ML110 Group Dynamics

Programmed Syllabus

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Course Description

Group Dynamics is a short course for anyone who leads a ministry group of one kind or another. Groups are the heartbeat of any ministry. That is where the personal touch happens—where hearts are opened, needs are met, lives are changed. People may participate in our ministry groups, but will they be changed as a result? It isn't what we learn in our groups that transforms lives; it's doing something differently because of what we've learned. In this course, students will explore ten effective ways to guide ministry groups.

Course Instructor

Deb McCormick holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Speech Communication and a Master’s Degree in Communications Consultancy. In addition to eight years of corporate leadership experience, Ms. McCormick has more than thirteen years’ experience as a consultant to executives and their teams. Her specialty is facilitating team meetings and retreats designed for creative brainstorming, problem-solving, evaluating, planning, conflict resolution, and team building. Her clients range from small start-ups to Fortune 100 companies. She also consults with teams within schools, government, health care, ministries, and other non-profit organizations. She has authored three books on team leadership.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Lead a small group to deeper personal connections among members
- Guide a group to identifying their purpose for meeting and interacting
- Model effective listening skills
- Observe changed lives as a result of small-group participation

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, interacting with other students, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/ Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be viewed, listened to, and/or read throughout the lessons of the course. Details on these materials will follow in the Course Requirements section.
**Interaction**

Whether they are learning online or in the traditional classroom, students benefit from interaction and collaboration with each other. To that end, CUGN offers structures and resources to encourage effective community interaction in this course.

**Reflection**

Through journaling and the use of interactive exercises, students will be provided with opportunities to reflect on what they are learning, what they believe, and where they are challenged. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth and transformation.

**Lesson Objectives**

At the end of each lesson, students should be able to accomplish the objectives listed below.

**Lesson 1: Introduction to Group Dynamics**

- Explain what it means for a small group leader to help his/her group “make the connection.”
- Define the relationship between context and content in small-group facilitation.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 2: Stop Speeding Up and Start Slowing Down**

- Define ways of slowing your pace in a small group.
- List and explain at least two goals of slowing the pace in a small-group setting.
- Explain how vital a group leader’s own quiet time is in the effectiveness of his/her leadership.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 3: Stop Talking and Start Listening**

- Identify physical and personal “noise” that can hinder good listening.
- Explain how setting the tone as a good listener will help others in the group to follow.
• Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 4: Stop Trying to Impress Others and Start Impacting Others**

• Illustrate how being transparent about your own hurts can help others become more open to share.
• Recognize how being real with each other can move your group beyond the surface level in relationships.
• Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 5: Stop Looking for Similarities and Start Appreciating Differences**

• Discuss ways in which different personality types can help strengthen a group's effectiveness, rather than hinder it.
• Identify the basic characteristics of the Merrill-Reid personality model: The driver, the expressive, the amiable, and the analytical.
• Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 6: Stop Being Bible Study-Led and Start Being Purpose-Led**

• Explain why establishing a purpose for your small group must precede the selection of a particular Bible study.
• Identify effective ways of directing the questions to maximize connection within the group.
• Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 7: Stop Providing Answers and Start Inviting Conversation**

• Identify ways of encouraging conversation among your small-group members.
• Enable members to develop a code of conduct as a way of building trust within the group.
• Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

**Lesson 8: Stop Telling What and Start asking “So What?”**

• Take the “what” of a Scripture passage and turn it into the “so what” of application.
• Describe ways in which to encourage others to ask, “What should I do differently because of what I have learned in this lesson?”
• Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.
Lesson 9: Stop Gathering and Start Connecting

- Discuss ways in which praying for one another can help your group connect on a deeper level.
- Explain ways in which creative ways of serving others can help your group's connection to each other.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

Lesson 10: Stop Frustrating and Start Facilitating

- Utilize a wide variety of creative techniques for effective small-group facilitation.
- Demonstrate skill in effectively managing the three P's of facilitation: People, process, and play.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz.

