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COMMUNITY GROUP CERTIFICATION TRAINING



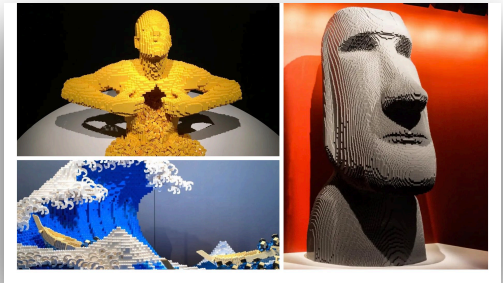
A Philosophical, Practical, & Passionate Approach to Community Groups

VISION CASTING

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VISION CASTING (THE LEGO PRINCIPLE)

- How many of you have played with Legos at some point in your life?
- How many of you have seen children build all kinds of things and occupy themselves for hours with Legos?
- Look at these incredible Lego projects.
- If you think about it, individual Legos are like people in the church.
- Like people, Legos come in all kinds of sizes, shapes, and colors.
- And, each Lego has a certain amount of snap on points: some have one snap on point, others have two, others have four, six, eight, sixteen, etc..
- Like Legos, **every person who attends a Community Group has a certain amount of snap on points.**
- The snap on points represent the time, energy, and resources that each individual has to give to the church.
- Each person has a limited amount of time, energy, and resources to give to the church.
- A problem occurs the longer an individual is involved in the church because more and more of the snap on points are taken up.
 - A long term church member has a few snap on points taken up with several different relationships.



- Before long, all snap on points are taken up with none left for anything else. 3
- What happens when a new Community Group member joins a Community Group and needs to snap on to others in the class?

- The new Community Group member has all of their snap on points to give away, but this lonely soul has none left with which to attach to a new member.



- If this new guest or Community Group member remains lonely and disconnected, they may become disgruntled and quit the class or the church altogether.
- They could believe and communicate that the people of the Community Group and/or church is unfriendly.
- The reality is that some Community Groups are full of long tenured members who have no available resources left to give away.
- This is the main reason new Community Groups reach new people better than long tenured classes.
- In addition, new Community Groups may be more hungry and aggressive and less satisfied than the class that is already made it smart within the church.

COMMUNITY GROUPS HAVE 5 PURPOSES

We make disciples. Community Groups make disciples by:

1. **Reaching** people for Christ
2. **Teaching** people the Bible
3. **Ministering** to one another
4. **Serving** together and
5. **Integrating** the vision and mission of the church

These five purposes work. They are good.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS SERVE A PURPOSE.
WE MAKE DISCIPLES.**

**COMMUNITY GROUPS PROVIDE AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR (1) REACHING PEOPLE FOR
CHRIST, (2) TEACHING PEOPLE THE BIBLE, (3)
MINISTERING TO ONE ANOTHER, (4) SERVING
TOGETHER, AND (5) ENGAGING THE VISION AND
MISSION OF THE CHURCH.**

IT WORKS. IT IS GOOD!

- **Ministering** to one another involves your Community Group getting to know each other and building relationship by sharing life together.
- Most Community Groups do a good job of ministering to each other in times of sickness and death, celebrations and grieving,
- And, of course, we understand that Community Groups have the goal of **Teaching** the Bible.
- A Community Group that does not teach the Bible should re-examine its reason for existing.
- We are here to **Teach the Bible**. This is key!
- But the first purpose is often neglected these days; that is to **reach people for Christ**.

Did you know that for every three unbelieving people enrolled in a Community Groups class, one will come to faith in Christ within a year? Think about that for a moment.

- Do you want to see more people be led to Jesus in your community?
- Do you want to see people baptized in our church?
- Do you want to see your church reach more people and grow in its influence and ministry in the years ahead?
- Then we must enroll people in our Community Groups!

- It works. It has worked for decades. And it works today. 5
- Community Groups, by design, should be open groups.
- That means that new people can join the group and be welcomed at any time.
- Some may be thinking, “well, all of our chairs are full, or I don’t know how well a new person would be received.”
 - Let me tell you a secret: we have 60 adult Community Groups in our church.
 - Some of them are full
 - Others might not be very open to new people.
- So, you know what we do? **We start new Community Groups.**
 - It’s true that new Community Groups grow faster than CGs that have been meeting for a long time.
 - If we start 10 new adult classes in 2024, every one of them will grow.
 - New classes grow fastest.
- We might not be able to start 10 new Community Groups, but we can begin with one!
- And each of us can do everything we can to
 - Help our current Community Groups teachers/leaders understand the importance of what they are doing and
 - Catch the vision of what it might be.

