

# **How to Multiply my D-Group**



# Important Questions

“How do I find someone to disciple?”

“Where will I find a potential apprentice?”

“Where will I find the people who will multiply into a healthy, thriving D-Group?”

Leaders are only asking these questions when they have caught the dream and vision of seeing Heaven on Earth through each individual the Holy Spirit lives in and works through as a result of their D-Group. While I am wildly drawn to the most explicitly practical solutions, the first answer to these questions is how Jesus did it. He discovered leaders through spending a night in prayer before selecting them (Luke 6:12-13) and then told us to pray also since there are plenty of people to bring to Him but we just don't have enough disciple-making leaders (Matt. 9:37-38).

A mentor of mine became a small group leader when he was young and wanted someone to disciple. So he prayed that God would give him someone. Two weeks later someone approached him about being discipled. They met in the dorm common room. He loved it so much he asked God for another. Two weeks later someone said they had overheard their conversations and wanted to be part of it. Again he asked God for another disciple. Two weeks later a roommate from one of the three asked to join. Eventually there were five, they all said the group changed their lives, and the next semester they each started their own group.

God is always looking for potential leaders. Multiplying leaders is cooperating with God in His plan to find and mentor potential leaders. It's all about getting in on what God is already doing and working WITH God in discovering them. If it's something you want then pray and expect God to bring you someone or multiple someones.

## Developing a New Leader

The principle job of a D-Group leader is not filling the group - it's training the next D-Group leader. First you have to identify the potential leader. The following are some good suggestions for identifying potential leaders:

### Identification

1. Pray God would send and reveal your apprentice.
2. Look for someone in your group who is eager to serve and friendly.
3. Look for FAITH: Faithful (they do what they say they will do), Available (for the tasks ahead), Integrity (person with character), Teachable (deeply believes they can always learn and grow), Hear for God (Evidence of love for Jesus, not just salvation).

4. Before you ask him or her to apprentice under you give them these responsibilities and see if they take them and own them:
  - Icebreaker
  - Intro to the lesson
  - Worship time
  - Help with Mission coordinator
5. Talk to your coach or pastor about considering this person for potential leadership.
6. Approach the person, encourage them with what you've seen and explain the process of apprenticeship and eventual goal of leading the current group or a new one.
7. Carry out the 4 steps of apprenticeship (see below)
8. Take your apprentice to leadership events or meetings with your coach or pastor.
9. Dialogue with your coach or pastor about areas of growth for your apprentice and how to help them get there.
10. Help your apprentice start their new group or take over your current one so you can start another one. Ensure they have the key roles of a D-Group covered in the group.
11. Continue on in friendship and partners in the Kingdom of God

## 4 Steps: Model, Mentor, Motivate, and Multiply

Jesus was the model of leadership multiplication and his method still proves true today:

**Modeling** means asking potential leaders to watch as you lead group and love people (Matt. 9:32-38). This is so they SEE highly effective leading so ensure you are owning your leadership because someone is watching and learning. [You do they watch]

**Mentoring** means delegating responsibilities in the group to them to create maturity. In this you watch, assist, gently correct, and encourage (Matt. 10:1). [You do they help/they do you help]

**Motivate** means letting them do the task as you encourage from a distance (Matt. 10:5). [They do you watch]

**Multiply** means calling on your potential leader saying, “Okay, you’re ready. Go and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19). Jesus’ disciples multiplied to 70 (Luke 10:1) to maybe 500 (1 Cor. 15:6), to 3,000 (Acts 2:41), to 5,000 (Acts 4:4) to so many Luke just had to say they were multiplied (Acts 6:7).

## 4 Steps in Action

Here is an example of how this process works for training someone to facilitate a group meeting: Juan asks Justin to be his apprentice. They agree to meet the night before the group each week to pray and prepare for the meeting.

