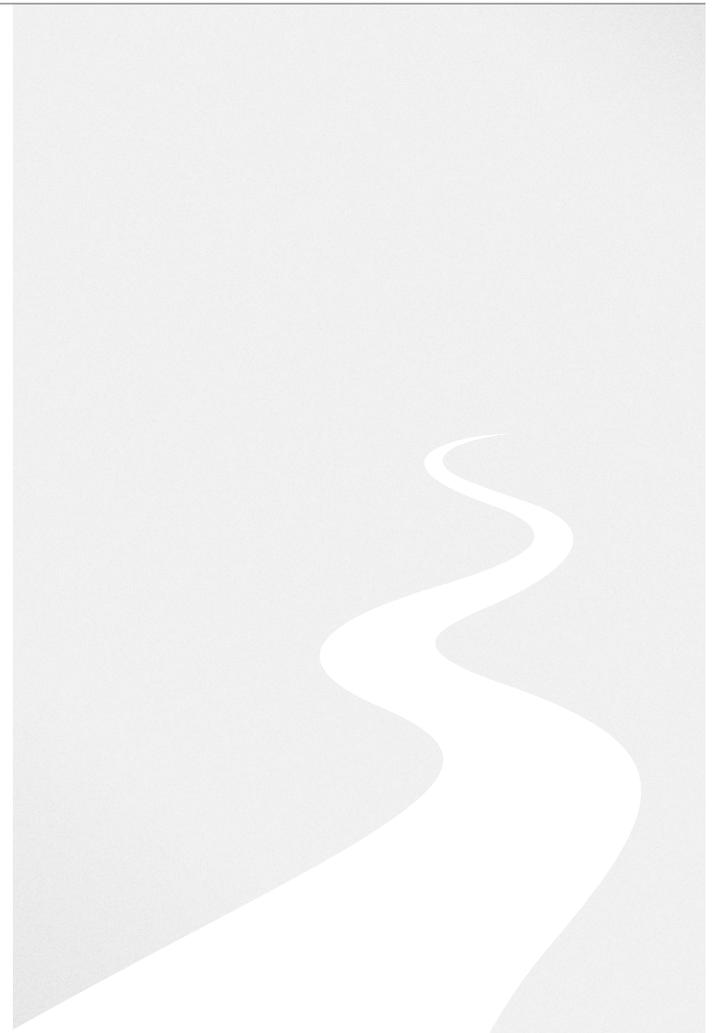
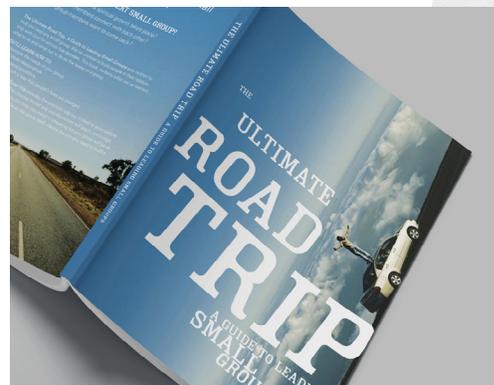


# Small Groups That Reach Out

Excerpt from *The Ultimate Roadtrip: Leading a Small Group* by **Rick Hove**.



Available at the CruStore.



CHAPTER 10

**HELPING STRANDED  
MOTORISTS**



**10.1 MOVING FROM "GETTING" TO "GIVING"**  
**10.2 THE ULTIMATE GIFT**  
**10.3 OTHER IDEAS FOR REACHING OUT**

Jesus told a similar story about people who were too preoccupied, cal-  
loused or scared to help others. We know the story as the parable of the  
Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In this story a foreigner goes out of his way  
to help a total stranger. Jesus didn't tell His parable as a reminder to travel  
safely, carry a cell phone, and join AAA. Rather, He told it to illustrate the  
care we should have for other people. It ends with these words, "Go and do  
likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Many small groups study the Word and provide strength and encourage-  
ment for the members to walk with God. This is how it should be. But sadly,  
often groups never turn the corner from "getting" to "giving." They never  
exist for anything beyond the group itself. This isn't how it's supposed to be.

You can't separate loving God from loving and caring for people. When  
an expert in the law asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment in the  
Law He replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your  
soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And  
the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and Proph-  
ets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Jesus' answer is stunning. The most important issue in life is relation-

ships—our relationship with God and relationships with other people. The Christian life is both a passion for our God and Savior, and a passion for those for whom He came. As we grow in our love for God, we'll love what He loves—people. If you love God, you love people.

So, all small groups should ultimately be committed to both of these priorities. Each group will go about pursuing these commandments in different ways, depending upon the purpose and maturity of the group.

