COMMUNICATE

The Compass

a tool for disciplers

CenterField PRODUCTIONS

Equipping Believers for Ministry

Leading a Small Group

Conversation On the Journey

Small groups are usually at the core of a person's positive experience with ministry. It's where many great relationships develop and where tons of biblical knowledge is gained. Some of my favorite times occur when I'm driving home after a great study. It's so much fun. For those who get to lead a group it can be extremely satisfying. But it's difficult to do it well.

Even Paul found it difficult on at least one occasion:

> *Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.* (Acts 20:9)

An interesting small group is not only important for your chuch ministry, but apparently, also a matter of life and death.

There's no way you can teach someone to become a great Bible study leader in an hour, so I'm not going to set you up for that. Rather, I'm going to drop a couple of principles and recommend two resources. Try to see your imparta-tion of this stuff to your disciple as a process, not an event. You can dole this stuff out over the course of the year, both in a small group, and during discipleship times.

Resource #1: *The Ultimate Road Trip*

The Ultimate Road Trip is a small group leaders handbook. I don't know off-hand what it costs, but it's worth it whatever it is. It is clear, funny, and loaded with solid information on how to lead a group. Be a nice guy and buy your disciple a copy. Honestly, it's the best resource I've seen for producing great small group leaders. Buy it for him and encourage him to read it.

Available at centerfieldproductions.com are a couple of lessons entitled, "Cru-cial Elements" and "Guiding a Discussion". Check them out and then order a copy of the book from New Life Resources. It is online at campuscrusade.com or by calling 1-800-827-2788.

Resource #2: *Cru.Comm*

Second, buy yourself, and him, a subscription to *Cru.Comm*. There you'll find studies that your disciple can use. Each lesson first teaches you the text, and then helps you figure out how to teach it to others. The studies are specifi-cally designed to help you turn lost people into Christ-centered laborers. If you use it right, it will have the added benefit of making you look like a genius.

This Week's Excursion

This week's lesson is meant to be a primer in how to train your disciple to lead a small group. Though the best thing you can do to that end is probably just to do a good job leading your own small group (where he can watch you), we'd like to offer a few thoughts that might help you set him up for success.

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Definitely get a subscription to it. By way of sneak preview, *The Compass* includes an article that should give you a sense of the *Cru.Comm* philosophy. It is entitled "How to use *Cru.Comm*". Check it out in the resources section.

Principles

Briefly in the principle arena, I'll remind you of the five E's of leadership development mentioned in the introductory article The Five E's of Leadership Development. Remember what they were? If not, maybe you could check out that article again. They are:

Education

Exposure

Environment

Experience

Evaluation

Let's hit each one briefly, as it concerns the small group leader you are developing.

Education. This is where *Road Trip* comes in. You could give him the book to read and then each week during your discipleship time talk though one section or topic that you find particularly valuable. I can't overemphasize how much our small group studies would improve nationwide, if all of the leaders read and applied this book.

Exposure. If you want your disciple to lead a good group, it would be helpful if you show how it's done every week. Be mindful that the people you lead will likely emulate you for good or for bad. Invest the time to lead well. For the ones you are discipling, let them look behind the curtain and see how you prepare, and why you do what you do each week.

Environment. The best place for him to practice leading a group is probably in your group. Make sure you aren't creating a high-pressure environment in which he would be terrified to lead (and fail). Hold the reins loosely, share the stage, value his contributions.

Experience. Let him lead a couple of studies. When you do, vow to yourself, and him, that you will not speak unless he asks you a direct question. It's tough to lead a group when your leader is there correcting you in front of everyone, or giving a better answer to a question you just flubbed. Save your feedback for when it's all over.

Evaluation. In the right time (after the study is over) and in the right place (privately) give ample feedback. What did he do well? Be specific and encourage first! What could he handle differently? Remind him of an awkward moment and work through a better way to handle it. Again be specific. Don't be a wuss

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Next Steps

As mentioned earlier, this lesson is best communicated as a process, not an event. Nevertheless, I'd recommend two application points to get you started.

1. Assign them to read a section of The Ultimate Road Trip (that you bought for them since you are such a great discipler), and plan to discuss it in a following week.
2. Pick a date a few weeks out when they can lead the group. Have them begin to prepare using Cru.Comm.

here. People will grow and improve because you help them recognize and address their mistakes. If you care about them, and they know it, they'll be able to take the criticism.

Developing small group leaders is a critical task. You can make a huge difference in peoples' lives by setting the standard and then doing the difficult work of training your disciples to do the same.

End

Side Trails

Leading a Small Group, The Ultimate Road Trip. New Life Publications.

Cru.Comm. New Life Publications.

Order at campuscrusade.com

"The Five E's of Leadership Development."

"How to Use Cru.Comm."

"Crucial Elements."

"Guiding a Discussion."

Available at centerfieldproductions.com

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org

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