



Making Disciples Through Groups

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OF THE GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION

JUNE 2015

“Making Disciples through Groups”

By Dr. Tim S. Smith

Before we discuss the role of a group in disciple making, we must first examine the beginning of the journey. In order for a person to grow as a disciple of Jesus, that person must first be a follower of Jesus. To begin the journey of faith, a person must surrender their life to the Lord Jesus and receive the gift of eternal life.

When a person becomes a Christian, they must have and keep the desire to grow as a follower of Jesus. Too many church members want the benefits of membership, but are unwilling or simply don't want to pay the price of commitment. It is extremely important to have the desire to mature spiritually, and even when life becomes difficult the “want to” must still be there for a Christian to grow.

Every living thing needs nourishment and the same is true of a growing follower of Jesus.

The things we feed our minds will determine our spiritual health but equally important are the activities in which we are engaged. In order to grow, we must be committed to daily Bible study and prayer. We must also avoid those things that could become a substitute for our relationship with God.

Those we spend our time with and what we do with them is vital to our growth as Christians. As a believer in Jesus we must be developing friendships with non-Christians. We should be seeking to influence them instead of them influencing us. We need to be a faithful witness in proclaiming what Jesus has done for us and we must be willing to serve others. We also are connected with other Christians and we should seek to build relationships with them. The influence of other Christians is where we begin to discuss the importance of groups. Every believer needs to be connected to a small group that has for its goal to make disciples.

So what is the role of a group in making disciples? This is not the perfect list but the following seven ideas are my thoughts, observations and practices when it comes to “groups that make disciples”.

1 – The church leaders and group leaders must know “why” for groups to exist. If the leaders don't have a grasp on the mission, purpose and goals of the class/group, then nothing positive will be gained. According to Jesus, the goal of every Sunday School class and small group Bible study is to make disciples!

2 – In order to make an impact the class/group must gather consistently. This is why a weekly gathering is best. The structured class or group time is important, but the group members must also be connected with outside group experiences. There must be the experience of doing life together.



Dr. Tim S. Smith
State Missionary
Specialist of Sunday
School Small Group
Ministries

3 – The structured gathering class/group time and the members of the group must create an environment that is a safe place and a place where trust can be developed. Every person, no matter what, must be valued and respected. The sharing of ideas and the freedom to ask any question is needed in classes/groups that are making disciples.

4 – During the weekly structured class/group time, the study of the Bible must be given center stage and the majority of the time allowed. There must be a major emphasis on application, not just studying the Bible like a history book or literature book. We don't come to Sunday School or small group Bible study to gain knowledge so that we can win the Bible trivia game! We've got to let God change us through His Word.

5 – People learn better when they are engaged. We remember almost 70% of what we discuss, so let's make sure that our class/group experiences are designed for engagement and discussion. We've got to have teachers and leaders who are willing to teach using styles that are different from their preferred method of learning, and teach with a variety of methods so that all members are engaged.

6 – We don't like this word – accountability – but it is a must in any disciple making relationship. There is no spiritual growth outside the realm of accountability. In order for me to grow spiritually, I must allow my group leader/members the freedom to speak the truth to me. I must be open and honest with them. The person that hides their sin and shortcomings does not grow spiritually.

7 – If we are really serious about making disciples then we will start new classes/groups. The best way to grow spiritually is to be a leader. The class/group must be producing new leaders and new classes/groups! If the class/group fails to produce a new leader and/or a new group within sixteen months, it doesn't understand making disciples.

Could the reason that your church is not growing, your Sunday School class is stalled or your small group is stuck be because your church, class or group is not focused on making disciples?



Online registration at
<http://gabaptistgroups.org/growinggroups2015>
Cost: \$25 until the Monday before the event; \$35 regular/walk up
If you have any questions please contact our office 1-800-746-4422 ext.285 or 770-936-5285.

