

How To Start Your Groups

Gary Short

Please turn off your cell phone!

Our goal is to train you how to train others to win souls and train disciples to be obedient to God's Word. We desire that this process will go several generations deep and **produce a disciple making/church planting movement.**

We will train you → You will win and train others → They will win and train yet others → Who will continue on and on.

The cycle is: Present the gospel, offer to train those who become believers, form the people who say yes to training into groups, begin training them to obey God's Word, get them presenting the Gospel to their circle of influence, forming groups and training their converts to be trainers. Continue presenting the Gospel, forming groups, and training trainers.

To train others it is best to form them into groups. It is better to train people in groups than individually because in a group people can *encourage one another*, in a group people *help each other learn*, learning in a group *helps individuals stay committed to the process* and learning in a group *gives people faith and boldness*. You can train more people in groups.

Ministering to People in Small Groups is very Biblical.

Acts 2:46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, NIV

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. ESV

Acts 20:20 How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house. ESV

Remember we are **going to them --- not asking them to come to us**. This means that your group will meet in one of their homes or a restaurant or other public location, preferably not a church. This will only develop into a church planting movement *if we as trainers do what we are asking others to do* in their groups. We also keep presenting the Gospel to people every week. Your groups are the key thing that will enable us to win thousands of people to Christ and train them to be obedient disciples of Jesus.

Each Group Meeting has 7 steps.

1. **Pastoral Care** - Praying for people's needs, counseling, answering questions, using opportune moments to teach biblical principles and sharing testimonies. Not just general prayers but lay hands on individuals and pray for their specific needs. Ask people how they are doing. If your training group is larger than 6-7 people you may want to break into smaller groups to do pastoral care. Pastoral care could take all of your time (don't let that happen), stop at the allotted time. You can set a time to counsel later when needed or continue after the meeting is over. As soon as you can, after forming the group, begin having one of the trainee's lead different steps. (Pastoral care can also be #7)
2. **Worship**- Teach people to focus on Jesus and His greatness and to express their love and gratitude to Him. Joyful worship with singing, clapping, shouting and valuing God's presence. Teach people to praise God out loud and to become worshipers. If there is no one who is confident to lead singing at least read praise Psalms (We have a page of Psalms you can read from). Teach people how to worship together as a congregation. Worship should be culturally appropriate and reproducible. Train worship leaders. Try to avoid meaningless, repetitive songs.
3. **Loving Accountability** – Loving because we are encouraging not demanding or shaming.

You will have 5 kinds of people attend your groups.

1. **Attainers:** They come to meetings but don't share the Gospel or train disciples.
2. **Witnesses:** Share the Gospel but don't form Groups.
3. **Starter:** Starters Share the Gospel, form their groups but train.
4. **Trainers:** They present the gospel, form groups, and train others.
5. **Trainer of Trainers:** Besides the above, they are working with groups of trainers.

Two kinds of accountability questions: **How are you doing sharing the Gospel? How are you doing training Disciples?**

Sample questions: With whom did you have the opportunity to share the Gospel? How are your groups doing? Which lessons did you teach last week? How are you doing at continuing to pray over and present the Gospel to the people on your list? Randomly throw in questions from previous lessons. Know in advance questions you will ask.

This is what loving accountability looks like. Celebrate obedience and victories! We don't hold people accountable to us but accountable to OBEY God's word. Never give an assignment unless you are committed to ask about it at the next meeting. Encourage people to obey God's Word don't shame them into obeying.

4. **Vision Casting**—“The importance of casting vision to our trainees is; what they can become in Christ and what the Spirit can do through them” (T4T p. 133). Helping people understand what we want to accomplish --- DMM. The value of each lesson—what we want to accomplish with each lesson. Use examples, illustrations, testimonies or Bible events, to help people gain vision. Give a short word of encouragement that stirs vision and commitment to follow Christ and be fishers of men. **Always know in advance what you are going to say to cast vision.**
5. **Lesson** – Give a copy of the lesson to each person and teach it. Keep the lesson short enough to fit on two sides of one sheet of paper. Give trainers permission to photocopy the lesson. Reinforce the authority of God's word and our commitment to obey it. Our Goal: give enough biblical content to obey and pass on. Don't make the mistake of giving too much information. After you are finished with these first lessons we will introduce Interactive Bible Study for long term discipleship. There are also lessons for oral learners. Keep it biblical, basic and easy to pass on. Remember your goal is to build a trainer not get through the content of a lesson. It is ok to take two sessions to complete a lesson if that is what it takes for people to understand it. Read it with emphases, don't preach it!
6. **Practice** Presenting The Lesson, your accountability questions and your vision casting – Have people pair up and give the lesson to each other. The goal is to give them confidence and competence to train others. This is so important that if you had to choose between time for the complete lesson and practice, practice is more important. Practice more than just the lesson, also practice worship leading, accountability questions and vision casting statements etc. If there is a big time spread between the current lesson you are teaching and the one they will be teaching do a brief practice of it also. “Only with practice will you build a trainer” (T4T 139). There is a temptation to cut short or skip practicing the lesson. Don't do that. ALWAYS practice the lesson because it is practice that gives the trainee the “confidence and skill” to share the lesson. Push through people's resistance to practice, it is **Very Important**. No practice no Movement.
7. **Goal Setting and Prayer**—Have them write their goals down. Who are you presenting the Gospel to? What lessons are you going to teach and to whom? Always have them pray over their Gospel-sharing disciple-making goals. Ask for the direction and anointing of the Holy Spirit and that He will prepare each person to whom you will minister. Lay hands on each other and pray that God will enable you to accomplish your goals. Pastoral Care can be either step 1 or step 7.

These 7 steps are divided into 3 sections.

- **The first third (parts 1-4) deals with personal growth, taking responsibility and being in love with Jesus.**
- **The second third (part 5) is learning the new lesson that the new trainer is going to teach to his or her group.**
- **The final third (parts 6-7) is preparing for ministry, building competence and confidence.**

Your weekly activity will consist of going to people and presenting the gospel to 1- 5 people, and offering to train those who receive Christ to be disciples/trainers. Your second activity is going to people's homes, a restaurant or other convenient location and forming people who have just received Christ into groups and begin weekly training sessions with them. Forming groups with people who have received Christ within a few weeks of one another, and training in groups is very important.

It is extremely important that we **follow these same steps each lesson**, to create a pattern that will be passed on from group generation to generation. There are many good ways you could present each of these lessons but **we want to do every lesson the same to make it easier to pass on and to assure the message doesn't get altered down the road.** When we do it right, people who start disciple training many generations from us will do it the same way.

In all we do we want to instill our own Hope And Grace culture! Hope and Grace International will endeavor to help people experience *the Father Heart of God and His personal, passionate and unconditional love for them* through all our interactions. We want to encourage people to develop a *deep loving relationship with Jesus* and to *appreciate and experience the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministry.* We value *honoring one another in our attitudes, words and actions and our time together as the family of God.* We value *honest relationships* that can share with one another both their victories and struggles. We want to *help people find healing from life's wounds.* We desire to *avoid non-biblical religious rules and traditions.*

We believe that fruitful disciples will be growing in the character of Christ and desire to love, win, and train others. We want to *develop abiding gratitude and passionate worship* toward the Lord in those we disciple. We desire to model and foster *appreciation and thankfulness toward others.* We want to train people to *believe that God will help, heal and provide in every situation.* Faith is the key to receiving the promises of God and ministering in His power.