Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (MBCC) Small Group

Facilitator Handbook:

Developed for Facilitators of Small Cell Groups at

Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church

by

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Go in Search of Your People[2]

Love Them;

Learn from Them;

Plan with Them;

Serve Them.

Begin with what They have;

Build on what They know.

But of the best leaders

when their task is accomplished,

their work is done,

The people all remark:

"We have done it ourselves."

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[2] Source: http://www.community4me.com/oldchineseverse.html, by an unknown Chinese poet

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Part I

Rationale for Small Group Facilitator Training Seminars

What is the Church?

The Greek word "ekklesia (ek-klay-see'-ah) means a called out assembly, an assembly of people. When used in a biblical sense, it means the believers are a people called out of the world to be the praise and glory of God (See Ephesians 1)[3]. When Christ died, those who are "in Christ" (the saved) died with him. The body of Christ on the cross is therefore the body in which the Church is united and redeemed (See Ephesians 2:16).

What is the Living Church?

When Christ rose from death and the grave, the church rose with him (See Ephesians 2: 1-10). Jesus is alive and he is the God of the living and not the God of the dead (See Matthew 22:32).

What is the Local Church?

The local church is a local body of believers, e.g. Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (MBCC) (See Acts 13:1; 18:22; Romans 16:3, 5; I Corinthians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1 and Philemon 2).

What is the Great Commandment to the Church?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophet (See Matt. 22:37-40).

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[3] The above scriptures were taken from the Kings James Version (KJV) of the Bible.

What is the Great Commission to the Church?

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (See Matthew 28: 19-20).

How did the Early Believers Fellowship?

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (See Acts 2: 42-47).

What is the Five-Fold Purpose of the Church According to the Purpose Driven Church?

Remember **E**very **D**ay **W**e **M**ust **F**orgive[4]: Evangelism, Discipleship, Worship, Mission and Fellowship

What is a Cell or Community Group?

The cell group model is the learning environment of choice. A cell group is defined as a gathering of 10 to 12 persons who are led by a leader who is connected to a coach or pastor for nurture and support, and which is involved in caring, learning, doing, and deciding. Cells give the church its life because it is through the cell that persons are connected to the larger and local church life. Consequently, it is not unusual for cells to grow and bud as they mature their members (servants). Thus, it is through the cell that the church can come alive.

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[4] Adopted from Dr. Gene Lawson's PowerPoint Presentation, MBCC, September 4, 2004

The Purpose and Importance of Using the Cell Group Model[5]

The importance of using the Cell Group Model as the paradigm from which the *Peace Maker* didactic issues form is to gear and orientate the congregation and the church's pedagogical element toward a larger concept of Cell Church Ministry. It is MBCC's intent to move the church from a *Teaching Oriented Sunday School* (*TOSS*) model of Christian Education to a *Growth Oriented Sunday School* (*GOSS*) model. The TOSS model prides itself on the teacher being the fountain of knowledge. However, a GOSS oriented model uses facilitation as its primary method of "creating "learning. Facilitation empowers the student in that the facilitator is more like a crossing guard who directs the traffic or flow of the class toward prescribed "avenues of learning." A facilitator does not know everything, but helps others to seek and find the truth of God's Word for themselves.

Facilitator training is necessary for the following reasons: A highly participative and trained facilitator helps participants to (a) stay on task and focused until the dissolution of the group, (b) work creatively and productively together, (c) achieve group outcomes faster, (d) comprehend and or give clear, concise directions for group activities and participation, (e) distinguish process from content in a group session, and (f) create a non-threatening environment that fosters learning, trust, acceptance of others and spiritual growth.

Benefits of a Cell Ministry to Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church

The local MBCC church congregation believes that cell ministry is vital to its spiritual growth in that it will help (a) increase a sense of community, (b) identify and meets need of members, (c) evangelize friends and family members, (d) establish and nurture seeds of peace, holiness and unity, (e) provide additional opportunities for fellowship, study and learning, (f), create a safe place for sharing and personal discovery, (g) provide a place for discovering and

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[5] Adopted from Dr. Gene Lawson's PowerPoint Presentation, MBCC, September 4, 2004

living out our purpose for service, (h) become a place to seek God for miracles in the lives of

each person and or family, (i) provide a place of worship and fellowship located close to

member's home, (j) take the church out of the four walls of the building, and (k) become a place

to create and multiply leaders[6].

<div align="center">Purpose of Facilitator Training Seminar</div>

<div align="center">*Description*</div>

- This workshop is designed to introduce participants to essential principles of facilitation

  applicable to small group discussions, incorporating the Growth-Oriented Sunday School

  (GOSS) model.

<div align="center">*Goal*</div>

- To provide participants with didactically significant information derived from

  educational research and best-practice applications, relevant to the process of effective

  group facilitation.

<div align="center">*Objectives*</div>

- Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

  o Discuss the importance of recognizing developing group dynamics within the

    context of the setting;

  o Identify and employ appropriate strategies for averting and/or managing conflict

    within a group setting;

  o Describe the facilitator's role in guiding and/or contributing to small group

    discussion;

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[6] MBCC Handout, September 5, 2004

- o Recognize potentially obstructive behaviors as revealed and demonstrate methods for managing adverse behaviors;

- o Utilize course content to develop an individualized approach to facilitating small group discussion; and

- o Evaluate group's interaction and or needs, appropriately referring to pastoral staff and or spiritual officers, as indicated.

Part I I

Group Dynamics

How do groups form and what are group dynamics? This section addresses these and other pertinent questions relating to the formation of groups and group dynamics.

Purpose of Small Cell Ministry Groups

Small Cell Ministry groups are a way to help people think about their lives spiritually through the process of sharing with others their thoughts and experiences. It is one method of sharing the gospel and being accountable to the local body of Christ. The results are threefold: The unsaved are led to Christ, participants will grow spiritually and in their understanding of what is personally meaningful, and at the same time build a caring community[7].

Developmental Sequence of a Small Group

Process is the key for the successful formation of a small group and healthy group dynamics. Developing into a "Performing" group (See below) is a process. Overlooking and or being unaware of this process may cause one to become disillusioned with the group.   Groups exist on two levels: *task* and *interpersonal*. The task level entails what the group is trying to do and the interpersonal level entails how group members communicate and function while going about accomplishing the task. Groups take time to develop. How long is impossible to specify; it depends on size, frequency of interaction, structural features, and so on.

However, one of the best-known bits of literature on groups is Tuckman's original model of group development which has four stages.[8] The diagram below shows this process not as a linear sequence, but as a cycle, after the initial forming. Actually, it is not even a cycle, which may suggests that the group can go from any of the three later stages to either of the others.

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[7] Adapted from Small Group Ministry Resource Book for Members of The First Unitarian Society in Newton
[8] Source: http://www.dmu.ac.uk/~jamesa/teaching/group_development.htm
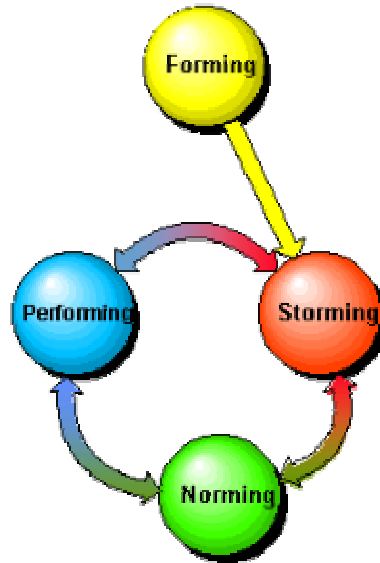
The four stages are delineated as follows:[9] (a) *Forming*: The group is forming. People

are just coming together around a topic or problem, and they are beginning to get used to each

other; (b) *Storming*: As group members begin testing each other, conflict can develop. The

individuals spend time feeling each other out, looking for common ground and coping with

disagreements; (c) *Norming*: The individuals set up expected behaviors of sharing and trusting.