7:30 a.m.	Breakfast and LifeWay Bookstore	11:15 a.m.	General Session/Plenary Speaker “How Groups Grow the Church”
7:45 a.m.	Registration	12:15 p.m.	Lunch/Bookstore
8:55 a.m.	General Session/Instructions	1:15 p.m.	Special Interest Session #1
9:30 a.m.	Age Level Teachers/Leaders Session	2:15 p.m.	Break/Bookstore
10:45 a.m.	Break/Bookstore	2:30 p.m.	Special Interest Session #2
		3:30 p.m.	Dismiss

9:30-10:45 a.m. Age Level Teachers	1:15-2:15 p.m. Special Interest #1	2:30-3:30 p.m. Special Interest #2
Growing Preschool Groups	Preschool/Children's Safety and Security	Bible Teaching Through Activities for Preschoolers
Growing Children's Groups	Dealing with Difficult Situations	Fun Bible Learning Activities for Children
Growing Youth/Student Groups	Spiritual Growth	Creative Teaching Ideas/Technology
Growing Younger Adult Groups 20-40 yrs	Reaching and Keeping Young Adults	Teaching Parents to Disciple Their Children
	Connecting with Young Adults 18-24	Dynamics of a Successful Singles Group
Growing Adult Groups 50 and up	How to Lead a Bible Study that Engages Your Group	Characteristics of Growing Gender Based Groups
Growing Your Groups for Directors/Coaches	Recruiting Leaders & Multiplication of Groups	Tips for Productive Leadership Meetings
Growing your Groups for Pastors/Church Staff	Effective Ministry With a Busy Life	How to Start Small Groups in a Traditional Church

Dates, Locations and Plenary Speakers

 <p>August 8 Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula Bob Mayfield Sunday School & Discipleship Specialist Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma</p>	 <p>August 22 Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany Josh Hunt Sunday School/Small Groups Author and Speaker</p>
 <p>Warren Baptist Church, Augusta Dr. Ken Hemphill Director of the Center for Church Planting and Revitization North Greenville University</p>	 <p>Eagles Landing First Baptist Church, McDonough Jason Britt Lead Pastor Bethlehem Church</p>
 <p>August 15 Second Baptist Church, Warner Robins Dr. Thom Rainer President/CEO Lifeway Christian Resources</p>	 <p>August 29 Tabernacle Baptist Church, Cartersville Allan Taylor Minister of Education First Baptist Church Woodstock</p>
 <p>First Baptist Church, Statesboro Dr. Don Hattaway President of the Georgia Baptist Convention & Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Cartersville</p>	 <p>First Baptist Church on the Square, LaGrange Dr. Lawrence H. Phipps Leader of “It's Life Ministries”</p>

2015
National
SUNDAY SCHOOL
DIRECTOR
Seminar

VALDOSTA, GA
Northside Baptist Church
OCT. 24, 2015

LIFEWAY.COM/NSSDS

**\$39 for online registration (above)
\$39 + tax per person at the door**

The National Sunday School Director Seminar is highly energetic, intensely focused, quickly moving, and totally devoted to the Sunday School Director! It is also beneficial for pastors, ministers of education, general leaders, departmental leaders, and age division coordinators.

What will NSSDS do for you?

- Equip Sunday School directors to serve effectively in all areas of Sunday School work
- Deliver practical tools for all aspects of Sunday School work
- Facilitate opportunities to network with other Sunday School directors

- Build team spirit among the Sunday School director, minister of education, pastor, and division and department directors

Through the 2015 NSSDS training you will:

- Gain insight into the purpose and mission of Sunday School
- Develop practical growth skills
- Learn to transform lives through teaching
- Build a step-by-step strategy in leading a healthy growing Sunday School

For more information, contact: Wayne Poling, LifeWay Christian Resources, 615.251.2685 or wayne.poling@lifeway.com

SCHEDULE

- 8:00 a.m.** Registration
- 8:30 a.m.** Session #1 – Instilling a Sense of Purpose and Mission in Your Sunday School
- 10:00 a.m.** Session #2 – Blueprints for Growing Your Sunday School
- NOON** Lunch
- 12:45 p.m.** Session #3 – Developing Life Changing Bible Teaching
- 2:15 p.m.** Session #4 – Building a Strategy for My Sunday School
- 3:30 p.m.** Dismiss

Growing Groups Online

Sunday School / Small Group Ministries offers training throughout the year. One of the ways that we assist churches and individuals in training is through our online video training or, what we like to call Growing Groups ONLINE...

