



# BUILDING MOVEMENTS: SMALL GROUPS

STEVE DOUGLAS ESSENTIALS STRATEGY

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# “ESSENTIALS” STAFF STRATEGY & TRAINING GUIDE

Steve Douglass

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## WHAT IS THE “ESSENTIALS” SERIES?



The “Essentials of Spiritual Growth and Multiplication” is a small-group discussion series. It is designed to help students grow in Christ and become involved in ministry and multiplication as soon as possible. “Life change” and “talking about God” are two very visible indications that a movement of spiritual multiplication is occurring. All 24 lessons encourage students to see change in their lives and tell others about what they are learning.

The series is also designed to be much easier for today’s college students to understand and use. One second generation group leader said, “This is so easy, anyone could lead it.” A major contributor to the ease of use and transfer to others is that the series takes into account two key facts about today’s students:

1. They are “post-modern” in philosophy.
2. They are “secondary oral learners”. That means they can read but they don’t prefer to learn by reading.

“Essentials” focuses on experience, story and discussion to understand biblical truth. It does not require a Bible scholar to teach it, because the leader’s role is to guide the group in discovering truth together. Group members pray and consider what the Scriptures say and how they apply to daily life.

“Essentials” is an evangelism and discipleship strategy but works differently than many other strategies you may have used. It penetrates the student body of a campus along the natural relational network that already exists. Second and third generation groups do not form mainly by large-scale promotional efforts. Instead new group leaders are asked to invite their friends and acquaintances to attend. Hopefully some of these people have begun to see life change and excitement about Christ in the life of the new group leaders.

## WHERE AND HOW WAS IT DEVELOPED?



“Essentials” was developed at the University of Central Florida, where Campus Crusade has had a successful ministry by normal standards of measurement: 400 in weekly meetings, 100 at Christmas conferences, 30 on summer projects.

But, the Campus Director, David Pezzoli, and his team were up against some significant challenges. The school had a very large student population (45,000, of which about 20,000 were traditional undergraduate students). The vast majority of the students lived off campus. Most of the students

closely identified with a relatively small group of friends (5-15). As you can imagine, these groups were not easy to find let alone systematically approach.

So, there needed to be a more fluid, organic approach that could take advantage of natural opportunities as they arose. Random surveys weren't working extremely well, so they tried to focus more on conversational ministry—encountering people after class, etc.

When someone came to Christ or when an existing Christian was discovered, that became an important opportunity to take the gospel back to the person's group. Realistically accomplishing that required two commitments:

1. To equip people quickly and effectively to begin to live a solid Christian life and to minister to the others in their groups.
2. Not to seek to pull new people into "CCC's world" (weekly meetings and other activities) so exclusively that they were pulled out of their groups of friends before they could make an impact.

These commitments created a need to disciple new people with more pace and intentionality than in the past. The standard was set to try to equip them to begin to walk with God, form some foundational Christian habits and minister, all within one semester. It sounded audacious, but the need was real, if they were to have a good chance to reach their groups.

One barrier to quicker discipleship was the failure to fully account for the natural learning styles of students. They wanted to learn with high amounts of discussion versus by listening to lectures. They liked stories more than lists of points. They were more open to application and sharing than we were calling them to do.

All of this led to the development of the "Essentials of Spiritual Growth and Multiplication" project. In September 2005 David Pezzoli, four student Bible-study leaders and I started from the essential content that Campus Crusade had refined through the years. But, we tried more engaging ways to promote learning and regularly sought feedback from the student leaders. What developed was so much easier to use that the student leaders twisted my arm to develop 12 more sessions to follow the initial 12. (That happened over my objection that I had a "day job" of leading Campus Crusade.) Two of the student leaders were so happy with the approach that they converted their 1 John study into the same format, while they waited for the new sessions to be developed.

To give some sense of the numerical results, the original two small groups started with 20-25 students involved (total) in September 2005. They had grown to 35 students involved by the end of January 2006 and had split into four groups. More importantly, from the two original groups 12 students became involved in teaching their own groups. Four of the new groups (they teach in teams) had a total of 25 people involved, not counting the leaders. One of the members of a second generation group expressed a desire to start something in her sorority within a few weeks after becoming involved.