They experience belongingness within the group. They might begin to change their minds as

they interact with other group members. Some groups never get to this stage (See *Remember the*

Titans); and (d) *Performing*: The group experiences unity. Individuals work effectively as

individuals, in subgroups, and in large groups. Group satisfaction is high. Problem solving is

marked by innovation and experimentation. This is the stage groups strive for, but not all groups

reach. Following are issues (not all are statements, some are posed as questions) that could be

occurring at each stage of the group's formation:[10]

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[9] Adaptation of Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. Psychological Bulletin, 63, 384-399, and Tuckman, B. & Jensen, M. (1977). Stages of Small Group Development.
[10] Source: http://www.perfectionlearning.com/ac/ac.ext.chap13.pdf

Forming		
Maintenance		Tasks
- How do I fit in? - What do these people expect from me? - What will these people think of me? - Will my contribution be important? - Are these people friendly? - How should I act? - Are there people here I know?		- What are we going to do? - How much time do we have? - Do I have any special knowledge about this? - Is this going to be a very formal process? - Who is the leader?
Storming		
- How do I express my opinion in an acceptable way? - How should I voice disagreement? - Do the others feel as I do? - Do I have a friend or ally in the group? - Should I say anything?		- What exactly is the issue? - Who has the skills we need to address the issue? - How do we organize our process? - Do I agree with the group majority?
Norming		
- I trust these people. - We have things in common. - I feel comfortable in this group. - I like these people. - I can take risks with these people. - These people trust me. - They will tell me what they feel.		- Everyone is contributing. - These people will share information freely. - I can rely on these people to do their parts. - These people are competent, and they feel I am competent. - We are creative. - We can solve this problem.

Performing		
• I'll be sad when this group no longer meets. • At least some of us will stay in touch after the job is done. • These people help me feel better about myself.		• This group is doing great work. • We are efficient. • We are confident in approaching the problem. • We are a team.

Types of Behavior You May Observer and or Encounter among Group Members

Types of Behaviors I Observed During Small Cell Group Sessions	Check When You Observe These Behaviors
Encourager -- Friendly and responsive to others, offers praise, accepts other's points of view.	
Mediator -- Mediates differences, relieves tension in conflict situations, gets people to explore their differences.	
Compromiser -- When his or her own idea is involved in a conflict, offers compromise and tries to maintain group cohesion.	
Expresses Group Feelings -- Senses the feeling or mood of the group, others, and self; and shares with the group.	
Gatekeeper -- Keeps communication open, suggests ways to share information with others.	
Initiator -- Proposes tasks or goals, suggests ways to solve problems.	
Information or Opinion Giver -- Offers facts, states beliefs or opinions.	
Information or Opinion Seeker -- Asks for facts, ideas, opinions or suggestions.	
Elaborator -- Interprets ideas or suggestions, clears up confusion, gives examples.	
Coordinator -- Pulls together related suggestions, offers conclusions for the group to accept or reject.	
Diagnostician -- Helps the group to identify where problems are occurring.	
Standard Setter -- Helps the group define standards, what's expected, what's acceptable	
Follower -- Goes along with whatever is being proposed, agreeable to what the group wants.	
Nay Sayers – Critical and basically a negative influence in the group	

* Add additional behaviors observed and share them at subsequent Facilitator Training sessions.

Chart the Development of Your Small Cell Group

Chart the Development of Your Cell Group		
Observed Characteristics	Check Observed Behavior(s)	Indicate Stage of Group Development
• Do I have a friend or ally in the group? • Do the others feel as I do? • How do I express my opinion in an acceptable way? • How should I voice disagreement? • Should I say anything?		
• Are there people here I know? • Are these people friendly? • How do I fit in? • How should I act? • What do these people expect from me? • What will these people think of me? • Will my contribution be important?		
• I can take risks with these people. • I feel comfortable in this group. • I like these people. • I trust these people. • These people trust me. • They will tell me what they feel. • We have things in common.		
• At least some of us will stay in touch after the job is done. • I'll be sad when this group no longer meets. • These people help me feel better about myself.		
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* Add additional behaviors that you observe and categorize them. Ask other group members to add to the list.

The Importance of Storming[11]

The most important insight of the model is the recognition of the Storming phase: (a) It may not always be obvious, but it happens in all groups, (b) It is inevitable and it cannot be structured out of existence, (c) Within groups, however, it may need to be contained; particularly because the most obvious role to be tested is that of the teacher and or the facilitator. If the teacher/facilitator fails whatever test the group sets, (e.g., disciplinary, out-of-role questioning, response to members, not preparing for the group) group members can get very confused and not know where to look for leadership. One may not want to "lead" or emphasize ones authority, but one may well have a problem of wasted time and loss of a learning culture if one does not.

A desire to avoid Storming may be one of the reasons why some teachers/facilitators appear not to want groups to establish much interaction or a real group identity. Keeping most of the interaction on the basis of exchanges between teacher/facilitators and a succession of single participants is the commonest way of doing this: simply lecturing without any other channel of communication.

Ending a Group

Tuckman and Jensen also recognized the "mourning" phase, in which the group contemplates its dissolution and "death". This is usually easy to recognize: as the group comes to the end of the course, there may be an attempt to deny the ending - an exchange of addresses and injunctions to "keep in touch", or even attempts to continue to meet on an informal basis. These are usually fantasy based, as the life of the group is reviewed in a rosy glow, and most continuing meetings peter out once the formal course is over. It is also common to ritualize the ending, by going out for a meal: it's harmless and usually quite pleasant, as long as no-one is willfully excluded.

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[11] Source: http://www.dmu.ac.uk/~jamesa/teaching/group_development.htm

Remember the Titans

Group Dynamics: Team Building[12]

Purpose: To gain a better understanding of group dynamics and team building.   Please read this handout prior to viewing the movie and be prepared to discuss it afterward. As they apply, match the terms in the box with the statements below the box. During the following discussion of "Conflict Resolution," give practical applications that may apply to your small group setting. In small cell groups, facilitators must skillfully guide the group to the "Performing" stage.

Instructions: Read the handout prior to viewing *Remember the Titans* and memorize the characters' names and roles. After the movie or during intermission, read the questions and place the number of the question in the box that best depicts the conduct displayed by the characters. The bold type characteristics are key or topical ones. Lastly, extrapolate an application for small group development and or dynamics and expound upon why these characteristics may manifest themselves in the cell group that you will be working with. After completing the handout, discuss your answers and reasoning for them in small groups. The lead person in each group will report your findings to the group at-large.

Forming					
Readiness	Confusion	Intimidation		Misconduct	Cooperation
	Participation		Fear		Respect
1. Why did Boone (Black Coach) refuse the job? 2. Why did Boone finally accept the job? 3. What was Boone's vision for the team? 4. Why did Boone tell the team to get off of the bus? 5. What kind of resistance did Boone face as he tried to form a team?					

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[12] An adaptation from Dr. Green's class, The Principalship, at the University of Memphis, Summer, 2004, by Dr. Alice Stanback.

Application: _____

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Storming

Respect		Racism		Cliques	
	Stereotyping		Disagreement		Resistance

1. How did exposure to different cultures produce hostility and anger between the players?
2. What meaning does this statement hold for you? "People are not willing to change until not changing becomes more painful than changing."
3. After conflicts become too painful for the team, what did Gary (White Team Captain) and Julius (Black Team Captain) decide to do as Captains?

