEND OR TO BE REAL

[Objective: Enable the group to recognize how to be more real in the way they present themselves to others.]

Good Objectives

Examples (continued ...)

3. CHOOSE A SHORTCUT OR THE LONG ROAD

[Objective: Encourage the group to resist taking shortcuts in order to build and maintain good relationships.]

4. CHOOSE COMFORT OR CHANGE

[Objective: Motivate group members to build life-changing relationships despite their uncomfortable challenges or time commitments.]

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

[Objective: Challenge each group member to take the next step in a relationship.]

Creating Good Scripture Observation Questions

The process of good **Bible Study** is Observation, Interpretation and Application. In other words, “What does it say?”, “What does it mean?”, and “What does it mean to me?”, or “to us” in the case of our Discussion Questions. To make application without carefully observing the text and understanding what the passage intends to say, is an error many people make and the result is the incorrect application of God’s Word in their lives.

Our Message Application Guide (MAG) is not a Bible Study in the truest sense of the word; in that, we are not doing an exhaustive study of a topic -- searching out all the verses the Scripture presents on a subject, nor are we carefully looking at context and presenting an authoritative Scripture Observation format. However, we do want to be responsible with the basic concepts of good Scripture Observation as we present the truths of God’s Word to people. We want to try not to interpret the Scripture beyond what the Teaching Pastors present. We can expand on their thoughts and offer verses that support their teaching, but we want to avoid moving the message in a totally different direction.

The Goal of the **Scripture Observation** question is to help the group members look carefully at the passages, and to see “what it actually says,” not what they think it means. This is the point at which the Bible becomes the authority upon which the discussion builds. The Scripture Observation questions should be answerable directly from the text.

Following are some good examples of how we should word the Scripture Observation questions we write for the Message Application Guide:

Scripture Observation Questions

Examples:

- What problem did the disciples encounter in Matthew 8:23-24? Why was this circumstance overwhelming? What was Jesus doing?*
- Read Matthew 8:25-27. What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus sleeping? What did they say to Jesus? How did He answer them?*
- What does God's Word tell us to do when we feel afraid in Luke 2:10?*
- What gift does God promise to help us overcome fear according to John 14:27?*
- How does 1 Chronicles 29:11 illustrate God's control?*
- How do the verses in Matthew 6:25-34 demonstrate God's willingness to provide for us?*
- What does 1 Peter 5:7 tell us to do with our worries?*
- Read 1 Kings 18:16-19:18 to familiarize yourself with the account of Elijah's encounter with the prophets of Baal and his subsequent state of mind. Consider 1 Kings 19:3-5,10 & 14. Elijah had been successful in the mission God had given him. Why then did he feel such depression and loneliness? What did God do to help him through this time?*
- What assurance is offered to us in Psalm 16:9-11?*
- Reflect on 2 Corinthians 12:9; Romans 8:26; Romans 8:34; and Mark 14:34-35. What do we learn from these verses that could help us to have a positive attitude? Are there any promises we can hold onto?*
- What do you see in Proverbs 19:8 that speaks about learning? What is the result of gaining understanding?*
- From Matthew 19:13-14 what was the agenda of the disciples? How did it differ from Jesus' agenda? How did Jesus handle the agenda of others when it differed from his own?*
- What example of solitude does Jesus give us in Mark 1:35?*
- We need to accept the reality that God forgives us. What do Romans 8:1 and Philippians 3:13 tell us about guilt and how we should look at our past?*

Notes:

Creating Good Discussion Questions

The **Discussion** Questions may be a combination of Interpretation and Application. The interpretation questions ask, "What does it mean?" and application questions ask, "What does it mean to me/us?" It is often helpful to ask the group to discuss what the passage means - what was the intended meaning of the passage. Asking them how the passage relates or could relate to us today is a good way to move them to apply the Scripture to their lives.

Discussion Questions are the obvious follow-up questions to the verses they have considered in the Scripture Observation Questions. They also help develop their thoughts and probe deeper into truths the Pastor presented in his message.

Remember -- the Scripture Observation/Scripture Reference Questions are represented by the □ symbol, and the Discussion Questions are represented by the • symbol.

The Goal of the **Discussion** Question is primarily to promote a meaningful discussion that will help the members of the group to understand not only what the Scripture means, but also how they may begin to apply the principles in their own lives. It is important at this point not to ask very personal questions, so we avoid asking "you" questions. Ask the questions in a way that applies to "us" or to "people" in general. This way the discussion stays open and many ideas may be brought out, allowing the group members the opportunity to recognize if the truths presented need attention in their own lives.

An excellent **resource** for asking meaningful questions for small group discussion is: *How to Ask Great Questions* by Karen Lee-Thorp, NavPress, 1998

Creating Good Discussion Questions (continued ...)

Here is an example of changing a personal question in a more general direction:

Instead of:

- In your experience have you found venting your anger to ever resolve a problem; or does venting stir up more anger? What needs to change in your life before you can restrain your words?

Try:

- In a heated discussion what result does venting anger usually produce? What needs to change within us before we can restrain our words and communicate effectively?

Some examples of good Discussion questions are found below and on the following page:

Good Discussion Questions

Examples:

Where do we get the strength to do the difficult things which God desires for us to do? See Philippians 4:13.

- Does this verse imply that God will give us superhuman powers to do things apart from His will for us? What kinds of things do you think this verse might apply to?

Good Discussion Questions Examples (continued ...)

❑ *Consider Proverbs 14:7,19; 15:18 and 29:22. What do you learn about uncontrolled anger?*

- What are some problems people bring on themselves and others when they give in to their tempers?
- What kind of losses can we bring on ourselves because of a hot temper?
- How can counting the cost of losing our temper before a situation arises help us to avoid a bad result?
- Who loses the most when we lose our tempers? Explain your answer.