The benefits of training Growing Groups ONLINE...

1. Available at the time & location that YOU want but requires access to the internet.
2. Involves content that many of our Georgia Baptist churches are dealing with or a need they might have as they lead churches
3. Accessible through web, tablet, or smartphone
4. Many training videos include PowerPoint and/or listening guide
5. Totally FREE!!!



**October 20, 2015 | 8:30am-4:30pm | Cross Pointe Church
1800 Satellite Blvd. | Duluth, GA 30097
\$15.00 per person**

“Today’s church buildings are not just containers for ministries, but can be designed to enhance community, facilitate worship and provide dynamic environments where divine appointments happen. Find out how your church can provide facilities that extend ministry beyond the Sunday morning experience to become a 7-day a week gathering place where both believers and those not yet committed can encounter Christ’s love. Architects, Developers, and Stewardship Consultants will be on hand to share and discuss important aspects of the planning and building process.”

If you are thinking about building a compelling environment for ministry or renovating your facility in the next several years, join us for this conference designed to prepare you for the planning and construction process. You’ll get sound advice from creative and experienced architects and financial ministry leaders on how to successfully create a more effective place for your ministry.

**Call 615-251-2466 for more information
or visit www.lifeway.com/churcharchitecture**

Our staff is committed to providing you some of the most informative and helpful videos we can. The training sessions will range from short tips which last no longer than 10 minutes, round table discussions that might include resources or Georgia Pastors and Staff who are discussing a specific topic, or content you could use in your leadership meetings.

These Growing Groups ONLINE sessions are 3 – 45 minutes and usually include listening guides and PowerPoint presentations. You are welcome to use these as you see fit. We also offer additional resources that will be of assistance to you through our estore. Visit <http://gabaptist.org/groups> and go to our estore.

These resources are from our own Dr. Tim S. Smith or one of our Georgia Baptist pastors.

In addition to our videos we want to stay in touch. Find us... www.gabaptistgroups.org

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Find us...

www.gabaptistgroups.org

or

You can also...

“LIKE” us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/gabaptistsundayschool>

“Follow” us on Twitter

@gbcsundayschool

Pinterest

<http://pinterest.com/gbccsg/>

We do our best to assist churches through our blog posts, videos and events.

Please join us!

We are thankful these resources can be offered through your gifts to the Cooperative Program and the Mission Georgia offering.

2014 "FASTEST GROWING"

SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUPS CHURCHES IN THE GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION

If you believe what you read or what you hear, then you may think that Sunday School and Small Groups are dying. The truth is that we've got some great churches doing some great things with Sunday School and Small Groups in Georgia. In 2014 there were 823,934 people involved in a Sunday School class and/or a discipleship small group that were connected to a Georgia Baptist church.

Those 823,934 people were involved in one of the 45,039 Sunday School classes and/or small groups connected to a Georgia Baptist church. That averages out to about 20 people per class or group. With that average in mind, we could reach 1 million in Sunday School/Small

Groups if we started 12,500 new classes and groups.

The churches on the fastest growing list for 2014 understand the importance of starting new classes/groups. The Sunday School/Small Group Ministries of the Georgia Baptist Convention conducts a research project entitled the "Fastest Growing Sunday School/Small Group Churches" of the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC). The reason that the SS/SGM continues the recognition of these churches is that the GBC needs to continually renew our efforts in making disciples through groups.

It does take several months to gather all the information from 3,600+ Georgia Baptist churches. This report is based on the statistics gathered in

the Annual Church Report (ACR). If you are a Sunday School Director, Small Group Director, Minister of Education and/or Pastor it is very important that you complete the ACR with accurate statistics. The report from your church helps all of us better understand the condition of all churches and thus develop better ministries and resources to aid our churches.