The fall of 2006, 21 groups were formed. By February 2007 there were 35 groups altogether with a total of 290 students involved. This represented almost 1.5% of the traditional, undergraduate

students at UCF. Here is a quote from Emily, a new second-generation group leader: “Kevin’s and my group is going really well. Right now we have six people. I could see them leading their own groups soon.” By April 2007 two strong third-generation leaders committed to start their groups in the fall.

## WHAT IS THE CONTENT?



The content of the “Essentials” series is divided into six groups of four sessions each. Each group can be taught independently. However, for Christians who are new to the faith or to Campus Crusade, it seems best to take them in the following order:

### **PART 1:** (The DNA of the Christian life and the ministry of CCC)

#### **4 Walks**

- Gaining assurance of salvation
- Experiencing God’s forgiveness
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit
- Walking continually with God

#### **4 Talks**

- Studying and applying the Bible
- Praying
- Witnessing to non-Christians
- Having fellowship with Christians

#### **4 Ministries**

- Realizing love is the foundation for ministry
- Winning
- Building
- Sending

### **PART 2:** (Knowing and responding to God in more depth)

#### **4 Facts** (about Jesus Christ)

- God
- Man
- Savior
- Servant

#### **4 Helps** (provided by the Holy Spirit)

- Power
- Truth (so you can know what is true spiritually)
- Peace
- Words (to say in ministering)

#### **4 Attitudes** (you should have toward God, the Father)

- Trusting Him
- Loving Him
- Obeying Him
- Using well what He gives you, for His purpose

Remember that at UCF we felt we had to begin to establish Christians in the faith and in ministry within one semester. So Part 1 contains the “basics.” After that “crash course,” however, it seemed best to seek to deepen their relationships with God. Part 2, therefore, is a brief applied theology course. Each person of God is featured for four sessions. The group members are invited to begin to respond properly to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God the Father.

Some campuses started some “Essentials” groups with just non-Christians. In those situations it seemed better to start with the 4 Facts (about Jesus) and then go back to the 4 Walks, etc. You could also start with another evangelistic Bible study and then go to the 4 Walks.

### **HOW CAN YOU DECIDE WHETHER TO USE “ESSENTIALS” ON YOUR CAMPUS(ES)?**



The following series of questions should help you and your team decide whether “Essentials” is right for you at this time:

1. How well is multiplication going? Are students owning ministry and passing that ownership on to other students? [If “not very well”, then “Essentials” might prove especially helpful to you.]
2. How much are each of the following present in your existing ministry:
  - A prayer emphasis?
  - Some strong student leaders?
  - Staff capable of providing training and support for a small-group strategy?
  - Flexibility (openness) among your staff team and student leaders to try something that might be quite different?
  - [If these are present with at least some strength, then you can likely introduce the “Essentials” strategy and materials successfully.]
3. How strong is your desire to penetrate to every part of your campus(es) and reach every student? [If your desire is very strong, you will be able to overcome the inevitable barriers to implementing anything new. “Essentials” is designed to promote the flow of evangelism and discipleship through the natural relational network that already exists on your campus(es). That viral spread can eventually touch every student.]
4. Have you and your staff team prayed and sensed a leading from God to proceed with “Essentials”? [Hopefully God will confirm in your hearts any major emphasis on your campus.]

Looking at it from a little different angle, know that “Essentials” works best when it fits into an overall strategy which includes other ministry/movement elements such as:

1. Specific additional training in ministry skills. “Essentials” is not a substitute, for example, for training on how to prepare a personal testimony, how to use the “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” booklet or how to counsel young Christians in areas of persistent sin. This training function can also be enlarged to train new “Essentials” small group leaders.
2. Momentum events or other activities, such as movement-wide weekly meetings and special outreach emphases (e.g. Freshmen Survival Kits or Surveys).
3. Fall retreats, Christmas conferences, spring-break and summer projects.

In other words, the “Essentials” series does quickly imprint the DNA of Christian life and ministry onto minds and hearts. It does promote transfer of ownership of ministry from one student to another. But it does not substitute for other important elements of movement building.

## HOW SHOULD YOU LAUNCH “ESSENTIALS” AS A NEW EMPHASIS?



Sometimes introducing the “Essentials” series has caused some kickback from upperclassmen who have been involved with CCC for a while. Its approach is quite different from the lecture method of leading Bible studies.

