

TMC Small Group Leader's Training

26 Jan 2008

Agenda

- **Part 1: SG lifecycle**
 - Why a lifecycle?
 - Stages & Strategies
 - Points to consider
- **Break**
- **Part 2: “Where do I see my group?”**
 - Personal reflection
 - Sharing & Prayer

Why a lifecycle?

- **Common questions**
 - How do I help my SG to grow?
 - What are the signs that my SG is growing?
 - Why is my SG experiencing certain changes?
- **A lifecycle provides a roadmap for growth that leaders can navigate**
 - Helps us understand and anticipate the different phases that groups will go through
 - Helps us understand changes in group dynamics and highlight what strategies can be employed at each phase
- **Many similar models out there – this is just one.**
 - All seek to cultivate a culture of community and outreach that results in growth and multiplication.

A SG lifecycle

STAGE ONE

BIRTH

This is the time in which group members forge relationships. This group will spend more time getting to know one another and finding their place in the group.

STAGE TWO

TRANSITION

Here the group begins to care for one another and work through conflicts and differences as they seek to apply what they learn through Bible study, worship and prayer.

STAGE FOUR

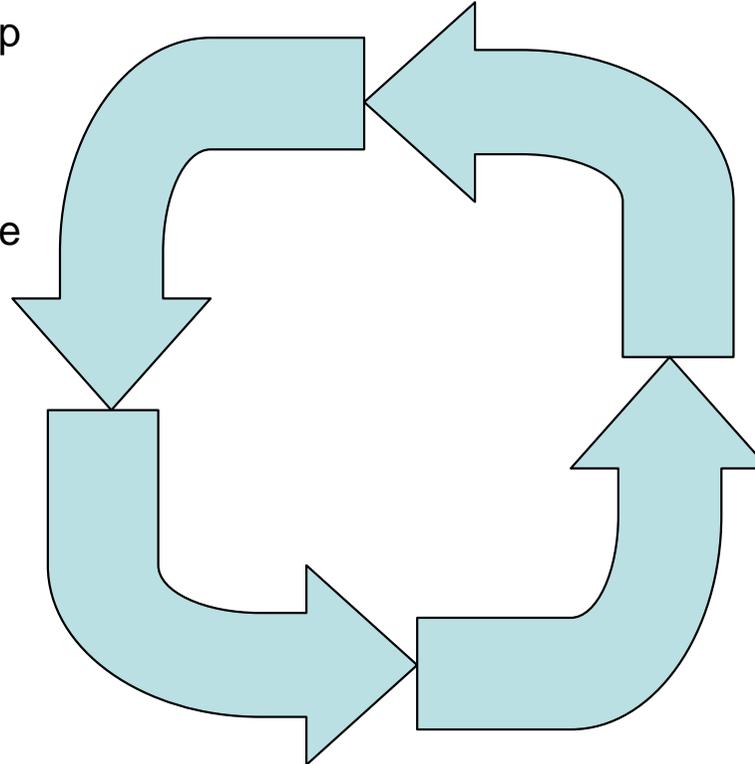
MULTIPLY

The group has grown and seeks to multiply. Members pray about their involvement in new groups. The “new” groups begin the life cycle again with the Birth stage.

STAGE THREE

COMMUNITY

The group is united and has established trust. They pursue deeper accountability and encourage one another to serve and reach out to others.



Stage 1 - Birth

- **Questioning**
 - “Do I belong to this group?”
 - “Will I be accepted or rejected here?”
 - “What will the meetings be like?”
 - “What commitments will the group ask me to make?”
- **Group dynamics**
 - Relationships are relatively superficial. Minimal self-disclosure.
 - Everything and everyone is nice at this stage. Much “small talk”
 - Members look for common ground.
- **Strategies**
 - Allow sufficient time for personal sharing and for members to get to know one another.
 - Help members establish trust by creating a climate that respects the opinions and feelings of members
 - Affirm member’s participation and contributions

Stage 2 - Transition

- **Questioning**

- “Will the group reject me if I share what I really feel?”
- “Will I look foolish if I am honest?”
- “Why are we focusing on these things?”
- “Who am I in this group?”

- **Group dynamics**

- Greater self-disclosure
- Members struggling to stay ‘safe’ while wanting to risk being involved
- Differences and conflicts may start to surface as members want to have more say and influence

- **Strategies**

- Allow members to express themselves more and leader can talk less
- Address and facilitate the working out of conflicts in constructive ways
- Assign responsibilities to core members
- Jointly evaluate the group with members and develop focus/goals

Stage 3 - Community

- **Questioning**

- “What can we do for others – the church/the lost?”

