

# ***Reformed University Fellowship***

## **Group Development Review**

- I. Our job is to build a group, not merely to preach the gospel.
  - A. Jesus built a group of apostles.
  - B. Paul built churches.
  - C. Preaching the gospel is central to building a group; a Christian group cannot be built without preaching the gospel, but preaching the gospel by itself will not build a group.
  
- II. Stages of Group Development.
  - A. Students relating to each other as individuals.
  - B. Students relating to each other in small groups.
  - C. Small groups relating to each other and connecting to large groups.
  - D. Student leaders involved in stages 1-3 and beginning to understand the Phil. of Ministry.
  - E. Student leaders embracing the Philosophy of Ministry and helping other students through stages 1-4.
  
- III. Comments.
  - A. These stages must be developed *in this order* or the group will become immature and deformed.
  - B. These are not steps in building a group, or stages which you can complete and move on, but aspects of group life that must consistently be present for a group to be healthy.
  - C. A group will be immature or deformed if one or more of these stages is absent.
  - D. The success of all activities (Bible studies, Large Group, etc.) is dependent on all these relationships being present.
  
- IV. How these stages are developed.
  - A. A heart for people must be developed through the teaching in one-to-ones, small groups, and large groups.
  - B. The campus minister and mature leaders must demonstrate relating to individuals, helping individuals relate in small groups, and helping small groups relate to each other and the large groups.
  - C. Explicit instruction and encouragement in these relationships must occur in all three avenues.
  - D. The campus minister and mature leaders must coach the other students in doing this (TDOEE). (See “Developing Leaders” for a discussion of training students.)
  - E. This process will be the primary topic of Ministry Team (Core Group) discussion. (See “Developing Leaders” for a discussion of how to use the Ministry Team.)
  
- V. Strategy for Building a Group.
  - A. Start by carefully studying the demographics and geography of your campus.
  - B. Do focused, energetic, effective freshmen outreach.
  - C. Do one-to-ones with your contacts.
  - D. Build engaging small groups, especially Bible studies.
  - E. Build exciting, challenging, welcoming large groups, especially the Large Group Meeting.
  - F. Develop leaders. (See “Developing Leaders”.)
  - G. Build a leadership group. (See “Developing Leaders”.)

VI. Comments.

- A. Beware lest you focus on these steps and forget the Stages of Group Development!
- B. Going from step 1 to 7 can take anywhere from 1 year (if you start with many contacts, some of whom are mature) to 5 years (if you start with a few young contacts).
- C. These are the *activities* you do; within these activities you must develop the five Stages of Group Development.
- D. *The irreducible minimum activities are freshmen outreach and a teaching meeting. Your ministry will fail if you do these poorly.*
- E. Well-executed *Ministry Team (Core Group), small group Bible studies, and outreach activities* are necessary to *growth*. The ministry will dwindle if these are neglected.
- F. All other activities, such as mission trips, conferences, and concerts – while possibly very valuable in themselves – can *diminish* a ministry if they rob energy from the five essential programs: freshmen outreach, a teaching meeting, Ministry Team, small group Bible studies, and some sort of outreach activity.

VII. Taking an Existing Group.

- A. Always begin by carefully studying the demographics and geography of your campus.
- B. Get as much information as possible about the group from the outgoing campus minister and the Area Coordinator.
- C. Carefully evaluate the group in terms of the five Stages of Group Development.
- D. Carefully evaluate the five essential programs.
- E. Determine if there are any other activities which are draining energy from the five essential programs.
- F. Devise a plan to strengthen the group.
- G. Implement the plan.

VIII. Freshmen Outreach.

- A. The goal is to show freshmen that you are a significant part of the university community and that you genuinely care about them.
- B. Include as many RUF members as possible in freshmen outreach.
- C. You want to meet as many freshmen as possible in the first days and weeks of school.
- D. Try to follow-up all contacts within 24 hours with an email, phone call, visit, or note; then keep in touch.
- E. Invite them to something that is happening the first week – several things if possible.
- F. Hold large and small group meetings the first week.
- G. Introduce them to other RUF members, particularly those in their dorm.
- H. Someone needs to keep good records of names, email addresses, etc. of all new contacts.
- I. Monitor the progress of all contacts in assimilating into RUF.

IX. Large Group.

- A. Each Large Group Meeting must meet the needs of the group that week.
- B. The first Large Groups of the year must be geared toward welcoming freshmen and other new students.
- C. Choose the scripture you will teach on the basis of the needs of the group that semester – not because you saw another campus minister teach something.
- D. Preach to the heart! Encourage! Alarm! Challenge! Let no one leave the meeting unchanged.
- E. Create a heart for God and people in your teaching.
- F. Instruct in what biblical ministry is like.
- G. Always hold up Jesus, whatever you are teaching.

