

Weekend message Small group study

- complementing the sermon given at St. Paul on **9/5/15 – 9/6/15.**
- a meeting agenda organized per St. Paul core values
- estimated for a 90-minute meeting



WEEK FOUR STUDY STARTING INTEREST GROUPS

Equipping “the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” –Eph. 4:12

Below is a tool to help delegate the leading/facilitating of meeting components between different small group members.

	Prayer (p.7)	Outreach (p.6)	Word of God (p.2)	Equipping (p. 7)	Worship - Our Redemption Response - (p.2)
Study component leader					

Prayer leader – Leads group prayer time

Outreach leader – Leads the charge of outreach (serving, inviting, filling the empty chair, etc.)

Word of God leader – Leads the Bible study time, encourages application of God’s Word to life

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Worship – Our Redemption Response

5 minutes

Heart Pumping

(*Worship champion:* Bring to the meeting a recorded song or a Psalm or other Bible verse to play or read which you feel passionate about—something that pumps your heart for Christ. Bring also a red balloon, upon which you've drawn a heart with a black marker on two sides.)

Ask someone in the group to blow up the balloon as you play the song or read the verses. When the balloon has been filled and the song or reading is done, share in prayer to God why it pumps up your heart up. Allow the group to jump in with their words of love for Jesus. The *Worship champion* will close the prayer.

Word of God

45 minutes

The Wonderful World of Hobbies (15 minutes)

Discuss the following:

1. Think of a hobby that you have now or had in the past—something you enjoy(ed) and have (had) fun doing. What is (was) that hobby? What is (was) particularly enjoyable about it?
2. Generally speaking, what makes hobbies so enjoyable for us?
3. What makes a hobby worthwhile or worth pursuing?

God has given each one of us unique interests. What we pursue for a hobby says a lot about our unique make-up. Today's session is going to explore the idea of starting groups with people who share similar interests.

4. Before we go too much farther, let's take a page out of the life of Matthew from Luke 5:27-31.

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

What impresses you about Matthew (Levi) from this passage?

What evangelism "principles" do we see operating in this passage?

Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg put it this way in *Becoming a Contagious Christian*:

So if we're going to impact our world for Christ, the most effective approach will be through friendships with those who need to be reached. We'll have to get close to them so that they can see that we genuinely care about them individually and that we have their best interests in mind. Over time that will earn their trust and respect.
(1994:97)

The Power of Interest Groups (5 minutes)

In 1 Thessalonians 2:8, Paul expresses the genius of Christianity when he states, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us." It was Paul's willingness to share his life with the Thessalonians that brought feet, hands and heart to the Gospel message. As it was in the first century, so it is today.

Have you ever creatively considered that God has given you a hobby, an interest, or a passion for a reason, and that reason may be that He wants you to share it with others, both inside and outside the church? That's right--there is tremendous power when people link up around a shared interest. It's fun, it's relaxing, it's relational, it's not hard to get motivated...etc., etc. Some of your friends might not come to church with you, but they would go fishing, or to the bowling alley, or to a coffee shop, or for a ride in the hills. So take the church to them by starting an interest group.

Discuss the following:

1. What stood out to you from the two paragraphs above?
2. What do you like about the concept of interest groups?
3. As you were reading, did any possible interest groups emerge in your thinking?

Application Activity (10 minutes)

Look through the "What If" section on the next page. Take 5-7 minutes to work through this individually.

The idea here is for us to get thinking, praying and planning to start something new, some kind of interest group, in the near future.

What interests and hobbies do you have?

- Sewing
- Quilting
- Cooking
- Genealogy
- Painting
- Gardening
- Scrap-booking
- Travel

WHAT IF?

What interests, hobbies, life skills or professional skills do you have?

- Guitar
- Voice
- Drums
- Brass Instruments
- Piano
- Composing
- Listening

What interests or hobbies do you have?

- Basketball
- Softball
- Running
- Camping/Fishing
- Aerobics
- Running
- Weight Training
- Golf

What life skills, or professional skills do you have?

- Budgeting
- Financial Planning
- Getting Out of Debt
- Finances and Marriage
- Job Transition
- Business Leaders

What "study" interests do you have?

- Book study
- Life study
- Support group
- Recovery group
- Prayer group
- Need related study
- Movie critics club

What needs are you interest in meeting in the community?

- Homeless ministry
- Prison ministry
- Nursing home
- Spanish
- Sign Language
- Community Action/Service

“What If” Possibilities (15 minutes)

Assignment: Using the “Shared Interests” concept, brainstorm possible interest groups that would be attractive to people who are being drawn toward Christ. Try to generate at least ten new possibilities. Feel free to refer to the previous page which is filed with various ideas to get you thinking.

Key questions:

Question #1: What interests or hobbies do I have that non-Christians would share with me?

Question #2: What life or professional skills do I have that would help me build relationships with unbelievers?

Question #3: What life challenges am I currently facing or have faced in the past that non-Christians could relate to?

Brainstorming Possibilities:

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Adapted from Groups Ablaze/LC-MS Ablaze Living: Starting Interest Groups.

Outreach

20 minutes

Wrap-Up

Individually spend 5-10 minutes thinking through the “Interest Group Planning Worksheet” below.

Interest Group Planning Worksheet

<p>What kind of Interest Group(s) are you potentially interested in considering?</p> <p>Who do you know (inside and outside the church) that might be interested in this kind of group? Who would you like to invite? Is there anyone who might want to partner with you in getting the group started?</p> <p>When would the group meet and for how long each time? When could you have your first meeting?</p> <p>Where would the group meet?</p> <p>What are some challenges or obstacles you might face in launching an Interest Group?</p> <p>What next steps can you take in the next 30 days toward starting an Interest Group?</p>

After each person has had time to brainstorm by themselves, in groups of 3-4, share your ideas.

Adapted from *Groups Ablaze/LC-MS Ablaze Living: Starting Interest Groups*.

If/when you are ready to launch your interest group, please contact Craig Mattes (Director of Group life) at cmattes@stpaulaurora.org so that you may receive coaching, support, and resources.

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (Luke 10:1 NIV)

As we go with the good news of Jesus Christ, let’s not be lone rangers with these *START NEW TO REACH NEW* efforts, but support and encourage one another as we are equipped by the Word and Spirit.

Prayer

20 minutes

In your triads, share a prayer request based on what was discussed during this meeting's *Word of God* and/or *Outreach* time. What is that next step in your faith life God is calling you to make? What convicted you from God's Word and/or our discussion of His Word? Please also share a way in which the group may support/encourage you regarding what you've shared. Of course other important matters can be prayed about as well. After all have shared, pray for the person on your left (whether aloud or silently). Pray together in popcorn style (as opposed to going in order around a circle.)

Equipping for coordinating next week's meeting...

5 minutes

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