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The Saddleback small group strategy by Steve Gladen

Small groups at Saddleback do five things that relate to each of the five purposes on the purpose-driven baseball diamond. We call this balancing the five purposes.

Not that you would come to group and do 15 minutes on each purpose. But over the course of six months you would evaluate your group on how much time your group has spent on each purpose. If it's not balanced, take a group evening to align your group to balancing the five purposes.

So what does each purpose look like in group life?

Fellowship

Small groups help people connect, which relates to membership or fellowship - moving your attenders from coffee and cookies to knowing true community and its benefits. I like to say, my best friends don't have to ask my prayer requests because they know my life. True fellowship helps people discover the real you.

Discipleship

Small groups help people grow, which relates to maturity or discipleship. Everyone is on a spiritual path which has twists and turns, forks in the road, dead ends, pot holes, etc. Group life helps people on their spiritual journey and how best to navigate that road.

If you're on the smooth part of the road, rejoice in that. If you find you're off-roading and moving off the disciplines, group life helps you get back.

Service

Small groups help people discover their spiritual gifts, which relates to ministry or serving. Not only do you want each person in your small group to discover his/her SHAPE as he/she begins ministering in the church.

But as a group, you want to serve your church and the people in your church. Every person has a ministry to the church and a mission to the world

Evangelism

Small groups help people learn to share, which relates to missions or evangelism. What is your group's mission to the world? While we want groups to focus cross-culturally; we don't want them to forget the mission field they live in—their neighborhood!

Small groups are a great way to get the attenders of the group praying for their neighbors and even planning activities designed for fellowship with those neighbors.

Worship

Small Groups help people to surrender their lives, which is worship (more than music and communion in a group). This purpose helps people to live out being a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) fully surrendered to Christ. Group life helps you be transparent; receiving the support you need to succeed in your Christian walk. So, we teach that worship is praise, but it is also action.

Small groups help real life change happen!

This is just one of the numerous strategies we've developed and want to share with you. You will see how to get complete church wide alignment with every dimension of your church using the Small Group Model.

If you think adding a CLASS Series (101, 201, 301 and 401) has helped your church, imagine what could happen if you align every Sunday school or small group with the five biblical purposes of the church. Now the possibilities for growth have just exponentially multiplied.

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