Application: _____

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Norming

Relationships		Understanding		Trust	
	Acceptance		Value/ Culture		Respect
		Cooperation		Sharing	

1. Relative to accepting differences and cultures, what can be implied from Sunshine's (Team Member from California) behavior in the locker room?
2. When did Julius demonstrate that he had conquered racial barriers?
3. How was this hostile group transformed into a community?
4. How was trust eroded between Sunshine and Pete (Black Team Player that Sunshine Replaced)?

5. When the team returned from camp, what relevance did the town's condition hold for the newly formed team?

Application: _____

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Performing

Collaboration		Participation		Communication	
	Responsibility		Positive Outcomes		Culture/Climate

1. At what point did Coach Boone become a team player?
2. What caused Yoates (White Coach) to give up the Hall of Fame?
3. When did Gary take full responsibility as Captain of the team? What risk(s) did he take? What did he have to loose?
4. When did the players really become a team?
5. Which team member never became a part of the group and why?

Application: _____

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* The highlighted themes are central themes.

Other Insights that You Gleaned form the Movie and the Discussion(s)

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Conflict Resolution[13]

What is Conflict? Conflict exists whenever there is a state of disharmony between incompatible or opposing persons, ideas, or interests. However, conflicts have considerable value when managed constructively. The issue is not whether conflict occurs, but rather how it is addressed. As a cell facilitator, one not only has to effectively manage group conflict, but also recognize the potential for conflict development. This section briefly addresses common behaviors from which conflict may arise and strategies for preventing and or managing it.

Behavioral Aspects of Conflict

An individual depicts certain behaviors for a variety of reasons, some of which include, seeking attention, feelings of insignificance or the perceived need for self-protection. Oftentimes these internal conflicts lead to obstructive behaviors, which evolve into external conflicts with others. How others respond to the difficult behaviors displayed by an individual can influence

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[13] Source: Bens, I. (1997). Facilitating conflict. In M. Goldman (Ed.), Facilitating with ease! (pp. 83-108). Sarasota, FL: Participative Dynamics; Bens, I. (1999). Keeping your teams out of trouble. Journal of Quality and Participation, 22 (4), 45-47.

how entrenched the behavior becomes. The secret is to break out of the spiral by addressing an individual's real needs without supporting his or her destructive faulty beliefs, and alienating patterns of reaction. The table below illustrates typical conflictual behaviors and alternatives for redirecting responses.

Difficult Behavior (and the Faulty Belief Behind it)	The Downward Spiral	Better Alternatives
Attention-Seeking ▪ *"I only belong when I am being noticed."*	You feel annoyed and react by coaxing. They stop briefly, and then resume their behaviors and demands, perhaps in a new way.	Avoid offering undue attention. Give attention for positive behavior especially when they are not making a bid for it. Support their real contribution and involvement.
Power-Plays ▪ *"I only belong when I am in control, when no-one can boss me!"*	You feel provoked or threatened and react by fighting or giving in; their aggression is intensified or they comply defiantly.	Disengage from the struggle. Help them to use power constructively by enlisting cooperation. Support their self-worth and autonomy.
Insignificance ▪ *"I won't be hurt any more, only if I can convince others not to expect much from me."*	You give up, overwhelmed; they respond passively, show no improvement, and stay the "victim."	Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small; focus on assets. Support efforts as self-improvement.

Managing Conflict[14]

Researchers agree that how the conflict is managed will determine whether the conflict is constructive or destructive. The ability to differentiate between healthy debates and dysfunctional arguments allows the facilitator to guide the group away from potentially unstable discussion to productive beneficial dialogue. Literature suggests that healthy debates include: being open to other people's ideas, listening and responding to different ideas from other group

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[14] Source: http://www.anthealth.org/eap/daily_issues/conflict_resolution.jsp ; http://conflict911.com/cgi-bin/links/jump.cgi?ID=4713

members, understanding other peoples' views, staying objective, staying focused on the facts, and systematically analyzing the situation to find solutions and closure without getting bogged down in divergent details.

Healthy Debates

Psychologists agree that direct and open discussion of disagreements result in a greater understanding of other people's ideas and motivates one to question the accuracy, validity, and wholeness of one's own views. That is, open discussion allows an individual to see the limitations of his or her own perspective, thereby allowing him or her to better understand opposing views and different ideas by considering other's perspectives and or ideas. As a result, one is able to assimilate the most reliable information from others with one's own, resulting in higher quality decision making.

Dysfunctional Arguments

Dysfunctional arguments are characterized by black and white thinking - where people assume that they are right and others are wrong. In this type of dialogue, there is no acknowledgement or response to others' ideas and a lack of interest persists in how they see the situation or issue. In addition, discussions tend to yield to personal attacks and blaming others, and "hot topics" are allowed to be haphazardly hashed out in an unstructured and unplanned manner.

Guiding Constructive Debate

A facilitator can either encourage a healthy debate or allow a dysfunctional argument to persist depending on how he or she handles conflict. Literature recommends the following ways a facilitator can encourage a constructive healthy debate: (a) identifying and examine the differences to gain understanding of all perspectives, (b) developing a rule that everyone must

listen politely, (c) asking people to paraphrase each other's ideas, (d) openly addressing the concerns of the team or a individual(s), (e) openly addressing problem-solving concerns, (f) inviting constructive face-to-face feedback, (g) aiming to get closure and move on to the next issue, and finally (h) being an assertive facilitator.

Managing Destructive Conflict

The following steps are recommended for resolving conflict: (a) recognizing that the conflict exists, (b) finding common ground by putting the conflict in the context of the larger goal of the group or society, (c) understanding all the perspectives of the issue, which means that everyone is not required to agree with the opposing views, (d) attacking the issue and not the members of the group, and (e) developing an action plan that describes how each member will solve the problem or issue.

In addition to following these steps, it is also recommended that facilitators avoid behaviors that worsen and or encourage conflict. These behaviors include: (a) avoid forcing team members to choose among given options or limiting the alternatives, (b) avoid becoming too dependent on spiritual leaders to resolve issues and or problems simply because dealing with conflict is painful, (c) avoid the temptation to ignore conflicts altogether, (d) prevent individual group members from giving into the group, who later act as though they are victims of group pressure, and (e) prevent group members from talking about group issues outside of the setting because such issues should have been discussed within the group meeting/settings. These methods of managing conflict direct the conflict to be constructive and beneficial by focusing on the "task types"[i] conflict while minimizing the "affect types" conflict[15].

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[15] See Endnotes.

Preventative Strategies to Manage Conflict

It is best for facilitators to plan in advance for conflict rather than to wait until it becomes a destructive force within the group. One means of doing this is by developing preventive strategies, such as: (a) having a proper team launch (e.g., introductions of group members, develop a common team goal and objectives, and or develop a communication plan), (b) developing and using team norms or rules to manage team members' behaviors, and posting them openly in an effort to illuminate overtly deviant behaviors, (c) educating group members about the stages of group development so they understand that certain activities are a normal part of "team building" (This can be enhanced by grouping members in triads to discuss and generate preventive strategies by asking the following questions: What action(s) should be taken if the group experiences confusion about the team goal, objectives, roles, or empowerment? If interpersonal conflicts occur, what should be done within the group and what should be done outside of group meetings? What should be done if meetings start to make little, if any progress? What should be done if the group starts to experience frustration and general dissatisfaction? What should be done should the group develop concerns about the group leader or facilitator?), (d) identifying things that block the team's performance early, rather than later when the problems or concerns become overwhelming (This can be done by setting aside a half hour [more or less] to identify and address barriers that the team is facing), (e) properly using feedback among members on a regular basis to address any interpersonal things that are preventing high performance (This can be done anonymously or openly, depending on the atmosphere of the group, and by asking the following questions: What are you doing that is effective? What could you be doing that is more effective?), (f) properly using and communicating feedback (anonymously or openly) to the team leader or facilitator so that he or

she may utilize it economically to help determine and meet the needs of the group, and (g)

regularly monitoring (e.g., every 6 to 8 weeks) the effectiveness of team meetings and the team.