❑ *What advice do we get from Proverbs 21:23?*

- What does it mean to guard our mouth and tongue?

❑ *From James 1:19, what instructions do we receive?*

- How can being quick to listen and slow to speak help us to be slow to anger?

❑ *From Proverbs 15:1 how can we diffuse an angry situation? What will make that same situation worse?*

- Is the gentle answer the one that someone “wants” to hear? What is a gentle answer?
- How do most people react to angry words directed toward them? What can we do to help change the mood?
- How can we begin to give the gentle answer instead of the harsh word?
- Is it OK to pass our bad behavior off by saying, “That’s just the way I am...?”
- What can we do to change the habit of bad behavior toward others? How might stopping to think before we speak change our reaction to others?

Notes:

Creating Good “Purpose” Questions

The “**Purpose**” questions are related to God’s Five Purposes for our lives (Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry and Evangelism). They are designed to develop balance and Christ-likeness in our lives.

If we are to become balanced Christians, we need to worship God both corporately and individually, connect with God and other believers through fellowship, grow to Christ-likeness through discipleship, serve in ministry and share the Good News of Christ through evangelism. All these purposes must be incorporated into our lives on a regular basis. The “Purpose” questions enable us to recognize some practical ways to include all Five Purposes in the life of a small group and in our personal lives. This section can move into the area of personal or group application.

We write one Purpose Point for each point of the Teaching Outline. If an entire message lends itself strongly to one Purpose we can, on occasion, use one Purpose Point for the entire message. If space is available we can write one Purpose Question/ Application for each point of the outline (all of the points being the same Purpose) or if space is limited we can write one Purpose Point for the entire outline, placing it at the end, just in front of the Personal Application and Commitment section.

Also, in the rare event it is really difficult to use a different Purpose Point for each Message Point, it is OK to repeat a Purpose and leave one or two out.

Consider these options as a last resort.

The thought behind using a different Purpose for each Point of the Outline is to instill in the users of the guide that ALL of the Purposes need to be functioning in our lives. A person may consider themselves to be a Maturity oriented person in just about all areas of his or her Christian life but, thinking about how each Point of the Message Outline can be applied to one of the Purposes can cause us to become more aware of the other Purposes. This concept of applying each Point of the Message Outlines to a different Purpose of God for our lives has the potential of bringing real change and growth.

If it is really going to make a better MAG we can do whatever it takes as far as these points go. But don't lose the concept that all of God's Word is applicable to our personal lives and all of the Purposes are to be functioning in the life of every

believer. Changing the format for these Points should be the exception and not the rule (ruling practice).

Understanding what each Purpose is all about is crucial to our ability to write meaningful and creative questions for this section of the Message Application Guide. A great exposition of the purposes is readily available to us in Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*.

On the following pages you will find brief descriptions of each of the Five Purposes, as well as good examples of questions for each Purpose. The PRIMARY FUNCTIONS section provides ideas for the goal of the Discipleship Purpose Point. The POSSIBILITIES section states ideas for specific ways or areas the questions or exercises can be directed in. The S.H.A.P.E. section points out the kind of person who might be willing to champion this purpose in a group. We have provided this here to give you additional ideas for writing the Purpose Points.

WORSHIP (Magnification) – Think “worship” (Personal and Corporate)

1. This purpose addresses our relationship with God. Here we can include the ideas that we were planned for God's pleasure; God smiles when we live to please Him; the heart of worship is surrender; God wants us to be best friends with Him, and it is possible to develop a friendship with Him; God is not satisfied with part of our lives, He wants all of us; and our need to love and trust Him even when we can't feel His presence. All these thoughts speak of true worship, acknowledging God in first place in our lives.
2. To magnify means to make larger. Worshiping the Lord magnifies Him. Worship is more than singing in a worship service. When we give our attention to God; live the life He planned for us to live; when we love and adore Him; when we praise Him; give glory to Him; recognize His greatness and who He is, that is when we worship and magnify God. Our very lives can be an expression of worship to God, and a testimony of His power and grace. Everything we do that glorifies God and gives Him credit is worship.
3. The **Worship** questions should turn our focus on the Lord. We have the opportunity to help those using the guide to recognize ways our lives can be an expression of worship. The questions should be reminders that our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions can all glorify Him and reveal our worship of God. We can also use this opportunity to focus minds and hearts on the greatness of God. Enumerating the answers to prayer and the blessings He has bestowed on us, and recognizing the future He has planned for us are also good areas to explore in the questions.

To some degree, taking care of our physical and mental health is honoring the temple of the Holy Spirit and is also placing importance on God's work through us. Balance would be the key in the area of physical fitness. Care should be taken to avoid the worship of our bodies; however, we should care for our bodies so that we are fit to serve God.

3. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS:

- Commit to making Romans 12:1 the key to personal worship
- Keep an ongoing assessment of personal commitment to living for God
- Encourage a life surrendered to God's purposes for every group member
- Provide a regular worship diet for the group (a capella, CD/tape accompaniment, or live music such as guitar or piano)
- Regularly (monthly) host a communion service for your small group (involve your leader and Maturity Champion as well)
- Champion your group to attend worship services together in the community
- Encourage the group to formally attend other members' baptisms, baby dedications, weddings, and family funeral services, etc. together