Some initial resistance to change isn’t surprising. It is a normal human reaction. But undue resistance can be avoided by “ramping up” to a full engagement with “Essentials”. At UCF we started with just two of the many Bible studies that were meeting at the time. The “Essentials” leaders, though, were well-respected and influential in CCC on campus.

Over a period of two semesters God blessed with significant success. The numbers of students and the numbers of groups grew rapidly. Word spread among the other group leaders. All the while we were improving the series to be more effective.

When the time came to “roll out” the strategy the next fall, the campus director had a special training time for the new group leaders. They were shown exactly how to do this rather different style of group from what they were used to. (Otherwise they may have continued with the existing more lecture-oriented approach.) Also time was given to answer their questions and concerns.

I would recommend using a similar approach in existing campus works:

- a. Introduce it to a few influential group leaders for a semester or more.
- b. Work out the details and differences in how exactly to implement this at your campus during that time.
- c. Let the word spread naturally as the series works in your context.
- d. Launch the comprehensive use of the strategy with good training and opportunity to have questions answered.
- e. Pray throughout that God will supernaturally accomplish His purpose in all of this.



As you seek to motivate and align your existing student leaders, recognize that they have probably been exposed to some “advanced concepts” concerning the faith. Also, many entering freshmen who fill out a freshman survey may already be exposed to Christianity through a good church youth group or parachurch high school ministry. So, to the above type people “Essentials” may seem a bit simple—even “beneath” them. In light of that you might find the following helpful in explaining the purpose and value of “Essentials”:

1. Recognize that the “Essentials” series emphasizes application to life versus presentation of intriguing and complex new truths.

No doubt assurance, forgiveness, filling, etc. are simple concepts. But, they are absolutely essential truths for living the Christian life. The reason Bill Bright determined they were crucial to emphasize was that Christians, for the most part, did not really understand them, nor did they apply them. For example, he found that many Christians weren’t really sure they would go to heaven if they died. They didn’t feel forgiven by God. They did not know how to appropriate the power of the Holy Spirit to their lives.

In other words, the appearance of being “overly simple” is not new. And, from my observation, the need to apply is still there as well. Christians’ misconceptions seem to surround the concept of “deep”. Seasoned Christians want to go deeper—and that is good. However, the real need for depth is not mainly in terms of higher complexity of truth. The real need for most people is greater depth of penetration of the simple truths into hearts and lives.

2. Therefore, encourage group members from the beginning to look forward to “life change” as a priority over “advanced truths”.

I once heard it said, “It’s not what I don’t know in the Bible that concerns me most. It’s what I do know that I am not applying that concerns me.” So it should become with your group members.

Consider what the Bible says about itself concerning its purpose: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV) Notice that three out of the four elements of its purpose relate to bringing our lives into conformity with Biblical truth. Without apology, call your group members to seek to please God by what they do in response to His Word. “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22 NIV)

3. When discussion on a particular passage of Scripture lags because people think the truths are overly simple, skip to the first question under APPLY.

The idea here is to get the discussion off of the theoretical and down to the practical. So ask, “Why don’t we always apply this simple truth?” In other words, “What are the elements of our circumstances, priorities, etc. that keep us from obeying what God so clearly teaches us.” Those questions should lead your group to a lively, realistic discussion.

4. Consider changing how you describe the “Essentials” series.

As mentioned earlier, having an inaccurate expectation about “Essentials” can cause disappointment. If we use the word “study” that may give the image of “advanced” or “complex”. It might be better to invite people to a “Bible discussion” or “discussion about spiritual things”. Then when they become seriously engaged in discussions about spiritual truth, they should perceive they got exactly what they came for.

5. In addition emphasize that this series will equip them to minister to others—and even multiply spiritually.

Note that in Ephesians 4:11-12 the purpose of ministering Christians (e.g. evangelists and teachers) is to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.” (ESV) The “Essentials” series is designed to help a ministering Christian do just that. Right away all your members are asked to tell others what they are learning. That is the beginning of equipping them for the work of ministry.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP START SECOND-GENERATION GROUPS?



By the end of several weeks group leaders are encouraged to challenge group members to lead their own groups. When some say yes, group leaders will have the opportunity to equip them to do that. Group members who really want to be useful to God should find it very exciting to imagine that God can use them to minister to others.

