

**HELP  
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**Recruiting Reluctant  
Small-Group Leaders**

# Recruiting Reluctant Small-Group Leaders

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## How to Use This Resource

For some pastors and church leaders, the idea of recruiting small-group leaders feels like a necessary evil. It often takes a lot of work. It always eats up a lot of time. And the fruits of your efforts rarely match up with the intensity of your investment. At the same time, quality small-group leaders are the lifeblood of an effective small-groups ministry. They are vital, and so they must be found.

One problem with the process is that people who need to be "recruited" are usually reluctant to lead a small group. (People who are excited and anxious to lead usually seek you out, but how often does that happen?) This hesitation makes your job even more difficult.

Still, reluctance on the part of potential leaders does not need to make your job impossible. Hesitation can be overcome, and reluctant recruits can turn into healthy, effective small-group leaders. The articles provided in this resource will help you through that process.

### Understanding the Hesitation

The first step to successfully recruiting reluctant small-group leaders is to understand what makes people hesitate in the first place. And that's exactly what Trevor Lee addresses in his article "Explaining Reluctant Leaders." The same is true for "The 'Right' Person to a Lead a Small Group," by Mike Mack.

More, "Convincing Reluctant Leaders" gives you strategies for directly addressing these root causes of hesitation. And Len Woods provides a helpful chart of legend vs. reality in "Small-Group Leader Myths."

### Recruiting Reluctant Leaders

Once you have a better understanding of what makes people reluctant to lead a group, there are some practical tools that can help you with the recruiting process. Mark Ingram provides a great overview of that process in "Recruiting Small-Group Leaders: The Basics." And you can find instruction for specific methods of recruiting with "The Power of Video" and "How to Find Your Next Apprentice."

Persistence is one of the best tools in your toolbox when it comes to recruiting reluctant group leaders, and that is the subject of Linda McCullough-Moore's article "The Value of Persistence in Recruiting." Last, Mark Ingmire gives some great advice on "When to Call Off the Dogs."

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# Explaining Reluctant Leaders

## *Why people hesitate to lead a small group*

By Trevor Lee

"I can't believe she said no!" This is a common response when someone we "know" is perfect for a ministry role inexplicably turns down the opportunity.

When you are recruiting small-group leaders, you will stumble across some people who are hesitant to take the plunge despite their obvious fit. Their hesitance can be frustrating, and it's easy to take it as a sign they're not committed to the ministry or the church. In reality, there are many reasons people become reluctant to lead a small group. Being good shepherds to these people means exploring the real reasons behind their hesitance and acting based on their unique situation and motivation.

So, here are seven factors that are often at the core of a person's reluctance to lead a small group. (I explain how to move beyond these factors in my companion article, "Convincing Reluctant Leaders.")

### **Self-Perception**

Even when you see someone as a perfect fit to lead a small group, they may not see themselves as such. There is a woman in our church who is devoted to prayer, winsome, and selfless—she is a perfect candidate to lead a small group. But when I approached her about the opportunity, she said, "Oh, I don't think I could do that." As we talked it became clear her self-perception wasn't as positive as my perception of her. Though she had been a Christian a long time and displayed consistent growth in her faith, she viewed herself as someone who needed to be led, not someone who could lead.

Self-perception is an area where Satan can establish a powerful foothold in a person's life—one that can keep them from having the Kingdom impact God wants them to have. Satan wants to keep people in a place of powerlessness and self-doubt, but the Spirit will contend against that to help people embrace the abilities they have in Christ. As long as people hold on to their negative self-perception, they will not believe they can effectively lead a small group.

### **Leader-Perception**

Every person in your church has an idea of what it means to be a small-group leader—and that idea may or may not be close to reality. This is compounded by the fact that the perception probably varies from person to person. For instance, many people assume that small-group leaders need to be outgoing. In some instances that is an important quality, but in many small groups an introvert can do just as well as an extravert.

Also, different churches expect different things of their small-group leaders. Some group leaders function as hosts, but don't do much teaching or facilitating. Other group leaders are expected to provide a substantial lesson each week. People will base their expectations primarily on small-group experiences they've had in other churches.

However, your small groups may have a completely different purpose and different expectations of the leaders.

So, a lack of clarity on what it takes to lead a small group can form a significant obstacle for recruits.

### **Past Experience**

One of the first times I went to Chipotle I got really sick. I can't prove it was food poisoning, but the circumstantial evidence was strong. For months after I refused to go back. That negative experience kept me from trying it again. Eventually I gave in and now Chipotle is a frequent stop for our family.

In his book *The Search to Belong*, Joseph Myers says that some small-group experiences can be "forced relational hell." This is strong language, but the reality is many people have lackluster encounters with small groups. When people have had a negative small-group experience, especially if they were leading, it forms a major obstacle to future involvement.

For example, when I pastored a church in Illinois, one family was hesitant to get involved with our small group. As we discussed their hesitance, we discovered it stemmed from unfulfilled expectations from past small groups. They wanted a group where people were involved in each other's lives beyond a semi-regular group meeting. By talking, we found that we had similar hopes for what our small group would accomplish. They joined us and it ended up being a great experience for everyone.

### **Lack of Vision**

"We need people to show the kids a video during church." This was the pitch for volunteering in children's church when I arrived at one church where I pastored. Shockingly, people weren't lining up to help. As we revamped our children's ministry, we cast a vision for the importance of loving children and starting them on the path of discipleship. We began emphasizing that we needed people to invest in the lives of children, instead of saying we needed babysitters. Sharing a compelling vision caused the number of volunteers to grow exponentially.

It's the same with small groups. In the Message, Proverbs 29:18 reads, "If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves." If people can't see what God is doing in your small-groups ministry, they will stumble on the way to leadership.

### **Time**

Because busyness is a badge of honor in our culture, most of us fill our lives with activity until there's no space left. People run themselves ragged with work, family, recreation, church, and their iPhones—leaving little time to lead a small group.

Some recruits wilt at the thought of adding small-group leadership to their already overcrowded schedule. Even if they feel called and gifted to lead, they may not see any possible way to make the time to do it. Time is a real and common obstacle for reluctant recruits in our culture.

### **Lack of Spiritual Maturity**

Sometimes persistent hesitation to lead a small group is a sign that a person isn't as perfect for the job as they look. For instance, it's not a good sign if a person doesn't

want to lead a group because they would have to give up watching a couple of their favorite TV shows. This is just one of many reasons a person may hesitate, but it's an important one to consider.

