

01.03.10 / Reverse Engineering Your Life

As 2009 comes to a close and we look ahead to 2010, we have an amazing opportunity to zoom out, see where we are and where God wants us to go, and then work backward to figure out specifically what we need to do, step-by-step, to get there. In essence, it's easier to get where we're going if we have a map. Scripture tells us to count the costs of our actions, to be good stewards of our time and energy, and to plan well for healthy growth. The hope is that this process will help you do all these things well to the benefit of you and your Community Group.

Take a look at all that we desire to see happen in our Community Groups, and then walk with your group through the questions that follow. As the Leader, please take a look at this ahead of time so that you have an idea of where things should go and can steer the group well during the discussion, leaving lots of space for each person in the group to take ownership of the process and really contribute to the specifics. This is an exciting opportunity for the people in your group to take ownership of the group under your leadership.

This is what we envision for all healthy Community Groups. That they would:

- Study and practically apply Scripture to their daily lives
- Pray for one another
- Share meals in the tradition of the Bible
- Meet each other's earthly and spiritual needs
- Challenge each other to become more like Jesus
- Connect one another to service opportunities at Vintage21
- Identify and meet the needs of those in the Triangle as a Community Group
- Plant new Community Groups
- Make disciples who make more disciples
- Invite our friends, families, co-workers, and others to participate in our Community Group
- Connect each other to classes designed for spiritual growth

General Questions

Where has your group excelled in these areas?

Why have you been successful in these areas?

What has caused you to do so well?

Where has your group struggled?

Why have you struggled?

What specifically can you do to move from struggling to excelling?

Defining the Vision for the Future

Pretend it's December, **2010**. Answer the following questions about the future. **WRITE THEM DOWN**. Have someone in your group serve as the scribe if it's helpful. Remember, you're answering these questions in the future, so let your answers reflect what you'd like to see happening at the end of this coming year.

How many groups will your group have planted?

Who will be leading these new groups?

How many days a week are the people in your group studying Scripture on their own?

How are your participants supplementing their spiritual growth?

Who's keeping track of prayer requests?

How are answered prayers being celebrated?

How often are you sharing meals and slow conversation time with the people in your group?

How are you keeping track of who has which needs in your group?

How is the group organized around meeting those needs?

What's in place to encourage accountability within your group?

How are disciples being intentionally made in your group?

Who's in charge of making sure service opportunities are advertised in the group and people are serving based on their gifts?

What needs are you meeting, and what is your group working to redeem in the Triangle?
How is this happening specifically?
Who have you invited to your Community Group?

Reverse Engineering

Now the fun part! Take a look at the answers to each question, and ask yourselves what will need to happen or be in place by the following dates in order to make this a reality:

October 1, 2010
July 1, 2010
April 1, 2010
February 1, 2010

For example (I'll use planting more groups as an example because it's something EVERY LEADER should have as a top priority):

Q: How many groups will your group have planted by December 2010?

A: Three

What needs to have happened or be in place by the following dates to make this happen?

October 1, 2010:

- First two groups have already been planted.
- Third Apprentice is being tested and is about to be planted.
- The group is praying for this Apprentice regularly.

July 1, 2010:

- Second group is about to be planted.
- Currently in conversation with third Apprentice about planting a new group.
- The group is praying for more Apprentices, and people in the group are praying specifically about whether or not God would have them plant a group.

April 1, 2010:

- First group has just been planted.
- Second Apprentice is on board with the idea of planting and will begin taking on more responsibility next week.
- I have 2 other people in mind I'd like to speak with about leading a group.
- The group is praying for me in this process.

January 1, 2010:

- The entire group has a clear understanding of the need for more groups to be planted – they know what the need is and what needs to happen to fill it.
- The entire group is praying for Apprentices to be raised up, both from within the group and in the church as a whole.
- Each person in the group is asking God where he/she should ideally serve in the church.
- I'm making a running list of people that I could see becoming Leaders in 3 months, 6 months, 9 months.
- I'm speaking with my Coach about the people I have my eye on as Apprentices so he/she can more effectively coach me toward my planting goals.
- I have a clear understanding of the training and assessment processes of raising up an Apprentice to plant a group.

To the extent possible . . .

- 1) Do this exercise for each of the major questions you and your group can answer
- 2) Set up a plan to put it all into place
- 3) Get folks in your group on board to play their part

Some Verses for Inspiration

RUNNING THE RACE TO WIN

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

WORK TO FINISH STRONG AND COMPLETELY**John 19:30**

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reverse Engineering as a Leader

The following list is a reminder of what you're charged with as a Community Group Leader. My hope is that having this list here will help you in reverse engineering your approach to leading your CG in 2010. I would recommend investing a couple hours in this sometime this month in order to be as effective as possible as a Leader in 2010. Thank you for your commitment to lead well.

- Training / Support

- Attend and actively participate in monthly Community Group Sync meeting on the third Tuesday of every month, 7pm – 9pm, at the downtown Raleigh Campus
- Willingly and enthusiastically engage in a coaching relationship with his/her CG Coach, meeting once at the monthly Sync meeting and one other time during the month to be decided between Leader and Coach
- Commit to seeking counsel and coaching from his/her Community Group Coach on issues that are beyond his/her capacity or for which it would be prudent to seek such help

- Actively manage the group on The City, using this tool to communicate announcements, prayer needs, events, etc. with those in the group

- Pray for Community Group participants

- Know each person in your Community Group well enough to understand his/her place spiritually (doubter, seeker, follower) in order to better understand how to meet him/her with the Gospel

- Prepare weekly Bible study using the Curriculum Guide and Application Questions

- Lead weekly Community Group Meeting

- Bread – People connect over meals and eating in general, so we challenge our people to break bread in one another's homes.
- Bible – Studying God's Word is essential to following Him, and our people need to be led to this consistently and powerfully. As such, there must be Bible Study at every weekly meeting.
- Prayer – God tells us to pray, and so we must. Corporate prayer is a must at each weekly meeting.

- Do everything in his/her power to raise up and train new two Apprentices or Apprentice teams (husband and wife) from within the group with the intention of planting two new Community Groups each year. We want to have extraordinarily healthy Community Groups not only for those in our church, but also for the entire Triangle. This means we must beg God to show us who our Apprentices should be and what to do in order to prepare them to plant.

- Meet the physical needs of those in the group (while the entire Community Group does the work, it's the Community Group Leader's responsibility to make sure the needs are known and met)

- Plan social events for Community Group outside of weekly meeting (again, while others may do the legwork, the Leader is responsible for making sure people are connecting on multiple levels)

- Drive his/her Community Group to be fully engaged in the mission to Know, Live, and Build

- Lead the group in identifying and meeting specific needs of others in the Triangle who are in need (as a Community Group)

- Maintain awareness of specific sin in the lives of those in the group and guide them toward full resolution, never turning a blind eye to sin

- Know the group participants well enough to connect them to specific service opportunities at Vintage21 Church

- Connect group participants to Journey Classes

- Communicate church-wide announcements to the Community Group whenever asked to do so

- Conduct interviews for those in the group who are pursuing church membership

- Assist Vintage21 Church members in the group with financial accountability regarding their annual pledge

- Refer group participants to Redemption Groups when appropriate