We must grasp the vision of the Great Commission.

WE MUST GRASP THE VISION OF THE GREAT COMMISSION.

Matthew 28:18-20 says, “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on

earth has been given to me. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.** And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

**NEW GROUPS =
NEW PEOPLE =
NEW GROWTH**

Jesus never intended for the church to hold up numerical growth.

- It's proven that starting new Community Groups is paramount in church growth.
- New groups involve more people and do more ministry.

New Groups = New People = New Growth

JOHN 3:16

[JESUS SAID] “FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

John 3:16 [Jesus said] “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

1 Timothy 2:4 [Paul said to Timothy about God, our Savior] who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

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2PETER 3:9

THE LORD IS NOT SLOW TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE AS SOME COUNT SLOWNESS, BUT IS PATIENT TOWARD YOU, NOT WISHING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD REACH REPENTANCE.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

We must constantly remind ourselves that the church is not just for us.

WE MUST CONSTANTLY REMIND OURSELVES THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT JUST FOR US.

- We are here for those who are not yet here.
- It is God's will for **Christians to reproduce themselves** and make disciples of others.
- It is God's will for **churches to reproduce themselves** and start new mission churches.
- It is consistent to believe that God intends for **Community Groups to reproduce themselves** also.
- Community Groups should experience meaning and fulfillment in the fact that they have multiplied new Community Groups

- **Why multiply?**

- Community Group leaders will need to help class members adopt the philosophy and purpose of multiplying new classes.
- Those who do not understand will naturally resist this concept.
- Many will question whether or not it will make a difference.

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS WILL NEED TO HELP CLASS MEMBERS ADOPT THE PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF MULTIPLYING NEW CLASSES.

- Clearly, it will make a difference because it provides opportunities for others to become active and exercising their spiritual gifts.
- A Disciple-Making Community Group teacher must ask, “Whose gifts and abilities are lying dormant in this Community Group?”
- Disciple-Making Community Group Bible teachers must discover these dormant gifts and put them in the service within the body of Christ.

- God did not intend for His children to waste the gifts that He entrusted to them.
- And, He certainly did not intend for the church to deny people opportunities to exercise their giftedness.

THE THREAT OF LOSING EVANGELISTIC INFLUENCE: SALT & LIGHT

In a rapidly changing world, the influence of Christian leaders in spreading the gospel is facing unprecedented challenges. The metaphor of salt and light in Matthew 5:13-14 highlights the significant role Christians play in shaping society and sharing the message of Jesus Christ. However, there is a pressing concern that this vital influence is at risk of becoming tasteless salt and hidden candles.

As we navigate these turbulent times, Community Group leaders must refocus their attention on the captivating power of Jesus Christ – the unwavering King of Kings and Lord of Lords – and reignite their commitment to proclaiming the life-transforming gospel.

Tasteless Salt: The Risk of Losing Distinctiveness. Jesus' most famous teaching, recorded in Matthew 5:13, He warned, *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."*

Salt, in ancient times, was not only a preservative but also a flavor enhancer. Christians, as salt, are called to preserve and enrich the moral fabric of society. However, the threat of becoming tasteless salt looms large. When Christians



conform to the world's standards and compromise their core values, they risk losing their distinctiveness and the ability to make a meaningful impact. The dilution of Christian principles in the face of busy schedules and demanding pressures weakens our ability to spread the transformative message of the gospel.

Hidden Candles: The Danger of Diminished Visibility

Jesus continues in Matthew 5:14-15, *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”*

Light serves as a guide, dispelling darkness and revealing truth. Jesus compares Christians to candles, meant to shine



brightly in a world shrouded in spiritual darkness. However, the danger of hidden candles lurks as Community Groups succumb to contentment, apathy, or complacency.

When the light of Christ within believers is obscured, the impact of their evangelistic efforts wanes. It is imperative for Community Groups to rekindle the flames of passion and courage, positioning themselves as beacons of hope and truth, unafraid to shine their light for all to see.