You don't want spiritually immature people leading others spiritually. Some people know how to do all the right things and look spiritually mature on the outside, while having hearts and minds that haven't been deeply transformed by the Holy Spirit. So, when someone is hesitant to lead a group, it may mean they just aren't ready for it, no matter how good they look at first glance.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

While hesitancy to lead a group may indicate selfishness and a lack of spiritual maturity, it can also indicate deep spiritual maturity that we need to honor. Some people say no to leading a group because they have clarity about their spiritual gifts and calling and know leading a group isn't a part of that.

One man in our church declined small-group leadership because God called him to care for his grandchildren and he knew he couldn't do both well. His spiritual maturity and honest assessment of his situation were appropriate obstacles to small-group leadership.

*For ideas on how to respond in each of these situations, check out my companion piece, "Convincing Reluctant Recruits."*

—TREVOR LEE is pastor of Mountair Christian Church in Lakewood, Colorado.

# Convincing Reluctant Leaders

## *Helping people overcome obstacles to small-group leadership*

By Trevor Lee

I have never understood the logic behind clothing items labeled "one size fits all." One size doesn't even fit everyone in my family. I am about 6'2" and am not thin. My wife is 5'4" and petite. Shirts that fit me are dresses on her. Shirts that fit her cut off my circulation.

Similarly, as we deal with people who are hesitant to lead a small group, we cannot take a "one size fits all" approach. You cannot effectively help people overcome the barriers that keep them from leading a small group without taking the time to understand what those barriers are. Figuring this out is time consuming, but it is infinitely more effective than treating everyone the same. By delving into the reasons behind a recruit's hesitation, you show them that you care, and you make sure to get the kind of leaders you need.

In my companion article "Explaining Reluctant Recruits," I explored seven reasons why people are often hesitant to lead a small group. Below you will find tips and strategies for helping people overcome their reluctance for all seven factors.

### **Self-Perception**

When someone lacks confidence in their abilities to lead small group, we must help them see the truth of their gifts and abilities. One woman in our church was hesitant to lead a group despite her obvious gifts, and so I spent time pointing out the ways she was already impacting people's lives. I shared the ways she had challenged me to grow in my prayer life. I acknowledged that she would be nervous at the beginning, but her maturity and gifts were something she needed to share. Over the course of a couple months, she came to believe that God had gifted her and that he wanted her to take on this responsibility. That began one of the most successful small groups in our church.

Often those who don't perceive themselves as capable small-group leaders need ongoing encouragement. As they lead, they will gain confidence; but when something doesn't go the way they hope, they can lose that confidence again. For this reason it is important to follow up with people who fall in this category and keep encouraging them in their gifts and calling.

### **Leader-Perception**

When someone is hesitant to take on small-group leadership because they have false expectations about what it means to be a leader, our course of action is clear: communicate the reality to them.

It is helpful to have a one-page handout that outlines the expectations of small-group leaders in your church. Then you can walk through those expectations with recruits and answer any questions they have. This benefits recruits because they know what is expected of them; it benefits you because you have something to hold them



accountable to. Making sure everyone's expectations are the same will help to avoid miscommunication and hurt feelings later.

As you communicate your church's expectations, don't minimize them. Sometimes we make the mistake of offering concessions because we want someone to accept leadership so badly. Each church must decide what the minimum requirements are for small-group leaders, and then stick to them.

### **Past Experience**

When someone has a negative experience, especially as a small-group leader, their hesitance to lead a group is understandable. Our past experiences have great power to shape how we see the world. When a person has a bad experience, it creates fear—which can quickly become a big obstacle.

As a shepherd, you need to help reluctant leaders work through their past experiences. Identify what went wrong and consider how things could be different. Have a jaded leader connect with others who have had a great experience leading groups. As they gain hope for a future group, these potential leaders will become increasingly open to engaging with a small group once again.

### **Lack of Vision**

Why do you have small groups? If you can't give a concise and compelling answer to that question, you need to figure it out with your church leadership. All of our ministries should serve the goal of making disciples of Jesus and glorifying God. When we are unable to quickly and passionately share how small groups contribute to that goal, it will be hard to convince reluctant recruits that small-group leadership is worth their time and effort.

People won't give their time and energy to keep a program going. People will give their time and energy to make an eternal difference. You can usually tell when this is the obstacle keeping someone from accepting a call to lead a small group because they don't have any passion when they talk about it. People who fall in this category will consider leading a group, but they aren't excited about it.

When you see this lack of passion, share stories of the impact small groups have had in your community. Tell them the difference small groups have made for the Kingdom of God. Help them see that if they will commit to leading a small group, they will have a front row seat to see and experience the powerful work of God. When people grab hold of a compelling kingdom vision, they won't just agree to lead a group; they'll do it with passion.

### **Time**

Full schedules are a reality for most people. Since this is a real obstacle to small-group leadership, people with packed schedules will have to give something up to take it on. And in order to convince people to give something up, they have to believe a group is worth it. This is another time when sharing a compelling vision is important. Some reluctant recruits will make time to lead a small group once they catch the vision for it.

There are others who will hear the vision and still hesitate to make the space in their lives to lead. When this happens we have to be strong enough shepherds to challenge

their priorities. If they are hesitating to lead but watch three hours of TV every day, we need to ask them what is really important in their lives.

One pastor I know challenges people to be better neighbors by saying, "If you don't take the time to love your neighbors, you're saying *everything* you do is more important than that." The same can be applied to leading a small group. Of course, in the midst of these discussions we should always be clear that we value their time and understand the demands of being a small-group leader.

### **Lack of Spiritual Maturity**

Seldom if ever will a reluctant recruit come right out and tell you they don't want to be a leader for selfish reasons. More often they will share reasons for their hesitance that seem completely legitimate—on the surface. To decipher when a lack of spiritual maturity is present, you have to enter into conversations about their motivation. (Since these conversations are essential for determining any of the obstacles, this isn't an extra step!)

In these conversations your spiritual maturity, discernment, and the leading of the Holy Spirit become essential. You might never find conclusive proof that someone isn't spiritually mature enough to lead a group, but through prayer you will have a good sense. If you believe a reluctant recruit isn't ready to lead yet, that affords a great opportunity to continue their discipleship so that in time they will be ready to jump into leadership.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

When someone hesitates to lead a small group because of spiritual maturity, your course of action starts the same way as when the obstacle is spiritual immaturity—conversation. When you discern that a person is hesitating for the right reasons, your response should be support. Instead of pushing someone to lead a group when they are called to something else, encourage them not to lead a group. Support them in the ministry they do feel called to pursue.

While small-group leaders are very important, the good of the Kingdom of God is more important. When he calls someone to something, we as shepherds need to affirm that call and enable people to pursue it whole-heartedly.