4. POSSIBILITIES:

- Consider the implications of Romans 12:1 and how you are living out these truths in your daily life
- Take time to ask God what areas of your life still need to be surrendered to Him. Commit to following through and to be accountable to the group.
- Host an outdoor or off-site communion service
- Bring in worship tapes for familiarity or other simple worship songs (select songs that flow together, that finish slower, and lead to prayer)
- Copy song sheets from the weekend service for your group's worship time
- Spend some time praising God for His goodness, answers to prayer, and acknowledge His greatness
- Have a prayer circle where each person speaks out an attribute, name, or aspect of the nature of God in praise of who He is (such as "Wonderful," "Loving," "Just," "Emmanuel, God with Us," "Counselor," "Creator," "King of Kings," "Savior," etc.) Look in the Psalms for help.
- Have each member bring his/her favorite worship song for your magnification time (e.g., "White as Snow." "Praise the Name of Jesus," "I Love You Lord," etc.)
- Play your favorite worship song (or songs) and just let the members listen and then pray together
- Read a Psalm or two and have a time of reflection
- Select "your place" in the Worship Center where you can always sit together
- Attend a new member's baptism as a group
- Do your worship a capella...brave but powerful (Select simple, familiar, and prayerful worship songs)

POSSIBILITIES (...Continued)

- Challenge them to become best friends with God. Encourage them to make a plan to give God some time and attention everyday at a specific time. Ask them to be accountable for their progress either to the group or someone else.
- Turn in the Psalms and use them as a model for giving God praise and worship
- Try hosting a foot washing service while people share a personal prayer request, and you then pray for them

5. S.H.A.P.E.:

Spiritual Gifts: Discernment, intercession, encouragement

Heart: For worship and praise

Abilities: Loves to worship, sing, lead other into an atmosphere of worship and praise

Personality: Extrovert for praise, introspective, reflective

Experiences: Leading others, enjoying worship and praise, motivating people to new experiences in God

6. Good Example of the Worship Purpose question:

❖ **Worship** - We exist to celebrate God's presence, focus vertically in our relationship with God, and to worship Him personally and corporately. What conscious decision can you make to worship God in all your activities this week? How does your group time glorify God? Is there a way to make your group time more God focused? Consider a time of singing or sharing the praises of what God is doing in your lives, searching the Scripture together with the intention of allowing it to change your lives, etc.

FELLOWSHIP (Membership) – Think “Connect”

1. This Purpose addresses the fellowship and community building functions within the church. It shows how we connect people in fellowship with others i.e., belonging to Christ; connecting with believers through fellowship in the Body of Christ (church membership); fellowship in a small group; a sense of belonging; and an awareness of being known. We can use this point to remind people that God created us to be part of His family. He wants us to show love to others, especially other believers; discover and fulfill our life role through relationships with others; experience true fellowship with God and believers; develop in honesty, humility, forgiveness, responsibility, confidentiality and have frequent contact with believers.
2. The **Fellowship** Questions should help the small group and individuals understand how they can and should be connected to other believers for true community. This support may mean having their own needs met, as well as meeting the needs of others. It's about a place to belong.
3. This is also a good place to remind the group that unity is the soul of fellowship. It is our job to protect the unity of our church. These questions can focus on what we have in common rather than differences; challenge our expectations of others or leadership; encouragement rather than criticism; refusing to listen to gossip and how to handle gossip; and godly conflict resolution.
4. **PRIMARY FUNCTIONS:**
 - Assist in helping people connect within a small group
 - Ensure the honoring of people and the natural celebrations of their lives (birthdays, personal victories, family highlights, life achievements, etc.)
 - Encourage members to offer the “welcome wagon” to newcomers (formally introduce and have them share their spiritual journey)
 - Facilitate sharing time, ice breakers, opening questions, mixer times (praise reports, highlights, and mixer games)
 - Keep group rosters and group guidelines (covenant) updated

5. POSSIBILITIES:

- Provide opportunities for group members to accept God's gift of salvation
- Encourage those who have not been baptized through immersion to do so. Suggest the whole group attends the baptism
- Challenge all group members to take C.L.A.S.S. 101 and to follow through with the C.L.A.S.S. process
- Remind members to sign, and take seriously, a commitment to the Covenants of the Church, as presented in C.L.A.S.S. 101
- Welcome newcomers by having the group members share brief (two minutes) testimonies, and have the new person share a ten-minute version
- Stress a continued or recommitment to living in relationship with Christ and His church
- Challenge each individual to become a regular player within their church, ministry, or small group, not just content to be an attender
- Host creative, fun, and personal affirmation times for every group member's birthday (Ask members to finish: "I appreciate Bill because...")
- Pass around the NavPress book *201 Questions* and have people answer one question
- Have everyone write a personal card that is read aloud for a person's birthday or anniversary
- Encourage regular sub-grouping during the Membership and Maturity group times in order to better care for the members
- Create a "hot seat" and have each person sit in it and then shower him or her with affirmation and praise
- Host a creative dinner party (progressive dinner, road rally to restaurants, murder mystery night, etc.)
- Plan a group retreat, twenty-four hours or a weekend (Remember 1 weekend spent together will be the equivalent of twenty-four group meetings of two hours each)
- Make plans for a beach day, pool party, or summer barbeque
- Serve as a "care caller" for the group: follow up on new, absent, or late members of the group
- Do a group call to members who are absent. Let everyone who is there talk (Say, "We just wanted to call to let you know we missed you. Here's Sue...")