The above strategies can help prevent conflict from dominating the group and help steer

the participants to focus on their goals and objectives. Yet, facilitators and cell members should

anticipate conflict in that it is an inherent part of group development, team building and group

dynamics.   Facilitators should also encourages people to change the way they view conflict by

viewing it "…as a positive sign that people care about the issue and have the energy to put

toward solutions".

Part III

What is a Facilitator?

A facilitator, helps people communicate and work together, creates a framework for meetings that allows people to tap into each other's creative potential, and provides an invaluable service for the church, community and or institution as it changes to meet the needs of the institution, a swiftly changing world, and the need for new business practices within and outside of the organization. Facilitation is a *service* to others[16].

The most important job of a facilitator is to protect the *process* of those being facilitated. The process is *how* the group goes about accomplishing their task. The problem or content is *what* they're working on. The facilitator is the *protector* of the process. The facilitator helps to create the process, adjust it, keep it heading in the right direction, and most importantly, keeps the people attached to it.

The *function* of facilitation is to keep a meeting focused and moving, and to ensure even participation. The facilitator makes sure these things occur, either by doing it or by monitoring the group and intervening as needed. The facilitator is the *keeper of the task* and doesn't influence the content or product of the group. The facilitator pays attention to the *way* the group works: the *process*.

The facilitator sometimes acts as a resource to the group in the area of data analysis tools and problem solving techniques. The facilitator must be comfortable with team building techniques and group process in order to assist the group in performing tasks and maintenance roles essential to team building. The facilitator intervenes to help the group stay focused and build cohesiveness, getting the job done with excellence, while developing the product: in this case new believers and spiritual growth.

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[16] Source: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/facilitation/4122.htm#basics

To keep the meeting on track, the facilitator must remain aware of the agenda, the time, and the flow of work. Facilitation skills are used to ensure total participation. Facilitators observe group development, noting both task and maintenance roles, and encourage group members to perform them. Facilitators handle inappropriate participant behaviors with skill and sensitivity. A facilitation performs many functions and roles which include: (a) a consultant who designs group sessions with a specific focus or intent, (b) an advisor to bringing out the full potential of group participants, (c) a provider of processes, tools and techniques that can get tasks accomplished quickly and effectively in a group environment, (d) a person who keeps a group meeting on track, (e) someone who helps resolve conflict, (f) someone who draws out participation from everyone, (g) someone who organizes the work and or lessons for a group, (h) someone who makes sure that the goals are met, (i) someone who provides structure to the tasks of a group, and (j) someone who protects the tasks of a group.

What a Facilitator is Not

A facilitator is not one who: (a) changes the wording of a participant, (b) refuses to address an idea (looks tired, got distracted, too many ideas coming at once), (c) gets involved in the personal lives of the participants outside the assigned group tasks, (d) fixes the group (even in the most loving way!), (e) fixes the problem for the group, (f) attaches to outcomes, (g) judges comments of the group, liking some ideas better than others, (h) flip flops the agenda and group processes, (i) manipulates people and behaviors through their own feedback, (j) monopolizes conversation, (k) takes sides on issues or people, (l) is closed to group suggestions on the process, and (m) tries to have all the answers[17].

The responsibilities of a facilitator differ from those of a team leader. The highly skilled facilitator must have a comprehensive knowledge of group dynamics, group process, and

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[17] Source: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/facilitation/4122.htm#basics

facilitator intervention strategies. The facilitator is able to handle issues including member

conflict, communication obstacles, low performance, leader (spiritual or otherwise) domination,

and group apathy. The facilitator may walk into a session and have the anger and frustration of

all the people in the room directed at him or her and is able to handle the situation with

discretion.

<div align="center">Two Schools of Thought[18]</div>

The following is Pastor Gene Lawson's (MBCC) comparison and contrast of the lecture

and facilitation models:

<div align="center">*The Lecture Model*</div>

- The lecture method is about power, control and efficiency of time.

- The lecture method has proven to be impersonal and often times unpersuasive.

- The lecture method does not help the teacher to discern whether or not the students are
  actually absorbing the information.

- In a voluntary institutional setting the lecture method is highly ineffective because the
  students are not paying for their classes per se. They are their out of choice and will leave
  by choice.

<div align="center">*The Facilitation Model*</div>

- The facilitation model respects the knowledge of both the facilitator and the student.

- The facilitation model is a two-way communication which thrives on the interactive and
  the dialectical exchange.

- The facilitation model allows for creative learning to take place.

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[18] Comparison by Dr. Gene Lawson

- The facilitation model helps to empower students to learn according to their learning style.

- The facilitation model helps to create a community of learners among those that regularly attend class.

- The facilitation model is the best model to use with voluntary institutions.

African American Church Teaching Pedagogy[19]

- There are two distinct teaching pedagogies in the African American Church: TOSS & GOSS:

- TOSS: Teacher Oriented Sunday School.

- GOSS: Growth Oriented Sunday School.

- MBCC is seeking to become a Growth Oriented Cell Church (GOCC).

- MBCC is moving toward a cell-based or community group model of ministry and fellowship. This is the business of creating culture.

- The nature of cells is that they bud and multiply.

The Living Church Cell Model

- Cell groups ought to have a lot of interaction during their sessions.

- Cell groups must have a well defined and reviewed lesson plan.

- Cell groups should have an element of fellowship for all its members on each session.

- Cell groups should constantly be in the mode of evangelizing for growth.

- Cell groups should have an agreed upon outreach project.

- Cell groups should be available to be mobilized for ministry.

- Cell groups should identify leaders, supporters and sprouters for nurturing.

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[19] By Pastor Gene Lawson

Basis Principles of Facilitation as Stipulated by MBCC[20]

A facilitator:

- knows the course content and is always prepared,

- doesn't know everything but understand the process of facilitation and is open to shared learning and is teachable,

- values and engages everyone's participation, and

- creates a learning environment that is respectful, inclusive, and is spiritually, socially, and emotionally mature.

Are You Prepared to Facilitate?

Below is a chart to help you answer this question. If you are not sure, or think, you are prepared to successfully facilitate a small cell group, answer the following questions to shed some insight on your perception of your abilities, maturity and or preparedness. Only *you* can answer these questions and there's no right or wrong answer, so you can't fail. Your honest answers will help you determine whether or not you would be comfortable facilitating a cell group.

Ability Survey

Ability	Yes	No
Are you willing to listen to others without judgment or preconceived notions about what they should or shouldn't say or do?		
Do you show respect for the opinions of others even when they disagree with you?		
Can you release the need to have complete control of a conversation or other situations?		
Are you comfortable dealing with conflict?		
Are you comfortable speaking in public?		
Are you able to laugh at yourself?		

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[20] Adopted from facilitation class notes at MBCC

Can you think on your feet?		
Do you believe that groups working together are smarter than individuals working alone?		
Can you accept feedback from others about yourself?		
Are you spiritually mature?		
Do you set aside a quiet time for God and read your bible daily?		
Are you resilient?		
Are you flexible?		
Are you adaptive?		
Are you proactive?		
Are you responsive?		

Answering *yes* to a majority of these questions indicates that you would be comfortable in the role of facilitator. All of these traits can be learned and improved and the facilitation process itself will improve as you facilitate. If you answered *no* to any of these questions, don't be discouraged. It means these are the areas in which you'll need to change some things about yourself like a belief, an attitude, or an action. The question now is Can you change?