—TREVOR LEE is pastor of Mountair Christian Church in Lakewood, Colorado.

# The "Right" Person to Lead a Group

*People resist a call to leadership because of questions about competency and commitment.*

By Mike Mack

This morning I received an email from a potential leader who stated she does not know if she's the "right" person to lead a small group. I hear that phrase a lot—the "right person." It's a common response when people feel they are being called to lead.

In my role as a small-group pastor I have found that the issue usually comes down to a person's confidence level, which is influenced by two factors: competence and commitment.

## **A Matter of Competence**

Sometimes people are hesitant to accept a call as a small-group leader because they don't feel a sense of competency to lead a group. They don't think they are adequately prepared with the proper skills or talents.

In reality, that doesn't have to be a big issue. While some skills are needed to lead a healthy group, it really has more to do with heart than skills. I can teach skills.

I always remind people that even after three years with Jesus, the first leaders of the church, Peter and John, were still considered "unschooled, ordinary men." But they "had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). They may have lacked some competencies, but they had the right hearts, and God used them to change the world.

I've been reading a great series of articles on mountain-biking skills in which the writer discusses five levels of competency. I won't go into too much detail here about each level, but I think they are worth mentioning in relation to leading a small group:

- **Unconscious Incompetence:** People do not realize they are lacking the necessary skills, but they go at it anyway. Whether in small groups or mountain biking, someone is going to get hurt.
- **Conscious Incompetence:** People realize they lack skills, but want to learn them. These are the potential and emerging people I want as group leaders. They are ready and hungry to learn.
- **Conscious Competence:** People have now learned the skills to lead competently, but they are still thinking through those skills: "OK, I asked the question. Now I need to really listen." "Make sure to make eye contact." "I need to call Rich this week to see how he's doing."
- **Unconscious Competence:** As leaders grow, leadership becomes more natural. You don't have to think so much about it anymore. You just do it. You begin to "lead from the heart."
- **Reflective Competence:** This is where leaders deliberately think about what they've been doing instinctively. This is necessary in order to teach others.

Often, when you become unconsciously competent, you have a hard time telling or showing someone else how to do it. In this fifth stage, you figure it out so that you can show others how to accomplish the skill.

### **A Matter of Commitment**

The second reason people don't think they're the "right person" to lead a small group is because of commitment issues. It may be they simply don't feel like they have enough time to put into it, or they have other commitments that are currently higher priorities. Or perhaps they don't feel like they have any emotional energy to spare right now.

Commitment is closely tied to calling. When a potential or emerging leader senses he or she has been called by God to lead a group, commitment should closely follow. Satan cannot disrupt God's calling, of course, but he can and will keep us from hearing that call or making the commitment. This is spiritual warfare.

Commitment is also related to control. The main question is: Who is in control? Who is the real Leader? Who is Lord? As we surrender the control of our life over to God, we can be committed to what he calls us to do. Again, spiritual warfare enters the picture here.

### **Find a Core Team**

The final element requires one more "C" word: Core Team. Leading a small group with a Core Team of 3–4 others helps with both of these issues—competency and commitment.

When you team up with other leaders and utilize one another's various gifts, abilities, passions, experiences, and personalities, you can also share competencies. And you can encourage one another to be fully committed to God's calling.

—MIKE MACK is Small-Group Pastor at Northeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky

This article was excerpted with permission from Mike's blog on [Small Group Leadership](#).

### **Discuss:**

1. Do you believe that a person's confidence level has a lot to do with their willingness to lead a small group? Why or why not?
2. Where do most people fit on the "five levels of competency" when it comes to leading a group?
3. Would the idea of leading groups with a Core Team work in your church? Why or why not?

## Small-Group Leader Myths

*Dispel these urban legends with a dose of reality.*

By Len Woods

With the growth of the internet has come a huge increase in the spread of urban legends. These mythical stories have absolutely no basis in truth—for example, the ring of evil doctors that supposedly harvest the kidneys of drugged hotel patrons. Though these urban legends are patently false, they are unusually creative and interesting. They often seem credible. The effect is that many people believe them fervently and pass them on. Alas, the myths refuse to die.

The same power of myth is at work in small-group ministry. In our church, as we have tried to recruit potential small-group leaders, we have discovered that many qualified Christians are persistently reluctant to commit. Why? The more we probe, the more we realize that many in our "capable, potential leader pool" have embraced certain myths about what it takes to lead a small group.

The following chart attempts to identify some of the most common false ideas about small-group leadership, and then replace them with truth.

<b>The Myth</b>	<b>The Truth</b>
Group leaders must be Bible scholars, preferably with some knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.	Group leaders are Bible students, steadily growing in their knowledge of the Word.
Group leaders are Super Shepherds! They have deep, personal contact (via email, phone calls, over meals) with everyone in the group every day or two.	Group leaders create (with help) an environment where the group members care for one another—each using his and her gifts.
Group leaders have it "together." They have few, if any, weaknesses or failings, and they work carefully to hide such flaws.	Group leaders know they do <i>not</i> have it together and never will! They are human, real, and honest about shortcomings, and they trust God for change in those areas.
Group leaders manage everything as part of a "one man/woman" show.	Group leaders understand the importance of involving everyone in the meetings. Group gatherings are highly participatory.
Group leaders seldom ask for help from staff, elders, coaches, and group members.	Group leaders insist on help from staff, elders, coaches, and group members.

Group leaders need to have a big, fancy home.	Group leaders may or may not have a big, fancy home. If not, no big deal! (Other group members can host meetings and socials, as well.)
Group leaders cannot be effective without lots and lots of advanced training.	Group leaders understand that some advance equipping is necessary, but they know the best and most useful training happens "on the job."
Group leaders should be administrative wizards and provide visionary leadership.	Group leaders are facilitators, simply keeping the group "between the ditches" and headed toward the goal.
Group leaders dominate discussions, doing most of the talking themselves. They make almost all of the decisions and everything themselves.	Group leaders delegate. They decentralize the ministry (in and out of group meetings) and divvy up responsibilities.
Group leaders have all the answers.	Group leaders know where to go for the answers (and are willing to search).
Group leaders are entertainers, making sure everyone is happy and having a good time.	Group leaders are encouragers, affirming people and challenging group members to grow.
A group leader's primary goal is to lead great small-group meetings.	The primary goal is relationships marked by love, acceptance, honesty, and encouragement, which ultimately lead to life-change and growth.

We are finding that the more effectively we dispel wrong ideas about small group leadership and replace them with truth, the more effectively we can recruit small group leaders. And ultimately, the more effective and healthy our overall church ministry will be.