- **Group dynamics**

- A “we-ness” and cohesiveness is present, group becomes more stable
- Members are committed to one another and look out for one another without the leader’s prompting. Absentees are missed
- Feedback is given freely and accepted without defensiveness

- **Strategies**

- Build on friendships by encouraging deeper accountability
- Challenge the members to exercise their gifts in service or ministry
- Encourage members in personal outreach to invite friends to the group
- Evaluate potential leaders in preparation for multiplication

Stage 4 - Multiply

- **Questioning**

- “How can we continue and share this blessing with others?”

- **Group dynamics**

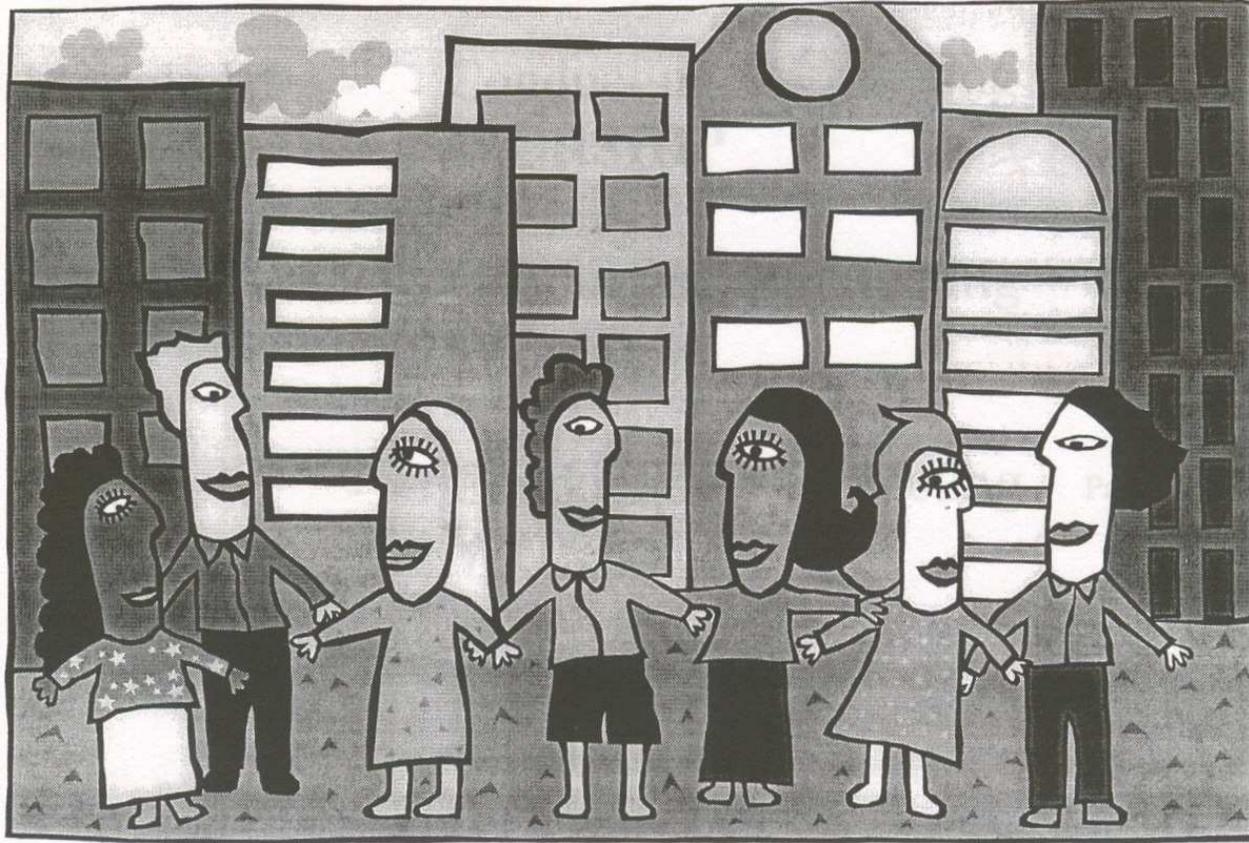
- The group size has grown sufficiently large (>14) such that it becomes difficult to experience community. However most may not raise this issue as they are already comfortable with the group.
- Members on the fringe or new members may be unintentionally left out due to the size of the group and the strong relationships already forged within the core members.