_____ Yes _____ No

Desirable Characteristics of a Facilitator

The following facilitator characteristics are adaptations from Thiagi's "Desirable Characteristics of Facilitators"[21]:

Characteristics of a Facilitator			
balance		open mindedness	
confidence		playfulness	
ability to blend intuitive and rational approaches		preference for diversity	
consistency between word and deed		process expertise	
ability to improvise		realism	
Accountability		respect	

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[21] Excerpts from Thiagi "Desirable Characteristics of Facilitators."

assertiveness		self-esteem	
continuous learning		self-sufficiency	
creativity		sense of humor	
efficiency		service	
emotional resiliency		simplicity	
empathic listening skills		sincerity	
enthusiasm		tolerance for ambiguity	
flexibility		tolerance for lack of closure	
impartiality		trust	
inclusiveness		open mindedness	
integrity		open mindedness	
interpersonal intelligence		playfulness	
intrapersonal intelligence		truthfulness	
long-term focus		versatility	
objectivity		willingness to share responsibility	

Make an "X" beside the skills in which you need to improve and or attain and develop a plan of action and timeline for improving and or acquiring them:

Improvement Plan and Timeline

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_____

_____

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Fill-in the Timeline

Cardinal Rules for Facilitators[22]

The following are the cardinal rules for a facilitator. Please rate your performance and or

capacity to perform each rule successfully. Also rate yourself throughout the small group

process and chart your improvement, i.e., growth in capacity: Place the number beside each task

on the scale, and then assess the area(s) in which you are most lacking and need to improve.

Facilitator's role

1. start each session promptly

2. calm initial anxieties

3. make expectations clear

4. interpret each assignment

5. help the group share time, gently remind the voluble to listen and the

    taciturn to speak

6. end each session promptly

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

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[22] Source: A Small Group Ministry Resource Book for Members of The First Unitarian Society in Newton

Maintain the structure

1. Establish format and ground rules.

2. Start and end meetings on time.

3. Lead and or allow opening and closing prayer

4. Check on absent members (to see if they have concerns or need help).

5. Properly refer special cases to the proper persons or agencies.

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**
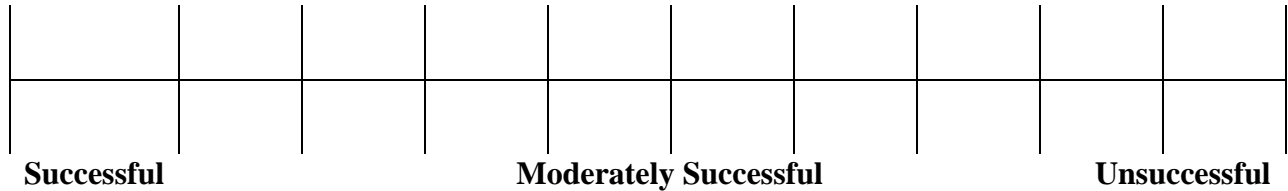
Facilitate the process

1. Model non-judgmental witnessing and acceptance of opinions.

2. Allocate and monitor time for checking in and addressing the topic.

3. Allow time for all to speak, prevent monopoly by any one member.

4. Delegate some functions thus promoting shared leadership.

5. Work with co-facilitator or apprentice so groups can split when appropriate, each new

    group with its own facilitator.

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**
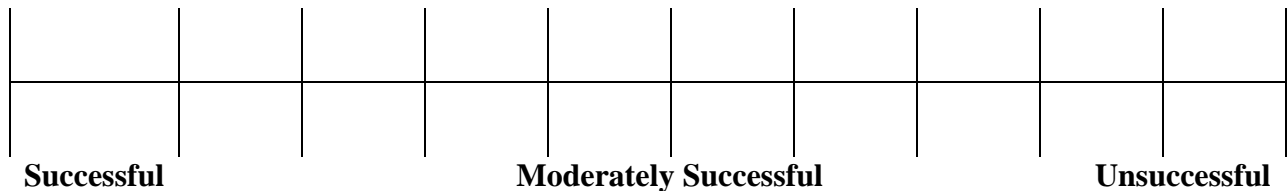
Work with oversight groups

1. Attend training sessions, facilitator meetings.

2. Help to evaluate pilot small group experience.

3. Act as liaison, sharing ideas and problems with minister or appropriate others, or communicate with liaison if someone else assumes that role.

4. Sharing inspirations with group members, facilitator trainers and pastoral staff.

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

Important Points

1. Remind people at each meeting to ask for confidentiality if they want it.

2. If someone seems overly troubled, suggest that they seek out a spiritual leader or a pastoral staff member.

3. Your participation is a model for others.

4. You are a member as well as a facilitator.

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

*Note: Functions may be delegated, but if group members do not do any item in the above list, the facilitator is responsible for doing it.

Skills Used in Effective Facilitation[23]

Consensus building, problem solving, task completion and such are fundamental to traditional facilitation. A mature facilitator will possess these skills and more, but others will

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[23] Adapted from Calvin O. Dame's "Information for Credo Group Leaders" created for New England Leadership School 1992.

have to acquire them. Listed below are other practical skills a facilitator should possess and know how to use effectively:

- Reflecting - Reflecting back the content and feeling of the message, e.g. "Let me see if I am hearing you correctly…"

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

- Clarifying - Restating an idea or thought to make it easier to grasp, e.g. "What I believe you are saying is…"

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

- Summarizing – Stating concisely the central themes, e.g. "It sounds to me that we have been talking about a few recurring ideas…"

**Successful**   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

- Shifting focus – Moving gracefully from one speaker, or topic, to another, e.g. "Thank you, Trey; do you have something to add, Keisha?" or "We've been talking about this issue for some time now; does anyone have strong feelings about other aspects of the situation?"

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

- Using silence – Allowing time and space for online reflection, by pausing between comments, e.g. "……….."

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

- Using non-verbal and verbal signals – Combining body language and speech to communicate, e.g. using eye contact to influence behaviors in the group, and to be aware of cultural differences between participants.

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

List Areas of Improvement and Delineate an Improvement Plan

_____

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A Good Facilitator[24]

1. Explains his or her role in the church, the group process, and the small cell group.

2. Is self-aware – good facilitators know their own strengths, weaknesses, hot buttons, and biases.

3. Appreciates all kinds of people.

4. Is committed to democratic principles.

5. Starts and ends the small cell group on time.

6. Is neutral – the facilitator's opinions are not used to promote or disparage other's ideas.

7. Is helpful to the group in setting up their ground rules.

8. Focuses and helps clarify the dialogue when needed.

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[24] Adapted from pages 8 & 9 of UU Study/Action Issue - Dialogue Circles: A Guide for Facilitators by Robert M. Sarly; Autumn 1999

9. Is able to stay in two roles at once (remembering that he or she is both a member and the facilitator of shared leadership in the group), both during and after the small group session.

10. Is able to balance the interests of the group and his or her personal interests.

11. Intervenes to address behaviors, not personalities.

12. Encourages and affirms each participant.

13. Participates as a member in the cell group as well as being a role model for the group norms. (Stipulate overall rating below)

Successful   **Moderately Successful**   **Unsuccessful**

Self Evaluation

Being very honest, list the areas that you succeed in and the areas in which you need help and develop a short rang plan to alleviate the underperformance(s). The Facilitator Trainers are always available to assist you in such an endeavor. You may also seek assistance from someone in your cell group for practical aspects (See A Good Facilitator).

Self Evaluation Exercise

Areas in which I Succeed	Areas in which I have under perform

Short Range Plan for Improvement

_____

_____

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Preparing for a Meeting

The key to successful facilitation is planning and preparation. Each session should be designed with a framework or a structure that will optimize the participants' time together, allow a way for them to talk among themselves constructively, and produce the desired results. Good planning and preparation are crucial to the success of each session. Before each meeting, the participants need to know the agenda and what is expected of them. At the end of each meeting, the facilitator should specify a reading assignment from *Peace Maker* for the successive meeting.

