



FAMILYLIFE®



# SMALL-GROUP

## Training

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GLOBAL TRAINING MANUAL





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### FEATURING

FamilyLife Couples Series®  
FamilyLife Parenting Series®  
Art of Marriage® Small-Group Series  
FamilyLife's Art of Parenting®  
Vertical Marriage

FAMILYLIFE®

## **Small-Group Training**

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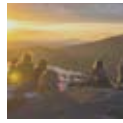
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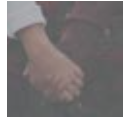
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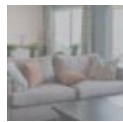
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# INTRODUCTION

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FamilyLife's desire is to provide you with biblical resources to enable you to have a marriage that is enjoyable and satisfying. Such a marriage will glorify God. Small groups are frequently the best resource to strengthen a couple's marriage. FamilyLife has two formats for discussion-oriented small groups:

- The FamilyLife Couples Series® or Parenting Series®
- Small-Group versions of The Art of Marriage®, Art of Parenting®, Stepping Up® videos, and Vertical Marriage

These resources can allow a lay couple to have a life-changing impact in others.

The late doctor Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary said, "You make an impression on people from a distance. You make an impact on people when you get up close." Perhaps this is the reason that small-group studies are so effective. When couples get close to each other, honestly applying Scripture and learning from each other, God changes lives. The leaders do not need to have perfect marriages or be expert Bible teachers. God can use them in the lives of couples more than an elegant teacher who impresses from a distance.

Small groups are the most versatile resource FamilyLife offers. When there is a large audience, the speakers speak in general terms and cover a multitude of principles. Many parts may not be relevant to an individual couple's specific circumstances. Other parts are relevant to the couple, but while covering so many things the speakers cannot go into as much depth or application as the couple needs. In a small group, the discussion can focus on the needs of the group members. Some couples have led many FamilyLife Bible studies using the same topics with different groups of people. These couples have observed that different groups have different personalities as they focus on principles and applications most relevant to the needs of the members.

Discussion-oriented small groups are especially versatile for international use. FamilyLife's resources and applications can contain a lot of American culture. For example, in America, "leaving" (as in "leave, cleave, and become one flesh") usually means for a newly married couple to get their own house or apartment. However, that may not be possible everywhere in the world. Discussion-oriented resources containing biblical principles naturally culturalize themselves because the group members make the applications in their own culture.

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## **YOUR MARRIAGE**

Statistics clearly show that couples in a loving and mutually supportive marriage enjoy their lives more and are more productive than couples with severe marital problems. And God, the creator of marriage, wants you to enjoy the full benefits. To most parents the welfare of their children is a high priority. Statistics also clearly show that children raised with parents having good marriages are likely to develop more fully as individuals and lead better lives. Raising successful children for the next generation is the most important single task that many parents accomplish in their lifetimes. The best gift to any child is a mother and father who love each other and have a biblical marriage. Discussion-oriented small groups are perhaps the most meaningful and effective path to having a biblical marriage.

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## **YOUR CHURCH**

Sadly, we do not have to look very far to see ineffectual families. Likely within the church you attend many marriages do not live up to the biblical model God intends. Many families are disintegrating. The Bible calls the church "the body of Christ," and it makes clear that when one part suffers the whole suffers. Many lay leaders and even pastors have been incapacitated by marriage and family problems.

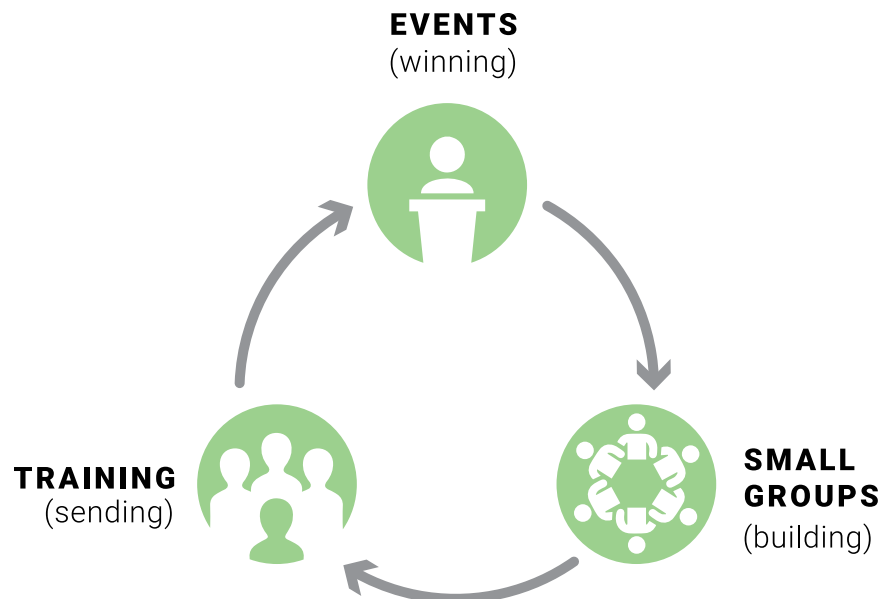


More importantly, the church and marriage are part of God’s plan. It wasn’t an accident that God chose to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church as the husband and wife in Ephesians 5:22-32. The Bible doesn’t tell us everything about the relationship between Christ and the church. Verse 32 calls it a “profound mystery.” But we can be certain that God is not pleased with marriages doing poorly within the church. FamilyLife strives to “help you help others.” FamilyLife’s small-group resources are perfect for couples who want to serve their church in this area.

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## YOUR COMMUNITY

As important as a good marriage is, a good marriage is not as important as a relationship with Jesus Christ. Receiving forgiveness for sins by grace through faith by Christ’s death on the cross is incomparably more important than having a good marriage. In addition, men and women must have that relationship with God to realize all that He can do for their marriage. Many in your community do not know Christ. The context of marriage is an excellent manner in which to introduce others to Christ.



Jesus modeled what we call a win-build-send ministry. The circle diagram shows a basic simplified form. As a ministry expands, winning-building-sending may take more

sophisticated forms. For example, small groups used most effectively can win, build, and send. In Jesus' ministry, win-build-send was a continuous process. This is what Jesus' disciples knew to do when he gave them the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International (now called Cru in the US), has said, "If you reach the family, you reach the world." Principles taught in FamilyLife materials lay out God's blueprints for marriage and family. These resources address the critical needs families have. Men and women are interested because they are looking for answers. When we "scratch where it itches," people respond. The FamilyLife Couples Series, with its non-threatening format, is an excellent way to do this. In the context of small-group relationships, people readily respond to a clear presentation of the gospel.

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## **A NOTE ON MINISTRY AS A SINGLE**

We encourage couples to do marriage and family ministry together because it provides a visible demonstration of the power of teamwork in marriage. However, we realize that some individuals (married or single) may choose to develop a ministry to families on their own. If this applies to you, we affirm and appreciate your contribution to the Kingdom of God. Although our training manuals are worded to address couples who are doing ministry together, please adapt and apply the material to fit your situation.



# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS A COUPLE

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## **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Gain confidence that God can use lay couples to impact others.
- Consider how teamwork in marriage refines us and makes us better leaders.
- Know that God will use FamilyLife studies in your own life and marriage.

Perhaps you have heard this old joke: “There are two types of Christians. First, we have the clergy, pastors, and others who are full-time Christian ministers. They earn their living from God’s work. You might say that they are paid to be good. The rest of us are laymen. We’re good for nothing.” Sadly, there is some truth in that old joke—not in God’s plan, but in our perception. Many laymen do think of themselves as “good for nothing” when it comes to God’s most significant work. However, FamilyLife’s small-group resources give lay couples the opportunity to be part of changing lives.

Many couples feel “good for nothing” because their own marriage relationship isn’t perfect. Nobody’s relationship is perfect. However, God may use a couple that has marriage issues in a surprising way. Couples are looking for real-life role models, not an unattainable image of perfection. A couple that is growing in their own relationship is modeling growth and improvement and making their relationship work, despite challenges. And what’s wrong with that? Not a thing! The Apostle Paul wrote, “Join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Philippians 3:17). Many times Scripture exhorts us to follow or be an example.



## **OVERVIEW**

God wants to use imperfect lay couples to change lives. Differences between spouses can make them more effective as a couple. Ministering as a couple can take a couple’s marriage to a higher level and make them better Christians.

When it comes to marriage enrichment, those who have been previously married may especially feel that they are “good for nothing.” Since they have been divorced, they think that nobody will listen to their experiences or insight. This is far from true. Couples who have suffered the heartbreak of divorce often go the extra mile to prevent this from happening to others. They frequently make outstanding small-group leaders. God has greatly used many lay couples that have a background of divorce.

And Jesus himself was a layman—He was a carpenter. What better way to illustrate to laymen that their ministry is critical to His plan? God calls all of us who are His disciples to make a real difference in others’ lives. Yet many laymen are held back by a lack of vision and a failure to develop ministry skills. This manual will help couples develop vision and ministry skills and use them as a team.

### **Working as a Couple Team**

A couple working as a team makes the best marriage-enrichment leaders. Does God expect Christ and the church to work together? Of course! God illustrates that relationship as a husband and wife. Does God expect a husband and wife to work together? Absolutely! And a husband and wife team is particularly effective at marriage ministry.

Those who have participated in a Weekend to Remember Marriage Getaway may remember its final challenge: to build a legacy of destiny. It’s a commitment to spiritual maturity, to loving one another, and to helping reach the world. Remember the smallest battle formation God uses? It’s the family. And what’s at the heart of the family? That is the partnership of the husband and the wife.

Unfortunately, the concept of working together isn’t very popular in our “Be your own person” culture. Individualism is revered over partnership. But we’re not taking our pattern of marriage from our culture. In biblical marriages we begin to build dependence on our spouses. God made us to need one another, to trust one another, and to work together for common goals. Often you’ll see a couple that looks extremely successful, but they’re really two individuals doing their own thing. They may each be successful, but there is no partnership in their marriage. We believe that teamwork is at the core of a truly biblical marriage.

## Differences Can Make You Stronger as a Team

The Bible says, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-11). This verse has been applied to many teamwork situations. But it is particularly relevant to marriage. Look at the last part: "If two lie down together they keep warm." With whom do you want to keep warm?

The differences you have can make your partnership stronger. Each of us has personal values and backgrounds that may be very different. You've heard that opposites attract. They may attract, but they don't necessarily stick. The very things that attracted us before marriage may irritate us after marriage. All of us have major differences. God knew that when he put us together. In fact, the more different we are, the stronger we can be as a team. Think of the legs on your chair. If we were to put those legs close together, how stable would the chair be? But the wider the legs are spread, the more stable and useful the chair is. In the same way, the more different a couple is as individuals, the more God can use them, if they learn to work together as a team. Each brings different strengths to the partnership.



## Take Your Relationship With God and Your Marriage to a Higher Level

A new small-group leader first realized part of God's greater purpose when he and his wife started leading FamilyLife small-group studies. The first lesson was about controlling selfishness in marriage. He was really trying hard every day to be an unselfish husband when a coworker came into his office. "What you did for those other guys was really unselfish," the coworker said. The small-group leader thought, "Whoa! My marriage has spilled over into other parts of my life!" He discovered that this is part of God's purpose for marriage. Marriage is the crucible in which our Christianity can be purified. As the leader worked to become a better husband, God used it to make him a better Christian.

Serving God by the principles in this manual will also help you mature as a couple. When someone first becomes a Christian, he is initially concerned with the sin in his own life and learning to walk with God. As he matures, the Lord expects him to become more others-centered. Unless he turns outward, he will stagnate in his Christian growth. In the same way, marriages can only reach a certain level until they reach out to others.

Everyone who has led a Bible study knows that the leader always learns the most. If you get involved with couples through the FamilyLife studies, your own marriage will be enriched as God uses you to change lives. Professional training and experience are not necessary. By adhering to the principles in this manual, you will be equipped to minister with confidence. Trusting God for a ministry together can take your relationship to a higher level and leave a lasting legacy.