—LEN WOODS; copyright 2004 by the author and Christianity Today International.

# Recruiting Small-Group Leaders: The Basics

*Helpful and practical tips that can be applied to any church*

By Mark Ingmire

Sales and service are two basic values for every successful business. I watched my dad, a small business owner, be pulled between these two directions to make his small business flourish. He hired people to service his existing customers, but he knew the best use of his time was to be on the sales floor.

In reality, sales and service are also two essential basics for small-group ministry. To make a small-group ministry successful, we not only care for our current leaders, but also recruit new leaders. Because many potential leaders need to be recruited, and unless you regularly find new group leaders, your ministry will always struggle to grow—if it grows at all.

So, here are a few basic principles for successfully recruiting new small-group leaders.

## **Decide What You Are Looking For**

Before you can begin to recruit someone for small-group leadership, you need to ask a couple questions:

- **What qualifications are required in order to lead?** If you just need warm bodies for your small-group ministry, then anyone will do. But most likely your requirements will be a little more stringent. Ask yourself what base qualifications does a leader need to meet? Will you require church membership, training, or new member classes? Some of these qualifications can be fulfilled prior to recruiting a potential leader; others can be fulfilled after a person agrees to lead.
- **What are the expectations and responsibilities of a group leader?** When you ask someone to lead a small group, it would be a mistake to assume that he or she knows what is expected of them. It's important to do your homework. Write down what type of character you expect the potential leader to display. Write down the core responsibilities of a small-group leader in your church. Good leaders don't accept leadership positions without first finding out what is expected of them. For the best results in defining these expectations and responsibilities, work with other leaders in the church, including staff, elders, or deacons.

## **Decide Where You Want to Look**

After determining what to look for in a small-group leader, the next step is to decide where you will look for the best people to lead. Here are some options:

- **From existing small groups.** Existing small-group members have experienced the blessing of small-group community. They are probably your ministry's biggest fans, and they don't need to be sold on the value of small groups. Therefore, these can be some of the easiest and best people to recruit as leaders. It's a good idea to seek the advice of current group leaders when it comes to finding current members who may be ready to take the next step.



- **From people new to your congregation.** Never underestimate the potential of those new to your congregation. In the past, many churches wouldn't let someone lead unless they were given time to work their way up the church leadership ladder. This approach leaves many sitting on the sideline and wasting their God-given abilities. Many times, these new folks come from other churches where they gained valuable experience being a small-group member or leading one. Once you have determined the leader qualifications, expectations, and responsibilities, it's safe to recruit from those new to your congregation.
- **From those who have led in the past.** Keep a list of past small-group leaders. Bring the list out during seasons of recruiting. If they met expectations the last time, they probably will meet expectations again.

### **Determine What You Are Recruiting For**

People need something compelling to be a part of. You may be recruiting potential leaders for a short-term group or a long-term group. But simply asking someone to lead one of those two types of groups does not give them a forceful reason to say yes.

Determine what is so compelling about becoming a small group leader. Rather than recruiting to fill a role, recruit by casting vision for what someone could be and accomplish if they took the opportunity to lead. If you are going to convince them, it's important to have your purpose, goals, and direction for small-group ministry well defined.

### **Decide How Many Leaders You Need**

Set and plan numerical goals. Otherwise, you may not have enough leaders when new groups begin. Numerical goals also keep us motivated and focused on meeting the need for more small groups.

You've probably heard it said that if you aim at nothing, you will hit nothing. Have something to aim for and then go for it! In sales, it may take one hundred "No's" before a salesman hears one "Yes." For this reason, make sure your list of potential leaders is significantly larger than the number of new leaders you need.

### **Decide When to Recruit**

There's a saying when it comes to elections: "Vote early and vote often." It's the same when you are looking for new small-group leaders: recruit early and recruit often. This will likely ensure a positive experience for you and for the new leader. The reason to act early is that the recruiting process takes time; therefore, plan for recruiting to take twice as long as you anticipate.

Also keep in mind that there are times not to recruit. Don't plan big recruiting efforts in December or around busy seasons. Use the events of the busy season to network and build relationships. Get to know people who could become future leaders when it's time to recruit again.

### **Decide How You Will Approach Potential Leaders**

There are several ways you can have a conversation with a potential group leader. The best way is the old fashioned way: face-to-face conversations. Remember, you have to sell the vision of a small-group leader, and it's hard to do that through an email or text. A conversation, whether in person or on the telephone, is the most effective way to communicate.

How do you start the conversation? On the telephone it might sound something like this.



Hello, this is [your name]. Is this a good time to call for a moment? I want to ask if you would consider leading a small group for us for the next [weeks/months]. We have an opportunity to [share the vision for your groups and ministry]. I believe you would be a strong group leader and able to meet the needs of your group members. Would you consider and pray about this opportunity? I will call you back in a week and answer any questions you have.

Then, call back when you say you will. If they say yes to your request, then follow up with a face-to-face meeting. If they say no, be sure to thank them for their consideration and let them know you hope that they will join you in the future.

### **Retaining the Leaders You Recruit**

The final part of recruiting new leaders is retaining them. There are several things you can do in this regard, such as providing care, casting vision frequently, equipping them with resources, and getting feedback regularly.

These things help develop the leader's ownership in your church and small-group ministry. And when you have their ownership, they become more than just leaders. They become ministry partners and allow you more time to recruit!

—MARK INGMIRE is the Small Groups and Adult Education Pastor at Savannah Christian Church in Savannah, Georgia.

# The Value of Persistence in Recruiting

*Because the impact of a small-group leader is worth the effort*

By Linda McCullough-Moore

Alas, recruiting small-group leaders is not an enterprise for sissies. It is hard work and it takes a great deal of time. However, when you consider the number of people whose lives are touched by our recruitment efforts, it becomes well worth the investment. For that reason, persistence needs to be a key part of our recruitment toolbox.

Here are several ideas to keep in mind as you persistently recruit small-group leaders for your ministry. Of course, they should be combined and adjusted to meet the needs of your specific church setting.

## **The Value of Persistence**

First, it cannot be emphasized strongly enough that what might feel like pestering to the recruiter will often feel like firmness of purpose and caring involvement to a potential group leader. Indeed, many potential leaders will only begin to open up and honestly discuss the possibility of leading a group after repeated contacts.

If people are not interested in leading a group, they will let you know. Until that happens, however, rich and lasting fruitfulness can be achieved by communicating with potential leaders in a way that is persistent and consistent.