- X. Training students to serve.
  - A. Training: the process of equipping someone with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to fulfil a specific responsibility.
  - B. TDOEE summarizes the training process.
    - 1. Teach: give knowledge of the responsibility.
    - 2. Demonstrate: show the responsibility being performed satisfactorily.
    - 3. Observe: watch the trainee attempt to perform the responsibility.
    - 4. Evaluate: criticize his performance.
      - a. Both positive and negative.
      - b. Tell him how to build on his strengths and correct his weaknesses.
    - 5. Encourage: cultivate the conviction that success is possible and progress is occurring.
  - C. TDOEE assumes a context in which the trainer and trainee are involved in *doing* ministry *together*.
    - 1. Teaching is not training. Teaching is only one part of training. Lecturing to your core group is not training, and will not develop leaders.
    - 2. Training must intentionally make use of all aspects of ministry. E.g. there must be opportunities for students to watch you minister, and for you to watch them minister.
    - 3. The Core Group is the primary arena for developing leaders – as long as you do not use Core Group to lecture on the Philosophy of Ministry, etc. (see XII.)
    - 4. RUF has overemphasized teaching and neglected DOEE.
    - 5. TDOEE grows out of the Learning Process, which is God’s plan for human development.
- XI. The Leadership Development Environment.
  - A. The whole ministry must build the foundation for developing leaders.
    - 1. Is your Large Group teaching (among other things) preparing people for leadership?
    - 2. In particular, is your Large Group teaching imparting the convictions and values necessary for Christian leadership?
    - 3. In Large Group do students see leadership in action? Do they see the campus minister and other students relating to other individuals and drawing them into the group?
    - 4. Do the small groups impart the convictions and values necessary for Christian leadership, or are they directionless?
    - 5. In small groups are students actively caring for other students?
    - 6. Are students steadily being grounded in knowledge of the Bible, theology, and philosophy of ministry?
    - 7. Are students steadily being called to biblical purpose and goals?
    - 8. Is it obvious that serving God in leadership is rewarding, or do leaders in your group burn out?
    - 9. Is the focus of your ministry Jesus, or RUF?
  - B. The Ministry Team (Core Group) is the primary arena for developing leaders.
  - C. Special small groups and conferences can play a big role.
    - 1. Leadership study group.
    - 2. Year-end and winter planning retreats.
  - D. One-to-ones provide the individual focus.

XII. Ministry Team (Core Group).

A. Purpose of the Ministry Team.

1. Most emphatically *not* to lecture on theology, ministry, the Philosophy of Ministry, or any other topic.
2. The Ministry Team exists to minister to students. Its members are junior partners with the campus minister in ministering to the group.
3. The Ministry Team and its members are to be involved in ministry: leading Bible studies, serving on the worship team, doing publicity, organizing the missions trip, etc.
4. Ministry Team is the environment where the campus ministry can do TDOEE with greatest effectiveness.

B. The Ministry Team Meeting.

1. The focus of the meeting is on ministry to people.
2. Thus the bulk of the time will be devoted to discussing ministry to people.
3. Learning occurs as students attempt to minister, report their efforts, and discuss their work with each other and the campus minister – TDOEE!
4. TDOEE should be the guideline for Ministry Team meetings.

XIII. Levels of an RUF Ministry.

A. Initial Group (0-15 members, years 1-3).

1. Sometimes started with a very gifted student leader.
2. Most members are average students with below-average leadership ability.

B. Young Group (10-30 members, years 2-4).

1. Still attracting mainly people with average to below-average natural leadership ability.
2. Seeing the fruit of your labors in students who are competent to lead a small group.
3. Viability reached at 20 members; group can plateau here.

C. Established Group (25-60 members, years 3-6).

1. Begin attracting a small, but regular stream of “natural leaders”.
2. Developing a steady stream of trained members and leaders.
3. Plateau can occur at 40 due to increasing group security and inability to know everyone in the group.
4. Plateau can occur at 60 due to great group security and greater leadership challenge to grow past 60.

D. Penetrating Group (50 members and up, usually after 5 years).

1. Consistently attracting top-rate student leaders.
2. Training active members and highly skilled leaders.
3. As growth continues, periodic restructuring becomes necessary to maintain a manageable, dynamic community.

XIV. Hindrances to group development.

- A. Slack freshmen outreach.
- B. Failure to match the teaching content to the needs of the group.
- C. Failure to preach to the heart.
- D. Using Ministry Team and other small groups as preaching platforms.
- E. Failure to train students in the Stages of Group Development.
- F. Failure to develop a strategy for steady growth.
- G. Mission trips and other tertiary programs.

- XV. Principles of group development.
- A. Maintain a solid foundation: scripture, doctrine, philosophy of ministry.
  - B. Keep your purpose in view: Reaching Students for Christ, Equipping Students to Serve.
  - C. Know your campus.
  - D. Work hard at freshmen outreach.
  - E. Preach to the heart.
  - F. Move students through the Stages of Group Development.
  - G. Form a Ministry Team when students begin to understand that the essence of ministry is caring for people.
  - H. Train and place students in positions of service: Bible study leaders, worship team, publicity, etc.
  - I. Develop the Ministry Team into a body that “owns and operates” the ministry.
  - J. Depend upon God!
- XVI. Our job is to build a group, not merely to preach the gospel.
- A. Building a group is a work of God.
  - B. It is neither mechanical nor magical.
    - 1. The secret is not simply following the right procedure.
    - 2. Nor can you expect success by hoping for God to create a group regardless of what you do.
  - C. We are calling you to recognize the way God works with people and join Him in that work, depending upon His grace for success.