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### SUMMARY

- FamilyLife's small-group resources give lay couples the opportunity to be part of changing lives.
  - Teamwork is at the core of a truly biblical marriage.
  - God uses our differences in marriage to refine us and make us stronger as a team.
  - Leading small groups will strengthen a couple's marriage.
-

# ACTIVITY 1

## Identifying Strengths of Your Relationship

*(Allow approximately 15 minutes for couples to list strengths of their spouses.)*

This project will help you begin to identify some of the strengths in your relationship. In the space below, please list several strengths of your spouse. A list of ideas is provided, but feel free to use any others that you think of. When you are done, share your list with your spouse.

WIFE'S STRENGTHS
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

HUSBAND'S STRENGTHS
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

IDEAS			
Fun	Articulate	Disciplined	Organized
Good cook	Hospitable	Likes people	Hard worker
Skilled with hands	Kind to others	Honest	Bold
Thrifty	Faithful	Remembers dates	Merciful
Knows the Bible	Remembers names	Good speaker	Positive thinker
Careful	Money manager	Physically strong	Courageous
Endurance	Able to teach	Heart for God	Intelligent
Common sense	Handy	Funny	Patient
Polite	Romantic	Computer skills	Thoughtful
Loves children	Disciplinarian	Athletic	

# ACTIVITY 2

## “Love One Another”

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Volunteers from the training should share an item from the list that their spouse has demonstrated.

- Bear with one another . . . . . Colossian 3:13
- Be devoted to one another . . . . . Romans 12:10
- Give preference to one another in honor . . . . . Romans 12:10
- Be of the same mind toward one another . . . . . Romans 12:16
- Be kind to one another . . . . . Ephesians 4:32
- Do not complain against one another . . . . . James 5:9
- Confess your sins to one another . . . . . James 5:16
- Forgive one another . . . . . Colossians 3:13
- Pray for one another . . . . . James 5:16
- Build up one another . . . . . 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Encourage one another . . . . . Hebrews 10:24
- Do not lie to one another . . . . . Colossians 3:9
- Regard one another as more important than yourself . . . . . Philippians 2:3
- Stimulate one another to love and good deeds . . . . . Hebrews 10:24
- Teach one another . . . . . Colossians 3:16
- Keep fervent in your love for one another . . . . . 1 Peter 4:8, 1:22
- Be hospitable to one another without complaint . . . . . 1 Peter 4:9
- Seek after that which is good for one another . . . . . 1 Thessalonians 5:15
- Do not speak against one another . . . . . James 4:11
- Show forbearance to one another in love . . . . . Ephesians 4:2
- Accept one another . . . . . Romans 15:7
- Bear one another’s burdens . . . . . Galatians 6:2
- Be subject to one another . . . . . Ephesians 5:21
- Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs . . . . . Ephesians 5:19
- Serve one another . . . . . 1 Peter 4:10
- Pursue things that make peace and build up one another . . . . . Romans 14:19
- Live in peace with one another . . . . . 1 Thessalonians 5:13





# STARTING A FAMILYLIFE SMALL GROUP

## **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Determine the benefits of being in a FamilyLife small group.
- Consider the decisions you'll need to make to begin a group.
- Examine ways to start a group.

The FamilyLife Couples Studies consist of small-group Bible studies that can help a couple to apply the biblical principles for families. Art of Marriage, Art of Parenting, Stepping Up, and Vertical Marriage videos are also small-group resources.

Putting all a couple hears at a marriage conference into practice can be like trying to swallow an elephant. But the FamilyLife small groups are like cutting the elephant up into bite-sized pieces. Each session has one application for couples to use in their relationship. Participants have an entire week to actually apply just one principle to their lives.

Timely topics include improving communication, resolving conflict, mastering money, improving parenting, and much more. It's a good thing when a husband or wife sits under a godly teacher and agrees silently, "That's right. I ought to be doing that." But when the same person sits with an open Bible and tells others, "I think this is what I as a spouse should do," God changes that person's life.



## **OVERVIEW**

This session explains why FamilyLife Couples Studies are effective at strengthening marriages and how they benefit couples. It also explores common questions about starting a group, such as which study to use, where and how often to meet, and whom to invite.

## **FAMILYLIFE SMALL-GROUP BENEFITS**

- Stimulates and guides meaningful conversation between husband and wife
- Doesn't require an expert Bible teacher, but rather a facilitator
- Requires only a short-term commitment
- Needs no preparation for the actual study from participants
- Emphasizes practical application in the projects
- Versatile in small groups, Sunday school classes, neighborhood outreaches, and weekend retreats
- Provides mutual encouragement and accountability
- Offers a variety of practical topics to choose from
- Teaches participants more about how to live the Christian life
- Gives couples the opportunity to have a ministry together as leaders

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## **STARTING A GROUP**

Organizing a group is not as difficult as it may seem. The family is one of the hottest topics people think about these days. There is a variety of practical study topics to interest couples. Most topics have about six 60-90-minute sessions. That way couples won't have to make an indefinite commitment. Six to eight couples is ideal, and we strongly advise you to not start with less than four couples. More or fewer couples will not allow the group to develop the dynamics that make FamilyLife groups special. Generally, couples should not be added to the group after the second session. New couples can be added when you start a new topic.

You'll need to make a few preparations. As a couple, commit to each other and to God to make the study a high priority for the six to eight weeks it will take to complete one study. Discuss how much you will share about your own marriage. Don't expect others to speak openly unless you set the example as leaders. Decide how you will share the responsibility for the various aspects involved in leading the group. You should also discuss preparing for the session, making phone calls, and extending hospitality. Commit to pray regularly for the couples in your group. Then address the following decisions.

### **Where do we find the time?**

In our busy world, small-group studies can actually be a time saver. Undoubtedly the biggest concern we get from couples is that there just isn't enough time to do all they want to do. None of you are looking for something else to do. But leading a group is a great way to maximize your time by combining several activities into one:

- Invest in your own marriage
- Study the Bible
- Improve your character in Christ
- Have fun and make lifelong friends
- Serve your church
- Do your kids a favor

### **What type of group should you start?**

Before you talk to others about joining your small group, you need to decide what type of group to start. This affects other decisions to follow such as whom to invite. There are several types of groups that you may consider. A mixture of types is possible, but frequently more challenging. But any way that you can get couples together discussing biblical marriage is great.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FAMILYLIFE SMALL GROUPS	ADVANTAGES	WHOM TO INVITE
<p><b>Event Follow-Up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures the enthusiasm from the event</li> <li>• A dynamic group with couples having different backgrounds</li> <li>• These are the best groups for later multiplication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent alumni of a FamilyLife event</li> <li>• Alumni from previous events</li> <li>• You can also invite others who are on your heart but didn't attend the event</li> </ul>
<p><b>Church</b>            Cell Groups            Sunday school            A new group            Weekend retreat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving the church is a high priority</li> <li>• Potentially a lot of contacts</li> <li>• Frequently childcare is available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church members and guests</li> <li>• Ask leaders of existing groups if they could use FamilyLife Couples Studies for a season</li> <li>• Outsiders may be willing to join if the church members don't pressure them to other activities</li> </ul>

**CONTINUED** →

<p><b>Neighborhood and Friends</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalizes on relationships you have already developed</li> <li>• Deeper friendships formed among the participants</li> <li>• Likely to meet deep needs among those you care about</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every couple you know—don't rule anybody out</li> <li>• Ask alumni of previous groups to attend and invite their friends and neighbors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outreach or Evangelistic</b> Training is recommended to lead this type of group. (See the session titled "Using FamilyLife Small Groups for Outreach.")</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective to introduce others to Christ</li> <li>• You may be surprised who attends because of their needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually a prior minimal-commitment gathering is necessary</li> <li>• Coworkers, neighbors, social acquaintances, etc</li> <li>• Seed the group with a few godly and discrete Christians</li> </ul>

Consider co-leading with another couple. You can pool or combine your likely participants and divide the leadership responsibilities. This is an especially good idea if there is a couple that is willing, but unsure of their leadership abilities. Don't be concerned if your prospective co-leaders have little teaching experience or Bible knowledge. These are not necessary to be effective group leaders. And after co-leading a group with you, they may be ready to lead their own group later. This is one of the ways FamilyLife small groups multiply.

### **Where will you meet?**

Couples are usually the most faithful to attend if the meetings are in your home. In nice weather, meeting outside on a deck or patio is fun. You can also ask volunteers among the group members to host a session in their home. This adds a lot to building relationships within the group. Perhaps someone even has a large basement where the kids can play with a babysitter during the session. Some church groups meet at the church. Meeting at a church can also make childcare easier by using the church's facilities. Outreach or neighborhood groups rarely work well meeting at a church. A few groups have even met at a public place like a restaurant or the YMCA.

### **How should you invite people?**

Recruiting couples (or singles to parenting studies) to participate varies somewhat depending on the type of group. But a personal invitation is nearly always best. Mailed invitations alone rarely work. For the best results, call the couples or visit them. Tell them how much these principles have meant in your lives. Show them the materials. Tell them about the discussion format and assure them that the study will help make good relationships better. Otherwise, they may think you're implying that they need help. They may need help, but they'll be unlikely to participate if they think that others will believe so.

Generally, you'll need to invite a lot of couples to attend to get a few to attend. In the beginning, you possibly will need to invite ten couples for each that joins. However, once your ministry becomes known as fun and meaningful in the community, your response rates will greatly increase.

Frequently a small event is a good way to interest couples in small-group studies. Many couples have hosted a cookout or potluck at their home to challenge their neighbors to join a FamilyLife group. Sponsoring a romantic dinner is a lot of work but effective. One couple conducted a dinner for 60 couples from the community. To their delight, enough couples signed up at the event to start four groups. Events are a key element in recruiting enough couples to join in order to create a vibrant small-group ministry. Much more on using events is included in the following sections.

### **What about childcare?**

Establishing childcare is a key element in establishing small groups. You can let everybody get his or her own babysitter. That's the easiest for you, but may exclude some couples. Or you can bring the kids to a common location like a family room and provide a babysitter. This has the advantage that you can use an older child to take care of those

who might not be old enough to be left completely alone. Some children who will quietly watch a video or play together in another room can simply be brought to the session. One unusual arrangement was a summer backyard study. The children played in the other end of the yard while the parents could casually watch them during the session. Yes, there were a few interruptions. But this is a family ministry. And what could be better for the children than observing their parents discussing how to be better husbands and wives?

### **With which study should we begin?**

1. Choose a study that meets your needs as a couple. Visit [shop.familylife.com](http://shop.familylife.com) to see the complete list of studies available.
2. You may want to select several studies of interest and let your group determine which one you do.
3. Suggested studies for your first group are:
  - *Building Your Marriage to Last* (this will be familiar material for those who have participated in a Weekend to Remember)
  - *Improving Communication in Your Marriage*
  - *Resolving Conflict in Your Marriage*
  - Studies appropriate for more established groups include: *Growing Together in Christ*, *Building up Your Spouse*, *Building Teamwork in Your Marriage* or *Mastering Money in Your Marriage*.
  - Some newer titles include *The Gospel and Your Marriage*, *The Power of Humility in Your Marriage*, and *Your Marriage Has a Mission*.

### **What day of the week and how often should we meet?**

- First consider your own schedule to determine when you can't participate. But the more flexible you can be, the easier the group will be to organize.



- Each session is formatted for about 90 minutes from “Warm-Up” to “Wrap-Up.” Plan for a total of two hours to allow time for fun and refreshments before or after the session.

Here are some pros and cons to various schedule options.