The Basics for a First Meeting[25]

(These are merely suggestions and your Peace Maker Workbook takes precedence)

Your first duty is to create comfort by building *trust and respect and excitement* in the group. The form this takes will depend on the facilitation design and style of facilitation. Interaction of group members is a primary way of doing this. The first 5 steps may take between 30 to 60 minutes depending on how you do them and the size of the group. These steps are designed to get a good start and build some intimacy in a group:

- Open each group with prayer.

- Briefly, introduce the purpose of the group, not more than 2 minutes at this point. End by saying you will seek feedback from the group a little later.

- Briefly, introduce yourself from the standpoint of how you are qualified to facilitate this group. When appropriate, add in some personal items like something about your family, your hobby, etc. If you have some fear about being facilitator, it probably is appropriate to touch on this *authentically* with the group. Again, make this brief, not more than 2 minutes.

- Provide an agenda or schedule for this and future meetings, no matter how brief and simple. An agenda provides some structure and reduces some anxiety that may be in the group. It also shows you have a plan. Outline primary items on a poster or handout as appropriate. Make it brief. You can add criteria for future meetings as appropriate. Include how they will help form what the group does.

- Add more about the purpose of the group as necessary. This may be a time to add information to create more excitement. It's also where you ask them what questions or

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[25] Source: http://www.community4me.com/smgpfacilitatebasic.html

additions they have. One way to start this is to ask a good question of the group that requires a show of hands. Put your hand up as you ask the question. It's often good to ask at least 2 questions that may be opposites or parallel on a subject.

- Build some *trust and respect* within the group to further reduce anxiety that many people bring into a group. This step has a number of options depending on the group size and how much they know each other and other factors you may know. Do some dyads within the group; they are very effective in creating trust and getting a group off to a great start. An alternate or addition is to have each member tell something about themselves and why there are attending. This is called a "checkin". Please frame this so each person has an opportunity to speak, but keep it brief. If your group is too large for this, you can ask them to turn to the person on their right for the first dyad and to the left or behind them for the second dyad. Do some follow up questions about the dyads by asking a few people to share with the large group what they talked about. This often takes 15 to 20 minutes for this complete exercise. In some groups, it may be necessary to ask a series of questions about what trust and then respect means to them (if applicable to the group demographics). It sets the stage for them to state some group guidelines that may or may not be documented by them in a summary for use by the group.

<div align="center">Beginning a Session[26]</div>

The following are procedures and considerations that should be observed at the beginning of each training and or small group session. Please keep in mind that facilitators and instructors are training other to become as they are:

- Take some time to be alone with God in prayer before the session begins. Clear your mind and focus on the session ahead.

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[26] An adaptation of http://www.koigroup.com/group.htm

- Be sure of your agenda. The more familiar you are the more flexibility you will have in modifying the agenda if necessary.

- Observe the participants as you enter the room. Observe verbal and nonverbal information which may indicate how well each participant will work with another. Who people are talking to and what they are talking about. Notice expressions on their faces. Do they talk to people of other sexes, races, and ages? Do they seem to mix freely?

- Be present and on time – or, better yet – be a little early. Feel out the situation and the mood.

- Consider seating arrangements. Increase the likelihood that participants can make as much eye contact as possible and that it is conducive to establishing communication and cooperation. Can participants move freely? Are they comfortable?

- Focus on introductions. They allow you to provide your credentials, justify your being there and lay the groundwork for egalitarian participation. This is an excellent opportunity for exploring expectations and determining whether or not you need to change the agenda.

- Clarify your role. Introductory remarks, prayer and ice-breaker. Acknowledge and thank the group for their participation and state the purpose of the session (the cell workbook will help…). Explain the agenda and state the desired outcomes, etc. for the session. Help the members perceive you as human. Help the participants see that you have a combination of skills, which everyone possesses in some degree, and that your role is to help them develop their skills as you have had an opportunity to develop yours. Make clear that you reserve the right to step into the process when you feel it appropriate, and

that you will be open to the consideration by some that such intervention may be inappropriate.

- Explain the reasoning behind the things you do. Bring your tools and skills down to earth, enabling the participants to evaluate them for themselves. The participants will understand what you hope to accomplish, how your decision-making works, and that you are not hiding anything from them.

- Solicit feedback and pay attention to it. Demonstrate to the participants that their opinions count. Treat their ideas with the same value that you do your own.

- Facilitation varies from situation to situation; your role with one group will not be the same role you will perform with another group. If you or the participants are uncomfortable with either of your roles you should discuss modifying the style or the responsibilities of both.

- Agree on plans. Determine what the participants' expectations of the sessions are and post them. Avoid giving the impression that you have the time or the ability to meet every one of these expectations. Always begin the session with an agenda overview. Explain the purpose of each one and the approximate amount of time that each will take.

- Recognize that most groups go through predictable phases in their development. They affect the pace of the meeting and the dynamics of group interaction. Once you understand this you will be able to accommodate your agenda to work with the group members instead of against them. When you plan your agenda, keep in mind that the session as a whole will likely progress through the phases outlined, and a similar cycle may occur for the specific activities within your agenda.

- Each group member will participate differently and you must be open to this. The program must be participant oriented rather than facilitator oriented: respond to what the participants want, rather than impose what you think is best for them. Convey to the participants that silence is okay and that conflict is too, unless it is destructive to the individuals involved.

- Social Interaction - exchange of pleasantries not related to the goals for the meeting; identification with each other, helps them feel a part of the group, puts them at ease, and serves to unify the group for later phases.

- Information Seeking - helps the group orient itself to it future activities by providing each of its members with as complete an idea as possible of what the group will be doing. Members answer the questions: who, why, what, and when in relation to their activities.

- Establishing Structure - after the program has been established and the problems that will confront the group have been characterized, the group must decide what its members will do in pursuing the activity, division of labor, role play, brainstorming, etc. Participants may be competing for control of the group at this point, which poses a challenge. Concentrate on the best means of organizing the activity. Have participants exchange roles throughout the session.

- Constructive Work - functioning now based upon how well the previous stages went. If the previous stages did not go well participants might have hidden agendas, feel alienated, or not understand what is going on.

- Completion - group activities need a natural closing point (summary, recommendation, or decision). Without it the activity may seem meaningless and unsatisfying to group members.

Ice-Breakers

Sometimes when you begin the facilitation process, no *formal* ice-breaker is needed.
However, it is suggested that you with humor or something light-hearted to help remove any
tensions (both yours and the participants). Getting yourself and the group "off on the right foot"
is an essential part of facilitation. Structured warm-up activities, even if very casual, help (a)
participants get involved more quickly, (b) increase their energy level and interest, and (c) them
get acquainted with each other. Following are examples of simple ice-breakers:

- Ask people to pair-up and introduce themselves to each other, and after two or three
  minutes, ask each partner to introduce the other to the group.

- Ask each person to state his or her expectations for the session.

- Without talking or gesturing, have the participants line up by date and or day of birth.

- Ask each person to write four brief statements about him or herself (three true and one
  false), then ask the participants to guess which one is false.

Sample Ground or House Rules

Ground or House Rules are developed by the participants and written out and
prominently displayed during a session. Not only are they the participants norms, they are the
facilitator's norms as well.

Begin by asking the group to develop rules by which they want to be governed during the
sessions. One might ask them to think about the following two questions as they decide what
would be effective rules for the group: (1) What behaviors do you feel are important to achieve
the success or expected goal(s) of the group? and (2) What behaviors would you like others to
exhibit and also to which you are willing to commit? It is suggested that one prepares the format
in advance. The following are example of responses that one might receive:

- Exercise trust, openness and honesty.

- One conversation at a time.

- Everyone stays on task.

- Have fun.