## 10.1

### MOVING FROM GETTING TO GIVING

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**I**t's important for leaders to be committed to helping those in their group learn to care for and be involved in the lives of those outside the group. This doesn't imply that those in the group cease getting and only give. During our entire Christian lives we're getting from God and from other believers. Ideally, believers in a small group should receive, and then give.

Learning to turn the corner from getting to giving is often a difficult step for many Christians, because it's far safer to stay within the confines of the group. However, someone cannot love God without caring about others;

#### JUDY'S TREAT

*Lynne, one of the girls in my Bible study at Vanderbilt, was doing her student teaching at an inner-city school. That Halloween she invited some of her fourth graders to join us for trick-or-treating. Hand in hand we went from door to door with our new friends. The little girls loved the chance to feel safe and loved by some college students. After trick-or-treating we gathered at my house to check out the goodies. We told them about the most important thing in our lives—our relationships with Christ. I shared the gospel and eight of them trusted Christ. It was a fun experience for us and a life-changing one for them. What a treat.*

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:7-8). A good small group will reflect the priority of loving and caring for people.

When a group works together to give to others, there are many benefits. Other people have their needs met by hearing the Good News. Also, the group itself grows closer together, and its compassion for others deepens. Perhaps, greatest of all, they get more excited about Jesus.

How do you help your group get involved in giving? There are two key steps: first, help them see the needs of those around them. Second, give them opportunities to get involved in meeting some of these needs.

### 1 *Help them see.*

Jesus was motivated to care for others because He saw their needs. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). He saw needy individuals. And He was compassionately moved to help them.

Today it’s often difficult for us to see the needs of others. Society fosters independence, isolation, and self-focus so most people are not aware of the needs of others. They are least aware of their spiritual needs.

Your group members must begin to see beyond themselves. Here are four ways to help a group begin to do this.

- First, help them develop biblical convictions about the needs of people. When group members view their family and friends through the values of society, they may not see their spiritual needs, so they lack any motivation to help. An attractive, successful, popular student who doesn’t know Christ is rarely viewed as “harassed and helpless” and “lost” as the Bible describes this person.

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### *Some Biblical Words*

*Used to describe those who don’t know Christ.*

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • <i>Dead</i>                     | • <i>Unrepentant</i>                         |
| • <i>Disobedient</i>              | • <i>Self-seeking</i>                        |
| • <i>Objects of wrath</i>         | • <i>Followers of evil</i>                   |
| • <i>Harassed</i>                 | • <i>Rejecting the truth</i>                 |
| • <i>Helpless</i>                 | • <i>Perishing</i>                           |
| • <i>Godless</i>                  | • <i>Without excuse</i>                      |
| • <i>Wicked</i>                   | • <i>Accountable</i>                         |
| • <i>Suppressers of the truth</i> | • <i>Deceived</i>                            |
| • <i>Darkened</i>                 | • <i>Slaves to sin</i>                       |
| • <i>Fools</i>                    | • <i>Cannot please God</i>                   |
| • <i>Stubborn</i>                 | • <i>Destined for everlasting punishment</i> |

### **GARY'S ROOFTOP**

*When I led a small group at the University of Tennessee, I would take each guy to the top of an academic building overlooking campus. Below us were thousands of students, going back and forth from classes. I would ask each of the guys, "How many of those students do you think know God personally?" It was a sobering statement but a great way to build compassion into the group. Then we would pray for the campus.*

### **SUNG'S TOMBSTONE**

*My leader took our small group to a cemetery one day. We talked about what we would like written on our tombstone. We read names, dates, and inscriptions, and talked about life in general. It was a great wake-up call to the nature of life, the finality of death, and the importance of the gospel.*

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Your group will benefit by studying passages in the Bible describing the spiritual needs of those who don't know Christ. Romans 1:18-3:20 argues how they are rightfully guilty before God (3:9-10) because of their rejection of what God has made plain to them (1:18-20). They worship created things instead of the Creator (1:25) and have fallen short of the glory of God (3:23). Ephesians 2:1-3 describes the state of a person who doesn't know Christ. Revelation 20:11-15 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 depict the tragic fate of those who ignore God's offer of forgiveness and reconciliation.

- Second, help your group develop a heart for others by studying passages which reveal God's heart for people. Pray that God will help you see as He sees and feel what He feels. Some passages which reveal God's heart for people are Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 15, Romans 5:6-8, Luke 13:31-34, Mark 1:40-45 and Luke 19:1-9.
- Third, expose your group to the needs of people. Use examples from everyday experiences, such as articles in the school paper, conversations, news events, etc. When you are in situations with group members, like going to class, McDonald's, or the cafeteria, seize the opportunity to talk about peoples' needs. Perhaps go off campus to see the needs of people, like to a soup kitchen, nursing home or AIDS hospice.

One way to expose your group to the spiritual needs of people is to take surveys around campus. Design questions that fit your particular audience. Have each person take as many surveys as possible and then compile a list of

the top ten needs they see on campus. This will give them a glimpse into the hearts and minds of other students.