SCHEDULE OPTIONS	PROS	CONS
<b>Weekly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A study can be completed in a few weeks</li> <li>• Keeps interest level high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May create pressure on group members' schedules</li> <li>• Requires frequent childcare arrangements</li> </ul>
<b>Bi-monthly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows more time to complete the project on the alternate week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lengthens time needed to complete study</li> <li>• Without a regular night reserved, couples forget and schedule something else that night</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can work for an existing group already having a monthly meeting scheduled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely develops the chemistry that makes groups dynamic</li> <li>• Frequently becomes just a social group</li> </ul>
		<b>CONTINUED</b> →



<p><b>Varied</b> Schedule sessions one at a time, depending on participants' calendars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes everyone's schedule into account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes more work to coordinate</li> <li>• Increases risk of not completing the study</li> <li>• Rarely successful</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weekend Retreat Option</b> A FamilyLife Couples Study topic can be completed in a weekend in a home or at a retreat center. Most frequently used by church groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves couples that are otherwise unlikely to make a longer-term commitment</li> <li>• Doesn't require outside speakers</li> <li>• Low-cost alternative to attending a conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't allow as much time between sessions to apply the principles covered</li> </ul>

**HOW CAN WE USE FAMILYLIFE SMALL GROUPS IN OUR CHURCH?**

First ask the pastor. Show him the materials and volunteer to do the work required. A certain way to fail is to give the materials to the pastor and suggest that he use them. Pastors already have plenty to do. If the pastor still isn't interested, respect his wishes and start a neighborhood group instead. One couple angered their pastor by telling him, "If you really cared about the families in this church, you would be doing this." He told them to leave and declared, "I never want to hear about FamilyLife or Couples Studies again." About a year later they reported, "We've got some good news and some bad news. Remember that pastor who wouldn't let us use FamilyLife Couples Studies? The good news is that he isn't our pastor anymore. The bad news is that now he's the bishop."

**Church Promotional Ideas:**

- Nothing is as effective as the pastor encouraging couples to participate.

- Use church promotional methods such as bulletin boards, bulletin inserts, pulpit announcements, monthly newsletters, flyers, etc.
- Have a sign-up sheet in a central location.
- Contact all who have expressed interest, get commitments, and recruit additional leaders as needed.

Caution: Churches sometimes try FamilyLife small groups hoping to increase their membership. If used carefully, these groups are very effective as an outreach tool and can certainly get couples involved in Bible study. (The session titled “Using FamilyLife Small Groups for Outreach” will explain in detail how to use the studies in this manner.) However, churches are sometimes disappointed when couples go elsewhere after the group ends. Even un-churched couples that get interested in spiritual things through small groups may seek a church like the one they grew up in rather than the church God used to touch them. Our advice is to be joyful in ministering to others without any expectations other than God’s promise to change lives through biblical principles.



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## SUMMARY

- FamilyLife Couples Studies are a great way to maximize time by combining several activities into one.
  - Consider where to meet, which study to begin with, when and how often to meet, and whom to invite.
  - Be creative in recruiting couples to join FamilyLife small groups.
-

# ACTIVITY 3

## Leaving a Legacy

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### Consider the following as individuals:

1. If your life ended today, describe the legacy you would leave. How would people who knew you best say you lived your life? What remains because you were here?
  
2. What values are represented by the legacy you described above (material, physical, spiritual, temporal, eternal, etc.)?
  
3. Now imagine your life at age 70 (if you are around 70, then add 15 years). What do you want it to be like? What do you envision you and your spouse doing? Write out what you see. Don't confine yourself to writing complete sentences. Jot down your thoughts, words, or whatever comes to mind.

Write out any steps you think you need to take today in order to get there. Put a star beside the steps you are presently taking.

4. What values are reflected in your answer to the first part of question 3?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Write a statement of the purpose of your marriage and family from your perspective.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Read Psalm 112:1-2 and apply it to your life, marriage, and family. List one or two ways you can begin to leave this legacy.

**Discuss as a couple:**

1. Review each other's vision and observations.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Decide on some steps you will take together to establish a sense of corporate family pride. Be sure that you are investing your life in a legacy that has a positive impact on the world for the cause of Christ.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Using the statements you wrote individually, write one family purpose statement together to cement your commitment to move in this direction. If you have children, you may want to get their input on this if appropriate.



# LEADING A FAMILYLIFE GROUP

## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Understand FamilyLife small-group dynamics.
- Learn the roles of the host couple.
- Discover facilitator techniques that make a session successful.
- Know how to respond wisely to severe marital needs.



## OVERVIEW

This session explains important elements of leading a FamilyLife small group, including the group dynamics, the host's role, and facilitator techniques.

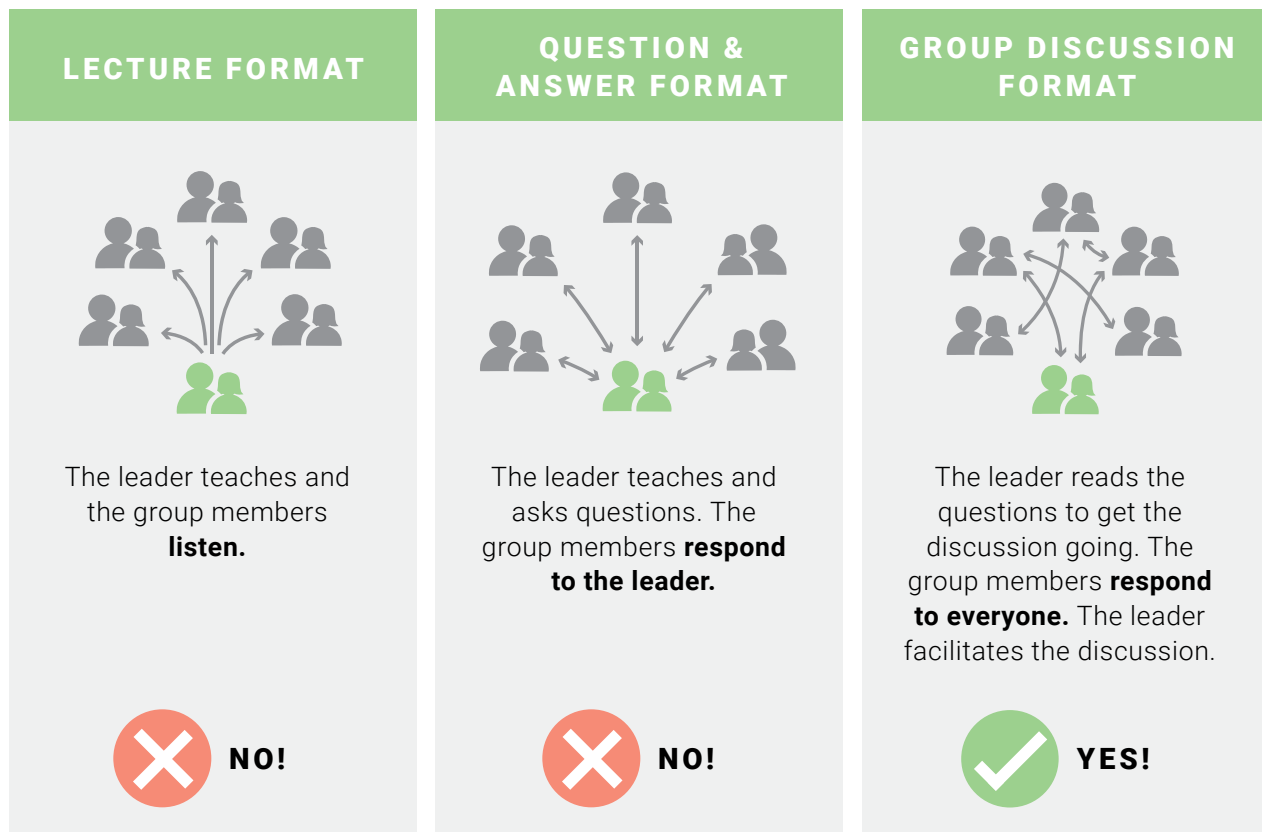
## GROUP DYNAMICS

A FamilyLife group should be like making stone soup. Three soldiers were walking back to their homes after the war. As they passed through a village along the road, they asked for some food. The villagers answered, "Sorry, but the war was hard here, too. We don't have any food to spare." Then the soldiers said, "I guess we'll have to make soup from stones." "You can't make soup from stones," the villagers replied. The soldiers would not be dissuaded. "If someone will loan us a pot, we'll prove it." They filled the pot with water and then built a fire around it. Then each of them selected a smooth stone from the creek and put it in the pot. They began to stir.

Of course, the villagers gathered to see these dummies try to make soup from stones. As they stirred the pot, one soldier remarked, "Stone soup just doesn't taste right without a little salt. I just wish we had some salt to show how good it can be." One of the villagers volunteered, "I've got a little extra salt." They added the salt to the pot. In a few minutes, another soldier remarked, "My mother used to put a few

carrots in her stone soup. It was the best. I just wish that we had a few carrots.” “I’ve got some extra carrots!” a villager cried out. And so it went. They added cabbage, potatoes, and meat. Then they shared their soup with the entire village. Everyone had a wonderful time and ate their fill. The soldiers resumed their journey. And for years afterwards, the villagers marveled that you really could make soup out of stones.

That’s the way these small groups are supposed to work. None of us are experts on marriage. But every one of us has learned about things that work and things that don’t. We can each add to the soup. The FamilyLife Couples Series is designed to enhance interaction and discussion from the participants. Leaders’ guides are available to help you prepare for the session, although having one isn’t necessary. Leading a small group doesn’t require an expert Bible teacher. The leader is a facilitator, not a lecturer. The main function of the facilitator is to provide an environment of openness, warmth, and acceptance. The facilitator is a fellow member of the group who has the added responsibility of covering the study guide within the limited time period. Sometimes it is difficult to resist telling the group members what is important in the study. A good leader allows God a chance to tell people what is important for them through His Holy Spirit or perhaps through another group member.



*(The arrows in each diagram show the direction of communication.)*

## **HOSPITALITY ENHANCES SUCCESS**

Practicing hospitality is a biblical admonition that will help make your group successful. Although nearly all groups succeed, when a group fails, it is frequently because hospitality was not practiced. Try to let each participant know that they are important to you. Developing friendships will create an environment in which God will change lives. In our impersonal world, many couples are hungry for friendships. Couples make best friends through small groups. God will use your relationship in an atmosphere of mild accountability to encourage couples to apply the lessons to their lives.

### **Additional hospitality tips:**

- Provide a comfortable, relaxed setting.
- Arrange the group so that everyone can have eye contact.
- Greet each couple and introduce them to other group members.
- Show respect for everyone by beginning and ending on time.
- Encourage couples to complete their project. Praise those who do but don't rebuke those who do not.
- Optional: Serve simple snacks and beverages. Usually this is better at the end. Otherwise, it will use up the discussion time.

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## **FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION**

Review the lesson with your spouse beforehand, but do not spend hours preparing. Those who invest a lot of effort preparing have a tendency to teach, not facilitate.

Start on time. Honor couples who arrive on time by starting then or as soon as possible. Many individuals may not feel comfortable with the chitchat before a session, and they will time their arrival to avoid it. If you wait for them, they may come later and later, and you won't have time for the study. If you consistently start on time, couples will be there.

Share the ground rules at the beginning of the first session. Review them at the

beginning of the second session and afterwards as needed. Very rarely will a couple get in a dispute during the study. If that happens, as the leader you need to intervene and review the ground rules. Then go on with the study. Do not let them fight in the group! Do not get involved in their dispute.

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## **GROUND RULES**

- 1.** Share nothing about your marriage that will embarrass your spouse. Your spouse is the best judge about what is appropriate.
- 2.** You may pass on any question you do not want to answer. Nobody is forced to say anything.
- 3.** Each couple should complete the projects (questions for each couple to discuss and act on) between the sessions.
- 4.** Keep what is shared in the group private.

Read the questions. At first, you may need to wait for answers. The clock seems to go “Tick, tick, tick . . .” Don’t jump in too quickly with your own ideas; otherwise, couples will wait for you and you’ll end up teaching the material.

Set an example by sharing from your own marriage. As you prepare the lesson, decide together which examples you will share. Remember, a perfect marriage is not mandatory to lead a group. Sharing your experiences (successes and failures) shows your group that you are on this journey together. And it encourages the participants to honestly look at their own marriages.

Watch the clock. Keep the discussion moving so that you can complete the study. The most important biblical applications are at the end. When necessary, move the discussion along simply by reading the next question.

Give everybody a chance to contribute. Some individuals have trouble breaking into the discussion. When you sense somebody wants to speak say, “I think (their name) wanted to say something.”



