



Small Group Format

Small groups are the life blood of any oral strategy. Among oral people everything is done in community. These communities are made up of networks of people, such as families, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The most effective way to reach people is to look for an opportunity to enter into one of these networks of people and form a small group. Once the group is formed there are 11 things that will give them life and make them multiply.

First Third

- 1. Pastoral Care** *(Take time to greet the group and find out how they are doing. Then pray for the group and specifically for those who have shared needs, concerns, or praises.)*
- 2. Worship** *(Worship is something far bigger than what we do when we are together. It includes how we live our lives to bring honor to God by declaring His worth. Worship is anything that we do that proclaims God's greatness and value to each other and the world. When you worship as a group you can use songs, share a poem, quote scripture, or share testimonies of God's greatness.)*
- 3. Loving Accountability *** *(This is a time to see how your group is doing with their commitments to do something as the result of what they learned in a story, or a commitment to tell a story to someone. Take time to ask each person who made a commitment to share how they are doing with keeping their commitments. This should be an encouraging time, not a time to cause shame. This is also a time for the group to learn from each other as they tell what happened, both through successes and failures. If they have not met their commitments, ask them, **'How can we help you to keep your commitment?'**)*
- 4. Vision Casting *** *(This is a time to help your group get a vision where they see the potential of who they are and can become in Christ (BEING) and what God wants to do through them (DOING). You want them to catch the vision for God to develop them in Christ-likeness and to use them for His purposes. Vision casting should only take three to five minutes. This can be done through sharing personal stories or stories from others that will help lead your group to see the vision you are casting. You can also tell made-up stories, like Jesus' parables, that communicate the vision you are casting.)*

Second Third

- 5. Tell the Story** *(Begin your story telling session by asking someone in your group to tell the previous story. This will remind the group of what happened before the story that you are about to tell. After someone tells the previous story, begin your story with a transition from the previous story to today's story, and then say, **'This is a story from God's Word,'** and tell the story. Be sure to always conclude your story by saying, **'This is the end of this story from God's Word.'** After you finish telling the story ask the group, **'Can someone tell this story? We will help you if you get stuck.'** If no one is willing to tell the story, ask them if they would like for you to re-tell the story. Then tell the story again. It is common for you to have to tell the story 2 or 3 times before someone will be willing to re-tell the story.*

6. Practice the Story * (If people in your group are still reluctant to tell the story, lead the group through the story by asking the group the question, **'What happened first?'** Then when that person gets stuck, ask the group, **'Someone else tell me what happened next?'** If they miss something, ask, **'What happened before that?'** If someone tells the story inaccurately, ask, **'Is that how I told this story?'**, or **'Is that in the story?'** When you finish leading the group through the story, ask, **'Who can tell this story?'** After several people tell the story on their own, break the group into groups of 2 people and ask each person to tell the story to the other person in their small group. Make sure that you allow enough time for everyone to tell the story.)

Final Third

7. Discuss the Story (Facilitate the discussion by asking the questions below. Make sure that everything that is discussed, is from this story or previous stories. It is not allowed for you or anyone in the group to discuss or share anything that is not from this story or previous stories that have been told in this group. If someone tries to discuss or share something outside the story, say, **'Is that in our story?'** If someone in the group ask you a question, always answer the question by saying, **'What does this story tell us about what you asked?'** or **'Is there something in a previous story that can answer your question?'** If this question cannot be answered by any of the stories that have been told in this group, you may say, **'These stories do not give us an answer. Maybe a future story will answer this question.'**) Here are the questions to use for group discussion:

- a. What did you like from this story? (This question is about what happened in the story.)
- a. What did you not like or find confusing from this story? (This question is about what happened in the story.)
- b. What did you learn about God and His character from this story?
- c. What did you learn about man and his character from this story?

8. Set Goals and pray for each other *

- a. Ask the group to pray and ask God: **'Show me what I should do because of what I learned in this story.'** (Ask the group to pray silently)(Allow the group plenty of time to truly seek God in prayer.)
- b. (Then ask) **What did God tell you to do because of what you learned in this story?** (You or someone in the group pray for each person separately when they make a commitment to do something.)
- c. **Pray and ask God: 'Who should I tell this story to?'** (Ask the group to pray silently)(Allow the group plenty of time to truly seek God in prayer.)
- d. (Then ask) **Who has God asked you to tell this story to and when will you do it?** (You or someone in the group pray for each person separately when they make a commitment to tell the story with someone.)

9. Practice other things (If needed, give the group time to practice anything else that you have asked them to do. For example, you may want them to practice telling their own personal testimony.)

10. Practice the story (Ask the group to break up into small groups of 2 and tell the story to each other again.)

11. Pray (Close your time together by you or someone in your group praying.)

* These are four essential parts of the small group that must take place every meeting to have a successful group that reproduces. All parts are important. But the goal is to build multiplying generations of group leaders.