## **Persistence in Prayer**

Prayer is the foundation of everything we do, and the first step in the recruitment process should be identifying a number of committed Christians to pray for everything that follows. Pray continually for potential small-group leaders, and continually find others to pray with you. (I also recommend that you send occasional prayer reminders to those who agree to pray with you).

We should be persistent in this endeavor, but we should also recognize that God will anoint those leaders whom he chooses. And he will protect and enable their small-group work. Thus, the recruiter spreads the seed of invitation to leadership, but is not responsible for whether or not a potential leader agrees to participate.

## **Persistence in Meeting with Possible Leaders**

The single most effective tool for recruiting new small-group leaders is an individual meeting. When you want to ask someone to consider leading a group, do it in person, and set apart a time where you can have an extended conversation. During that meeting, do not be shy about directly approaching the topic of small-group leadership. Ask questions such as these:

- Have you ever considered leading a small group?
- What is attractive about the prospect of doing so?
- What hesitations or reservations do you have?
- What would you hope for in terms of support or supervision if you were to lead a group?
- What is the best way to be in contact in the future? Do you prefer email, phone, or personal contacts?

If the potential leader seems hesitant about the subject at first, be persistent. Explain why you believe they would be a valuable candidate, and ask them to consider talking things through with you. Be both honest and firm regarding your intentions.

At the same time, don't assume that everything will be figured out in one conversation—repeated exposure to the idea is usually necessary. The first meeting should be followed by a second in about a month's time. Whatever questions and reservations a potential leader has will not emerge at once, so there should be repeated conversations and repeated meetings for as long as the potential leader is willing to attend.

Here's another good idea: meet with a number of potential leaders at the same time. People are often more willing to speak openly in this kind of setting than they would be one-to-one. Either way, be persistent in seeking out regular, face-to-face interaction with potential small-group leaders.

### **Persistence in Handling Hesitation**

There are many different reasons why potential group leaders hesitate to "take the plunge." These can be addressed and worked through as you meet personally. Again, persistence is important—you don't want to give up on a potential leader just because they express a bit of doubt. But when does persistence cross a line?

While there are no hard and fast rules for distinguishing such a line, it is only prudent to stop the recruitment process once candidates make it clear that they are not interested in leading a small group at this time—when they give you a firm "no," in other words. Be sure to make it clear that they can contact you if they change their mind, but also be clear that you will let them make the next move.

Until you hear that firm "no," however, you should continue to invest time and energy in addressing any doubts or reservations expressed by a potential leader.

### **A Word about Email**

For better or worse, email offers the most time-efficient method of contacting potential small-group leaders. But it's important that a recruiter not abuse the ease and availability that email offers. For example, a second email should not be sent until the first email is responded to. Also, recruiters should avoid sending any extraneous emails to the candidate—ever. However tempting it might be to forward inspirational or topical emails, this urge should be avoided. Use email only for specific communication regarding the opportunity to participate in small-group ministry.

In addition, be careful if you find yourself sending emails more frequently than once a week. Some people check email every hour, but others check only once a week. So, the lack of response may indicate that the email has not yet been read. Ultimately, if your email is not answered after several days, your next step should be to contact the potential leader with a phone call.

### **A Word about Phone Calls**

A recruiter should be persistent in contacting potential small-group leaders, but only so far as those leaders are comfortable. This requires some observation and common sense. A sensitive recruiter will have an appreciation that some people enjoy frequent contact; they are very social and chatty and look forward to this aspect of any work in the church. (My personal record is 14 phone calls to invite one teen to join a Bible study.) Others are more goal-oriented and appreciate

## **Recruiting After a Bad Experience**

being contacted only when there is a specific task or decision at hand. These two personality styles are neither good nor bad; they are just different.

Further, you don't have to act like an anthropologist and dig out each person's preference when it comes to modes and frequency of contact. Ask potential leaders directly to describe which level and frequency of contact works best for them.

### **Closing the Deal**

It often takes a number of months and a number of contacts for a potential leader to accept your invitation to lead. It takes time to grow accustomed to the idea of ministering in such an important way, but one new leader can touch the lives of many people. So be prepared, and be persistent.

—LINDA McCULLOUGH-MOORE; copyright 2011 by the author and Christianity Today.

## *How to understand what happened and limit future breakdowns*

*By Carolyn Taketa*

During a small-group promotion weekend at our church, a woman approached the signup table and said: "I have been in a small group before and it was a bad experience. That's why I haven't joined a group for two years. If I join another group, how do I know that it won't happen again?"

It is not unusual to hear variations of this same theme year in and year out—people took a risk, joined a group, had a negative experience, and are understandably reluctant to try again. I wish we could wave a magic wand and guarantee each person a great small group experience every time. But as we know, there are no "perfect" small groups because there are no perfect people. Small groups are inherently relational and, just like people, they are messy packages. This means that despite our best intentions, group members will sometimes have negative or damaging experiences.

The same is true for potential small-group leaders.

So, is there a way to explain those negative situations and provide hope? There should be. And is there anything we can do to minimize the likelihood of negative experiences arising in our groups? Yes.

Although there are many issues that can derail a small group, most of them can be traced to a few common causes. The following are five situations that can produce undesirable experiences for small-group leaders and members—as well as suggestions for how they can be minimized.

### **Unclear Expectations**

Everyone approaches a new small group with a set of expectations about what the group will be and do. Some may want deep Bible studies, while others hope to quickly build friendships through social activities. These expectations are shaped by the "felt needs" of the members, the specific church culture, an individual's past group experiences, and whatever emphasis the church has used to promote small groups.

So, when someone complains about the group "not meeting their needs," it may be due to a lack of clarity or a mismatch between their expectations and the goals of the group.

The key to fixing this is to identify the expectations of individual members in the first couple meetings. Ask questions such as: "What led you to join a small group?" "What do you hope to gain from being part of this group?" "What has been the best and worst aspect of your previous groups?" (If a member has sensitive negative issues from a former group, it may be best to discuss it privately with the leader first). The goal of the discussion is not necessarily to develop consensus, but to increase awareness of people's different perspectives.

It's also important that you ask church leaders about their expectations for groups, and then align your group within those guidelines. Whether you use a written covenant or an informal conversation, make sure that every member understands and agrees on the broad goals of the group. And make sure to reaffirm those goals periodically—especially as you contact potential new members (or leaders).

## **Wearing Masks**

Counselor and author Larry Crabb commented that in the church, "We arrange our bodies in a circle, but our souls are sitting in straight-backed chairs facing away from the others." We live in an image-driven culture that craves connection but lacks meaningful relationships. Even in church, we want to be known but are afraid of what people will think of us if they really knew us. So we put up a façade; we make it seem like everything is okay and we are fine.

