

ARC Small Groups Newsletter, February 15, 2007

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Serving Together,

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Opportunities to Share

Small Group life is a unique place where God meets us in community. As a small group leader, you are in a position to experience this life change better than anyone else. The congregation of Autumn Ridge is growing larger and as we grow larger, we need to continue to grow small through small groups. Many people in our church have not experienced small group life the way that you and I have.

Would you be willing to share your life changing experiences with others at Autumn Ridge Church?

I am looking for small group leaders or members to share their lives with the congregation through the pages of Ridgelines. If you or another member of your group would be willing to write an article for Ridgelines and submit it to me for timely placement during the year, then please contact me.

It is our desire as the Pastoral Staff of Autumn Ridge to provide an opportunity for every person who walks through the doors of our church to connect with God in a small group community like yours.

Upcoming Small Group Events

Coaches Training – March 11, 18, and 25

For three weeks in March I am inviting a few people to discover what small group coaching is all about. We will learn together the benefit of supporting and encouraging small group leaders at ARC. Please pray for our time together as well as your involvement in being involved in a coaching relationship further down the road.

Coaches aren't experts; there are people who love God and want to serve others as they walk along side a few small group leaders to pray for them, encourage them, and give them valuable resources. For three weeks in March I will be offering Coaches Training during the 10:30 Sunday service. On March 11th, 18th, and 25th we will seek to discover together how developing coaches at Autumn Ridge can enhance the true biblical community that so many are already experiencing through small group life. I hope that you will consider coming to these three weeks of training to learn more about what coaching is all about.

For more information about becoming a small group coach [email me](#).

Just Walk Across the Room

In June of 2007 we are launching a small group campaign called *Just Walk Across the Room*. This resource that has been developed by Willow Creek in Chicago is based on the book by the same name authored by Willow Creek's Senior Pastor, Bill Hybels. Hybels is taking a step forward from his personal evangelism training in *Becoming a Contagious Christian*. Hybels has learned from over 30 years in ministry to listen to the Holy Spirit when engaging people in spiritual conversations. In his latest book, *Just Walk Across the Room*, he shares his insights and challenges all followers of Christ to step out of their comfort zone for Jesus' sake.

At Autumn Ridge we will be learning how to take bold steps toward becoming people who listen to the Holy Spirit as we rub shoulders with our neighbors and engage them in spiritual conversations. *Just Walk Across the Room* will be a church wide campaign as it will be preached from the pulpit and lived out in small groups for four weeks in June of 2007.

Please consider how you might be involved in this important campaign for our church. You might lead your current group, be a leader of a new group, or encourage someone from your group to take a step of faith to lead a new group. During past small group emphasis campaigns we have had over 1000 people involved in small group life – let's see how we can move forward with God's help this June!

I'm looking for small group leaders right now for this campaign. If you would like to lead your current group, start a new group for 4 weeks, or help a group member in your group take the next step toward leadership, please [email me](#).

Willow Creek Small Groups Conference – September 27-29

“Three days at Willow Creek is worth a year of teaching on small groups.”

Or so says one small group junkie at Autumn Ridge. If you want to be encouraged and resourced in your small group leadership, then this conference is the way to go. This year we are hoping to fill a busload of people to catch the small group vision and learn how they are best gifted to serve God within the small group ministry. You might find yourself saying, “But I’m already on board with small groups, you don’t need me to go to an event like this.” On the contrary, if you are already on board with small groups, you are exactly the right person to go to an event like this. Willow Creek promises to be three exciting days of teaching, fellowship, teambuilding, and vision casting. Autumn Ridge’s small group ministry will be better off if you attend this conference.

Resources for Leading Your Small Group

Asking Questions Like the Master Teacher

Ask your small group the same types of questions Jesus used to produce change.

By Dave Arch

“Do you not yet understand?”

—Jesus (Matthew 8:21)

Whether in a public gathering, a confrontation with his enemies, or a private conversation with his closest friends, Jesus consistently used questions to produce change and growth. In the eighth chapter of the Book of Mark, he used eight types of questions.

1. Answering with Questions (Mark 8:5)

Rather than merely answering a question (and thereby stunting the question's teaching potential), Jesus would often answer a participant's question with a question of his own. In Mark 8, when his followers asked Jesus how he planned to feed a crowd of 4,000 people, he responded with a question: "How many loaves do you have?" That question kept his followers involved.

It takes confidence and wisdom to ask involving questions. Asking a question as simple as "What do the rest of you think?" can keep people engaged and searching for truth. When we answer every question, we rob the questioner of the satisfaction found in personal discovery.

2. Gathering Data (Mark 8:5, 19-21)

Jesus eventually asked some personal questions in this chapter. However, he began with and interspersed throughout the dialogue questions of a more factual nature. "How many loaves do you have?" involved his followers on a non-threatening level.

Using these types of questions helps maintain group involvement while gently moving toward

the more personal application questions. A factual question such as "How many years have you worked in your current job?" doesn't require much personal disclosure but still reveals

insights about the person.

3. Making Statements (Mark 8:12)

Jesus skillfully asked rhetorical questions to emphasize a point in a powerful but non-combative manner. "Why does this generation seek for a sign?" communicates much better than "You stubborn group of unbelieving people!" Such diplomacy is a beneficial teaching skill.

4. Communicating Passion (Mark 8:17-18)

When rhetorical questions are linked together, they can transport tremendous passion. In Mark 8:17-18, Jesus asked his followers: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears

but fail to hear?"

As Jesus joined questions together without giving pause for an answer, his listeners were rendered thoughtfully speechless.

This technique can be used effectively in discussion groups to powerfully reinforce a point.

5. Correcting (Mark 8:21)

When we need to correct someone, phrasing it as a question can allow the person to make the necessary changes without defensiveness or losing face. Instead of saying, "You are so stupid—you never understand anything," Jesus asked, "Do you not yet understand?" This question made the point while maintaining the involvement of his participants.

6. Seeking Feedback (Mark 8:23)

While healing a man of blindness, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" We can ask the same kind of question throughout any teaching process. A question such as "Do you understand what we're studying?" can reveal the level of comprehension and keep people on track.

7. Encouraging Personal Application (Mark 8:27-29)

Toward the conclusion of Mark 8, Jesus used two increasingly personal questions to lead his followers into content application.

He began with a more general question—"Who do people say I am?" (Mark 8:27)—before leading into the directly personal question—"Who do you say I am?" (Mark 8:29).

When we want to move our group to application, a good approach is to ask, "What are some ways we could ... ?" before transitioning to "What are some ways you could ... ?"

8. Soul Searching (Mark 8:36-37)

Mark 8:36-37: "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

These types of questions reach to the heart of an issue and have no comfortable reply.

One example of such a question might be: "How can a church survive if it isn't in touch with the needs of the congregation?" Closing with this type of question or writing it at the bottom of a handout can make a strong impact.

Adult Bibles Classes and Communities

Video – An Action Plan for Personal Growth

This is a great resource from *Solutions on Video*:

To watch this video from Dr. John Townsend, click [here](#).