Subtly encourage group sharing. One way to do this is by not making eye contact with a person while he is talking. This may be hard to do at first, but it will force the person to make eye contact with someone else in the group. Helping couples respond to one another will add a new dimension to your group.

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## **FORMAT**

FamilyLife Couples Studies follow a format. Although this format may vary slightly from session to session, you should familiarize yourself with the basic format so that you are aware of the purpose of each segment of the study. The following outline gives a quick look at how the sessions are structured.

**WARM-UP:** A time to help people get to know each other, review the past session, and begin the new study. Have fun here, but don't let this section take too long.

**BLUEPRINTS:** The biblical content of the session. Most of the session's time will be spent in this section.

**PRINCIPLES:** Summary points made throughout the study. Should always be emphasized.

**WRAP-UP:** This category serves to "bring home the point" and wind down a session in an appropriate fashion.

**MAKE A DATE:** A few minutes for couples to decide when they will complete their project.

**PROJECT:** A couple's project to be completed at home before the next session. This is probably the most important part of the small group.

End on time. The discussions are uncomfortable for some even when they are being helped. If you exceed time, they may not continue with the group. Cut off the discussion if you have to. It is always best to quit on time and send couples away wanting more. That doesn't mean you can't have social time or a dessert afterwards. Then couples that need to leave, perhaps to meet a babysitter, can do so. Others can stay longer. As friendships develop, they are likely to stay later.

Emphasize the need to "Make a Date" just before the session ends. This is when couples apply the principles to their own marriage situations and improve their communication on a date during the week. You can reinforce those who kept their date by asking for a show of hands at the beginning of the next session. A few short testimonies about the date are appropriate.

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## SEVERE MARITAL PROBLEMS

Couples with severe marital troubles are likely to join your group. You are not responsible to be their counselors. When you are aware of very difficult underlying issues such as infidelity, alcoholism, drug abuse, or physical abuse, refer those couples to godly professionals. However, the couple may be encouraged to continue in your group. Your group may even help motivate them to complete the counseling.

Many others, especially Christian couples, may just be completely isolated from each other or worn out and defeated from fighting. God can use your group to turn a relationship like that around and save a marriage. These couples should also be strongly urged to attend a FamilyLife event to help restore their hope. Then FamilyLife Couples Studies can show them how to change that hope into reality through Christ.





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## SUMMARY

- FamilyLife Couples Studies are a great way to maximize time by combining several activities into one.
  - Practice biblical hospitality in your group.
  - A group facilitator doesn't need to be an expert Bible teacher.
  - Become familiar with the ground rules and share them before the first session.
  - Don't teach—instead, create an atmosphere where group members interact with one another.
  - Set an example by sharing your own experiences, good and bad.
  - Start and end on time.
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# ACTIVITY 4

## Sample Session

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This sample session gives participants the opportunity to experience what a full FamilyLife Couples Study would be like.

### **WARM-UP** | 10 Minutes

- Introduce yourself and share how you and your spouse met.
- Share with the group a time when you and your spouse worked together on something. Some ideas include cooking, doing a home renovation project, writing, speaking, building, organizing, etc. What challenges did you face? What were the benefits of working together?

### **BLUEPRINTS** | 30 Minutes

1. Share at least one way you and your mate complement each other as team members.

*"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?" ~ Ecclesiastes 4:9-11*

2. Consider the preceding verse. What are some of the obstacles in our culture that discourage couples from working as a team?

**3.** Do you think it is more difficult for a married couple to work as a team than others? Why?

**4.** Read and discuss the following verses one at a time. How can they help build teamwork in marriage?

- Hebrews 10:25
- James 5:9
- Philippians 2:3
- Ephesians 5:21
- Romans 14:19
- James 5:16

#### **WRAP-UP** | *10 Minutes*

Individually write down as many ways as you can think of in one minute that you and your spouse have demonstrated positive teamwork. When time is up, exchange lists with your spouse. Share with the group something received.

#### **MAKE A DATE**

Make a date with your spouse to meet before the next session to complete the project. Your leader will ask you to share something from this experience at the next session.

#### **PROJECT** | *60 minutes*

##### **Individually** (*15 minutes*)

1. In what ways have you seen Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 be true in your marriage?

2. Make a list of reasons you are thankful for your spouse.

**As a couple** (30 minutes)

1. Share your answers from the individual time with each other.
2. Brainstorm together for romantic ways you can develop your teamwork and grow closer to each other.
3. Finish your time together by praying that God will help you to work as a team in a way that honors and glorifies Him.



# USING FAMILYLIFE SMALL GROUPS FOR OUTREACH

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## **PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:**

- Use minimal-commitment events to interest non-Christians or unchurched couples.
- Identify several ways to use small groups for outreach.
- Learn tips for leading outreach groups.
- Discuss a clear and organized way to share the gospel.

The FamilyLife Couples Series is an excellent tool for outreach to non-Christians or unchurched couples. Through the family, the FamilyLife strategy targets a major audience, which has no cultural bounds. Ministering to families gets us into cultures and groups that other strategies cannot reach. When needs are met, hearts become open to Christ. Sometimes in places where one-on-one sharing of God's plan for life is not welcomed, practical how-to's that apply to life and marriage are received warmly.

The FamilyLife Couples Series is a door opener and an evangelistic tool. It's also a tool to help spiritually disciple families. And through small groups you can meet people where they need help. As they respond, they become healthier spiritually and personally. They get involved in a deeper way for the cause of Christ.

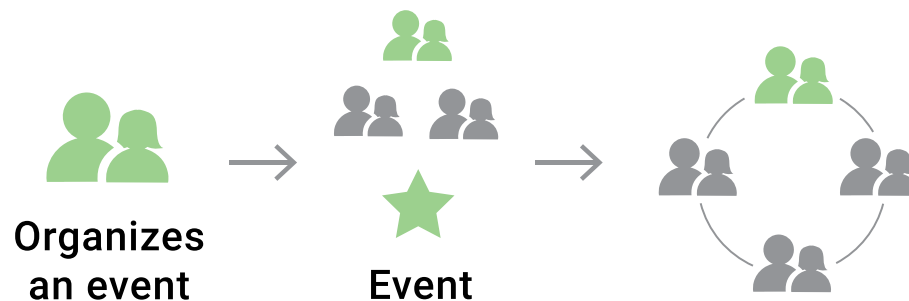


## **OVERVIEW**

Small groups can be a great tool for outreach to families who are in desperate need of Christ. This session introduces the concept of using small groups for outreach and presents ideas and tips for successfully sharing Christ through the FamilyLife Couples Studies.

## OUTREACH EVENTS

Frequently, some sort of event requiring minimal initial commitment is most effective to get couples with the greatest needs involved in small groups. Invitations, phone calls, or personal visits will get couples to attend. You can enlist helpers who have been in small groups to assist you by inviting their own friends who may need to know Christ. Those whom God has touched will be your best source for encouraging others to participate. But they should expect only one person out of five or ten to respond the first time.



The event should be non-threatening and fun. If the event is fun and meaningful, the guests will tell others. Many people who declined the initial event may respond to an invitation to the next event. As you plan your event, remember how important each person is to God. Making the occasion first class can communicate to your guests that you value them. And they should be important to us—Jesus died for them! Building relationships before and during the event is a key to positive response. Pray ahead of time, then relax and enjoy the event. Tension in the host will be evident and will reduce the effectiveness of the event.

Avoid political issues, religious jargon, and symbolism. When you're seeking to involve unchurched couples or those who are unsure of their relationship with God, it is important to speak their language. Don't talk about divisive issues that would take the focus off of marriages. And be sure to avoid religious words or phrases that they would not understand. Even prayer, except to receive Christ, may not be appropriate at some outreach events.

People are surprisingly ready to make friends with dedicated Christians and are often open to learning things that work. The guests should know ahead of time if there will be a speaker or emphasis on biblical marriage; otherwise they may feel tricked into coming.



## OUTREACH EVENTS

- Cookout (backyard, park, lake)
- Christmas coffee
- Christmas cookie exchange
- Luncheon (or breakfast) with a speaker
- Home dessert with a testimony or challenge
- Super Bowl or other sports event party
- Easter egg hunt
- Volleyball or other sports activity
- Houseboat party with a Bible study
- Craft demonstration
- Neighborhood project
- Home dinner party with a testimony
- Catered dinner with a speaker
- Fashion show with a testimony
- Valentine party or banquet
- Costume ball with a speaker
- Seminar for engaged couples
- Marriage or parenting seminar

At the outreach event, you can offer a chance to express interest in FamilyLife groups with a response card. Women are usually more receptive, especially among non-Christians. If a husband isn't ready to join a group, try forming a women's group first. The women can organize periodic socials to which the husbands are invited. Frequently, after the men get to know you through their wives, they will be willing to try a group.

Be persistent as you begin your ministry, and don't allow failure to discourage you. The most mature faith, the faith God uses, is prepared for failures. Perhaps one of the best-known success stories from the Bible is when the shepherd boy David fought the giant Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:40 records that David took five stones with him to face the giant. Most assume David hit Goliath on the first shot. But Scripture does not say it was the first stone. David was prepared to fire until he brought the giant down. So it is with us, using FamilyLife groups to reach out to our communities. We need to be prepared to make several attempts at starting a group or organizing events. God seems to require that type of faith to work the greatest miracles.

## LEADING OUTREACH GROUPS

If you want the most excitement, try to mix people with different backgrounds. Church groups are great, but they're not as diversified as groups of Baptists and Catholics, or Presbyterians and Pentecostals! Keep the focus on improving marriage, not on denominational differences. An added challenge, especially when including non-believers in your group, is that you are likely to have some couples with very non-biblical ideas. The way you respond to them makes all the difference. Organize and lead a group with non-Christians in the same manner as a regular group, with special attention to the tips below.

### Important Tips for Leading Outreach Groups:

- Create a non-threatening environment. You may wonder how a church could threaten anyone, but it can. Outreach is most successful in a neutral place like your home.
- Don't teach—do share. Be careful not to appear as the expert. Some couples will become defensive if you do. The best way to lead is by generously sharing your own mistakes and what you're learning.
- Have fun! The FamilyLife Couples Studies are strong medicine for many couples. Make friends and encourage laughter to break the tension. Couples having fun are likely to put the lessons into practice and to continue coming. Limit the meeting to an hour and a half plus social time. Having fun together is more important than finishing all the questions.



- Be patient. Couples trained in the world's values will have very non-biblical ideas. Don't correct them. If someone says something like, "God led me to get divorced," continue on to the next question from the study. Let God's Spirit use your example and the Scriptures in the study to touch his heart, and our God will do it.
- Be flexible. These couples are precious to God, so much that He died for them. Sacrifice your own convenience to arrange meeting times, child care, etc., for them.
- Protect. Don't let Christians who may join your group "witness" to your target couples in a confrontational or condescending manner. At all costs avoid a "them-and-us" division between Christians and non-Christians in the group.
- Respect privacy. Nothing will anger some couples more than to hear from people who are not part of the group that they are praying for them. If this happens, they will know you've been talking about them outside the group. Keep what is shared in your group private.
- Start and end on time. Many men feel uncomfortable, especially at first, making small talk. The topics will be painful for some. Don't extend the sessions or they may not return. Also, some couples will come later and later if you delay starting.
- Work together as a team. Your spouse may be more sensitive about needs in the group than you are. Talk with your spouse about which couples in the group might need encouragement.
- Don't accidentally embarrass anyone. Many people have little Bible knowledge. For example, don't call on someone to read unless you're certain they've found the verse.
- Don't force people to talk. This is even more important than in a regular Christian group.