Some possible survey questions could include: •What are the greatest needs of people you know? •If you could have one thing you don't have right now, what would it be? •What do you think are the two greatest fears of our generation? •What do you think is the solution for the problems you see in the world? •If a young child asked you, "What happens when people die?," what would you say? •If you could have one question answered about life, what would you want to know?

- Fourth, hold a focus group. Ask ten or so non-Christians to get together for pizza to give you honest feedback on how they think and feel about Christianity. The goal of the time is not to answer their questions, but to honestly listen to what they are thinking and feeling. This may also lead to your group developing some relationships with non-Christians.

Some possible Focus Group questions could include: •What do you perceive is the basic message of Christianity? •What do you like or dislike about Christianity? •How did you form these opinions? •What is your opinion of Christians at this school? •How many of your friends share your views? •If you were a Christian at this university, what would you do to improve your image?

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## 2 Give them opportunities to meet needs.

One of the best ways to expose your group to needs around them is to give them opportunities to give to others. Remember to consider the maturity of your group when you plan an activity designed to help them turn the corner to giving. If you expect too much from a group too fast, they'll be reluctant to do anything.

### MELVITA'S PILGRIMAGE

*I wanted the women in my group to understand what we were studying in Romans 1 and 2. So, I took them on a religious pilgrimage around the city of Washington, D.C. After leaving Howard University, we went to a Hindu temple, a Mormon temple and an Islamic center. I wanted them to observe and learn about these different groups.*

*Afterwards, the girls came over to my place for dinner, discussion and to watch the "JESUS" film. We saw how people are lost and without excuse. We talked about the blindness of people and the task ahead for us to reach them.*

*It was good for the girls to have God open their eyes to the hopelessness of people and the possibilities of God.*

As the leader set an example by sharing your own heart and convictions concerning reaching out to others. Even in a brand new group you can tell about a conversation you had with a friend about Christ. Just like many other

### **SHERRIE'S DATE WITH CHRISTIANS**

*I had a date to the spring formal, but I really wanted to get in with a group of people so it wouldn't be awkward. My roommates were involved in Campus Crusade, and a large group of them were going to dinner together. I asked if we could come along, even though I wasn't a Christian or involved in Campus Crusade. They welcomed us, and that night I had a blast. In fact, I had never had that much fun sober. Over the next few weeks I started attending the Campus Crusade meetings. My friends told me about God and eventually I became a Christian. My senior year I had the chance to lead my own group. It all started because of a fun social adventure with a group of Christians.*

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issues in life, compassion for others is often caught from others. Take individuals in the group with you while you do ministry and they will often come back personally motivated to do the same.

Even the youngest group can give to others with simple activities, such as eating dinner with a group of non-Christians, bringing cookies to someone who's discouraged, praying for someone, inviting a friend to an evangelistic event, tutoring a student who needs help, or help at a food drive or other project on campus. Activities like these aren't threatening to most young group members, but they still help build a caring attitude about those outside of the group.

## **10.2**

### **THE ULTIMATE GIFT**

**A** group can reach out to those around them in many ways, but none is more important than reaching out with the good news of the gospel. Because the greatest need any person has is to be reconciled to God, the ultimate gift we can offer someone is to introduce them to Christ.

Since its beginning in 1951, Campus Crusade for Christ has focused on meeting peoples' spiritual need. Dr. Bill Bright, founder and president of Cam-

pus Crusade, often asks these two questions: “What is the greatest thing that has ever happened to you? What is the greatest thing you can do for others?” These two questions reveal the heart and motivation behind a worldwide ministry committed to offering Christ to the world. Much has changed over the past decades, but our purpose remains the same: to glorify God by helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

The Great Commission was Jesus’ final command to His disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). While Jesus was with them He taught getting and giving. They received from the Lord and went out into the towns and villages to give to others. Now, after His death, they received the ultimate gift, Jesus’ death and resurrection on their behalf. They in turn passed it on, being faithful to help fulfill the Great Commission by making disciples throughout the world.

There are many ways for small groups within Campus Crusade to help fulfill the Great Commission. Not all groups are structured the same way, not all groups have the same purpose or content, and not all groups are directly focused on doing evangelism. However, every campus ministry within Campus Crusade has adopted the mission to help “turn lost students into Christ-centered laborers.” In some form or fashion, each small group within Campus Crusade should help fulfill this mission.