This mask is also used in small groups where it may not feel safe to share the struggles of faith, relationships, and life. This fear of judgment and rejection results in groups getting stuck at a superficial level. But over time, people find themselves dissatisfied and wishing for something more.

Genuine faith and friendship can only grow from a foundation of authenticity—admitting to God, ourselves, and others who we really are. It takes risk and work to create a group culture where it is okay to ask questions, express doubt, and share the hard stuff of life. For a group to become more transparent and authentic with one another, someone in the room has to start by telling the truth, sharing their struggle, disclosing their weakness, and asking for help. Over time, honesty, safety, freedom, and grace become the norm in the group and significant relationships can flourish.

Caution: at the same time, group leaders and members are not trained professionals and should not attempt to solve everyone's problems. Rather, a small group is a place to pray, support, and encourage members as they work out their issues.

## **Allowing People to Hijack the Group**

There are certain personality types that can cause trouble within a group: the excessive talker, the judgmental know-it-all, the emotionally draining person, the wannabe preacher, the cynic, the gossip, and so on. These people should not be excluded from group life, but they should not be allowed to dominate it, either.

Unfortunately, in some groups, members with disruptive personality traits are allowed to consistently hijack the group's time. They may not even be aware they are doing it. Left unchecked, this unhealthy dynamic may push other members away or cause them to mentally disengage from the group—this is often demonstrated through body language such as lack of eye contact, rolling of eyes, passivity, or negativity.

In a healthy group, all members need to feel heard, valued, and appreciated. When dominating or disruptive behavior occurs repeatedly, it needs to be addressed privately in a conversation that gently points out the behavior, explains why it is inappropriate in the group context, and helps those involved to change. With prayer, love, and patience, these issues can be resolved.

## **Avoiding Conflict**

Over the course of time disagreements or hurt feelings are inevitable in any relationship. When interpersonal conflicts arise in small groups, it can be awkward, uncomfortable, and difficult. But instead of addressing the issue, sometimes there is an unfortunate tendency to deny or ignore it in the hopes that it will just go away.

The problem is that conflict does not go away. Instead, it goes underground and shows up later as gossip, superiority, criticalness, divisiveness, mistrust, or rejection. Any of these traits can cause a damaging or negative experience, even for group members who are not directly involved.

Whatever the conflict may be, it is better to face it biblically and appropriately. In Matthew 18:15–17, Jesus gives great guidelines on how to best handle interpersonal disagreements. Instead of viewing conflict as the enemy, we can see it as an opportunity (albeit a difficult one) for spiritual and interpersonal growth.

We are called to speak truth in love—something that is rare in this world. When group members step out in courage and handle conflict well, it can become a catalyst for healing and transformation.

### **Self-Focus and Passivity**

In our culture of instant gratification, if something does not give us what we want, we complain and then head for the nearest exit. In group life, sometimes people find something they do not like about the group, which causes them to leave or jump into another group—until they find something "wrong" with that one, too.

It is easy to make snap judgments like, "I don't click with these people," "we have nothing in common," "I don't like this study," or "I'm just not growing here." These may all be legitimate concerns, but group members who feel dissatisfied need to do a heart-check to determine if they are being too self-focused (and whether they have done their part).

For starters, people need to give a group enough time and grace for relationships to develop. A new group with a bunch of strangers will feel awkward for a while—and that needs to be acknowledged and expected. When a member is focused on what they are "getting out of" the group rather than what they can give to the group, they are more likely to be disconnected and disengaged. This leads to an unfortunate cycle: member feels disconnected from the group so he is more likely to skip meetings, which then makes him feel more disconnected when he attends, so he becomes even less committed, until eventually he leaves the group. This cycle can be broken when the member, with humility and grace, pushes through the discomfort, inconvenience, or preferences and chooses to commit to the group while paying attention to what God wants to do in and through the group.

A related characteristic to self-focus is passivity, which breeds discontent. Some leaders make the mistake of doing everything for the group. This makes it easy for members to sit back, criticize, and blame others when things do not go well. For members to engage and belong, they need opportunities to serve and invest themselves in the group. The old adage "the more you give, the more you get" is true in group life. When we use our time, skills, energy, and resources for the sake of other group members, we will come to love, accept and value them more. This leads to deeper levels of love, trust and accountability—markers of a growing and healthy group.

### **Conclusion**

So, what did we tell the woman at the small-group table? "We cannot guarantee that you will have a great small-group experience, but we can promise that God will be there working in you and in your group. It may be different than what you want or expect, but be open to what God has for you."

Every member of a small group needs to work at contributing to a healthy life-giving group. When you clarify expectations, take off the masks, value everyone, grow through conflict, and focus on what God wants to do in you and in the group, you can minimize many of the obstacles that cause negative group experiences.

—CAROLYN TAKETA is Small Groups Director at Calvary Community Church in Westlake Village, CA.

**Discuss:**

1. Have you heard stories of group leaders or members in your church who had a bad experience with small groups?
2. Which of the "root causes" listed above do you feel is most dangerous? Which do you feel is most common?
3. How can you use these causes to diffuse the fears of potential leaders?



# The Power of Video for Recruiting

*A vital medium you can use to project the message of small groups*

By Carolyn Taketa

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then is a video worth a million words? Perhaps. In America, we live in a culture hyper-saturated by video. We are increasingly flooded with visual images on our computers, smart phones, televisions, and social networks. Recent statistics show that the average person watches more than 4 hours of television per day, 182 online videos from sources like Youtube per month, and 20,000 commercials in a year. Clearly, video is an extremely popular and effective medium for communication.

Unlike written text, which is good for delivering information, the power of visual media lies in its experiential nature. It is a creative medium that speaks not only to visual learners but to everyone. Through a great movie, a Hallmark commercial, a compelling clip of news footage, or a Youtube download, video has the power to move hearts and minds.

So how can we harness the power of video to influence people toward biblical values in our churches? More specifically, how can we use the video medium to promote small groups? The following are some guidelines to consider as you use videos in your ministry.

## **Video Works Best When Telling a Story**

Everyone loves a good story. And the best thing about the video format is its power to uniquely connect the subject matter with the viewer by taking the viewer into the story or experience itself. This can be done in 2–4 minutes using factors such as subject, setting, tone, voice, images, words, music, colors, lighting, and so on.

That being said, if the information you are presenting via video could have been delivered in written form as a bulletin insert or website content, you may not be using the video medium for its maximum impact.