Closing a Session

(These are merely suggestions)

Close a session by summarizing what has occurred. Do it verbally (and if possible, visually) so that everyone sees and hears what has been realized as outcomes. You, as facilitator, tie the parts together into the whole when you summarize the session. This gives group members a sense of completion and feedback for work well done.

Thank the participants for their efforts and their cooperation with you and each other in making the session a success, easy and fun. One cannot deny that at some point a facilitator may have a difficult session. However, with careful planning and preparation, he or she seldom will. If he or she does, he or she should process his or her emotions the let them go. By remaining objective, the experience will afford him or her very valuable "lessons learned."

Suggestions for Cell Group Facilitation[27]

As a support group facilitator, one will encounter a plethora of different experiences. The following are general tips and methods that may be utilized during these encounters.

General Suggestions

- Use small groups that report back to the large group.

- Ask individuals what may be gained from the group and what they want from the group.

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[27] Source: Participants from the A, B, C's of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Groups

- Use scenarios and references from the Peace Maker text and or scripture and ask what you would do.

- Have individuals supply questions.

- Explain your role in the facilitation process.[28]

- Know your own strengths, weaknesses, hot buttons, and biases.

- Be aware of influences.

- Be appreciative of all kinds of people.

- Intervene to address behaviors, not personalities.

- Encourage and affirm each participant.

- Orient group to timeframe and task.

- Develop group ground rules.

- Stay focused in the present.

- Allow disagreement.

- Use "stop action".

Ways to Work with Support Group Members in Denial

- Ask questions to determine what is happening.

- If applicable, talk about "what ifs".

- If applicable, help the participant(s) face the situation.

- If applicable, ask the group to help.

Ways to Work with Support Groups Members Who Are Withdrawn

- Provide opportunities for involvement.

- Recognize the individual may be checking out the group.

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[28] Source: *Also taken in part from UU Study/Action Issue – Dialogue Circles: A Guide for Facilitators by Robert M. Sarly*

- Do activities in small groups to encourage discussion.

- Use an icebreaker that has a purpose and is not a game.

- Greet people when they first come to the meeting.

- Recognize nonverbal clues the individual may be giving you.

Ways to Work with Support Group Members Who are Shy

- Realize it takes time for some individuals to feel comfortable in a new group.

- Recognize some individuals may be getting enough by being quiet.

- If applicable, have them hook-up with another member after the meeting for follow-up.

- Respect the individual's choice to be quiet.

- Thank the individual for coming.

- Ask the individual for involvement.

Ways to Work with Support Group Members Who are Hostile

- Spend time with the individual at a later time.

- Invite a resource person from the local congregation on topic that the individual is hostile about.

- Refer the individual to a spiritual officer or a member of the pastoral staff for counseling.

- Attempt to diffuse the individual.

- Ask the group to respond with positive ways they have dealt with the situation.

Ways to Work with Support Group Members who Dominate

- Redirect the individual's conversation.

- Start a new topic.

- Ask someone else for input.

- Talk with the individual after the meeting.

- Indicate not enough time and move on to a different topic.

- Refer to group guidelines regarding respecting each person's time.

- Ask for comments, instead of open discussion.

- Plan an activity that is not verbal.

- Talk to the individual.

- Open discussion to the group.

- Reinforce ground rules or develop a ground rule.

- Do an activity on respect.

- Stop the person.

- As a last resort, ask the individual not to participate in your support group.

- Find out what they are really trying to say and why.

Ways to Work with Support Group Members Who are Negative

- Be direct with the individual.

- Hear the individual's anger and recognize their issues.

- Let the individual vent.

- Reframe the issue and bring it back to group for discussion.

- Let the individual express his or her feelings.

- Take a 3-5 minute break.

- Talk to the individual at the end of the meeting.

- Involve friend that came with them.

- Have others acknowledge how they felt or dealt with the issue.

- If the behavior is exhibited often, decide how to deal with the individual.

- Echo what is being said as a way to understand what is being said.

- Ask what the individual wants, what their expected outcome is and then explore how to reach what they are expecting.

- Be proactive when planning future topics, be prepared.

- Take the individual's "anger energy" and help point out the positives.

- Develop group rules around not being negative.

- As a last resort, ask the person to leave the group.

- As for assistance from group members if necessary.

Ways to Work with Support Group Members Who are"Know-It-Alls"

- Divert the individual by changing the topic.

- Involve the group in active roles like writing things down to share with the group so all will have to listen and write.

- Have a limit for discussion and at the time limit, change the topic.

- Make sure others have a chance to talk.

- Talk with the individual about their "know it all" attitude.

- Develop ground rules around everyone discussing and valuing different ideas and perspectives.

- Offer the individual the opportunity to lead a group discussion.

- Give the individual a job and involve them as a team member.

- If appropriate, recognize the individual in more than one way.

- Use the individual as a resource person.

- Avoid eye contact, eye contact encourages participation.

- Try not to give the individual control.

- Don't call on the individual.

- Ask group members for their reaction or experience with the situation being discussed.

- Refer the individual to someone with more information on the topic being discussed.

- Try not to single out the individual.

- Ask the individual where they got their information or what resources they used.

Ways to Work with Support Group Members Who Cry

- Try to use a sense of humor to create a diversion.

- Provide a box of Kleenex to take to him or her without comment.

- Tap or pat him or her on the shoulder and recognize their feelings.

- Say "It seems as though you're feeling sad . . . can we help? Have any of you had this experience?"

- Acknowledge that there will be blue days and sad times and ask the group how they handle the situation.

- Ask "Was their anything said in the group that upset you?"

- Have a co-facilitator escort him or her discreetly from the room and then work with them.

- Acknowledge their feelings.

- I f advisable, ask them if you can touch them by saying, "Do you need a hug?" or "Can I give you a hug?"

- Create an environment where it is safe for crying to happen.

- Ask others in group to share their experiences.

- Acknowledge that the group may be uncomfortable.

- Be sensitive to everyone's feelings.

- Be a good listener.

- Don't say "We know how you feel," because most likely you do not.

- Be careful not to single him or her out.

Creating an Environment Conducive to Spiritual Growth and Teaching & Learning

One of the tasks of a facilitator is to create a pleasant learning environment for the group. The following are thing to consider when preparing to facilitate and or host a group:

- Spirituality: An atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit and preside freely (See "Wisdom from Proverbs").

- Atmosphere: Is the room cheerful in color and does it have outside windows?

- Layout: Is the room large enough for your needs? Will everyone be able to see the items you work with and each other?

- Furniture: Are the chairs comfortable for longer meetings?

- Conveniences: How far away are the rest rooms etc. and are they easily accessible?

- Lighting: Is there sufficient lighting? Can the room be darkened easily, e.g., to show an overhead, video clip etc.?

- Noise: Is the room free of excessive noise and interruptions? Will everyone be able to hear what's going on?

- Outlets: Are there enough outlets for equipment, e.g., personal computer etc.?

- Heat & Cooling: Will the temperature be appropriate and can you control it yourself?

- Telephone: Is there a phone nearby for participants to use privately? Is there one in the room? Do you want it there? The answer is generally no.[29]

Conclusion

In conclusion, we the facilitator trainers entrust you, the facilitators and teachers, unto the wise counsel of the Proverbs. Read them - and do them - that you may experience success in your cell groups. Our honest desire is that you prosper in all things. Remember, he that winneth

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[29] Source: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/facilitation/4122.htm#basics

souls is wise, and be confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Now we commend you and your cell group to the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that you trust in him with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path (Proverbs 3: 5-6). Remember, it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy (God's) faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Therefore be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil (Proverbs 3: 7). For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God but be filled with His Spirit. (Allow the Holy Spirit to stretch out in your heart, be comfortable, i.e., be at home) (See Ephesians 4: ff, The Believer's Walk). Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11).

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Philippians 4:8), and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless you in all your endeavors.