POSSIBILITIES (Continued)

- Use email to keep in contact with group members and to update meeting times, prayer requests etc.
- Attend C.L.A.S.S. 101 as a group
- Give consideration to key relationships that need more attention
- Examine where time, money and energy are spent and determine if they are taking away from developing the most important relationships. Make any necessary plans for change. Commit to being accountable for change.
- Challenge members to deal with relationships that need forgiveness or restoration

6. S.H.A.P.E.

Spiritual Gifts: Encouragement, hospitality, helps, shepherding

Hearth: For connecting people and creating community

Abilities: Coordinate activities and creatively celebrate people, and possess events organizational skills

Personality: Party animal, loves people and including people, sanguine personality, extrovert

Experiences: Social Coordinator in Life, Assistant Director of This or That

7. Good Example of a Fellowship Purpose question:

❖ **Fellowship** - Having open and honest relationships with fellow Christians is an important part of being a member of the Body of Christ. How would a lack of honesty within a group of believers hinder valuable relationships? Take a few minutes to go around the room and have each person affirm one quality they observe in the person on their left.

DISCIPLESHIP (Maturity) – Think “GROW”

1. This Purpose addresses the process of and promotes our spiritual growth. God created us to become like Christ. So, the goal is Christ-likeness; to grow in character, develop Christ-likeness, become like Christ. In his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren spoke of ways God uses to grow us up. Some of them are people, His Word and circumstances. People provide us with opportunities to grow in love and forgiveness. The Word of God requires accepting its authority as the final authority, assimilating its truth, and applying its principles. Becoming like Christ includes the choices and commitments we make; and a right view and response to the purpose of troubles and temptations in our lives. Some of the characteristics that mark a mature Christian's life are: the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:22-23). Other qualities are devotion to God, obedience, trust and reliance on God, discipline, faith, humility, being other-focused, perseverance, having a forgiving nature, being responsible, and a willingness to serve.
2. The **Discipleship** questions focus the group and individuals on how they can become more like Christ. These questions should challenge us to grow in our relationship with God and to see the fruit of the spirit become more evident in our lives as we deal with others and the circumstances of life.
3. **PRIMARY FUNCTIONS:**
 - Encourage further development of the C.L.A.S.S. 201 spiritual habits in the members of your group (quiet time, prayer, small group involvement, and people sharing tithing success stories). Promote attendance of C.L.A.S.S. 201 as a group.
 - Provide a spiritually refreshing and replenishing diet through creative teaching, spiritual readings, devotional sharing, or group prayer times
 - Assist in the overall spiritual formation process of your group by developing and encouraging various spiritual exercises, experiences, or practices that will enhance one's spiritual growth
 - Champion the C.L.A.S.S. attendance process. For example, follow through on baptism from C.L.A.S.S. 101, quiet time accountability from C.L.A.S.S. 201, active ministry involvement from C.L.A.S.S. 301, and regular sharing of Christ with others from C.L.A.S.S. 401.

4. POSSIBILITIES:

- Direct members to connect with a Spiritual Partner for sharing and accountability in their spiritual journey
- Encourage people to try a “Solitude” experience. Very good resources are available from the Maturity Department at Saddleback Church.
- Challenge members to attend C.L.A.S.S. 101, 201, 301 & 401 together or in pairs
- Encourage the members to develop a spiritual journal to God (daily log of conversations with God)
- Share a devotional reading at the beginning of the group (Oswald Chambers, Max Lucado, or better yet, from your own devotions)
- Host a foot washing service with your Worship Champion (Foot washing worksheet available in the Membership Department, Small Groups)
- Coordinate the weekly prayers and praise reports
- Share a book report on a topic the group has need or shows interest in
- Lead discussion on devotional practices and personal progress
- Challenge a day of fasting for a personal need or spiritual discipline (half a day of prayer)
- Teach your group to pray creatively (partners, pray over a Psalm, seeker friends, etc.)
- Have a curriculum selection party (Bring multiple curriculum ideas in from a Christian Bookstore)
- Everyone is vulnerable to temptation. Develop a plan to protect yourself from temptation before it becomes a problem.
- Challenge them to have an accountability partner if they are struggling with an area of temptation

5. S.H.A.P.E.:

Spiritual Gifts: Teaching, encouragement, wisdom, prophecy and a variety of others

Heart: For the Word and transferring the power of God's Spirit

Abilities: Communication, motivation, training others, voracious learner

Personality: Thinker, someone who loves to go deep, reader, teaching

Experiences: Successful and growing devotional life, various life experiences, and "relative" journeyman/woman in the group

6. Good Example of a Discipleship Purpose question:

❖ **Discipleship** - Being willing to face our shortcomings and taking steps to change are part of the process of becoming more Christ-like. How willing are you to allow your group to help you identify areas in your life where you may be blind to God's truth? As you are able, commit as a group to lovingly encourage spiritual growth both within the group and personally. Choose a spiritual partner to team up with on a regular basis for sharing and accountability.

MINISTRY – Think “Service”

1. It is important to keep in mind the difference between our Ministry and our Mission. Our ministry is our service to believers within the church; our mission is our service to unbelievers outside the church. We have all been S.H.A.P.E.d for serving God. He has created each of us to serve Him in *ministry* within the church, by serving fellow believers. This Purpose addresses the need for every believer to discover their unique S.H.A.P.E. for ministry, and to commit to develop and use their God-given gifts and abilities in serving God and others. This begins by discovering our S.H.A.P.E., which includes our **S**piritual gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality, and our **E**xperiences. All of these elements together reveal how God made each of us to make a difference with our lives.
2. Service is the pathway to significance and it is through ministry that we discover the meaning of our lives. We will never know what we are good at until we try, so it is our goal to challenge people to jump in and try some ministry experiences. It is also good to help people think like servants: thinking more about others than themselves, think like stewards - not owners, concerned about their own work rather than what others are doing, basing their identity in Christ and seeing ministry as an opportunity rather than an obligation. When it comes to serving, many people see their inadequacy, but our ability and strength come from recognizing that real power in service comes from God, not our own strength.
3. The **Ministry** questions challenge groups and individuals to discover their S.H.A.P.E. through the **C.L.A.S.S. 301** process, and to begin to develop and use their God-given gifts and abilities by serving God and others. These questions should bring awareness that service is to be an important part of every Christian's life and the realization every Christian is a minister. Remember not to confuse *spiritual gifts* with the “Fruit of the Spirit.” “Fruit” shows our Maturity. “Gifts” show our Ministry. Encourage S.H.A.P.E. discovery, deployment, and the development process for both personal and group ministry involvement with these questions.

4. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS:

- Champion C.L.A.S.S. 301 attendance, the S.H.A.P.E. Discovery Session (S.H.A.P.E. Interview), and the application of one's God-given S.H.A.P.E., either at the church or within our church family.
- Catalyze and coordinate infrequent group service opportunities, either at the church or within our community.
- Facilitate group "sharing times" about the personal progress and ministry highlights found in both the discovery and development of our God-given S.H.A.P.E.
- Encourage the identification of who in the group might best champion the purpose of Ministry. Suggest someone who has a heart for Ministry take this role for a limited time period to help the group members grow in their desire and ability to serve God and others.

5. POSSIBILITIES:

- Have people go to www.saddleback.com/ministry for current and ongoing ministry opportunities
- Go to www.saddleback.com/ministry and look for the Ministry Finder. It is a great tool to find service opportunities.
- Go to www.saddleback.com/ministry and click on "Ministry in a Box." There are great projects for groups and families to serve together, or ideas for individuals, too
- Go to www.saddleback.com/ministry and click on "Serving Saddleback Today." It has ministry opportunities for people to serve at the Ministry Center during the week
- Challenge members to explore the S.H.A.P.E. Discovery process through 301
- Encourage S.H.A.P.E. development through the S.H.A.P.E. Discovery Session (S.H.A.P.E. Interview)
- Send a note or give a call to a member who shows initiative or progress in the S.H.A.P.E. process
- Encourage the group to attend C.L.A.S.S. 301 together or in pairs. (Encourage a second round if members are not applying S.H.A.P.E.)
- Create a S.H.A.P.E. "hot seat" experience (where members affirm and Champion people along their S.H.A.P.E. journey.)

POSSIBILITIES (Continued)

- Challenge everyone to “experiment” with or “test drive” a new or different ministry area for discovery purposes
- Attend one of the 150 new ministry orientations with an exploring new member
- Have the group share “one” new thing that they are learning about their S.H.A.P.E. discovery process
- Help the church on a “work day” or call the church office for the project list
- Challenge the group members to examine their attitudes concerning serving. Are they pleasing to God? What needs to change if your service is to be acceptable to God?
- Commit to meeting the need of someone other than yourself this week. How was your joy level? What does that tell you about your attitude as you serve?
- Examine whether you think like a servant or an owner when it comes to your resources of time, money and energy. Consider any changes that will please God.

6. S.H.A.P.E.:

Spiritual Gifts: Administrative, discernment, shepherding

Heart: For seeing people mobilized for ministry

Abilities: Empowering others, leading others, believing in others, coordinating teams

Personality: Introvert or extrovert, people-oriented, but ability to make things happen with persistent follow-through

Experiences: Managing people, working with teams, people development skills

7. Good Example of Ministry question:

❖ **Ministry** - Ministry involves meeting needs. Why is it important that we are willing to be humble and adjust to the needs of others as we serve in our ministries, neighborhoods, and families? Is there a need within the group or in your church you as a group could meet? Go to www.saddleback.com/ministry and find an area of ministry your group can serve in together or as individuals. Make a plan and discuss the possibilities at the next meeting.

EVANGELISM (Mission) – Think “Share”

1. God wants each of us to have both a *ministry* to believers, in the church, and a *mission* to unbelievers, in the world. This Purpose addresses the fact that God has always been interested in the entire world. God has given the church the overall task of fulfilling its Five Purposes as given in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission – worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and evangelism. Our goal is to champion the small group development process (filling the empty chair and releasing leaders/apprentices), as well as the call to local evangelism and global missions. We also want to encourage local cross-cultural experiences as they are available. **Evangelism**, the church’s task: Introducing people to Jesus Christ; sharing the Gospel; Cross-cultural sharing and Missions.
2. The **Evangelism** questions can challenge group members and individuals to consider their *Testimony*: the story of how they began a relationship with Jesus; their *Life Lessons*: the most important things God has taught them; their *Life Passions*: the values and issues they care about most deeply; and *The Good News*, all valuable tools for sharing Christ with others.

We can use the **Evangelism** questions to help people realize who is around them that they can share Christ with. We can also introduce them to the idea of short-term mission work both at home and abroad; and help them consider how they can become “World-Class Christians.” We should remind them to attend C.L.A.S.S. 401, so they can learn about what **Evangelism** means in the life of a Christian.

3. In the Appendix on page 66, we have included for your convenience, a page called, **Circles of Influence**. This page is intended to be used as a tool to help MAG writers come up with ideas for influencing people around them and bring them to Christ. This page can help us identify who we might have opportunity to influence and how we might take the first steps. This can be helpful with the Evangelism Point. Also, with a bit of imagination, the concepts might work in the areas of Ministry and Fellowship as well

2. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS:

- Regularly pray for the unconnected and unchurched people in your lives, from the core of our church to the ever-growing community
- Encourage the value of sharing Christ with unchurched family and friends, inviting them to attend a weekend seeker service and/or your small group
- Encourage the entire four-step “Shepherd Development Process” of filling the

group's open chair, selecting Champions, identifying apprentices through sub-grouping, and releasing leaders/apprentices in order to connect a few more sheep (helping to eventually multiply your group)

- Encourage discussions, prayer activities, and entry-level trips to experience cross-cultural out-reach opportunities to help people discover and deploy their unique life mission in this world