What is the most common type of video we see at church? Probably the one promoting an event or a ministry where someone is on camera and talks about what, why, and when you should attend—basically an infomercial. This is appropriate at times and provides people with information delivered by an influential voice such as the senior pastor or ministry leader. But consistent use of this format does not maximize the video medium, because the message is not necessarily delivered in a way that connects and draws in the viewer.

For example, if you use video to recruit new leaders for small groups, you can 1) have someone from the small-groups ministry or the senior pastor on camera saying why people should lead a group and asking people to sign up to lead; or 2) tell a story by interviewing someone who signed up to lead a small group last year, what led her to lead, how she felt in the beginning, how she feels now, and how God has blessed her as she has served. Either approach may get across the main point (lead a new group), but the first video style is more informational while the second is a personal story which is more likely to stir people's hearts toward action.

## **Basic Tips for Filming Video**

First, know your goal and share those objectives with everyone involved in making the video. Ask yourself:

1. What is the primary purpose of the video?
2. What's the message in a nutshell?
3. What do we want to accomplish?
4. Who is the target audience?
5. What do we want people to think about or do after viewing the video?

Next, create a roadmap before shooting so that you'll get more useful footage and save time:

1. What is the main point of the message? What is the arc of the story?
2. If interviewing subjects, prepare questions that will elicit responses related to the story/ message and share with the subjects in advance so they have time to form their answers prior to shooting. Do not put words in people's mouths, but help them articulate their thoughts and feelings.
3. Figure out what setting, background, tone, colors, etc. will be most effective for the message you want to communicate.
4. Decide what additional visuals, photos, graphics, and text you need to collect in order to create a visually compelling story.

As you work, pay attention to details. Be deliberate and intentional about who and what you choose to feature in a video—including age, race, gender, type of background, clothing, size of house, and so on. Also, be aware and careful about what is in your frame so that you do not inadvertently feature something that is offensive or inappropriate.

And it's vital that you be authentic with any kind of storytelling. Since a 2–4 minute video is not capable of capturing all the nuances of a story or a person, there may be a temptation to tell a "perfect" story by presenting a misleading or glossy false picture. Though the story needs to be compelling, it must be authentic and not manufactured or manipulated. We do not want to show a commercial—we want to show truth in a creative way.

Community happens best in a journey together over time. When possible, include images or a few sentences depicting that life together is an ongoing process (i.e., the pivotal times or circumstances that brought people closer). It is okay to show the messy or unresolved aspects of group life, but be sure to do it in an appropriate way. Always ask permission to share publically.

### **Conclusion**

Through video, we have a powerful tool with which to paint pictures of the life that God offers us. God is constantly at work in amazing ways in people's lives. So set the bar high! Pay attention to the stories in your small-group ministry, dig around, and ask questions to find stories that illustrate God's goodness and power in a fresh way. Choose to diligently apply both focus and creativity to the craft of video-making so that the pictures you paint inspire and move people toward biblical community.

—CAROLYN TAKETA is Small Groups Director at Calvary Community Church in Westlake Village, CA.

# How to Find Your Next Apprentice

*It doesn't have to be a difficult experience if you remember Who is in charge.*

By Sam O'Neal

For some small-group leaders, finding an apprentice is about as difficult as walking around the block. They automatically think of that individual or couple in their group who has been blessing the socks off the rest of the group members—encouraging people, praying diligently for the group, volunteering to lead discussions, and making the best apple pie north of the *Rio Grande*. They are easy to tab as future leaders because they stand out so clearly within the group.

But if that doesn't sound like your situation, don't worry. Small groups that have an obvious choice for an apprentice leader are the exception, not the rule. It's much more common for a group to contain a leader who does almost all of the work, and then a collection of group members who always receive and rarely give.

In those cases, we often don't know where to begin when it comes selecting someone as a potential apprentice leader. And that's okay. In fact, it's an opportunity to help one or more of your members experience significant spiritual growth—and an opportunity for you to grow, as well.

The following steps will help you navigate through the process.

## **Pray, Pray, Pray**

The first thing you need to remember when searching for a small-group apprentice is that you are not qualified for the job. You don't have sufficient wisdom to discern the spiritual lives and maturity of your group members and figure out which ones are ready to step toward leadership.

That job belongs to the Holy Spirit. He knows what your group needs, what you need, and what your next apprentice needs. And the way to hand over the recruiting responsibility to the Spirit is prayer. "Pray to the Lord of the Harvest," Jesus said, and his words remain sharp and active today when it comes to identifying and recruiting spiritual leaders.

So, if you want to move beyond your own wisdom and smarts when it comes to finding a person to join you in the spiritual leadership of your group, pray for your small-group members every day. Pray that God would be working in their lives, and pray that he would be sanctifying them through the Holy Spirit. And as you pray for the growth and development of your group members, ask God to raise up workers for the harvest in your community. And ask for wisdom to see who those new workers may be.

## **Use the Eye Test**

As you interact with the Holy Spirit in prayer and request eyes to see the people that are ready for a new step, you also need to be watching your group members. Specifically, watch their eyes and their faces as they participate in group meetings, and as you interact with them in the "real world."

Which person's eyes really light up when it's time to dig into God's Word? Who gets excited when the discussion goes deeper? Who displays empathy and a kind heart when other group members

open their hearts or confess their sins? These are the people that may be ready to join you in leadership. These are the people that you need to especially lift up to the Holy Spirit in prayer.

In the same way, if you have a person or two in mind that you think the Spirit might be calling into leadership, watch their faces and their behavior within the group. If they pass the "eye test," it may serve as a confirmation of the Spirit's leading. If they seem bored or disinterested during important elements of your group's time together, you may be barking up the wrong tree.

### **Recruiting Questions**

In addition to the "eye test," there are some questions you can pay attention to as you pray, and as you observe the members of your small group:

- Who is faithful?
- Who understands your vision (and the vision of the small group ministry)?
- Who is eager to learn?
- What person/couples seem to be the natural leaders of the group/team?
- Do they have the ability to train others?
- Who would be good candidates to be trained to minister alongside you?

Again, as you think through these questions, be sensitive to the work and leading of the Holy Spirit—especially if that leading is taking you in a direction you don't want to go, or a direction you hadn't thought of before.

### **Don't Impose Your Own Boundaries**

One final piece of advice as you go through the process of identifying a small-group apprentice: don't limit your opportunities. Be open to new directions that you didn't think of—and even new people you don't know very well.

For example, it's possible that your next apprentice will be a person that is not currently part of your small group. This is not an ideal situation, normally, but if you keep coming across a person that shares your passions and is being called by God to take a new step in leadership, there may be something going on. Don't resist it out of hand.