Wisdom from Proverbs[30]

Wisdom from the Proverbs to Guide Your Behavior
A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: 1:5[31]
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. 2:8

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[30] Source: KJV Bible
[31] Source: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/kjv.browse.html

My son (facilitator), if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. 1:10
How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. 2:22-23
They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. 1:30-33
My son (facilitator), if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 2:1-5
When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: 2:10-11
Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. 3:3-4
My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. 3:11-12
Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. 3:13&16
Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm. 3:29-30
Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. 4:5-7
Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. 4:13
But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. 4:18
Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. 4:23
Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. 4:26
For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray. 5:21-23
A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.6:12-15
These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. 6:16-19
For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: 6:23
Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? 6:27-28

But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. 6:32-33
Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. 7:2
And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) 7:10-12
Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. 7:25-27
Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. 7:10-11
I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. 8:12-13
I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. 8:17
Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. 8:32-36
Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. 9:6
He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. 9:7-10
If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it. 9:12
A foolish woman is clamourous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. 9:13
Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. 10:6
The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall. 10:8
Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins. 1-:12
The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin. 10:16
He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth. He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. 10:17-18
In the multitude of words there wanteth (lack) not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. 10:19
The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. 10:21
The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. 10:22
The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. 10:28
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness. 10:32
A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight. 11:1
When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. 11:2
An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. 11:9

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. 11:11
He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. 11:12
A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.11:13
Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellers there is safety. 11:14
A gracious (godly) woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches. The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. 11:16-17
As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. 11:19
As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion. 11:22
He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. 11:29
The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. 11:30
Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. 12:1
A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. 12:4
He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread. 12:9
The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble. 12:12 -13
A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him. 12:14
The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. 12:15
He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. 12:17-18
Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellers of peace is joy. 12:20
Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. 12:22
A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. 12:23
Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad. 12:25
In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death. 12:28
A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. 13:1
He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. 13:3
The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke. 13:8
Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. 13:10
Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. 13:12
Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. 13:13
The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard. 13:14-15
Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly. 13:16
Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. 13:18
He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. 13:20
Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. 14:1

In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. 14:3
Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox. 14:4
A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. 14:5
A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. 14:6
Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit. 14:7-8
Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour. 14:9
The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. 14:10
There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. 12:12
The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. 14:14
The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. 14:15-16
He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: 14:17a
Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good. 14:22
A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies. 14:25
He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. 14:29
A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones. 14:30
A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. 15:1
The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. 15:2
The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. 15:3
A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. 15:4
but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. 15:5b
Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die. 15:10
Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? 15:11
A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise. 15:12
A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. 15:18
Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellers they are established. 15:22
A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it! 15:23
The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. 15:28
The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat. 15:30
The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. 15:31& 32
The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility. 15:33
Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. 16:3
Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: 16:5a
When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. 16:7

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. 16:18
Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.16:19
He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: 16:20a
The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.16:21
Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones 16:24
There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. 16:25
An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. 16:27
A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. 16:28
moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass. 16:30b
He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. 16:32
A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. 17:4
and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. 17:5b
Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. 17:7
He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. 17:9
The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with. 17:14
and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. 17:20b
He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. 17:27
Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. 17:28
The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters (18:4a). A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. 18:6-8
He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. 18:13
Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. 18:21
Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. 19:1
Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; 19:2a
The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD. 19:3
A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. 19:5
He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good. 19:8
A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish. 19:9
The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. 19:11
He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die. 19:16
Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. 19:20
and a poor man is better than a liar. 19:22
Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge. 19:25
Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. 19:27

An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity. 19:28
It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling. 20:3
Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. 20:5
Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? 20:9
Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD. 20:10
There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. 20:15
Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war. 20:18
He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips. 20:19
Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee. 20:22
Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good. 20:23
It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry. 20:25
The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly. 20:27
Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. 21:2
To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. 21:3
The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right. 22:8
When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge. 22:11
The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: 22:12b
The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: 22:16
He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour. 22:21
Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. 21:23
The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind? 21:27
There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD. 21:30
By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life. 22:4
Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease. 22:10
Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee? 22:17-21
Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. 22:24-25
Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. 22:28
Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. 23:9
Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. 23:12
My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things. 23:15-16
but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long. 12:17b
A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellers there is safety. 24:5-6
The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men. 24:9
If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are

drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? 24:10-12
My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: 24:13-14a
These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. 24:23
Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips. 24:28
Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. 25:8
Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away. A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear. 25:9-12
Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. 25:14
a soft tongue breaketh the bone. 25:15b
A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow. 25:18
Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. 25:19
As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart. 25:20
The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. 25:23
It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory. 25:27
He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. 25:28
Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. 26:4
Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. 26:5
The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools. 26:7
As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool. 26:8
Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. 26:12
He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. 26:17
As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? 26:18& 19
Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. 26:20
As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. 26:21
The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. 26:22
Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. 26:23
He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; *25:* When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation. 26:24 - 26
A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin. 26:28

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. 27:2
Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? 27:4
Open rebuke is better than secret love. 27:5
As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. 27:8
Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. 27:9
A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished. 27:12
A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself. 27:15 & 16
Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. 27:17
As in water face answered to face, so the heart of man to man. 27:19
As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise. 27:21
The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. 28:1
A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food. 28:3
They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them. 28:4
Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things 28:5
He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination 28:9
Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession. 28:10
He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. 28:13
Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. 28:14
A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him. 28:17
Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. 28:18
To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress. 28:21
He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue. 28:23
He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat. 28:25
He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered. 28:26
He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. 28:27
He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. 29-1
A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. 29:5
The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it. 29:7
Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath. 29:8
If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest. 29:9
The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul. 29:10
A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. 29:11
The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes. 29:13

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. 29:18
Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. 29:20
An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. 29:22
A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. 29:23
An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked. 29:27
Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. 30:5 & 6
There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness 30:12
If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife. 31:32 & 33
Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. 31:8 & 9
Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised 31:10, 25, 26, 29 & 30 (Please read the "Portrait of a Virtuous Woman" in its entirety: Proverbs 31: 10 – 31)

* Meditate on a portion of these scriptures daily, and may God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit bless you daily.

After meditating on the above scriptures and prayer, record some of the illuminations that the Lord revealed about your cell group, you included, and if appropriate, share them with the group.

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[i] *Tasks and Affect Conflict:*

     Tasks conflict may be defined as *issue-related disagreements among group members that focus on common objectives*. Several researchers agree that this type of conflict tends to be constructive, functional, and beneficial by improving team effectiveness, increasing decision quality, satisfaction with the team, commitment, cohesiveness, empathy, creativity, understanding, and performance, while reducing complacency and apathy. This type of beneficial conflict should be expressed and explored rather than ignored or avoided because of the potential creativity and advantages that can come from it. Tasks conflict may also be referred to as: *cognitive conflict or task-focused conflict.*

     However, the other type of conflict, known as *affect conflict*, (also referred to as relationship conflict, or interpersonal conflict), is related to disagreements that come from personality clashes or emotional interactions among group members which is often perceived as personal attacks. This type of conflict is likely to be considered destructive and dysfunctional if problem resolution is not achieved, energy is diverted from the pressing issue or activity, and group or individual morale is compromised. Moreover, this conflict is considered disruptive because it can result in greater indecisiveness, increased polarity, reduced cohesiveness and consensus, while promoting hostility, distrust, cynicism, apathy, and disengagement among team members. Such conflict needs to be identified, discussed, and reduced before it gets out of control, or before it results in "…an environment of fear and avoidance of the issues".

     Amason, A. C. (1996). Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams. *Academy of Management Journal, 39(1),* 123-148.

     Townsley, C. A. (1997). *Resolving conflict in work teams*. [On-line]. Available: http://www.workteams.unt.edu:80/reports/Townsley.htlm.