In order to be in the study a church had to turn in an ACR for 2014 and to have given to missions through the Cooperative Program. We looked at every church's percentage gain in Sunday School/Small Group average attendance, net gain in Sunday School/Small Group average attendance, net gain in Sunday School/Small Group average attendance, net gain in Sunday School/Small Group average gain in Sunday School/

Small Group enrollment, net gain in Sunday School/Small Group enrollment, and total baptisms from 2011 - 2014. We are looking for churches that reach new people, assimilate those they are reaching and are reproducing disciples.

Where the church is in the list of each of the above criteria determined the number of points. For example, if the church is listed 12th on the percentage gain in Sunday School/Small Group average attendance, then the church would get 12 points. The church with the lowest overall point score will be ranked first in the "Fastest Growing" list.

We also placed every church in a size category based on their Sunday School/Small Group average weekly attendance from

their 2014 ACR. Micro = 49 or less, Small = 50-100, Intermediate = 101-199, Medium = 200-399, Large = 400-699, and Mega = 700 or more.

Congratulations to these churches and keep up the good work. To all other churches, remember that your Sunday School and/or Small Group ministries is the best method to reach new people for Christ, the best way to grow people in Christ and the best tool to reproduce disciples that will make more disciples.

➤ To see the list of the 150 Fastest Growing SS/SG churches in the GBC, visit our website gabaptistgroups.org.

Age Group Resources



Every age division has a resource addressing specific issues. If you are a leader of a preschool, children's, youth or adult class then there is book just for you. If you are a pastor or Sunday School director there is a book for you as well. All of the resources in this series share common themes.

Each book deals with the following topics; the purpose and mission of Sunday School, organizing your class, specific age group ministry position descriptions, the value of record keeping, ministry to members, outreach to prospects, getting your class involved in outreach, preparing to lead a Bible study session, presenting a Bible study session, getting your class involved in the Bible study, the value and purpose

of curriculum, classroom management issues, sample room set-ups, training, multiplication of new leaders and new classes, and the spiritual life of the Sunday School leader. The cost for each book is \$3.00 and includes shipping/handling. To order copies for your church and leaders visit <http://gabaptist.org/product-category/sssg2/> or call 770.936.5286.

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2014-2015 Annual Church Report

The beginning of the summer is a reminder that the 2014-2015 church year will be ending in just a few weeks. Every year Sunday School/Small Group Ministries (SS/SGM) conducts a study of all Georgia Baptist churches and the source of that study is your Annual Church Report (ACR). The SS/SGM desires for every church to be included in the study, so it is very important for every church to complete an ACR.

We are asking for your help in making sure that your church completes the ACR for the 2014-2015 church year. Below you will see the six statistical questions being asked for Sunday School and Small Groups.

Sunday School

Ongoing classes and/or groups (all ages) that meet on the church campus on Sunday morning for the purpose of Bible study, Evangelism and fellowship;

- _____ Sunday School enrollment
- _____ Average Sunday School attendance
- _____ # of Sunday School classes or groups

Small Groups

Ongoing classes and/or groups that meet for Bible study in a home, apartment, restaurant, office, nursing home, etc, as well as those groups meeting at church for Bible study at a time other than Sun AM.

- _____ Small Group enrollment
- _____ Average Small Group attendance
- _____ # of Small Groups

Average Small Group Attendance – average number of people who attended a Bible study small group each week during the reporting year. Include all ages, but not counting anyone twice.

Average Sunday School Attendance – average number of people who attended or were regularly involved in a Sunday School class or group each week. Include all ages, but not counting anyone twice.

Small Group Enrollment – total # of people involved or enrolled in Bible study small groups other than Sunday Am Sunday School.

Sunday School Enrollment – total number of people (all ages) involved or enrolled in Sunday morning School classes/groups.

Please help with this important task. When you receive your ACR packet, usually in August or September, please complete it and forward it to your associational office.

VBS REPORTING

By Jenni Carter
State Missionary

Do you ever wonder what we do with the VBS Reports that we ask you to send in each year? First, we rejoice as we look over the numbers and see how many have made professions of faith and prospects that have been discovered as a result of your VBS. Then we pray that you will be able to continue the connections you've made during VBS so that you can continue to reach out to your community. Finally, we pass the information to our Research Department



Jenni Carter

which helps us to know what's going on in VBS in Georgia so that we can track trends and plan training events accordingly. I had the privilege of visiting 22 different VBS events around Georgia last summer. I loved and learned from each one, but I can't get to every VBS, so the only way we can know what's going on is for you to send in those forms. If you don't have your form, simply go to www.gabaptistgroups.org and you'll find one there. I can't wait to see how God will work through your VBS this summer!