Turning lost students into Christ-centered laborers is a process. Younger group leaders help individuals first develop a heart for those who don’t know

#### **JAY’S EXAMPLE**

*I’ll never forget the first time my group leader, Jay, asked me if I wanted to come along when he talked to someone about Christ while we were at Daytona Beach, Fla. I was terrified, but he was quite calm, and before long he was sharing with this guy who was catching rays beside his car. The guy trusted Christ. I figured that was the end of a good day and it was time to hit the surf, but Jon just went on down to talk to another guy. I think God must have been out to encourage me as a rookie because that day all five guys Jon shared with received Christ. Going along with him changed me more than any lesson ever could have. Later that week I shared Christ for the first time.*

Christ and help them begin to share Christ with others. Usually students need help doing this. They need to be with the group leader as he models how to share his faith. The group leader needs to give them training in how to share the gospel using the “Four Spiritual Laws” or “Would You Like to Know God Personally?”.



### *Bad Ideas on Moving from “Getting” to “Giving”*

- Offer \$5 for each person your group members share Christ with. If compassion doesn't motivate them, who knows...maybe money will.
- Surprise your group by suggesting they hit the quad for some outdoor preaching next Friday at noon. This will win them over to the joy of sharing Christ in a hostile environment.
- Ask a young group to start a new evangelical church in downtown Baghdad.
- Ask them to do something you aren't doing, like talking to unbelievers.

As group members mature in Christ, they often desire to start their own small groups. When this happens, the veteran leader takes on a new role by equipping the younger believers in the group with skills they need to lead their own groups.

As lost students become Christ-centered laborers, more students become actively involved in giving the ultimate gift to others. God's great gift and His Great Commission are at the heart of all we do in Campus Crusade for Christ.

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## 10.3

### **OTHER IDEAS FOR REACHING OUT**

There are a variety of ways your group can reach out to others. It's up to the leader to choose the wisest course for the group in light of its maturity and purpose. Here are some ideas on different ways your group can give to others.

- 1 Have a “bring a friend” small group meeting where everyone invites a non-Christian to the group. In fact, some small groups are designed to be open groups, where members are encouraged to bring new people every week. Do a lesson or activity that would be appropriate for everyone. Cru.comm (see chapter 12) contains two evangelistic Bible study series.
- 2 Do something as a group to give to others, such as Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, or a leukemia drive. Sometimes taking students off campus deepens their heart to share Christ on campus.

- 3 Meet together regularly to pray.
- 4 Invite non-Christian friends along for some sort of adventure, such as paint ball, camping, attending a formal, or simply going out for pizza.
- 5 Plan a group outreach of some kind. You could do an evangelistic meeting in a dorm or fraternity/sorority or plan a party. Another option is handing out evangelistic articles to friends and getting their feedback on it or putting up flyers for the evangelistic website, EveryStudent.com. Maybe the group could show the “JESUS” film to international students.
- 6 Take a missions trip together.

## **CONCLUSION**

Remember that a group will tend to become ingrown by focusing on its own needs. Being involved in ministering to others is essential to following Christ. A group that pursues loving God will naturally love and pursue people as a result.

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### **ALYSIA'S VALENTINE**

*For a long time I had been feeling compassion for Debbie, who lived next to me, but I never seemed to be able to work up the nerve to just talk to her about Christ. Our small group decided to have a Valentine's Day party, so I invited Debbie. We had an icebreaker, food and door prizes. One of our women was the emcee, one led the icebreaker, one gave her testimony, and our small group leader gave a talk called "Keeping the Love Alive." After the offer to receive Christ, Debbie said, "Yes." On the drive back after the party, she said it was the first time she had ever heard the gospel explained.*

### **JENNIFER'S TRIP**

*I participated in a life-changing inner-city missions project with Campus Crusade one summer. I was able to share my faith, make friends in the neighborhoods of New York, and help meet some physical needs around me. The next fall, we recruited a men's small group to go with our group to New York for spring break. Twelve of us flew up to New York together. We had the best time showing the "JESUS" film, sharing our faith, and helping meet the needs of the homeless.*

**FOR THOUGHT / DISCUSSION**

- 1 *What helped you turn the corner from getting to giving in your Christian life? How would you say you are presently doing in this area?*
- 2 *In 2 Corinthians 5:16, Paul writes, "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view." What are some ways you view people around you from a worldly point of view? What would you see in people if you didn't see them from a worldly point of view?*
- 3 *Have you ever been in a group that did some kind of ministry together? What did the group do? What was the result, both outside and inside of the group?*
- 4 *If someone told you they didn't think it was that important for a Bible study to be involved in giving to others, what would you say? How would you defend your view using God's Word?*
- 5 *Given the maturity level of your group and its purpose, what are some creative ways your group can reach out together?*

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*Turning a group from getting to giving is often difficult. Not everyone in the group will want to be involved in evangelism or the other ways of giving to others. Even if you do a good job leading the group in this direction, you'll likely encounter resistance. It's often threatening for group members to publicly associate with Christ. If this happens, remember God the Father cared enough about people to offer His Son, who was misunderstood, maligned and crucified. Being faithful to share Christ with others isn't easy, but it's better than the alternative of being too frightened to get involved with others.*