THE POWER FOR EVANGELISTIC INFLUENCE

Captivated by the Unrivaled Majesty of Jesus Christ

Amidst these challenges, Community Group leaders must refocus with laser like precision on the central figure of our faith – Jesus Christ. Jesus is the death-proof, never-failing, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whose authority transcends earthly pressures. As Community Group leaders become captivated by the matchless beauty and power of Christ, their influence gains an unshakeable foundation. With Christ at the forefront, Community Groups can be emboldened to stand firm, unwavering in their commitment to spreading the gospel, regardless of opposition or adversity.

The Earth-Shaking Proclamation: Life and Death Announcement

The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a mere philosophical suggestion; it is an earth-shaking, life-or-death announcement with eternal consequences. The gospel has the power to transform lives, heal brokenness, and reconcile sinners to God. This transformative message demands urgency, conviction, and unwavering dedication from Christian leaders. In a world rife with uncertainty, the gospel remains an unchanging anchor of hope, offering salvation to all who believe.

The Role of the Holy Spirit: Opening Darkened Hearts

In the pursuit of preserving evangelistic influence, Community Group leaders must remember that the Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role. It is the Holy Spirit who opens darkened hearts, illuminating minds to comprehend the truth of the gospel. The work of transformation is not contingent solely upon human efforts but is a divine collaboration between believers and the Spirit of God. This is a partnership of unrivaled honor and privilege. As Community Group leaders faithfully proclaim the gospel, they can trust that the

Holy Spirit will accompany their message effecting irrevocable transformations in souls and ushering them into the light of Christ.

Conclusion

The threat of Community Groups losing their evangelistic influence is real, but it is not insurmountable. The metaphors of tasteless salt and hidden candles serve as cautionary reminders of the dangers that lie ahead if Community Group leaders fail to prioritize their divine mandate. To counteract these threats, Christian leaders must redirect their focus to the unmatched splendor of Jesus Christ, the death-proof King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They must reproduce themselves, multiply, and start new Community Groups. The proclamation of the gospel demands unwavering commitment, courage, and faith.

In these uncertain times, Christian leaders must rise as unwavering beacons of light, shining brightly amidst the darkness, and as preservers of truth, flavoring a world in need of hope and redemption. The call to preserve and strengthen evangelistic influence is urgent, for the gospel is not just a message – it is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe (Romans 1:16). Let Community Group leaders rekindle their passion, boldly proclaim the life-transforming Gospel, and trust in the Holy Spirit to bring about profound and everlasting change in the hearts and lives of those they reach.

VISION CHALLENGE

The Discipleship and Community staff wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude for our Community Group Leader's unwavering dedication and exemplary faithfulness within our Community Groups. Your commitment to nurturing spiritual growth and fostering a sense of community has been truly remarkable.

As we reflect on the progress we've made, let us not lose sight of the ultimate mission that lies before us - Reaching People for Christ. We are commanded by our King to "Go, make disciples." Within the context of Community Groups, this speaks to the necessity to multiply our groups and give birth to new ones.

While your current Community Group stands as a shining example of your leadership ability, the true mark of success lies not only in the growth of your group, but also in the multiplication of what your Community Group can create. Just as a seed multiplies to produce a bountiful harvest, your efforts too can give rise to new groups, each bearing the same fruit of love, knowledge, and unity that you've diligently cultivated. By multiplying yourselves and initiating new Community Groups, you expand the reach of Henderson Hills Baptist Church, accommodating more souls thirsting for spiritual nourishment and community.

The legacy you can leave behind is not just the accomplishments within your current Community Group, but the ripple effect of your evangelistic fruit and Disciple-Making spreading far beyond. As leaders, you possess the unique ability to inspire and guide others in taking up the mantle of leadership. This act of multiplication is a testament to your selflessness and a reflection of your commitment to the growth of our faith community. May we continue to shine as beacons of light, creating new Community Groups that will shine even brighter, impacting lives and deepening our collective spiritual journey. May we serve Jesus with heartfelt gratitude and a vision for an even brighter future.

August 23	Vision Casting • Team Building • 5 Purposes
August 30	Teacher (Teaching People the Bible)
September 6	Director - A leader to direct the team.
September 13	Prayer and Care Leader (Ministering to One Another)
September 20	Outreach/Social Leader (Reaching People for Christ)
September 27	Mission Leader (Serving Together as a Micro Group)
October 4	Administrative Lead (Records and Reports)