

Ten for '10: Build Great Groups in 2010

Written by Bill Craig

In the Adult Ministry area here at LifeWay we've been grateful for the way that church leaders have responded so positively to our [Adult Ministry Strategy](#) of Connect, Grow, Serve, and Go. We understand that most churches, whether they express it with those words or others, desire to interact with adults around those key strategic ideas—*connecting* with God and others, *growing* in their faith, *servicing* the Body of Christ, and *going* in missions and evangelism to a lost and dying world.

Build Great Groups

I also believe that we can strengthen your church and your ministry as we help you *Build Great Groups*. You're going to start hearing more and more from us about how we can help you *Build Great Groups*. You might ask, "why is that so important?"

I'm glad you asked! I'll share more about this in the future, but for now let me share one foundational truth. I believe that churches that are growing and reaching people for Jesus Christ are likely to be healthier and more effective in Kingdom work. Tightly linked to church growth, in fact the *reason* churches are growing, are *great groups* where adults *Connect, Grow, Serve, and Go*.

Ten for 2010

More about my philosophy of building great groups in the future. For now, let me give you ten ideas for building great groups in 2010. I don't expect anyone to try all these ideas in one year—but if you've been wondering how to advance your work with adults, or how to get unstuck, or how to accelerate an already growing ministry, try one or more of these ideas and experience the positive effects of building great groups in 2010. (Note: read all the way through to idea 10 for an offer of a free ministry book.)

1. **Equip and empower your leaders.** If there is one key to great groups, it is having leaders who have been properly enlisted, then equipped and empowered to do their work. Use David Francis' [Connect3: The Power of One Sunday School Class](#) to train Sunday School leaders in their work. Already done that? Train leaders in other Sunday School class roles (Care Group Leaders, Missions Leaders, etc.) in the basic work of Sunday School so they can do a better job helping the teachers build a great group.
2. **Equip and empower your leaders, part 2.** You're a "small group church?" Use Rick Howerton's [Destination: Community](#) to train your small group leaders, or to train prospective small group leaders for future groups. Or discover and entirely new approach to small groups in [Small Group Life Ministry Manual](#).

3. **Start a 2010 Groups campaign.** There are several creative ways to use the year 2010 in a campaign to get new groups started. Try *Ten in '10*—ten new groups in 2010, or ten new people in groups in 2010. Or, if you're willing to stretch, try *20-10*—20 new groups each with 10 people. Or devise your own campaign that fits your church setting. Research shows that for every new ongoing group you start, on average, you'll increase your attendance by 10 people. Research also tells us that people who get involved in a small group tend to stick around (assimilate) better than those who only attend the “big group—worship.” One more idea—think about groups creatively—to reach your goal of many new groups, start different kinds of groups: Sunday School groups, Small Groups, Discipleship Groups, even Evangelism Groups to reach seekers. Remember, every new group will tend to reach 10 people.
4. **January Bible Study.** People frequently ask me to suggest “deeper” Bible study resources from LifeWay. One of the best “deeper” studies any church can do is January Bible study. Check out [Stories for Life](#) resources that can put your adults on a path of deeper Bible study and a better understanding of the parables in the Book of Matthew.
5. **Challenge people about their most important group.** The most important group for any believer is a group of 2: the believer and God, meeting together daily for prayer and Bible reading. Provide [LifeWalk](#) or some other devotional guide to the adults in your church and encourage them to have a daily encounter with God. *LifeWalk* guides adults to read through the Bible in a year and provides tools to help people understand more deeply the Bible in a comprehensive way.
6. **Guide Small Groups on a journey of intentional discipleship.** Have you been concerned about the lack of results and focus of your small groups ministry? Check out [Small Group Life](#) for a brand new way to think about and resource small group Bible study. Authentic small group resources with an intentional scope and sequence—affordable, with free video support, and related Kids Bible study (free). This stuff will help you build great small groups.
7. **Start E-Groups.** Evangelism groups are designed to reach seekers. Try [Discover More to Life](#) as a resource to reach people around your church and in the neighborhoods of your members who don't currently attend church. *More to Life* training resources will be available in March, but the resources available now, are simple to understand and use.
8. **Experience God.** Wonder where God is at work in your community? Has it been a while since you and others in your church have studied [Experiencing God?](#) Maybe you have a whole new generation of believers in your church who have never studied this core discipleship study about finding and doing the will of God. Fall 2010 brings the 20th anniversary of this amazing study that has impacted millions of Christians around the world. Encourage groups in your church to experience the study, or experience it again.
9. **Reach families, strengthen marriages, help parents.** This seems like a multiple step idea—and you'll probably need to adjust it to fit your circumstances. Reach out to families in your community by showing the movie *Fireproof*. Even if you've already done this, offer it again. Even people who've seen the movie will enjoy it again. Start [Love Dare Bible Study](#) groups to begin the week right after you show the movie. Set up a table and sign up people for the study as they leave the movie. For groups of parents in

your church, after they've finished the *Love Dare Bible Study*, offer to start an ongoing Bible study group just for them using [LifeTruths](#). Some folks not parents? Start a *Small Group Life* small group for them, or invite them to join an ongoing group using [Explore the Bible](#).

10. **Mobilize Baby Boomers.** Whether you know it or not, the largest population of adults that has ever existed is about to transition into new stages of life—from empty nest to retirement to recareering—you name it, the Baby Boomers in your church and in the community around you are about to change life for us all again. Discover how to mobilize the Boomers you have and reach the ones around you in [RESPECT: Meaningful Ministry with Baby Boomers in Your Church and Community](#). I've written this new ministry guide, along with Donna Gandy, to help you begin thinking through some of the most significant changes that are on the way because Baby Boomers are moving to a new stage in life.