- **Strategies**

- Nurture potential leaders to assume a leadership role in the group
- Allow enough lead time to talk about and prepare the group for multiplication

Other points to consider

- **Time Frame : “No more room” syndrome**
 - No ‘best’ timeframe for each stage.
 - Goal is not to complete in the shortest time.
 - Groups that run too long should be aware of the “[No more room](#)” syndrome
- **Evaluation**
 - Having an annual [evaluation](#) within the group is an useful exercise
 - To assess the state of the group through open sharing and feedback.
 - To reflect on how the group has changed
 - For leaders and members to mutually encourage one another
 - Opportunity for the leader to share and set direction and focus for the year ahead
 - More effective when group has been together for at least a year and a level of trust has been established



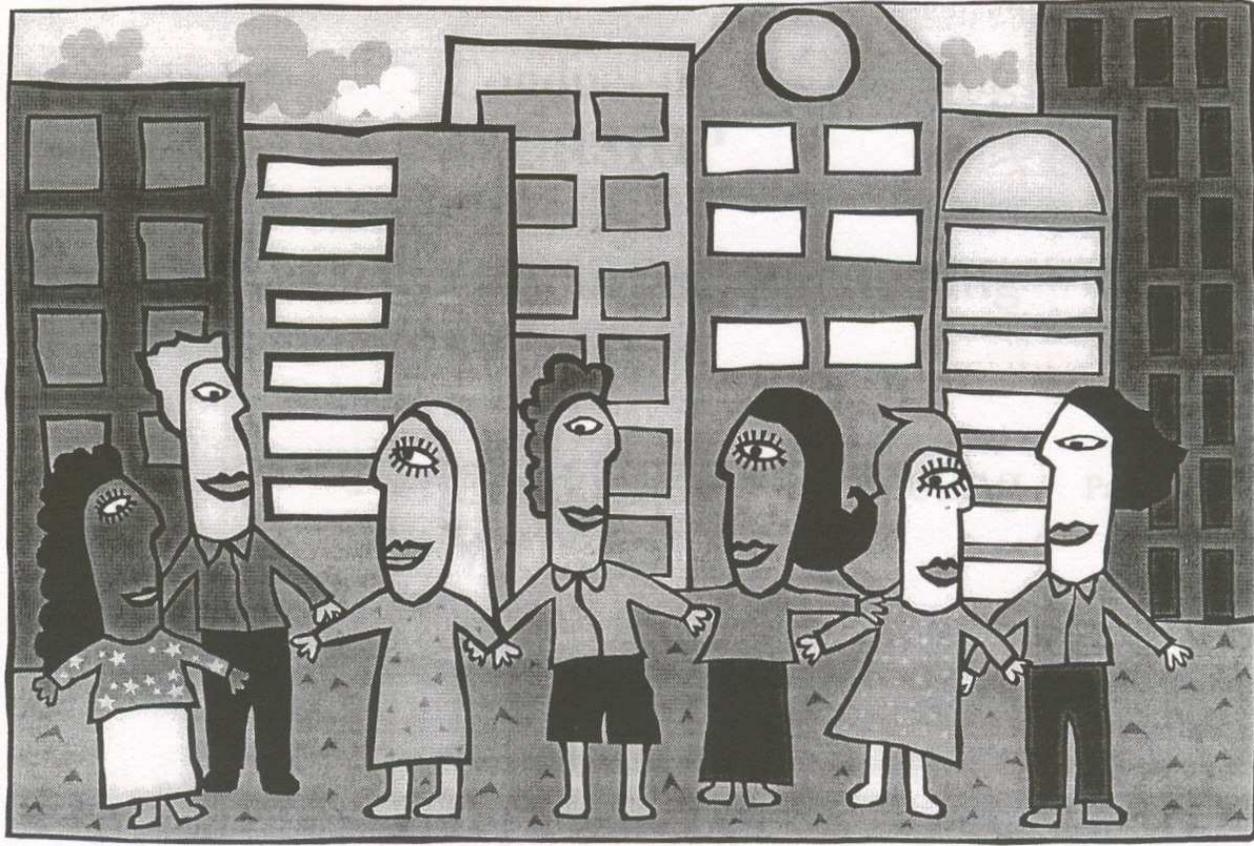
BREAK

“Where do I see my group?”

Personal Evaluation

- Which stage of the lifecycle do you envision your group to be in?
- How is your group growing? Are there issues preventing it?
- What could you do, as a leader, to address some of these issues?
- How can you encourage your group to grow in the coming year?

In groups, share with the others which stage you feel your group is at. Also share some of your current challenges so that you can pray for each other.



END



“No More Room”?

- NO MORE physical room
- NO MORE emotional room
- NO MORE safe room
- NO MORE relationship room
- NO MORE communication room
- NO MORE leadership room
- Group too large for home setting
- Group full of its own emotional needs
- Group conflicts keep new members from feeling safe
- Fear that new people will detract from existing relationships
- Group too large for effective communication
- Leaders are not able to nurture new leaders



Sample Evaluation questions

1. Reflect on the past year, what we've done and been through as a SG. What are some of things you want to give thanks for?
2. How would you describe how the SG has changed over the past year?
3. What are the things we could do more or less of? This can be in terms of format of the meetings, materials used etc.
4. In what areas do you feel we can serve the church as a group, taking into account our profile and gifts?
5. How do you hope to see the group grow in the coming year?