From the experience of several campuses experimenting with “Essentials”, some valuable lessons came to light to increase the success of second-generation groups:

1. Selection and initial support

While we want to encourage group members to multiply, we also want to be alert to their ability to do so. From our experience at UCF, we saw that the major cause of groups not succeeding at first was the leader’s inability to “gather people”. Not everyone finds it easy to invite friends and acquaintances to a spiritual discussion. Possible solutions to that problem are:

- a. Be more selective and pick natural “gatherers”.
- b. Have staff and experienced student leaders help organize groups.
- c. Have group leaders use mini-attraction events to kick off their groups (e.g. involving food and an interesting video segment).

2. Up-front training

A very clear correlation to success in the use of “Essentials” was the presence of up-front training—especially including modeling of the first lesson. Basically, where new group leaders received quality training (including modeling), they had good experiences. Their

groups retained students much better and had much more positive feedback on the sessions. Situations where there was not much up-front training tended to fail.

### 3. Ongoing follow-up and encouragement

Two important activities often didn't happen without ongoing follow-up and encouragement:

- a. Group leaders didn't always encourage their group members to consider taking their own groups.
- b. Group leaders didn't tend to get to the APPLY and TELL sections of the session outline.

In both cases it became important for staff to remind the leaders why we are using the "Essentials" series: to encourage spiritual multiplication. If they don't ask their members to consider forming new groups, multiplication is less likely to occur. If they don't drive their group discussion toward life change and sharing, multiplication is also less likely to occur.

In other words, the "Essentials" series is much more than an alternative set of Bible-study materials. It has built into it the DNA of spiritual multiplication. Especially for first-time leaders, it will probably take repeated explanation and motivation to help them understand that concept.

### 4. Help in challenging new leaders

At UCF we discovered that it was very helpful for potential new leaders to receive a high-quality vision for what they are about to do. David Pezzoli (the campus director at UCF) hosted a meeting at his house for first-generation group members considering leading a second-generation group.

These thoughts should help you as you start second-generation groups. Of course, only God can cause spiritual movements. So as one final very important thought, let me encourage staff and students alike to unite in prayer that God's Spirit will work in powerful ways in students' hearts and minds. What we all want to see is for Him to take our efforts and multiply them supernaturally. (See page 17 for prayer suggestions.)

## HOW CAN YOU HELP GROUP LEADERS DRAW PEOPLE TO THEIR GROUPS?



### 1. Encourage them to pray.

This is as much perspective as activity. As mentioned above, only God can cause a movement of spiritual multiplication. On one hand, the new leaders must work at attracting people to their group. On the other hand, they need to relax and leave the results to God. Prayer will help that happen.

They need to pray personally, but they may also want to line up another new group leader as a prayer partner. It may be good to set up a Facebook group to facilitate sharing prayer requests and answers.

### 2. Help them prepare to motivate the people they talk to:

- a. “The ‘Essentials’ group has meant a lot to me because.....”
- b. “The ‘Essentials’ group will help you multiply your impact as a Christian.”  
(Use to challenge strong Christians.)
- c. “We will be discussing how to experience God’s forgiveness for the things we have done wrong.”
- d. “We will be discussing how to have God’s power to live life.”

### 3. Help them understand the “four rings” of people (around them) to invite:

- a. First ring – “Christian” friends.  
These are people they hang out with regularly and who are interested in Christian things.
- b. Second ring – “Non-Christian” friends.  
These are people they hang out with regularly, but who haven’t yet shown interest in Christian activities.
- c. Third ring – “Christian” acquaintances.  
These are people they have met (e.g., in class or a club), and who have demonstrated interest in Christian things.
- d. Fourth ring – “Non-Christian” acquaintances.  
These are people they have met, but who have not yet demonstrated interest in Christian activities.

The first two rings are friends. They have the greatest likelihood of saying “yes”. The third ring, though, also has a good likelihood of saying “yes” because of their Christian interest. The fourth ring is a stretch, but you never know until you ask.

### 4. Have “first ring” people who say “yes” invite their friends and acquaintances.

5. Make the first session especially fun and attractive.
  - a. Have special snacks.
  - b. Play a board game afterwards.
  - c. Play ultimate Frisbee or some other inclusive sports activity.
  - d. Do something with another “Essentials” group.

## WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS ONCE THEY HAVE STARTED THEIR GROUPS?



Of course, the greatest thing you can do is pray for the groups and their leaders. So many things can get in the way—excessive other activities, an unhealthy relationship with a girlfriend or boyfriend, a feeling of inadequacy, etc. Pray that God will protect and provide.

