

available on the schedule that you gave and still is interested with the idea of a Grow Group, then you could just refer him to another group with a schedule that fits him/her.

5. Set for an initial meeting.

If the person expressed interest, ask him to come to the first group meeting that you have set. Here he can meet his prospective group mates and that for him to further understand the nature of the Grow Group Ministry.

For you, as a leader, this initial meeting can actually serve as an opportunity to test who are really interested and who are not. It has always been easy to say yes to an invitation but often times it becomes altogether a different thing when the actual meeting comes.

As it is commonly said also, first impression last. So make the first meeting a good one. Make it warm, unpretentious and spiritual. Impress them of your sincerity to help and be a life companion to them as they struggle in their spiritual life.

In explaining the nature and purpose of the Grow Group use the material titled: Rationale for the Grow Group Ministry found in the Organization Stage. After explaining in detail what a Grow Group is— its objectives and intentions, and have answered their queries, ask them once again, if they want to belong to your Grow Group.

6. Set for an organizational meeting.

To those who would said yes, tell them to come to a commitment meeting. There you will be discussing further the objectives and specific expectations for the members, and then as a group sign the commitment pledge.

For this meeting use the material “Group Goals and Values.” Carefully discuss each item and ask them if they have any question. If they agree with the values and expectations, ask them fill-up the Member’s Pledge.

You can also start coming up with you additional expectations for your group so that the group goals can be facilitated. For example. You can opt to assign a texter for each day who will send inspirational texts to all the members. You can write these additional tasks in the Group Agreement Form provided at the Appendix of this Leader’s Companion.

After filling up the Member’s Pledge, they are now formally part of a spiritual family. You as a leader has now established your Grow Group. End the meeting with a prayer of commitment.

The first task of a leader-to-be is to establish his own group. Before a rabbi can be a rabbi, he must have disciples. Look at the example of Jesus and you will see that one of the most significant part of His ministry was when he invited several people to be his disciples. A leader can establish a group through the following steps:

1. Determine your time and place of meeting.

Being the axle to which the members of the group will be connected to, you have to set a schedule of meeting that suits you best but which others can meet as well.

It would be tragic for the group that as it progresses, it will become apparent that the leader himself is the one finding it hard to meet the schedule. Why set it in the first place a schedule that you yourself as the leader cannot meet.

It is suggested that the group session will be weekly in frequency, not once a month or even less. Neither should it also be several times a week. People have many concerns, and it is not the intention of the Grow Group to snatch them away from these tasks and responsibilities.

Chose also an appropriate place for the meeting. Do not just chose any location. Chose a private place that is free from noise and other distractions.

See to it that the members can possible seat in a circle to observe the right dynamics and proxemics of a small group meeting.

2. Make a list of prospective members.

Because of the time constrains for the group sessions and the myriads of concern that commonly attend a person’s daily life, it is practically suggested that a leader establishes a group of not more than ten persons.

He also need to carefully consider whom shall he invite. Reflecting back in the way Christ choose the twelve, it is reasonable to think that Christ never did a random selection of just walking by the sea and inviting whomever

he chanced upon to be His disciples. It was most likely that He observed his prospective disciples, talked with them previously and considered them seriously before inviting them to be His disciples.

A modern discipler must bear in mind these considerations when making his list of prospective disciples. These would really help him in his task of growing a group. These are:

- **Age Level.**

There is a bigger chance for a group to succeed if the members belong to the same age level, for this would mean similarity in many elements like developmental issues, interests, needs and level of maturity.

- **Intellectual Level.**

Closely related to the age level is intellectual/emotional level. Intellectual Level is loosely equated with educational attainment and experience. A laborer who just finished several grades in elementary might find it hard to blend with persons with doctoral degrees.

- **Language facilitation.**

Some persons might not be good or totally unable to understand the Filipino language like foreigners and people coming from the south or north of the Philippines and instead speak well in English. Mixing them with folks who can only understand Filipino might spell disaster for the group.

- **Other commonalities of life identified.**

Grouping people according to other considerations like seafarers, cancer survivors, and others can also be helpful not only in facilitating bonding but also in catering to a special need that is common among them.

- **Precaution in your choice of group members:**

Avoid racial or tribal grouping that would promote a divisiveness. Though educational background and social standing is a helpful consideration, it must be used with caution for it might be seen by others as elitism or promote such a feeling in others.

- **The issue of denomination.**

The Grow Group Ministry is designed to be an open group in this matter— meaning it does not disqualify anyone to be a member on the basis that he belongs to different Christian denomination. In fact, leaders are encouraged to invite non-Adventists so that they can learn to reach with people of other faith. It would be far-out though to invite non-Christians to join the group, for being a member of a Grow Group presupposes faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Pray for your prospective members.

This is the first task of the Group leader. Since his goal is to bring members closer to God, he will never miss including these prospects in his prayers that they will be prepared by the Holy Spirit when he approaches them.

This is also the first test for a beginning Grow Group leader, if he cannot even continuously pray for his prospective group members, how he can ever have the commitment to disciple them.

4. Invite them.

We cannot help but look back at the story of how Christ called the Twelve. After thousands of years, the scenario is still fresh to be painted before our minds. Christ was walking by the lake and fishermen were attending to their catch and nets. Passing by Peter, James and John, Christ said, “Follow me.” It is said that they immediately left everything. They followed Him and from then on their lives were never the same again.

Talk with your prospective members impressing them of the value of your invitation. Tell them that you are forming a spiritual support group— a kind of a family that they can meaningfully relate, feel accepted and nurtured towards Christian maturity.

It is important that you state the regular schedule and place of the group meeting, so that the person can also decide whether he/she is available on that time. If the person is not