- I. *Model it:* Formation night one, Juan does all the preparation and leading, while Justin watches. Juan is careful to explain what, why and how he is doing things along the way.
- II. *Mentor it:* Formation night two, Justin prepares the icebreaker. He practices it in front of Juan. Juan makes some encouraging and helpful comments. Then Justin leads the icebreaker in the group. Juan gives him more encouragement and helpful feedback when they get together in their weekly meeting.
- III. *Motivate it:* Formation night three, Justin leads the icebreaker all by himself. Occasionally, Justin is given helpful feedback and far more encouragement.
- IV. *Multiply it:* Formation night four, Justin shares the icebreaker with confidence and skill.

If Juan is smart, he will do basically the same thing with each piece of the group until Justin can do each element confidently. Jesus gave us a simple, yet powerful way to train and release new leaders with this four step process. I've used it many times successfully. If you will embrace it you, too, will produce confident and competent leaders for D-Groups.

Again, experience has shown my error. As a young small group leader with little knowledge I prayed a lot because it felt like all I had. My plans were feeble but my unashamed dependence on God “do something or this will fail” was not. I had more fruit the years I prayed more and knew less than the years I’ve known exponentially more and prayed almost correspondingly less.

The most effective small group leaders pray and they pray a lot. Many surveys of small group leaders showed a correlation between prayer and multiplication. Leaders who spent 90 minutes or more in daily devotion multiplied their groups twice as often than those who spend less than half an hour. The 8 habits are easier for the one who takes this one seriously and harder for the ones who don't.

# Starting the New Group

Nothing is more fun for the person who dreams of seeing God's Kingdom advance and Jesus be loved and honored through the multiplication and start of new healthy groups. There is no single "right way" to start the new group but the following three methods or combinations of them can be effective to start this new exciting group off strong.

## 1. Multiply: One Large Group Becomes Two Separate Groups

The vision for multiplication has and is continually shared with the group. A new leader is selected, developed, and he or she spends time developing strong relationships with everyone in the group. You as the leader have private conversations with everyone in the group about if they want to stay with the original group or go with the new one. You talk through the roles of a D-Group and ensure they know the group as a whole is going to have to own responsibility of the new group. The goal is to have an equal number in each group.

## 2. Launch: Core Group from Parent Group Starts New Group

The process for this method is the same as the first except that the only people needed to launch the new group are those committed to the four key roles in the D-Group. They start the group knowing they will not have many other members from the parent group and will reach out more to unchurched friends and people in the church not in groups.

## 3. Plant: One Person/Couple from the Parent Group Starts a New Group

The planter can be the original leaders or new leaders. This group can be started with new members in the church, people from the community, members of other groups who want to start a new group, or a combination of all the above.

# For Better Success

### Talk about multiplying early and often.

Start talking about new groups forming from day one. Describe the fact that one of the purposes of the group is to raise up leaders who will be sent out to lead new groups. At least monthly, take time to pray during your meeting about the new groups. Keep your group informed of the plans and progress each step along the way, and it will be far easier when multiplication time arrives. Remember, people can't be excited or involved in something they don't know about.

### Talk about Multiplying Your Group in Positive Terms

Do not speak of "breaking up," "splitting," or "dividing" your group. This just sounds like divorce. Instead, talk about "launching" new groups, "multiplying" groups, and "raising up and releasing" new leaders. Words are powerful.

### **Talk about Multiplying in Terms of the Big Picture**

Every new group formed lowers the number of unchurched people on the planet. New groups equals reaching our world for Jesus. Share this "big picture" view often.

### **Pray about the Best Method and Best Time to Multiply**

It is possible to make the right decision at the wrong time. Maybe the group is ready to multiply for the leaders are not or vice versa. Maybe it's not a good season to launch (summer is not an effective time for a new group to start).

### **Set a Date for Multiplication**

Setting a date for multiplying your group is essential. Joel Comiskey's survey of 700 multiplying small group leaders from around the world points out that:

*"Cell leaders who know their goal — when their groups will give birth — consistently multiply their groups more often than leaders who don't know. In fact, if a cell leader fails to set goals the cell members can clearly remember, he has about a fifty-fifty chance of multiplying his cell. But if the leader sets goals, the chance of multiplying increases to three of four."*

### **Celebrate the New Group**

When you're ready to start the new group, throw a party! Ask your coach or pastor to pray over them. A party like this is a great chance to recast the vision for multiplying.