4. POSSIBILITIES:

- Remind the group to use the Saddleback New Home Kits as a way to get to know their new neighbors and familiarize them with our church. This may open the door to sharing Christ with them.
- Suggest using the Saddleback New Baby Kit as a means to reach out to neighbors with the arrival of their babies. This can be an opportunity to talk to them about Christ.
- Encourage attendance of C.L.A.S.S. 401, as a group or go in pairs
- Challenge them to consider and write out their *Testimony*: the story of how they began a relationship with Jesus
- Ask them to make a list of the *Life Lessons*: the most important things God has taught them, so they can share this with someone
- Motivate an understanding of their *Life Passions*: the values and issues they care most deeply about; this can help them in sharing with others
- Influence them to share *The Good News*: explaining how to accept Christ with others
- Help them realize who is around them that they can share Christ with by creating a Top Ten List. See the **Circles of Influence** in the appendix for help making this list.
- Introduce them to the idea of short-term mission work to other cultures both at home and abroad
- Encourage them to become clear about what Mission means in the life of a Christian
- Have the group share “who” and “how” they got connected into a small group (re-connect with the power and purpose of a personal invitation)
- Share the Biblical motivations for the open chair, evangelism, and cross-cultural outreach locally and globally
- Link up with any mission organization for materials, books, videos, vision trips, or ministry partnerships, and review/discuss them with your group
- Encourage members to adopt a “needy” person in their lives. Share the progress and prayers with the group.
- Who can you share Christ with this week? Make a plan and follow through.
- Challenge the group to write their "Testimony" in a brief form and be prepared to share it with the group at the next meeting. Sharing it with the group will give confidence as you share it with unbelievers.
- Make a list of the Life Lessons you have learned as a believer, so you have them clear as the need to share arises

POSSIBILITIES (Continued)

- Make a list of the blessings God has granted you which can be an encouragement to someone during their time of need or struggle
- Host a free neighborhood car wash (in the name of Jesus)
- Do yard work, housecleaning, or repairs (for single moms/widows within the church)
- Serve as a group for the Purpose Driven Church Conference
- Create your own “mission project” in your community (ask the group for their input: they’ll love it more!)
- Head down to mission in Mexico, or serve at an unwed mother’s home, or serve at a homeless shelter at any time other than Christmas or Thanksgiving

5. S.H.A.P.E.:

Spiritual Gifts: Evangelism, encouragement, teaching, exhortation

Heart: For seeing people reached for Christ and the spreading of the Gospel

Abilities: Empowering gifts, organizational skills, project oriented

Personality: Extrovert, risk lover, self-confident

Experiences: Missions exposure, small group membership, evangelism, training, people skills, project management

6. **Good Example of Evangelism Purpose Question:**

❖ **Evangelism** - Living a godly life - conducting ourselves in a holy manner - is an unspoken witness of Jesus Christ to the communities in which we live. But, “...*how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*” *Romans 10:14*. Discuss how you as a group can participate in a local outreach to share the love of Christ in some way. Consider a social event, possibly a barbecue, for inviting friends or family who don’t know Christ. Or, go to www.saddleback.com then click on **SHARE**, then click on **Current Opportunities** to find out other ways your group might be able to reach out to the lost.

Notes:

Section 4
Appendix

Responsibilities of the Ministry Leader

The role of the Ministry Leader is to oversee the running of the team. This person needs to invest in and develop a Ministry Apprentice to help ensure the teams run smoothly. The apprentice should be trained to take over in the absence of the Ministry Leader. The Ministry Leader is responsible to identify the leaders within each group. This person should encourage each leader to develop an apprentice to assist them and fill in for them in their absence. The Ministry Leader should train leaders; develop someone to train new writers or personally train them; maintain close communication with the leaders; critique the work of the groups as necessary to maintain consistency and quality; keep an updated Roster of all groups and group members; create a calendar for at least six months and up to a year showing the dates the teams are responsible to write. As needed the Ministry Leader and Ministry Apprentice may need to present writing workshops to build unity and consistency within the teams. Occasional Leaders' meetings are also necessary and should be organized and run by the Ministry Leader.

Responsibilities of the Ministry Apprentice

The Ministry Apprentice is to assist the Ministry Leader in any ways needed to maintain the work of the ministry. This person should expect close communication with the Ministry Leader and be willing to fill in when the Ministry Leader is unavailable.

Responsibilities of Team Leaders

The Team Leaders are responsible to notify the MAG Writers of the dates they will be responsible to write. The Team Leader should also be familiar with the MAG format and able to help the writers keep the consistency of the MAG quality. The Leader is ultimately responsible for the finished MAG; for emailing the Guide to Leaders and the Membership Department Leadership; making copies to be available on Sunday for anyone who needs a hardcopy; and for posting the MAG Online.

The Team Leaders should identify team members with leadership potential and develop an apprentice to assist them during the writing of the MAG and to fill in when the Leader is unavailable.

Responsibilities of the Team Apprentice

The Team Apprentice should assist the Team Leader in any ways needed. The Apprentice should be prepared to fill in when the Leader is unavailable.

Responsibilities of the MAG Writer

Commitment to the work and the team

A schedule will be available for each quarter. Our teams are purposefully small in order to reduce confusion and multitudes of perspectives that tend to distract and slow down the work. However, each member is vital to the process, and we need you there with your team when it is your turn to write. We need to know that we can count on you. If you do not show up, the team is delayed in starting because they are waiting for you; and even if you notify the leader of your absence, more responsibility is added to the other team members. Please mark your calendars when you receive the schedule, and consider it an important commitment. Remember that approximately 1,700 leaders and individuals are accessing this guide weekly.