Also be available for counsel and discipleship. No doubt, you already do this, but as students lead a group, the need increases. As you discuss how they are doing in leading the group, you will probably find the following points important to emphasize:

1. Pursue learning versus plow through a lesson plan:
  - a. Sometimes covering one passage of Scripture in the HEAR section will stimulate your group into an extended lively discussion. At the end of that, they are probably ready to go on to APPLY and TELL versus discuss another Scripture. At other times you may need two or three different passages to get to the same point. If necessary, add a different Scripture you think will enhance your members’ understanding.
  - b. Realize that the standard discussion questions under HEAR are deliberately designed to be wide open to promote thinking and broad participation. They are there to serve you and your group. But if discussion is not forthcoming, feel free to ask more specific questions like, “This passage uses the phrase ‘ \_\_\_\_\_ ’. Why do you think that is used?” OR “What exactly do you think that means?”
  - c. Encourage group leaders to use the “alternate questions” where they seem to help them pursue learning better.
  - d. Involve your group members in ways they feel comfortable. Call on outgoing people to re-energize discussion. Call on more reserved, reflective people after they have had a chance to listen for a while. Call on a person who is knowledgeable of Scripture to add parallel passages which deepen understanding.
2. Do not skip the APPLY and TELL sections of the Leaders Guide:
  - a. These two sections are the key to turning your group into a spiritual movement. When Christians’ lives are changing in the power of the Holy Spirit, non-Christians notice and become more interested in a relationship with God. This effect is multiplied when Christians talk about what they are learning in following Jesus.  
If you skip these two sections, you basically have just another Bible study.

- b. One Campus Ministry summer project used the “Essentials” series with their small groups of the summer project students. Here are some of the students’ comments:
    - (1) “I think that I am able to pull out valuable life lessons that are easy to apply to my everyday life. It also makes me realize that it is possible to take small weekly actions encouraged by the study and see a life-long change.”
    - (2) “I also like that the studies have an action point and a person to tell about what we’ve learned. So often believers walk away from Bible studies unsure of how to take action in what they just learned. I think the action point aspect is excellent because we are applying what we learned as well as keeping one another accountable.”
3. Realize that typical groups have people with varying degrees of Christian maturity.
- a. As a result there may be a need to customize the material some.
  - b. Set the expectation that more mature Christians need to bring their wealth of experience into the discussion. Rather than their saying, “I’ve learned this before,” they should say, “I have had to deal with this, and here is how I learned to overcome it.”
  - c. Ask some extra questions relative to each passage of Scripture, as needed, to draw people in, make them think at a deeper level and offer more ideas.
  - d. The Campus Ministry summer project made some of the above adaptations and here were some of the students’ responses:
    - (1) “I am learning a lot. I sometimes think of the concepts as easy, but then when I dig down deeper, I realize that there is so much for me to learn”.
    - (2) “I think that the format is very different, and it makes it more engaging.”
    - (3) “In order to get something out of the Bible study, people have to be willing to go in-depth. You can’t just skim the surface and go with the easy answer. You have to look for the ways that it can relate to your life.”
4. Be sure to challenge people to receive Christ and to be filled with the Spirit at the appropriate points indicated in the Leader’s Guide. My experience in witnessing leads me to suggest including your testimony with regard to receiving Christ or being filled with the Spirit before you share the content on “how.”
5. Remember that you are seeking to multiply.
- a. By the end of the first four weeks of the series, plant the thought that some of your group members should form their own groups. They don’t need to wait until you have completed the whole “Essentials” series with them. Read through the two-page instruction section at the front of Part 1 of the series for more details (under the MULTIPLY point).
  - b. Dream of what could be as a result of your group. A number of your group members could launch groups from among their friends. Then some of their group members could start third-generation groups, etc.

- c. But in order for this to occur:
    - (1) You need to pray that God will do it. Remember He wants to see more people involved in ministering to others.
    - (2) You need to keep it simple and transferable. Without that people won't think they can do it.
    - (3) You need to work with your group members personally to support their attempt to launch new groups. There will be challenges which must be solved.
6. Take advantage of the breakdown of the 24 sessions into six four-week segments.
- a. Today's college student is more likely to say "yes" to a four-week commitment than a 12 or 24 week commitment.
  - b. But then feature the content and benefits of each following four-week segment as you finish the previous segment. If they like their first four weeks, they will likely return for the next four weeks. The last session of the four-week sections ends with a reminder to do this and reference to the description of the next four weeks sessions.