Course Requirements

In order to receive credit, the student must complete the course requirements within a 90-day period. Those requirements include

- Viewing the lectures for each lesson
- Completing the assigned reading
- Participating in the online discussion forum
- Keeping a blog of reflections about what is learned in the course
- Taking all quizzes, scoring 70% or higher.

Additional information about these requirements is provided below.

Video-based teaching

The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in streaming video. For international or domestic students who do not have the bandwidth required to view the video (384 Kbps DSL minimum), we provide the option of listening to the teaching via audio files or reading the lesson from a transcript of the teaching video. The transcripts contain screen captured images of important images in the video.

Because the primary teaching information is provided in video, audio and PDF text documents, students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles. Multiple options are also provided.
for students with auditory and visual learning challenges.

**Assigned reading**

Students will be required to read the following textbook in relationship to this course:


Students may read the text at any time during their study of ML110 (there are no specific assignments given per lesson) and must submit a reading validation at the end of the course.

The book is available at amazon.com.

**Online Discussion Forum**

Students are required to respond to relevant questions posted by the instructors; students are also encouraged to read and respond to the posts of fellow students.

**Web Journal/ Blog**

Students are asked to record their reflections on what they are learning in the blog provided. Blog entries can be viewed only by the student and by the site administrator. They are required but are not graded.

**Quizzes**

Short quizzes are provided in each lesson. They are based on the teaching in the video lectures. Grades will be automatically recorded upon completion.

**Online Discussion Forum Instructions**

Participants will interact with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of several course topics in each lesson.

In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, students should complete the forum assignment after they have listened to all the lectures. Then they should return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. The following steps are instructions to the students for completing the assignment:

- Read the question(s) posted by the instructor.
- Choose the corresponding discussion topic.
- Read the question again and share your thoughts with others.
- Take the time to read other students' postings.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

Personal Reflection and Evaluation

To integrate academic studies with the walk of faith, students are asked to reflect on the content of the course and evaluate their lives in light of what has been learned. The following questions will guide that individual reflection process:

**Step 1: Review**
Think about the material you have studied in this course. Then ask these questions: What are one or two things you learned that you did not know before this study? What was there in the teaching that made you look at the Bible or something in the Bible in a new way?

**Step 2: Assess**
Think about your life, both past and present. Given the insights or understanding that you gained in this course, what changes do you need to make in the way you think or behave?

**Step 3: Apply**
What specific steps will you take in order to put these positive changes (from Step 2) into practice in your life?

**Step 4: Record**
Write your responses to the above reflections in your blog.

Community Reflection and Interaction

Students often find it helpful to discuss what they are learning with a mentor or spiritual counselor. The following steps will give you some guidance in that process if you are interested in pursuing such conversation. The mentoring relationship is optional for this course.

**Step 1: Choose**
Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, share what you learned from this course with another person. You might choose from these categories of people in your life:
• Someone with whom you have a close relationship
• Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader
• Someone who is not a family member
• Someone who values the spiritual formation process
• Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course
• Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry

Step 2: Discuss

Ask that person what advice, deeper insights, or broader applications they might offer from their own life and experience.

Step 3: Respond

In light of the course content and your discussions with another person, do you believe that the assessment and application decisions you reached are appropriate? Why or why not? Add your thoughts and insights to your blog.

NOTE: The degree of effort students put into this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course students have not yet reflected critically on life in light of what has been studied, this assignment will be a helpful guide in that spiritually transforming process.

Course Grading and Requirements

Validation

All course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded to any student. Students will be asked to submit validation forms upon completion of the final lesson in the course.

Notes Regarding This Syllabus

This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. Specific assignments are contained in each lesson.

Individuals who may be taking the class for academic credit or for a certificate program are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to add additional reading requirements and to alter the syllabus to meet their accreditation requirements. Students seeking academic credit should check with
their academic institution for details.