Be available for occasional meetings/training sessions

We will make every effort to keep these to a minimum, but in order to maintain consistency and uniformity in the curriculum, meetings and training sessions may be necessary.

Understand and submit your work according to the template

We are striving for consistency among all writers and the groups. Please make yourself familiar with the format, purpose, and style of the guide. When you write your questions, please follow that format. If you need help wording something, ask for help from the team.

Don't be possessive of your work

Please be willing to be flexible. As the group edits the questions, be willing to accept changes that the majority or the leader feels will make the work more understandable or to the point.

Make certain the Objective is consistent with the overall message

Write an Objective that complements the goal of the Teaching Pastor's overall message, and directs the flow of the particular point.

Responsibilities (continued ...)

Make certain that your work accomplishes the Objective

After completing your work, read the Objective and the questions to be sure that the goal could be accomplished by answering the questions. If not, change the goal or add/subtract questions to correct the problem.

Please arrive promptly at the Ministry Center

Please drive to the Ministry Center immediately following the message. Your Team Leader must let you into the Ministry Center, so if you arrive late, he or she cannot go in without you, and the team cannot get started on time.

Ministry Center Etiquette

1. Please keep lids on all drinks.
2. If you have made coffee, please turn off the coffee maker and rinse out the coffee pots before leaving.
3. Remember, you are using a staff member's work-station. Clean up your work area before leaving.
4. If you borrowed chairs from another area, please return those before you leave.
5. Please leave the copier area clean.
6. Turn off the lights in your area before you leave for the night.
7. Always remember to be courteous to your fellow writers by arriving promptly at the Ministry Center after the service.

SADDLEBACK MESSAGE APPLICATION LEADER'S GUIDE

- **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like Him. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next sixty to ninety days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge them to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider the Five Purposes and make a plan to encourage your group to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider if your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion? Is it stimulating, challenging and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using Your Application Guide

- Your Application Guide has been designed to stimulate discussion, commitment and growth in four areas:
 1. Questions designated with □ are specifically designed to provide an opportunity for Bible Study and discussion.
 2. Questions designated with • are specifically designed to stimulate discussion about the Pastor's message. The questions probe what the message means to us, and how we can begin to appropriate the principles to our lives.
 3. Questions designated with ❖ are designed to stimulate discussion and commitment to an area of the Five Purposes; i.e., Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry or Evangelism.
 4. Questions designated with △ are designed to bring each group member to a personal commitment to growth and accountability to the group.
- Keep in mind that the Application Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group you may choose one of the following options:
 - one section of questions;
 - one or two questions from each section;

SADDLEBACK MESSAGE APPLICATION

LEADER'S GUIDE (Continued ...)

- one question designated with • and one question designated with ♦ from one or all sections; or
 - the question designated with a □ from each section and the △ question
-
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember this is only a guide.
 - Most questions are asked in the second person, “we” or references to people in general. This keeps the discussion from being threatening. More mature groups may prefer that the questions be personal allowing them to share their personal experiences, struggles and growth. As the leader you are to assess the needs of your group and ask the questions accordingly.
 - The questions relating to the Five Purposes are meaningful to develop balance and spiritual maturity in our Christian lives. If we are to become balanced Christians, we need fellowship, discipleship, service, evangelism, and worship all incorporated into our lives. You can bring your group to an awareness of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
 - Personal application is key to everyone’s growth and should be included in every discussion. If when asked how they intend to apply a principle to their lives, a group member says, “I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer,” it is important that you help them to make a more specific application. Help them to commit to a specific plan of action by asking them “How are you going to begin?” An example would be to get up a half hour earlier each morning, and spend fifteen minutes reading the Bible and ten minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for their progress at the next meeting.
 - As the Leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps them recognize their need for change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.
 - Please give us your input. Our purpose is to meet your needs and the needs of your group. Our heart’s desire is to assist you and your group in your spiritual growth.

**SADDLEBACK MESSAGE APPLICATION
LEADER'S GUIDE
(Continued ...)**

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More Writing Tips

Below are some examples of Message Points and questions that were written for each point. The first example for each point will show good questions for Scripture Observation and Discussion; however, the second example will give us an idea of perhaps a better way to expand on these questions to promote a livelier, and hopefully, a more meaningful study and discussion time.

Good

1. EARN AN HONEST LIVING

[Objective: Motivate the group to discuss the value of work and understand that work is one of God's commandments.]

- Read 2 Thessalonians 3:12. What were we created to do?*
 - What has God given us to allow us to fulfill His commandment to work?
 - What does God tell us about the balance between work and rest on a weekly basis?
 - What type of work is considered honorable?
- ❖ **Evangelism** - If we work diligently, who will witness our example? What will they learn?

=====

Better

1. EARN AN HONEST LIVING

[Objective: Motivate the group to discuss the value of work and understand that work is one of God's commandments.]

- Genesis 2 tells the story of creation. From verse 15, what was one of the things for which man was created?*
- What does Paul say about work in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13? What are we commanded to do in verse 12?*
- See Proverbs 14:23. What type of work is considered profitable? What is the result of failing to work?*

More Writing Tips (continued ...)

- God's Word has much to say about work, why do you think that is?
- What resources has God given to enable us to fulfill His commandment to work? (Refer to Matthew 25:14-30 for help).
- Consider God's example concerning work in Genesis 2:2-3. What does this tell us about the balance between work and rest on a weekly basis? What might the consequences be if we fail to follow this example by overworking or failing to work hard? How can we bring balance in this area of our lives?