## **SHARING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST**

Participating in a FamilyLife group will start to create an interest in spiritual things for those who get involved. Making scriptural applications will open their receptivity to the claims of Christ. It is critical that they clearly understand what the claims of Christ are. There are three basic ways to share the gospel:

- Personal salvation testimony
- Appointment with an individual or couple, perhaps using a presentation such as the Four Spiritual Laws booklet
- Invitation to an evangelistic event

### **Personal Salvation Testimony**

A personal testimony like the one demonstrated in Acts 26:1-23 can be very effective. Since FamilyLife Couples Studies are designed to be a group discussion, a personal testimony is a very natural and easy way to share the gospel during a session. It is a personal explanation of the circumstances surrounding your conversion and the changes Christ has produced in your life. A well-designed testimony of two to three minutes will seem a natural part of group dynamics. Few people will feel that they have been “witnessed to.”

Remember that your main objective is to communicate your testimony in such a way that others will know how to trust Christ. Do not be concerned that your testimony is exciting, just that it is interesting. If possible, try to build your testimony around a single theme of how Christ has changed your life. For example, tell how your personal goals or relationships with others have changed.

The following outline will help you organize your thoughts:

#### **MY LIFE BEFORE I RECEIVED CHRIST**

In giving a testimony, remember that most people will relate to your thoughts and attitudes. Everybody’s circumstances and actions are different, but our concerns and feelings are very similar. Begin your testimony with an attention-grabbing statement, question, or story.

## MY CONVERSION EXPERIENCE

Relate what happened in your life that changed your thoughts, attitudes, or misconceptions about Christianity. Be specific about what you did to receive Christ. What you did is more important than when or where you did it.

## MY LIFE AFTER RECEIVING CHRIST

Explain the changes that took place, again being specific. Be sure that the changes you communicate relate to attitudes and actions mentioned in "Before I received Christ." Briefly explain what your relationship with Christ means to you now. You could include one verse that is meaningful to you that relates to your testimony.

Here's a sample evangelistic testimony:

*Everyone said I was a good kid. I made good grades, went to Sunday school, and said "Yes, sir" and "No, ma'am" to my elders. I went away to college and things were about the same. I was on the Dean's List, had a car, a job, and a girlfriend. Everyone said I had it made. But inside I knew otherwise. For one thing, I lay awake at night wondering what would happen to me when I died. I had a terrible temper and would throw and break things when I didn't get my way. Worst of all, I used people to get what I wanted. As a result, I didn't have any real friends, only acquaintances.*

*A guy I had gone to high school with invited me to attend a Bible study. The topic was how to know you are a Christian. One part I remember was, "And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." I knew that I didn't have either Jesus Christ or eternal life. Previously, I had a vague idea that God had a balance scale in heaven. He would put the good things on one side and the bad things on the other. Whichever way it went would determine where I would spend eternity. But I couldn't know which way until I got there. I started to ask a lot of questions. I asked, "Where did Cain get his wife?" and "How did Noah get all the animals on the ark?" I never got all the answers, but I became convinced by the character of the Bible study leaders that Jesus Christ is real and that He could change my life.*

*One night in the privacy of my dorm room I prayed a prayer something like this: "Jesus, I know I have sinned against you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Please come into my life to be my Lord and Savior. Make me the kind of person you want me to be." And immediately I felt ... nothing. I didn't feel any different. But I knew that Jesus would keep His promise and had come into my life. Very soon my life started to change. First, I didn't have to worry about what would happen to me when I died. Then I learned to trust Him in many situations, and my temper improved. Then He taught me how to really care for other people, and soon I had the kind of friends I'd always wanted. I'm still a long way from being Mr. Perfect. And I never will be. But I know that everything I have, everything I am, and everything I ever will be, I owe to what my Lord Jesus Christ has done for me.*

--Drew Coons

### **Private Appointment**

In many cases it may be best to schedule a private meeting to present the claims of Christ. It can be done couple to couple. (But often it should be done husband to husband and wife to wife.) This is one of the advantages of developing a ministry as a husband and wife team. Many men are reluctant to expose their lack of understanding in front of their wives.

Sometime during the six to eight weeks of the study, schedule a time to meet with this person or couple privately to explain the principles on which this study is based. Pray before meeting them, confessing any known sin in your own life, and asking God to prepare their hearts. If only one member of the leadership couple goes to the appointment, the other can pray during that time. If both of you attend, the one who is not sharing should continue in silent prayer.

Begin in a friendly manner, but get quickly to the reason you wanted to meet. Otherwise you may use all of your time visiting. Share the gospel of Christ and offer an opportunity to receive Him as Savior and Lord. We recommend the Four Spiritual Laws booklet or Cru's *Would You Like to Know God Personally?* These can help you explain how a person can have a relationship with God.

Booklets are available, or you can visit <https://www.cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html> for an online version. You can very effectively share the gospel by simply reading through these resources out loud with the person or couple you're ministering to. Postpone questions until you finish. There is even a copy of the Four Laws in the appendix of some of the FamilyLife study guides, making it a natural part of the study.

Advantages of using the Four Spiritual Laws:

- Easy to use—just read through it
- Contains all a person needs to know and includes Bible references
- Will keep you on the subject
- Brings a person to the point of decision
- Includes some immediate follow-up
- Serves as a reminder of what they have heard or done
- Natural to use the Four Laws as part of the small group because it's included in the back of many FamilyLife studies

### **Invite Couples to an Event at Which Christ Will Be Shared**

Andrew, the disciple of Jesus, did an effective job of evangelism. All he had to do was to invite his brother Peter to a meeting. You will develop close relationships with the couples in your group. As your friends, they are much more likely to attend an event where Christ is clearly shared, especially if it is a marriage-oriented outreach. If possible, you could attend together. Your personal testimony beforehand will help prepare their hearts. As a small-group ministry starts to multiply, you may want to intentionally organize events to give participants an opportunity to receive Christ.

One great thing about using FamilyLife Couples Studies as a platform to share Christ is that those who receive Christ are already in a Bible study. Your effectiveness in sharing the gospel, answering questions, and conducting follow-up can increase with training and experience. Cru offers many resources to develop your ministry skills in this area.



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### **SUMMARY**

- The context of marriage is an excellent manner in which to introduce others to Christ.
  - God expects us to be prepared and demonstrate faith.
  - A minimal, non-commitment event is an effective way to get non-believers involved.
  - Develop a short personal testimony to show others how to trust Christ.
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# ACTIVITY 5

## Small-Group Ministry

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**Answer the following questions as a couple:**

1. List several reasons you'd like to lead a FamilyLife small group (or other type of small group).
2. Discuss the following and write down your best answer at this time:
  - What sort of group would you like to trust God to organize (conference follow-up, church, neighborhood, outreach, mixed, or another type)?
  - When would you like to start?
  - Where would you like to meet?
  - What about child care?





## OUR SMALL-GROUP PRAYER LIST

List the names of couples you know that the Lord brings to mind. Then pray daily for them that God would be at work in their marriages and they would respond positively should you invite them to join your small group.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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# ENCOURAGING SMALL-GROUP MULTIPLICATION

## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Understand Jesus' methods for multiplying discipleship.
- Review the role of the Small-Group Developer.
- Determine how FamilyLife groups can multiply.
- Understand ministry cycles.

Once a couple has organized and led several small groups and seen the positive effect they have, then the couple may wish to help other couples do likewise. This is the beginning of multiplication. This couple may be called "Small-Group Developers."



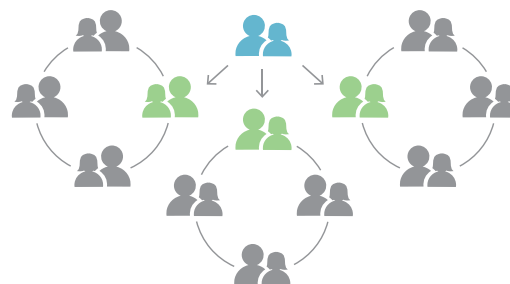
## OVERVIEW

This session explains the role of a Small-Group Developer and multiplication in the context of a FamilyLife small-group ministry. It also explains ministry cycles and how we can look to Jesus' ministry as an example.



### Small-Group Leaders

Organize and facilitate groups



### Small-Group Developers

Help others organize and facilitate groups

## THE POWER OF MULTIPLICATION

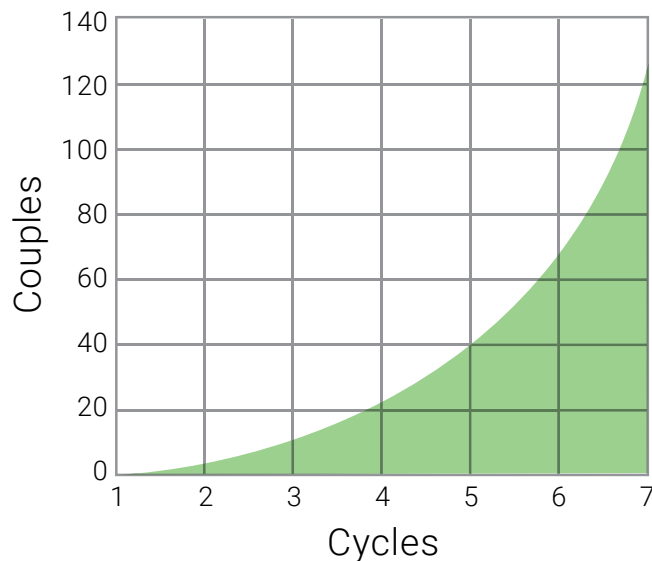
Multiplication was the way Jesus planned to change the world 2,000 years ago, and multiplication is still the way you and I can change the world today. Some couples have seen their desire for reaching families multiplied into more than 100 groups. A ministry is composed of many people working together to achieve a purpose greater than them. A large FamilyLife local ministry contains many smaller ministries led by couples that God is using to touch lives.

The early church described in the book of Acts expanded very rapidly. At first they added new converts (see Acts 2:41, 2:47, 4:4, and 5:14). After some time had passed, the new believers grew and matured, becoming disciples. Then God changed their mathematics. Instead of adding, they started multiplying! (See Acts 6:1-2, 6:7, 8:1-4, 9:31, and 12:24.) That was the movement of God that spread Christianity all over the world in a few short years.

Many people understand the principles of multiplying discipleship. If you could fold an ordinary piece of paper just 24 times, it would be over a mile thick. Let's say you took a FamilyLife group and trained just one couple from that group for leadership. Then, in six months you both start a new group and train another couple for leadership. If you continued this cycle for five years, you'd end up with more than 1,000 groups.

Since many know this principle, and it is part of Jesus' plan, why don't more people put it into practice? The reason is that it is very difficult. Satan understands multiplication, too. He will oppose multiplying discipleship strongly by attacking the roots. In addition, people may be too overloaded with good activities, even Christian activities, to attempt this kind of ministry.