Attention Part/Full Time Children's Ministers



Speaker – Mark Jones
(Mr. Mark's Classroom)

KIDS MINISTRY SUMMIT

February 4 – 5, 2016
Jekyll Island Club

Registration will open September 1, 2015
For registration information visit gabaptistgroups.org



REGISTRATION: www.gbace.org

GBACE Conference
2016 Georgia Baptist Association
of Christian Educators Conference

Flat Creek Baptist Church | 161 Flat Creek Trail, Fayetteville, GA 30214
Thursday, January 21, 2016 | 9:00 am – 4:15 pm
SHIFT is the focus for our 2016 GBACE Conference

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Thom Rainer, President of LifeWay Christian Resources

Ministry in this day and age requires us to think outside the box. We live in a world that is not only non-Christian, but in many ways, anti-Christian. People are showing up at the doorstep of our churches with baggage like we've never seen before and asking for help. There is a significant deficit of capable leaders in our churches to meet the demands of today's ministry.

Opportunities to impact our communities and beyond with the gospel are everywhere, but require us to adapt, move, change and think differently. SHIFT will challenge you to see the crucial issues facing those who serve in our churches and to find solutions that will help us as we seek to further the gospel, mature believers and expand God's Kingdom.

The theme for our VBS Jumpstarts for 2016 is Delegate!

In order to have a successful VBS you need to learn to delegate some ministry positions to other leaders. Come to one of our twelve Jumpstarts to find out what you need to be doing now to have a successful VBS this summer.

The schedule will be as follows:

- 7:00 pm – 7:45 pm**
Learn the Power of Delegation
- 7:45 pm – 8:30 pm**
Your Choice:
LifeWay Curriculum Overview
Other Curriculum Options



Jumpstart Dates and Locations:

January 19, 2016

- First Baptist, Statesboro – 108 North Main Street, Statesboro
- Colquitt County Associational Office – 1826 5th Street SE, Moultrie
- First Baptist, Monroe – 202 McDaniel Street, Monroe

January 21, 2016

- First Baptist, Americus – 221 S Lee Street, Americus
- Summerville First Baptist – 125 Georgia Ave., Summerville
- First Baptist, Washington – 105 W. Robert Toombs Ave., Washington

January 26, 2016

- First Baptist, Douglas – 124 N. Gaskin Ave., Douglas
- Tabernacle Baptist, Macon – 6611 Zebulon Rd., Macon
- Clayton Baptist Church, Clayton – 87 S. Church St., Clayton

January 28, 2016

- First Baptist, Villa Rica – 1483 W Highway 78, Villa Rica
- Gresston Baptist, Eastman – 1444 Gresston Baptist Road, Eastman
- First Baptist Cumming – 1597 Sawnee Dr., Cumming



The "Taking Your Groups to the Next Level" training event is for pastors, staff, and laypersons who want to become better leaders of your Sunday School or Small Group Ministries. The Training will be provided by Lifeway Leadership along with our Sunday School / Small Group Specialist and Consultants.

Dates and Locations:

- February 22, 2016** – Norman Park Conference Center
4243 US Highway 319 N;
Norman Park, GA 31771
- February 23, 2016** – Hopewell Baptist Church
5086 Poplar Springs Road;
Gainesville, GA 30507
- February 24, 2016** – First Baptist Church of Douglasville
5900 Prestley Mill Road;
Douglasville, GA 30135

General Information:

Register online at gabaptistgroups.org
Schedule includes breakfast and lunch from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Cost will be \$15.00 per person

Conferences/Breakout Sessions:

- Church Staff & Directors/Coaches
- Adult Leaders
- Student leaders
- Preschool and Children Leaders
- General Session** - "Why THEY Stayed"... by Dr. Steve Parr

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