❖ **Evangelism** - Good work ethics can be observed by those around us, but actively showing love to others offers opportunities to reveal Christ to them. As a group consider adopting a "needy" person or family who has real needs. Have someone research who might need this kind of help and report back to the group at the next meeting. Or, plan a social event to invite unsaved friends, family and co-workers to join you for a fun time of food or activity.

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Good

2. GO TO GOD WITH YOUR DISAPPOINTMENTS

[Objective: Lead a discussion that shows why we can't expect human relationships to meet needs that only God can meet.]

- ❑ *Read Ephesians 4:2 about allowing for each other's faults.*
 - What action should we take or feeling should we have to "allow for each other's faults" or to "bear with one another"? How can we know whether we have done this or not?
 - ❑ *Read 1 Corinthians 15:7 about how love always perseveres.*
 - What are some examples of Christ doing this?
 - Does God expect us to be able to have this kind of love?
- ❖ **Worship** - How can focusing on God instead of on ourselves help us when we are disappointed? Did Christ do this?

More Writing Tips (continued ...)

Better

2. GO TO GOD WITH YOUR DISAPPOINTMENTS

[Objective: Discuss why we can't expect human relationships to meet needs that only God can meet.]

- ❑ *What does Ephesians 4:2 teach us about how to deal with the faults of others?*
 - What action should we take or feeling should we have to "allow for each other's faults" or to "bear with one another"? How can we know whether we have done this or not?
 - Why do we look to people to meet our needs?
 - Why is unreasonable for us to expect another person to meet all our needs? What should we do with our disappointments?
- ❑ *From 1 Corinthians 13:7, what do we learn about love?*
 - What are some examples of Christ doing this? Does God expect us to be able to have this kind of love?
 - What are some practical ways that we can demonstrate this kind of love to those who disappoint us?
 - What does it mean to go to God with your disappointments?

❖ **Worship** - Focusing on God instead of ourselves can improve our view of disappointing circumstances. Take some time as a group to worship God by sharing together praises for what God has done and is doing in your lives.

More Writing Tips (continued ...)

Good

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO GOD'S STANDARD

[Objective: Help the group identify what God's standard for sex is, and then verbally and publicly commit to it.]

- ❑ *Read Exodus 20:14, 17. What does this scripture say about God's commands related to sex?*
- ❑ *Based on 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7, what specifically do the Bible and God want from us?*
 - What are people exposed to that makes them not follow God's standards in relation to sex?
 - Ask each individual to reflect for a moment about whether or not their lives are consistent with God's standards in this area.

❖ **Discipleship** - God doesn't force us to do His will, but when we don't, we're the ones who will suffer the consequences. Have your group publicly commit to God's standards for sex.

=====

Better

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO GOD'S STANDARD

[Objective: Help the group identify what God's standard for sex is, and then commit to seeking Christ's character through time in the Word of God.]

- ❑ *Read Exodus 20:14, 17. What do these scriptures say about God's commands related to sex?*
- ❑ *Based on 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7, what specifically does God tell us that He wants from us?*
- ❑ *What advice does the Psalmist give for one who would keep his life pure in Psalm 119:9?*

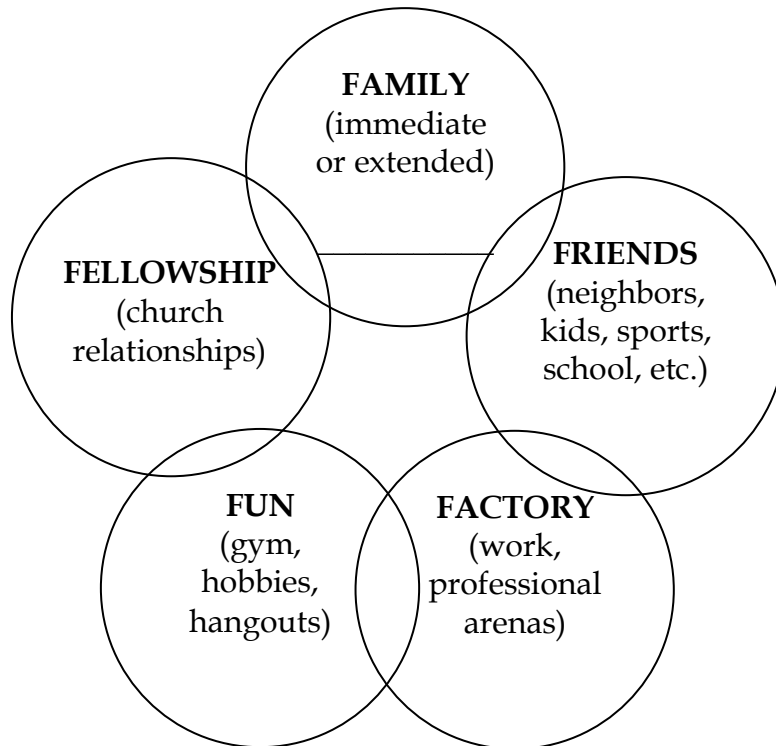
More Writing Tips (continued ...)

- What are people exposed to that encourages them not to follow God's standards in relation to sex?
- Where do we learn what God's standard for our life is? In what ways do we see believer's lives fail to be consistent with God's standards? What changes do we need to make to be sure this is not true in our own lives?

❖ **Discipleship** – God's Spirit uses Scripture to grow us into the likeness of Christ. What can you do as a group to take in the Word of God, understand the practical application of the Word and see your character transformed by it? Pair up with a Spiritual Partner for sharing and accountability this week.

Circles of Influence

Discover to whom you can connect in community



Follow this simple four-step process:

1. **Prayerfully** list one to two people in each circle
2. **Prepare** the group for them. Share a few names with your group and update your progress
3. **Place** a call to them
4. **Pick** them up and bring them to your next meeting

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19