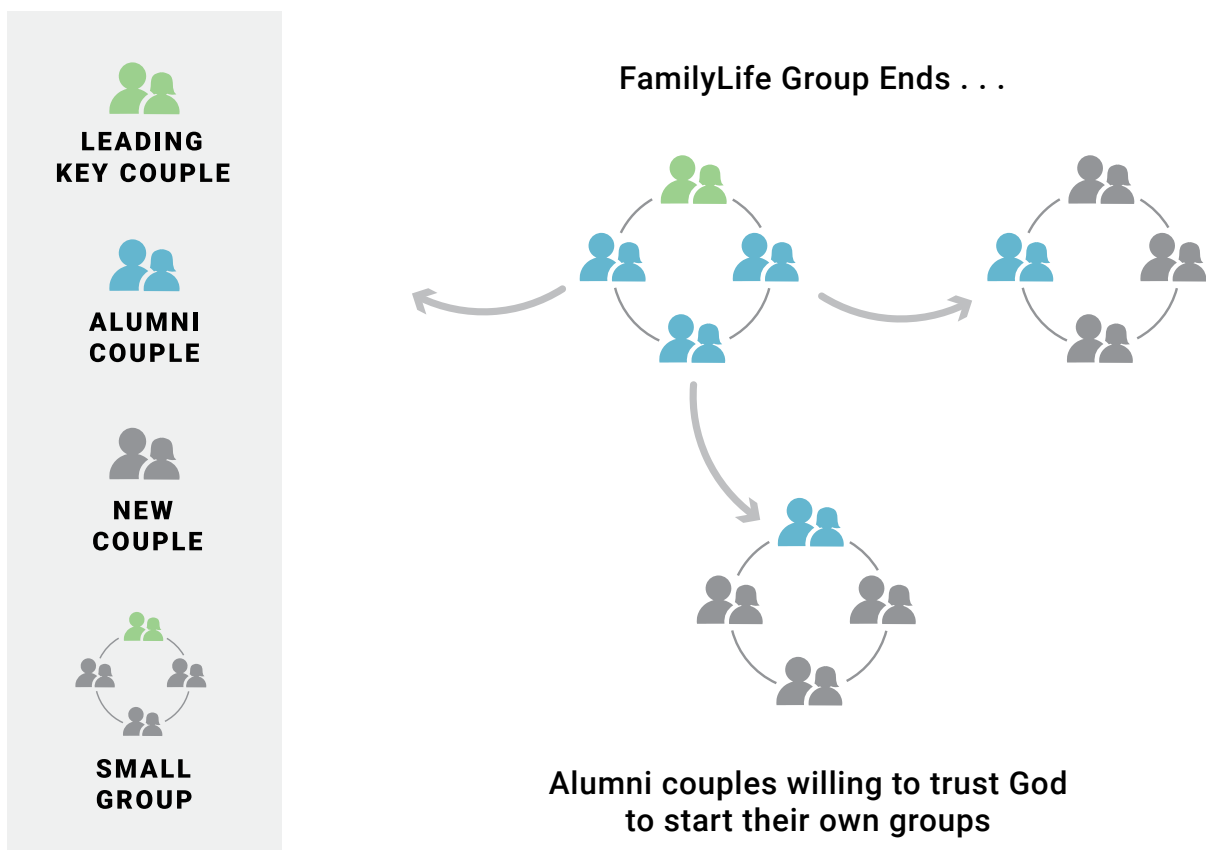
**Power of Multiplication**



## SMALL-GROUP MULTIPLICATION

A couple came to a FamilyLife Small-Group Leadership Training where they expressed their disappointment with the group they had led. “Nobody wanted to do another one,” the wife said. “We don’t belong at your Leadership Training.”

With some encouragement, they attended the Leadership Training anyway. The surprise came when they remarked that a couple from their defunct group was there also. The couple they indicated was one of the most active FamilyLife small-group coordinators in their state. And this couple had brought another couple that had already led several groups. The original leaders, who were so disappointed in the response of their group, actually had spawned at least three generations of multiplication and had not known so! They left the meeting excited about how God had used them.



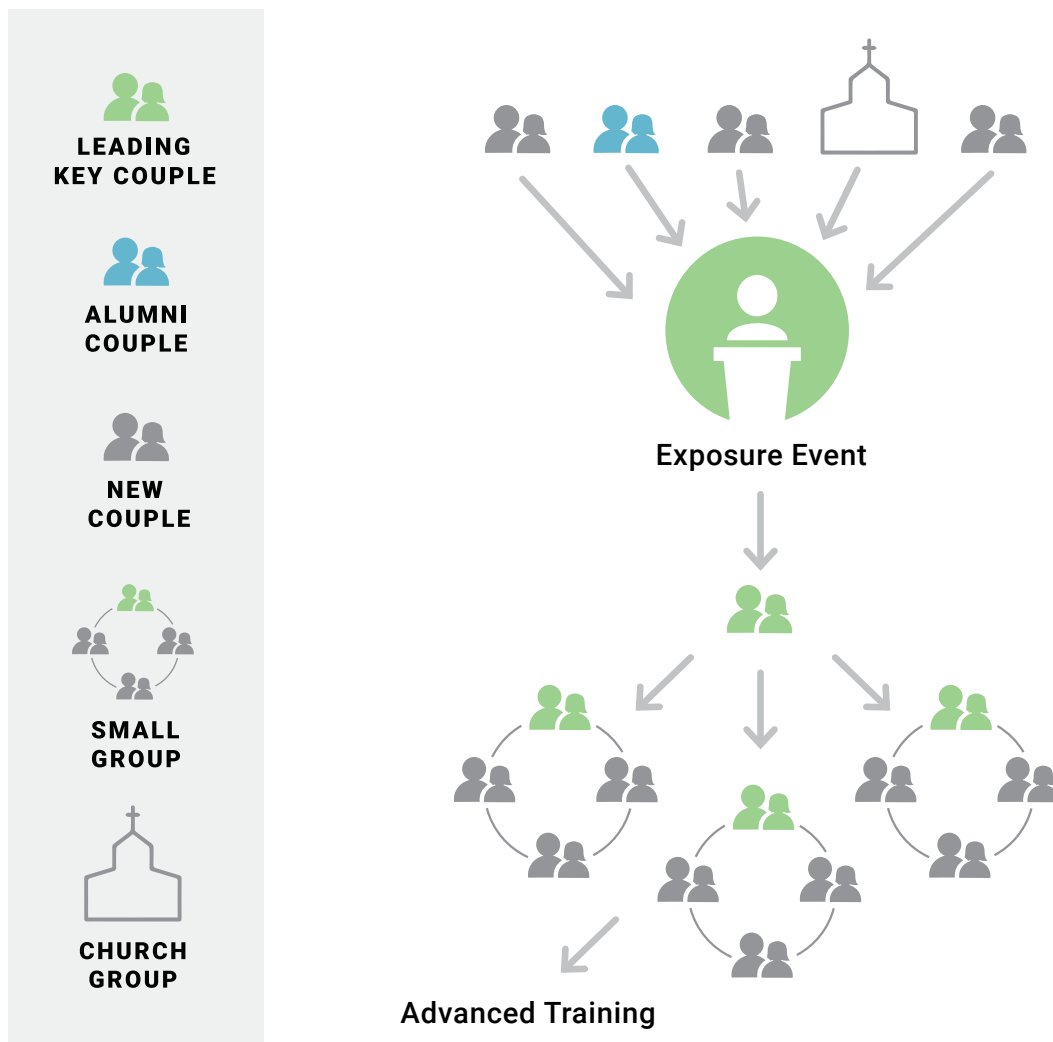
Many times people think of multiplication as a group getting larger and larger, then dividing into two groups like an amoeba. But FamilyLife groups rarely multiply that way. The sketch on the previous page illustrates how FamilyLife groups usually multiply. Groups come to an end after the couples have received biblical applications to improve their marriage. Afterwards some of the participants may start new groups. But don't be surprised if there is a large gap between a group ending and another beginning. Frequently, couples that really loved FamilyLife small-group studies and want to be leaders wait a year or more before beginning their own group.

In some cases, the end of a FamilyLife group may be part of God's plan. Jesus said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Sometimes a group has to come to an end before it can multiply. After a group ends, couples may start their own groups, even years afterwards. We never encourage groups to end. But when they do, we look forward to seeing who may emerge as future leaders from that group.



## EXPANDING A SMALL-GROUP MINISTRY

After a couple has led several groups they may wish to start helping others start groups. These couples can be called Small-Group Developers. To generate more interest and help others start groups, the Developers may want to host a first-class event. The alumni of your groups are indispensable in helping you with the event, perhaps by bringing others. After the event, multiple groups may form. As a ministry grows, no person really runs or directs it, or even knows all that is going on. The ministry belongs to God.

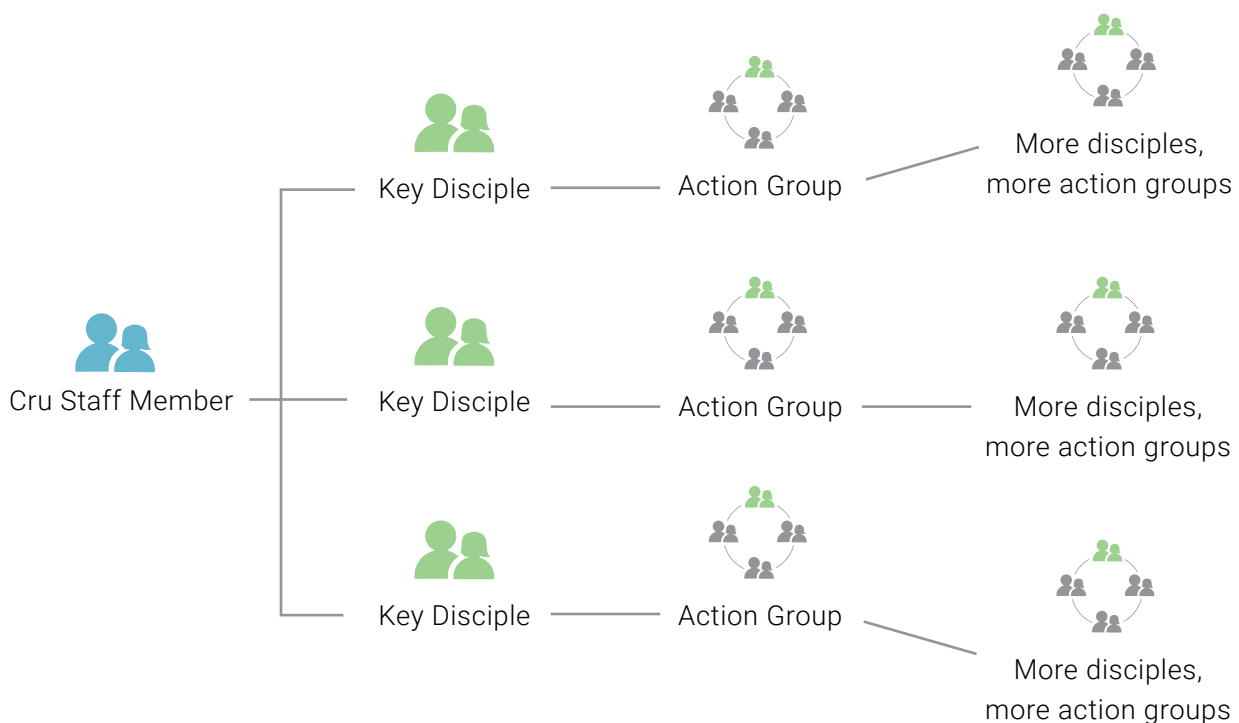


A key couple went to speak to a group of couples about attending the Weekend to Remember. Their response was, “That sounds pretty good. But have you guys heard about FamilyLife Couples Studies? They’re really terrific.” The key couple assured them that FamilyLife Couples Studies were great and politely left. In the car, they burst out laughing. They knew that those couples were their fifth generation disciples in FamilyLife small groups. The couples didn’t even know who had started what changed their lives. That may be your greatest joy in ministry—meeting couples God has touched through your ministry who don’t even know who you are.

When a ministry grows, there are secondary effects that benefit couples who haven’t even participated directly. The ministry starts to raise the standards for godly marriages in churches. The general community awareness of the importance of the family is increased. Many role models are generated for the community. And others start to imitate your success. In our area, lots of churches do sermons, marriage retreats, or seminars using their own material. And what’s wrong with that? Not a thing! Our response is to encourage them and offer to help any way we can. After trusting God like this for an effective ministry for seven years in our area, the divorce rate decreased for the first time ever.