In addition, your church leaders may have identified people who are on fire for God and need to be mentored for leadership in a small-group setting. It may be that your group is just what these future leaders need.

—SAM O'NEAL is the former managing editor of [www.SmallGroups.com](http://www.SmallGroups.com).

# When to Call Off the Dogs

*Discerning the right time to end your pursuit of a potential group leader*

By Mark Ingmire

My family used to have a yappy Chihuahua. She weighed less than 10 pounds but acted like she weighed 80. She would bark incessantly at anything, and always at inconvenient times. She would bark at bugs, leaves, and noises in the house (just to name a few). She didn't have a good sense of when to bark and when to call off her attack, and the end result was annoying.

The same is true for some of us when we try to recruit new small-group leaders. We know that unless we recruit new leaders, the number of small groups will decline through normal attrition. Therefore, we continue to pursue people with the potential to lead. But sometimes it may seem to those people that our persistence is incessant, annoying, and happens at inappropriate times in their lives.

In our enthusiasm for small groups and recruiting new people, we can actually turn away potential leaders. So, what are the factors to help us discern when to call off the dogs?

## **When Do We Call Off the Dogs?**

**When there is a serious issue in their life that affects their family.** Experience tells me that this is often the number one reason someone shouldn't be asked to lead. These serious issues can include a variety of subjects. Some consume large amounts of time in a potential leader's life—things like the serious illness of a family member or caring for an aging parent. Other issues may consume a lot of emotional and mental energy, such as breakdowns in a family relationship (including separation or divorce). In any of these situations, the potential leader needs time to work on their family's issue until it is resolved.

**When there is a serious issue in their life that affects their witness.** Certainly we do not expect perfection from our small-group leaders, because perfection isn't realistic. However, we do expect them to pursue spiritual maturity and live a life above reproach. Issues that affect the leader's integrity and moral authority include separation and divorce, dishonest business dealings, pornography, and gossip. Without moral authority, a leader is a leader in title only, and will lose the respect of group members.

**When they turn you down multiple times.** It's time to get the hint: they don't want to lead. At least not right now. Continue to maintain and build your relationship with them, but don't ask them to lead. This will help reinforce the confidence they know you have in them. In addition, potential leaders will respond better in the future when they know that you care and are interested in them as people. Let the idea of leading a small group marinate in their minds and give them time to warm up to the idea of leading a small group.

A general rule of thumb is the more requests they have turned down, the longer it will take for them to become comfortable with the idea. If you have approached the idea twice in a period of three to four months and were turned down, you should wait at least six months before even thinking about approaching them again.

**When there is no longer a compelling reason to lead.** Future leaders should be recruited for a specific purpose, such as participating in a sermon-alignment campaign or specific short-term

study. If there is nothing compelling for new leaders to lead, perhaps it's a good time to give the dogs a rest until another opportunity arises. When a compelling cause appears, they may be more likely to step up to lead.

**Don't hesitate to ask because they are involved in other ministries.** Some may say that you call off the dogs when a volunteer is serving in two or three ministries. Well-meaning pastors and church leaders may feel a volunteer could become overburdened or they may even have selfish reasons for not wanting the volunteer's time shared with other ministries. However, the volunteer may actually be waiting for the chance to lead a small group but doesn't know how to get started or that the opportunity is open. The volunteer may have time for more than one or two ministries.

So, if someone meets your qualifications and you believe they would make a great small-group leader, let them decide how much they can or can't do. If they ask your opinion about the time involved leading a small group along with their other ministry responsibilities, have an honest conversation about their work, family, and other volunteer schedules. Whether they lead a small group or not, the final decision should be theirs, not yours. Bottom line, don't say their "No" for them.

### **When Do You Let the Dogs Out Again?**

If a potential leader has experienced a life crisis or a failure in their personal life, should they ever be asked to lead a small group again? The answer depends on each situation. Our lives are never static. Sometimes the change is for the better; sometimes it's for the worse.

If a potential leader has come out on the other side of a crisis with a Christ-like attitude and their witness rebuilt, then consider how you might re-engage them again in small-group ministry. For those who have successfully weathered an intense family crisis, such as an illness or caring for aging parents, perhaps they have time to lead a small group. For those who experienced a moral failure, they may be ready to move into group leadership, but much more slowly. They might begin as core members of a new group, or perhaps a host for their small group. This strategy will allow them to re-engage, rebuild trust, and be an effective witness once again. They may eventually be ready to lead in the future as they prove over time that they have restored their witness in spite of their failure.

### **Putting It All Together**

Knowing when to call off the dogs is not a step-by-step process that is set in stone. Mostly it involves observation of the volunteer's circumstances, character discernment, and engaging common sense. If you are not sure when to call the dogs away from a potential leader, don't feel you have to make the decision all by yourself. Use any other resources at hand—a staff member or church leader who may know this potential volunteer.

Also, even though there are times to definitely call off the dogs, never lose your bark. Even yappy Chihuahuas know they need to bark sometimes to get what they need. Just choose wisely when to recruit and whom you will recruit!

—*MARK INGMIRE is the Small Groups and Adult Education Pastor at Savannah Christian Church in Savannah, Georgia*

## **Further Exploration**

*Resources to help you . . .*

[SmallGroups.com](http://SmallGroups.com). We specialize in equipping churches and small-group leaders to make disciples through life-changing community.

[BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://BuildingChurchLeaders.com). A website with practical training tools for various church leadership roles.

[CTPastors.com](http://CTPastors.com). A website offering practical advice and articles for church leaders in pastoral roles.

[WomenLeaders.com](http://WomenLeaders.com). A website ministering to women leaders in the church.

### **Creating Community: Five Keys to Building a Small Group Culture**

*Andy Stanley and Bill Willits*

Multnomah, 2004

The authors describe how they established a small-group culture at North Point Community Church.

### **Go Big with Small Groups**

*Bill Easum and John Atkinson*

Abingdon Press, 2007

This book offers step-by-step advice for beginning and developing a small-groups ministry

### **Making Small Groups Work**

*Henry Cloud and John Townsend*

Zondervan, 2003

In this book, facilitators will learn how to promote growth within their groups, what makes a group work, the roles of members, and how to find solutions for problems

### **The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community**

*Randy Frazee*

Zondervan, 2000

This book paints a beautiful portrait of biblical community and talks about the sacrifices we will have to make in order to experience life together.

## **Why Didn't You Warn Me?**

*Pat J. Sikora*

Standard Publishing, 2007

This focused guide trains the novice or experienced small-group leader to deal effectively with the obstacles of group life.