## WHAT ARE SOME GOOD GUIDELINES TO HELP GROUP LEADERS PREPARE FOR AND HAVE SUCCESSFUL SESSIONS?



As David Pezzoli and I were talking about the second generation studies at the University of Central Florida, we concluded it would be good to provide more session-preparation guidelines for the new group leaders. They were freshmen and, for the most part, didn't have a lot of experience in leading Bible-discussion groups. In addition the second generation groups seemed to include more non-Christians than the first-generation groups.

As a result the leaders had to adapt the Group Discussion Outlines. To do that well, they needed to understand some of the principles behind the approach and some ways to maintain a simple, smooth flow of thinking and discussion. The following are some preparation guidelines and checklist items to help with that.

### SESSION PREPARATION GUIDELINES



#### PRAY

Only God can empower you to have a truly successful session. Take some time to pray for that before you dig into your specific preparation. Also pray that each person in your group:

1. Will attend this session.
2. Will be helped by God to understand what will be discussed.
3. Will apply the main lesson in some specific way this week.
4. Will share what was learned with someone else this week.

 **CONNECT**

Be sure to have a good personal example ready to be able to tell how you have experienced the stated truth. This “lead” into the Bible discussion is intended to be a sharing of experiences not a debating of opinions. It should create a climate where most people acknowledge the truth from experience, so you can easily lead into the HEAR section with a statement like, “So it is in a relationship with God (or in the Christian life, etc.)”

Part of connecting involves assessing where your group members are spiritually. If there are a number of non-Christians present, your whole session may contain more explanation, and you may need to be sensitive about prayer times, etc.

 **HEAR**

Spend time reading over the possible Bible passages. Consider using the “alternate questions” listed in the Session Preparation Checklist on the page before each Group Discussion Outline in the Small-Group Leader’s Guide. These questions may be easier for you to use than the standard questions in the Group Discussion Outline. Ask yourself if there are other questions you would like to add or use instead. If, for example, your group consists mainly of non-Christians, you may need to ask questions which clarify or assure proper understanding, like: “Is there anything about this passage that isn’t making sense to you?”

It is helpful to predetermine which questions you are going to use for a particular Bible passage. It should help you guide the discussion more easily.

 **APPLY**

This should flow very directly from the HEAR discussions. For example, in the “Walk Assured” lesson you should be able to say something like: “We agreed in our discussion at the beginning of the session that ‘relationships thrive on acceptance and assurance’. That includes a relationship with God. We can see from our discussions related to the Bible that God does indeed love and accept people who have established a relationship with Him. So it is crucial to ‘be sure of your personal relationship with God’.”

Then the next logical question is, “Why don’t we always experience assurance in our personal relationship with God?”

Every session has this kind of simple flow of thinking built into it. Don’t make things too complicated or disjointed. Let the discussion flow from one step to the next. And make sure your group members do write down an “action to take” and share and pray about it. (You may need to share a personal example.) Life change leads to motivation to continue to grow and to talk about Christ with others.



## TELL

Likewise make sure they plan to tell someone outside the group what they are learning. Realize that many people may be somewhat reluctant at first to talk about spiritual things with friends. But those simple discussions help the gospel spread through the networks of friends of the members of your group.



## OVERALL

From time to time over the weeks, ask yourself:

1. What are some things I can do to build stronger relationships in the group? (For example, is this a good week to take a break from the regular material to do a group activity?)
2. Who among the group members seems ready to be challenged to take his/her own group? (Plan a time to talk to the person about it. Let him/her take a part of one of your sessions and acquaint the person with the Small-Group Leaders Guide.)
3. Are there some group members who seem like they don't know Christ? (Pray and look for opportunities to share Christ with those people.)

### SESSION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

(This correlates with the Session Preparation Guidelines. They are placed in the latest Small Group Leader's Guide revision on the pages before the Group Discussion Outlines.)

#### PRAY

- Have prayed for wisdom.
- Have prayed for group members.

#### CONNECT

- Have a good personal example to share.
- Have in mind when and how to transition to HEAR.