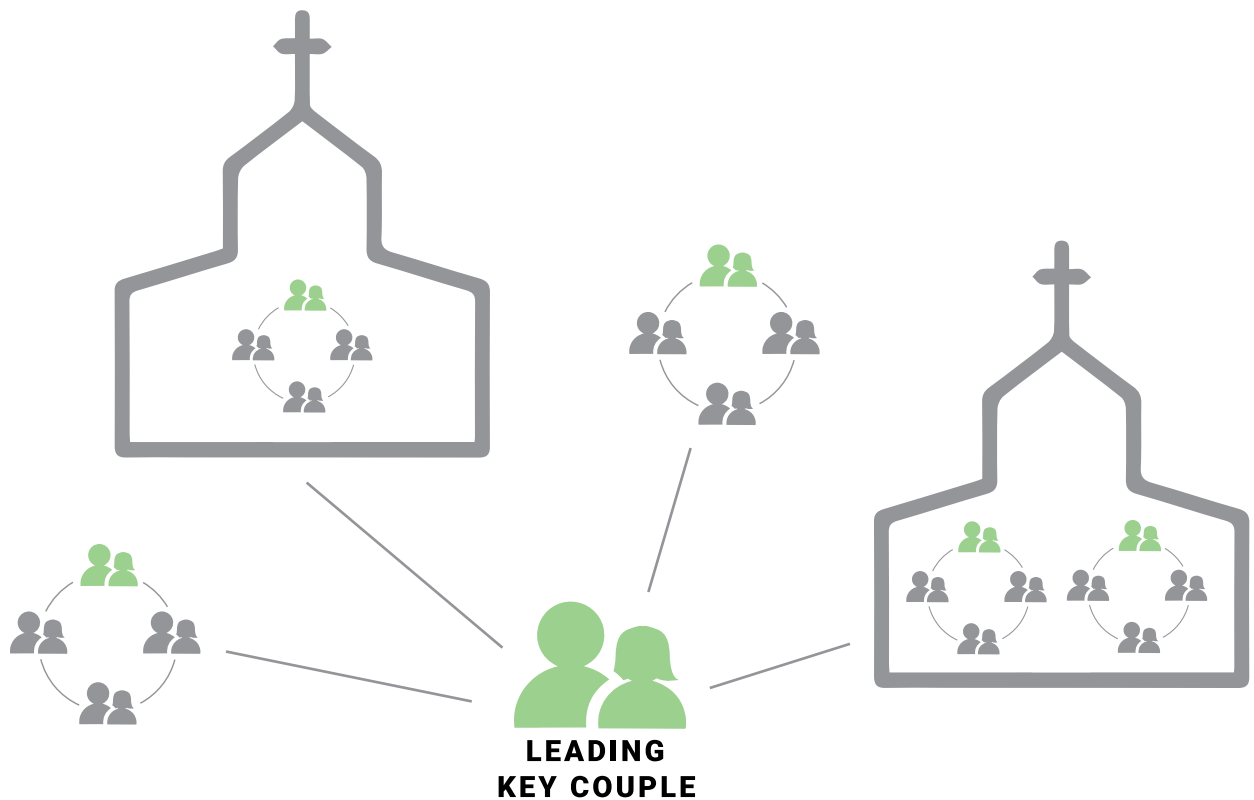
Sometimes you see a discipleship ministry represented as a tree showing an ongoing relationship between leaders and disciples. The needs of families vary over time. Therefore, a FamilyLife small-group ministry will not be able to maintain this type of organization very long. An active small-group ministry looks more like bubbling oatmeal with groups beginning and ending continually with minimal formal organization.

### Traditional Organization





## Suggested FamilyLife Small-Group Organization



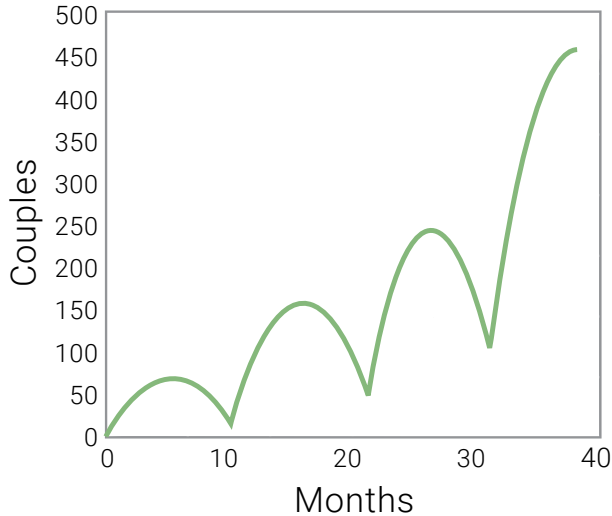
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## UNDERSTANDING MINISTRY CYCLES

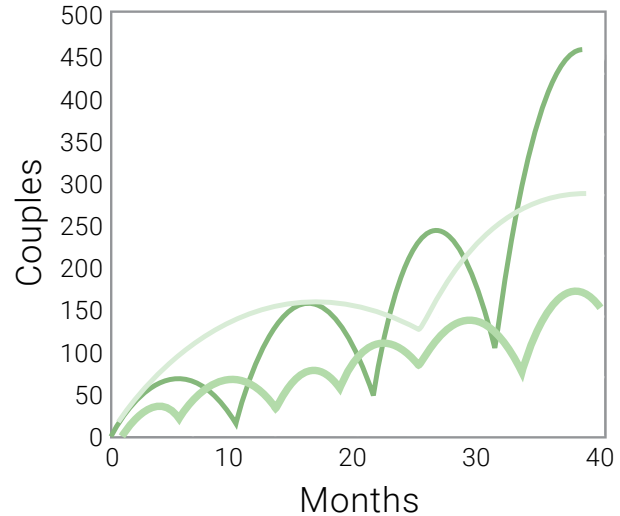
Jesus and Paul both had ministry cycles. These are represented in the ebb times when not much appears to be happening in the ministry. The down times are part of God's plan to help identify the faithful men spoken of in 2 Timothy 2:2. You should invest your lives in the couples who, during the slow times, are eager to go forward in our Lord's service.

In a typical ministry cycle, the work will slow down and perhaps even dwindle to almost nothing before it takes off again. Most local FamilyLife ministries have a natural ministry cycle with the annual FamilyLife conferences. However, as the ministry expands beyond the conference, the cycle may not be so evident. It will be different in a FamilyLife small-group ministry.

## Ministry Cycle



## Beware of Comparisons



Couples who are Developers will have different ministry cycles according to the gifts given to them and their circumstances. Discouragement comes from comparing ourselves to others. You must beware of comparisons! Different couples have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us (Romans 12:6). Therefore, the way God develops a ministry through you or the way you contribute to a ministry will be very different from others. The problem is that most people, expecting a constant, steady growth or comparing their ministry to someone else's, think they have failed at the end of a cycle. So they quit. But few ministries operate with continual growth.

Ministries can seem very slow developing, especially at first. You must plant many, many seeds and complete a number of cycles before you start seeing the most significant (numbers-wise) results. Remember, "in due time we shall reap, if we do not grow weary" (Galatians 6:9). Frequently, couples join or start a small group years after they were first challenged to do so. Some who resisted all your efforts to involve them at any level may respond much later due to a need in their life or because the circumstances, like the ages of their children, have changed. Many others will respond more favorably as the positive reputation for FamilyLife Couples Studies grows in your community.

For this reason, Developers should establish a database of couples who have expressed interest or have been challenged or trained in FamilyLife small groups. A periodic newsletter with small-group tips and testimonies will remind them without being offensive. I call the effect, "Keeping them (prospective leaders or participants) warm." You can also continue to invite them to your events and remind them about the influence of FamilyLife Couples Studies. Many will respond at a much later date.

Frequently Small-Group Developers get phone calls along the lines of, “Remember us from your meeting two years ago? We’re ready to start that group now.” One couple called for help starting a small group eight years after they had been challenged. Had we not kept them informed, they would have forgotten all about FamilyLife Couples Studies. But when the circumstances in their lives allowed, God’s Holy Spirit used our newsletter to prompt them to start leading a small group. Many couples will respond in such a manner if you are patient.



### **SUMMARY**

- Usually a FamilyLife small group will come to an end before it multiplies.
- Jesus built a ministry of multiplying discipleship that included continuing ministry to groups.
- In a typical ministry cycle, work will often slow down and may even dwindle to nothing before taking off again.

# ACTIVITY 6

## Challenges of Multiplication

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### **As a group discuss:**

1. Why do you think Jesus' methods were effective?
2. Can you share examples of New Testament and modern-day multiplication?
3. Why do you think more couples don't attempt this type of multiplication ministry?
4. What are some ways that Satan could attack multipliers?
5. Have you observed examples of multiplication ministry failure?
6. Could that failure have been prevented? How?



# ACCELERATING MULTIPLICATION

## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Describe the purpose of the village and synagogue strategy.
- Identify types of events that can be used to get couples involved in the local FamilyLife ministry.
- Learn to conduct a one-hour small-group orientation and training session.

Most of the ideas in this training have related to bringing couples to our ministry. However, Developers can frequently see the most results by adopting a “go to the people” strategy. Once again this follows Jesus’ example.



## OVERVIEW

This session explains the “village and synagogue” strategy. Rather than bringing couples to us, this strategy is designed to serve people and churches where they are. This is the most time-effective opportunity for Small-Group Developers to get couples involved in groups. Activities that work well within this strategy are explained.

## THE VILLAGE AND SYNAGOGUE STRATEGY

*And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. —Matthew 9:35 NAS*

Jesus used large-group meetings and created interest by performing miracles to

accelerate the ministry. FamilyLife offers a natural momentum-building occasion with the Weekend to Remember or similar events.

Jesus also went to the people in their villages and synagogues (Luke 8:1, Luke 13:22, Mark 6:6, Matthew 11:1, Matthew 9:35, Matthew 4:23, Mark 1:14). He also sent His disciples to the people (Luke 9:6, Luke 10:1, Mark 6:7-12, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8). In the same way, multiplication in a small-group ministry can be greatly accelerated by creating strategies designed to minister to people where they are and to serve local churches. These can also be highly outreach oriented, giving men and women the opportunity to receive Jesus Christ.

Lots of churches and groups are looking for someone who can give an entertaining message with some practical content. A marriage enrichment talk can be a tremendous door opener to promote FamilyLife Couples Studies or to interest couples in the Weekend to Remember. Churches also respond well to your willingness to serve them on their own terms. You can offer to lead a discussion-oriented seminar for a day or weekend using sessions from a FamilyLife Couples Study. You may even add some short talks or testimonies of your own.

A seminar so designed can lead into a small-group ministry using the studies. These seminars have perhaps the greatest potential for serving smaller outlying communities that can't have a full conference of their own. This is the essence of the village and synagogue strategy.

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## **EXAMPLES OF VILLAGE AND SYNAGOGUE ACTIVITIES**

**Note:** *This strategy benefits from some speaking skills. FamilyLife has a style of speaking that emphasizes humor and personal stories, including mistakes made. FamilyLife's Global department has training to equip leaders to speak in a manner that communicates clearly and brings in audiences.*

Activities centered around the FamilyLife Couples Series are a great way to get couples involved in the local FamilyLife ministry. The idea behind the activities (they're usually free) is to create low-commitment entry points into the ministry. It's important to make the activity first class to demonstrate to the guests that you value them highly. Of course, the proper basis for valuing them is the investment that Jesus has already made on their behalf by giving His life for them. A first-class event also communicates that these studies will be worth their time and effort. Following are some activities that have worked well.

<b>EXAMPLES OF "GOING TO THE PEOPLE" ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>Group Demonstration</b>	<p>Some couples wish to lead a group, but aren't certain how the sessions should be conducted. An experienced couple can go to the first meeting and facilitate it with everybody's understanding that the organizers will lead subsequent sessions.</p>
<b>Facilitating by Request</b>	<p>Occasionally a couple will organize a group and prefer to not facilitate the sessions. An experienced and willing facilitator couple can perform that role.</p>
<b>Evening Marriage Emphasis</b>	<p>Sunday school classes or other groups frequently want a wholesome program perhaps as part of a romantic dinner. Some jokes, a few activities, and a 20-30-minute testimony about marriage can entertain everyone and give the Small-Group Developer an opportunity to offer their resources.</p>
<b>Marriage Talk</b>	<p>For churches wanting a guest sermon or groups wanting more substantial content, a 45-60-minute talk gives couples a taste of biblical marriage. Many in the audience may be willing to try FamilyLife Couples Studies.</p>
<b>Marriage Seminar</b>	<p>Churches and other groups frequently want to minister to marriages by a weekend retreat. This requires delivering several talks, but the small-group follow-up is especially effective.</p>
<b>FamilyLife Small-Group Orientation Meeting</b>	<p>Sometimes denominational or pastors' groups ask for small-group training for lay leaders. This can be provided in as little as an hour.</p> <p>"Conducting a One-Hour FamilyLife Small-Group Orientation and Training Session" follows.</p>



## **CONDUCTING A ONE-HOUR FAMILYLIFE SMALL-GROUP ORIENTATION AND TRAINING SESSION**

The most important thing when teaching others is to be enthusiastic. That will communicate more than anything you say. If you assign another couple to do short parts of the program, just keep track of the time and instruct them not to field questions. You will burn up too much time if you don't stick to the schedule.

