

# The Celebration Huddle 2010

## To recognize and encourage our small group leaders



### What is a small group win? What is success for your small group?

We have a lot to celebrate as small group leaders. 2009 was a good year for community life at ACC. In the past year we have moved from identifying 190 adults in small groups to 350 adults. We have moved from 21 identified small groups to 32 identified groups.

During our fall series, .COMmunity 75 people moved into small groups.

Thank you for your commitment to helping people experience life together in your group. Thanks for helping people experience God's Word together, service together, prayer together. You guys are doing a great job and we need to celebrate that together.

We need to celebrate:

What are the successes you should celebrate in your group? What should you get excited about each week during your group? There are three things that we celebrate in our groups:

#### 1. Prayer (person holding a cell phone)

What happens when we pray together?

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO US THROUGH PRAYER.

GOD INVITES US TO BRING OUR BURDENS AND NEEDS TO HIM IN PRAYER.

GOD RESPONDS TO THE PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE.

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results" (James 5:16)

GOD IMPARTS WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGH PRAYER.

GOD EXERCISES HIS AUTHORITY AND ABILITY TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE.

GOD EXTENDS HIS POWER TO US THROUGH PRAYER SO THAT WE MAY RESIST TEMPTATION.

"Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you." (Matthew 26:41)

#### 2. Fellowship (person wearing big name tag)

What are some simple ways fellowship happens in your group?

PEOPLE KNOW OTHER PEOPLE (Names, kids, jobs, etc.)

WE LAUGH TOGETHER, WE DEBATE TOGETHER, WE SHARE SADNESS TOGETHER

WE CARRY EACH OTHER

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

BUILD NEW SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS

#### 3. Christian Formation (person holding a potted plant)

What are ways we grow together in our groups?

READING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

"It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

TELLING THE TRUTH TO ONE ANOTHER

IDENTIFYING GIFTS IN EACH OTHER

CHALLENGING WRONG UNDERSTANDINGS OF GOD'S WAYS

GROWING IN THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – love, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, self-control

These are the “wins” in our small groups. Every time you help people pray together, grow in friendship with one another, encounter God’s Word together – it is time to celebrate!

## Why Coaches?

Another thing we can celebrate from 2009 is the building of a coach team. As small group leaders, we each need a coach.

### 1. Prayer – testimony from John/Elaine Bubar

Coaches pray for group leaders and their small group

Prayer changes things and small group leaders need to know that someone is praying for them

### 2. Trouble Shooting – testimony from Martha

Coaches lead small groups as well and understand the challenges and problems group leaders face

Coaches bring an outside perspective to the challenge and can help brainstorm ideas to bring resolution

### 3. Encouragement – testimony from Jenny

Coaches want to encourage small group leaders and remind them that what they do matters

The Coach team plans ways to encourage group leaders every year, through notes, gifts and gatherings

You need a coach, and your coach needs you.

Your coach can’t do their job if you don’t respond to them, if you don’t let them know what your needs are and how your group is doing. Now we know for some of you, things are going fine and you don’t have any real concerns about your group right now – that is great. You might just need to know that when something does go south, there is someone to walk with you through that.

The plan right now is to connect with your coach twice a year, once in the fall and once in the Spring for a Small Group Leaders huddle.

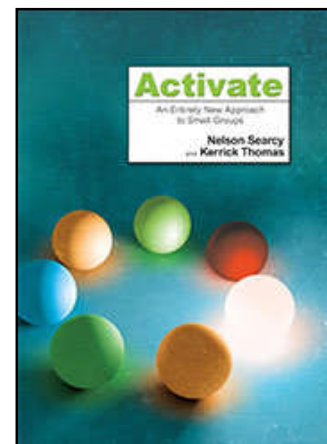
## Fun Awards

- Multiplication Award: Martha/Marie/Pam
- Most Flexible Group: Kinsey/Katie’s Exercise and Study
- Most on Par: Paul’s group that meets at Indian Tree Golf
- Newest Group: Dave/Jen Cannon
- Sunrise Award: Linda Thompson’s group, starts at 7 AM

## Future Thinking – Activate Book

Thank you for taking on new things in the last year-and-a-half:

1. Small Group Covenant
2. Training sessions in 2009
3. Coaches



Trying to get a clearer picture of our church, found that even though we average around 800 adults each Sunday, we actually have around 1300 adults coming to our church in a given month.

That means our goals for the number involved in small groups needs to change. With the potential of 1300 adults in group life we would love to see half of them connecting by next year. That means an increase of 300 or more people; it means an additional 20 groups and 20 leaders.

This desire to see more adults experiencing life together has caused our coach team to ask some new questions and seek out some new ideas of how to facilitate our small groups so they have a greater opportunity to grow. We have started to read this book: *Activate*, by a Pastor and Small group leader at a church in New York. The book begins with 12 Big Ideas and I want to share three of those ideas that have most captured the imaginations of the coach team.

### **Big Idea #1: Think friends, not intimacy**

Conventional Wisdom – Small groups are a place where intimate relationships are formed

Reality – Small groups are a place where new friendships are formed

Four Spaces:

- Public Space: Sunday morning worship (more than 20)
- Social Space: Small Group (8-20)
- Personal Space: Personal Conversations (5-7)
- Intimate Space: One-on-One

Our groups need to be safe places to meet new people, make friends, grow in faith, fun.

As leaders we don't need to feel the pressure to create intimate friendships among our group members – we need to let that happen naturally. What we do want is a place where people have the opportunity to find those kinds of friendships.

If our goal is spiritual friendships and not intimacy, then we don't need to close groups for 18 months to 2 years in order to go deep relationally. Relational depth is not the goal, spiritual depth is.

**What are the differences between relational depth and spiritual depth?**

### **Big Idea #4: Short-Term vs Long-Term groups**

Conventional Wisdom – Small groups should last anywhere from 18 months to eternity

Reality – The ideal length for a small group is 10 to 12 weeks

This is the most revolutionary idea from the book. If we decide to pursue this concept and make it a reality at ACC, it will really change things.

Why would we want to move to three short 10-12 week sessions each year for our small groups:

- Our community follows a calendar dictated by the educational system.
- People grow over short periods of time (stress). Then they need to rest (release). After the period of rest, they can grow again (stress)... and the growth cycle continues.
- Clear beginning and end dates (leader and group members are more likely to sign-up)
- More group options, new topics
- Easier for people to get into a group when all groups start at the same time.
- Fight stagnation

What might this look like?

Fall Session (½ Sept – ½ Nov), Winter Session (½ Jan – ½ March), Summer Session (½ May - ½ July)

Sign-ups take place for five weeks before groups launch, sign-up around 20 adults per group (hope 15 make the 10 week commitment), groups meet for 10 weeks, every week, and then move into a 6 week break. At the last group meeting before the break your existing group members get to sign-up for the next session.

**Which reason for moving to short-term groups would be most helpful from your perspective?**

## **Big Idea #12: Leader Multiplication not Group Multiplication**

Conventional Wisdom – The best way to increase the number of small groups in a church is to split existing groups.

Reality – Through the semester-based system and the practice of apprenticing, you can multiply groups naturally by multiplying leaders.



Raise up, don't split up

**What makes identifying apprentice leaders difficult for you?**

I want to invite you to discuss and share feedback with your coaches. We will invite all of the groups to engage some of these new ideas with us, probably by next fall, but we realize some of you might not want to take them on.

## **Table Time – Sharing and Prayer with you Small Group Leader Huddle**

1. What has been going well so far this season?
2. What is the most challenging thing for you and your group?
3. How can we be praying for you?