#### HEAR

- 1st passage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alternate questions (pre-printed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Other questions \_\_\_\_\_

- 2nd passage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Alternate questions (pre-printed) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other questions \_\_\_\_\_
- 3rd passage (Optional) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Alternate questions (pre-printed) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other questions \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLY**

- Have in mind when and how to transition from HEAR to APPLY.
- Am prepared to encourage people to a specific action step. (Have an example in mind.)

**TELL**

- Am committed to encourage people to do this despite their natural tendency not to.
- Am looking for group members who “tell” easily. They may be good at leading their own groups soon.

**WHAT ARE ANSWERS TO SOME OBJECTIONS OCCASIONALLY RAISED CONCERNING THE “ESSENTIALS” APPROACH?**



**Objection 1**

“Many students in the first generation groups are not ready to lead their own group.”

That is true. Let’s start with an observation from the first groups that used “Essentials” at UCF. One-third of first generation group members last year sought to start their own groups right away. That means most first generation group members didn’t. Why not? Well, here are some possible reasons:

- a. They didn’t yet have a vision and calling from God to do that.
- b. Their lifestyles were not consistent enough with biblical standards.
- c. They were not comfortable facilitating a group.
- d. They felt more called to engage in other CCC ministry activities on campus.

Unfortunately the experience of so many saying “no” can adversely affect our expectations. The challenge for us in ministry is not to limit those who “can and will” because of our experience with those who “can’t or won’t.”

Many students are able to minister more quickly than we allow them to. Remember that many of the first generation group members did say “yes”. Why? Perhaps:

- a. The thought of leading a group was very appealing to them. Maybe God has given them a gift in teaching.
- b. God was moving in a significant way in their lives at that time. They were looking for ways to please Him and respond to His leading.
- c. They were fairly mature in their faith and had even had some experience leading a group of peers.
- d. Our challenge to them and our expectation that they could do this gave them the courage to step out in faith and take this opportunity.

Expansion of ministry is critically dependent on the kind of person who says “yes” to serving God. So, we need to mobilize and “unleash” those whom God has motivated and equipped to minister to others. To do less than that is poor stewardship.

The group leaders are not being asked to exegete and lecture, which may well require more personal growth and training. They are simply being asked to guide discussion. And when group members seek to share what they are learning with others, they learn truths even more deeply.

It is instructive to note that the primary missions sending base for most of the book of Acts was the church at Antioch. Within two years they were sending humanitarian aid and missionaries. Apparently, relatively new believers owned ministry rapidly and effectively.



## Objection 2

“Aren’t we trying to move too fast to start a second (let alone a third) generation of groups in one school year?”

The main answer to that is to become aware that rapid reproduction is typically associated with effective spiritual multiplication.

I remember when I first got involved with CCC. I was encouraged right away to minister to others. I distributed evangelistic magazines at a Boston University football game, led College Life meetings, and spoke in a local church’s evangelistic meeting. I was encouraged to “own ministry” as quickly as I was willing and able to do so.

What I found out later was that students all over the U.S. were similarly encouraged to get involved in ministry and multiplication as soon as possible. At one campus the assumption was that a new Christian would share his or her faith within a week of coming to Christ.

David Garrison is a researcher and practitioner in the area of church planting movements. He has observed 10 principles that are always present in a successful church planting movements. One of the 10 is “rapid reproduction”. Let me quote a passage from his booklet “Church Planting Movements” (published by the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention):

“Some have challenged the necessity of rapid reproduction for the life of the Church Planting Movement, but no one has questioned its evidence in every CPM. Most church planters involved in these movements contend that rapid reproduction is vital to the movement itself. They report that when reproduction rates slow down, the Church Planting Movement falters. Rapid reproduction communicates the urgency and importance of coming to faith in Christ. When rapid reproduction is taking place, you can be assured that the churches are unencumbered by non-essential elements and the laity are fully empowered to participate in this work of God.”



### Objection 3

“If someone isn’t lecturing, how will biblical truths be understood and applied?”

Well, you need to be aware that there are five teaching elements built into the “Essentials” approach. There is a temptation to think that, without lectures, no truth can be conveyed. Actually, as teaching methods go, lecture is not the strongest method.

Here are the five teaching elements in “Essentials”:

1. Word – It features the Scriptures as the ultimate, credible source of learning. In 1 Timothy 3:16 we see that the first purpose mentioned for Scripture is to “teach”.
2. Spirit – You are encouraged to pray at the beginning of each session that God will give wisdom. We are told in 1 John 2:27 that the Father employs the Holy Spirit to do that: “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit –just as it has taught you, remain in Him.”
3. Others’ experiences – College students today prefer to learn by listening, especially to their friends. Seeing someone else grapple with meaning and application is a powerful teacher.
4. Applying – Trying to figure out how to apply a biblical truth helps people understand the truth’s meaning and how it works practically.
5. Telling – One of the best ways to really understand something is to try to explain it to someone else. We are much more likely to remember what we talk about versus what we have only heard.

## WHAT ARE SOME PRAYER REQUESTS TO HELP LAUNCH AND SUPPORT THE “ESSENTIALS” GROUPS?



- Pray that students will view the “Essentials” groups as a great place to grow in their knowledge and application of God’s essential truths, and as a great place to experience Him through others.
- Pray that the students will be curious and not turned away from learning more about surrender to and dependence on God. And pray that the groups will be places where the students will develop the trusting relationship with God they need to invite Him to transform and equip them.

- Pray that biblical truth will be communicated and modeled by the leaders of the groups.
- Pray that the students see and experience God’s love through each group leader and other group members.
- Pray that the students will not lose heart during the challenging circumstances in life, and that God will be glorified and made known through them.
- Pray that students will view the “Essentials” series as a way to glorify God and make Him known in their lives and on campus.
- Pray that the students in the groups will be moved to form their own groups.
- Pray that the students will learn that God is offering them a relationship with Himself, much more than a “set of rules”.
- Pray that new students will be drawn into the groups to learn more about God and that the students will see the discussion groups as safe, non-threatening places to explore faith in God.
- Pray that, through the presence and equipping of the Holy Spirit, these students will in turn share God’s truth, love and salvation with others on campus.
- Pray the “Essentials” groups will contribute to unity in the movement. Pray that this unity will help create a caring community for those involved and draw others into the movement.

## SUMMARY AND FINAL WORD



Well, you have been through a lot to get to this point. Congratulations! Perhaps the best way to conclude is to summarize the role you play as staff in the “Essentials” strategy. In essence you are mobilizing students to spiritual ministry and multiplication.

The most important thing you can do is to pray:

1. For wisdom
2. For the right leaders
3. For the right group members
4. For the preparation and discussion times.
5. For application to life
6. For opportunities to talk to other about it
7. For multiplication to second, third and subsequent generations

In addition to prayer, you have three major responsibilities as an orchestrator of a “sending” process:

1. Motivate
2. Train
3. Support

The more you understand that essence, the easier it will be for you to understand and implement all that you have read in this guide.

Motivate: Students need to see why this is important. They need to see how absolutely central they are to seeing evangelism and discipleship spread to the entire campus. They will have concerns that affect their motivation, and you need to have answers for those concerns.

Train: Very basic to CCC's approach to ministry is to show people how to do things—to train them. This strategy is no exception. Experimentation with “Essentials” confirmed exactly what you would imagine:

1. With good training it succeeded.
2. With little or no training it failed.

Support: However, initial motivating and training is not enough. You need to keep praying and stay in contact with the students as they try it. Here are some points where they often seem to need help:

1. Gathering their group initially.
2. Sticking with the “Essentials” approach versus drifting back to old habits.
3. Getting around to challenging group members to start their own groups.
4. Knowing how to pray for, motivate, train and support their next generation groups.

Much of this can be a little different for students at first. The key question is no longer, “How many members are in your group?” The new key question is, “How many groups are in your members?” It is about multiplication not addition.

But take heart, once group leaders get involved and see success, they will be more likely to buy in without objection. This is what happened to the original four Bible study leaders at UCF. After a few months of using the approach and seeing growth and multiplication, one of them said, “This is so much better, we don't want to go back!”

My ultimate dream is that you will have the joy of seeing movements of spiritual multiplication spread contagiously throughout your campus. Since that is what God has called us to facilitate, I believe He will give us the resources to see it happen. The “Essentials” series is one such resource. But, no doubt, there are and will be more. I am trusting that God will use you to help us develop the new generation of strategies and materials necessary to help build spiritual movements everywhere.

It is a pleasure to serve the Lord with you.