Get everybody's attention and distribute brochures and FamilyLife small-group training manuals, available through FamilyLife. (Contact [global@familylife.com](mailto:global@familylife.com) for information about available training materials.) Begin the program as soon as politely possible after the scheduled start, but be prepared for delays.

- Introduce yourselves. Tell something about your experience with FamilyLife Couples Studies. Introduce the other key couples.
- Tell how a FamilyLife group works, how much fun it is, and how easy it is to lead. Emphasize that leaders don't need to be Bible experts. You can use the stone soup story from the "Leading Small Groups" section in this manual. Your job here is primarily to sell people on the FamilyLife Couples Series.
- Tell about the FamilyLife Couples Studies topics available. The ones to start with are *Building Your Marriage to Last*, *Resolving Conflict in Your Marriage*, or *Improving Communication in Your Marriage*. Show some materials. Explain the difference between using the materials at home and using them during a church session like Sunday school.





- Explain how a group works, how many couples participate (six to eight is best), and how long a session lasts. Discuss refreshments and how to use alternate leaders. Emphasize the discussion rather than lecture format. Discuss projects. Go over the small-group ground rules:
  - Don't say anything to embarrass your spouse.
  - You don't have to say anything.
  - Keep your date with your spouse.
  - Keep what is shared confidential within the group.
- Divide the couples into groups for a practice session. Ask for volunteer facilitators, or appoint them. This practice session should last 20–40 minutes. If no other practice session is available, use the one located in Activity 4 of this manual.
- Give the couples about five minutes to introduce themselves to each other, then start discussion. Move around, encouraging everybody and answering questions.
- At the meeting's close, thank the couples for attending, as well as those who may have helped you, and let everyone know you'll stay around to answer questions. Close with a short prayer.
- Stay as long as anyone has questions.



## **SUMMARY**

- A ministry needs strategies to generate momentum and create enthusiasm.
  - Taking on an attitude of service can open many doors for small groups.
  - Churches respond well to your willingness to serve them on their own terms.
  - Local seminars or events can be used to reach couples less likely to attend a full Weekend to Remember.
  - Events can create low-commitment entry points into the ministry.
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# STARTING A FAMILYLIFE SMALL-GROUP MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH OR COMMUNITY

## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify four steps to start a small-group ministry in your church or community.
- Understand how to grow and sustain a FamilyLife small-group ministry.
- Understand realities and challenges for pastors leading groups.

“Can’t you put all this into some simple steps?” someone asked us. Simple, yes.

Easy, no. The following outline gives four steps to build a ministry. Couples do not need to complete all four steps to be very successful. God can use just steps one and two to change many people’s lives in your target area. But if you can trust God through step four, you will start to see thousands of changed lives.



## OVERVIEW

This session presents a step-by-step plan to start a local FamilyLife small-group ministry. It is a summary of the strategy presented in this manual.

STEP  
1

**Start and lead several FamilyLife groups.** At least one group should be a non-denominational or neighborhood group.

STEP  
2

**Use FamilyLife Couples Studies to follow up the Weekend to Remember.** Start to build a database of interested or strategic couples. “Keep them warm” by mail or phone, and be patient for God to put these resources on their hearts.

STEP  
3

**Serve local churches** as a free consultant to families.

**A.** Offer service strategies to churches:

- Group start assistance
- Small-group orientations or training
- FamilyLife talks (offered free to any group)

**B.** Use effective local publicity to promote FamilyLife Couples Studies and make your willingness to serve churches known.

**C.** Approach local denominations to offer free FamilyLife small-group leadership training.

STEP  
4

**Develop year-round ministry** with strategic, godly leadership.

**A.** Follow Jesus' village and synagogue example by going to the people.

**B.** Apply principles of multiplying discipleship.

**C.** Include evangelism and outreach to un-churched couples.

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## HOW TO START, GROW, AND SUSTAIN A FAMILYLIFE SMALL-GROUP MINISTRY

### Ideas to Consider

**1. Do everything with a "Let us help you help others" mindset.**

- Promote ownership by the individual couples who are ministering to other couples with FamilyLife studies.
- Resource and encourage couples of vision, passion, and capacity. Look for ways to be useful to them.

**2. Have a transferable method for training FamilyLife small-group leaders.**

- Facilitates growth and expansion.
- Helps you succeed at and replicate the right thing.

**3. Set clear expectations for follow-up.**

- Make follow-up assignments before the training occurs.
- Contact all couples with a high or very high interest in leading a group or being in a group.
- Follow up before the motivation and enthusiasm begin to fail. Establish your own acceptable follow-up time expectations.

#### **4. Plan for a growing number of groups each month.**

- Ask: How many FamilyLife Small-Group Leader Trainings will be needed to support that growth?
- Set goals for new groups.
- Schedule new Leader Trainings. When, Where, and Who.
- Assume monthly meetings for planning, organizing, training, and prayer.

#### **5. Challenge training participants to do something simple and specific.**

- Help training participants move from “good idea” to “action.”
- Have FamilyLife studies for sale at training events.

#### **6. Take good care of your small-group leaders.**

- Schedule special events to encourage current leaders (ice cream socials, marriage messages).
- Organize rallies for leaders and their guests to build momentum and enthusiasm.
- Maintain a database of leaders.

#### **7. Create a Great Commission mindset.**

- Constantly make the connection between multiplication and the Great Commission. This is one of the greatest contributions of Cru.
- Challenge leaders to prepare potential leaders within a group to start and lead their own groups.

#### **8. Adopt a strategy of events and small groups working together.**

- Small groups are the foundation of building ministries.
- Events cast a net to get other people involved.
- Use events to minister to couples and invite them to get involved in ministering to others with small groups.
- Use the small-group network to promote events, challenging members to invite friends.
- Train new small-group leaders shortly before marriage events so couples who go to the events will have new small groups ready for them to join right away.

#### **9. Work with and through local churches.**

- Churches represent a huge pool of untapped resources.
- Churches often do not have marriage ministries because they do not have the resources or a plan. That is where FamilyLife can help. Expose them to FamilyLife resources and training.
- Encourage churches to start marriage ministries, building on a foundation of FamilyLife materials. Offer to train their leaders.
- Ministering to the marriages of pastors and their wives can open doors for additional ministry opportunities.
- Encourage lay leaders to form small marriage ministry teams within their churches.

## 10. Consider using FamilyLife studies as a discipleship tool for your ministry to professionals and business leaders.

- Marriage and family rank very high among their felt needs.
- Small groups helps couples spend time together, grow together as a couple, and grow together in the Lord.

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### A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT PASTORS LEADING FAMILYLIFE GROUPS

FamilyLife encourages anyone who feels led by God to lead a FamilyLife group. After all, FamilyLife exists to provide proven biblical solutions for your marriage and family, and help you as you help others. And FamilyLife Couples Studies are some of the most important resources FamilyLife has that can help you help others.

FamilyLife Couples Studies are designed for lay couples to use, but that does not exclude pastors from leading groups. However, there are a few realities and challenges to be aware of. Pastors should be aware of these realities and be ready to address them, especially if they are leading a group in their own church.

#### REALITY 1

Small-group leaders are to be facilitators, not teachers. They are to read a question from the manual, guide the discussion, and manage the time. This can be a challenge with pastors. Teaching is a major responsibility for most pastors; hopefully it is an area of gifting for them. And it may be a challenge for them to step out of the teaching role. So their propensity to teach may put them at a disadvantage in leading a group.

#### REALITY 2

Small-group leaders must create an environment where the couples in the group feel safe sharing about the successes and challenges in their own marriages. The leader couple should set an example of being transparent and vulnerable with their group. This makes the group feel that nobody's marriage is perfect. Everybody experiences challenges. And it makes the other couples feel safe sharing about their own marriages. Pastors may be unwilling to have this level of transparency and vulnerability, especially if they are leading a group of their own congregation. Some pastors may be willing to do this, but many other pastors may find this to be too risky. This may put them at a disadvantage in leading a group.

#### REALITY 3

Small-group leaders must get a group discussion going. Again, pastors may be at a disadvantage. With a pastor leading (or even participating in) a group, the other couples in the group may be reluctant to respond to questions for fear of getting the answer wrong. This is perhaps especially true with the questions about what Scripture passages mean and how they apply to a marriage.

Similarly, group participants may be reluctant to discuss challenges they are facing in their marriage. It is hard enough to admit these things to others. It is perhaps even more challenging for group participants to reveal such things in front of their pastor! A pastor's presence may actually discourage group discussion.

So these are three realities that make it extra challenging for a pastor to lead a FamilyLife study. BUT there are other realities that present a tremendous opportunity for pastors. The realities are:



Pastors need help in their marriages just as much as anybody else, and FamilyLife groups can be a huge blessing for them.



Pastors often have difficulty balancing their ministry and their marriage. So they come home from "work" tired and exhausted with little energy left for home. They need encouragement.



Pastors often feel isolated, having no one they can turn to in confidence for support, encouragement, counsel, and prayer. And who better to turn to than their own peers?

There may be a tremendous opportunity for pastors to form and lead FamilyLife groups with other pastors. They may be able to be open and transparent with their peers in a way that they cannot be with those in their own congregations. This could create a safe place for pastors to get the encouragement they need, strengthen their marriages, and develop healthy relationships with other pastors in their community.

Some communities have pastors' consortiums or associations where pastors are already meeting regularly with other pastors. If these are present in your locale, it may be strategic to introduce and train some of these consortium or association leaders in FamilyLife strategies and encourage them to form small groups with the pastoral couples they already meet with.







to experience  
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# VIDEO FORMATS

## PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the video resources (Art of Marriage, Art of Parenting, Stepping Up, and Vertical Marriage) that are available for use in a small-group setting.



## OVERVIEW

This session describes FamilyLife's video resources that can be used in a small-group setting.

## THE ART OF MARRIAGE

Making marriage work is a divinely inspired art form. That's why FamilyLife created The Art of Marriage. Biblical content and practical applications give couples a fresh perspective on married life that has proven to have a significant impact on marriages.

The six-week study weaves together expert teaching, real-life stories, humorous vignettes, man-on-the-street interviews, and much more to portray both the challenges and the beauty of God's design.



## THE ART OF PARENTING

Over the years, we have found that life change happens best in community. With that in mind, we created FamilyLife's Art of Parenting™ Small Group Series. This 8-session, video-based study is designed to not only help parents find new ways to integrate faith into everyday parenting moments, but also to create an environment where moms and dads can shoulder burdens together, celebrate breakthroughs, and relate to one another's day-to-day parenting journey.



As a group leader, you will be equipped with all the tools you need to guide parents in making faith core to their parenting with intentional, biblical instruction and Christ-centered plans that “aim children’s hearts toward God.” Parents will finish the study with renewed confidence in parenting, fresh insights on parenting children of different ages, and a parenting plan unique to each child’s personality and gifts.

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## STEPPING UP

Men today are in a battle without bullets or bombs, but a battle all the same. It’s a fight for our families and our future. Facing the battles of life demands courage, and courage is the ability to do the hard thing in every circumstance, despite the cost. That’s the message of Stepping Up. In a world where too many men are shrinking back, Stepping Up gives men the vision and the tools to live godly, courageous lives.



## **VERTICAL MARRIAGE**

A more vibrant marriage is possible when it's built on a foundation of active faith. Join Dave and Ann Wilson on this five-week journey with humor-filled and relatable video sessions, dynamic group discussion, and intentional couple's connection. Vertical Marriage will help your small-group members learn the secret to a healthy marriage—if the vertical relationship with God is put first, the horizontal relationship between spouses will follow.



# Global Outreach

## TRAINING MANUALS



Global Outreach Strategies and Resources (GOSAR): This manual provides an overview of Global Outreach's FamilyLife strategy and is the foundational training document for developing an international FamilyLife ministry.

The following how-to manuals build upon the strategies and resources given in the GOSAR:

