

Steps to Launch Gatherings



1. **Pray together often to Jesus, and he will guide you through these steps.** Jesus promised that he would build his "church" and he sent his Holy Spirit into his churches to help them grow.
2. **Ask a more experienced gathering leader to coach you.** There are many others like you who have more experience and would be glad to mentor you.
3. **Hang out with your friends and with others who need to meet Jesus.** Most new believers will come from your own friends, family, neighbors, coworkers.... Sometimes, someone will come to you, first.
4. **Invite a few friends, relatives or neighbors to come together to learn about Jesus.** Most gatherings start amongst those who know and trust each other. You can start with as few as two or three others.
5. **Spend some time together reading, listening, and talking about the life and teachings of Jesus.** Help everyone to learn the original Good News that Jesus and his apostles taught. It is the story of his life, miracles, death, resurrection, appearance, commandments and promises.
6. **Help anyone who is ready to repent and to trust Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life.** Whenever someone becomes a new believer, help them share the Good News with others. Baptize them with their family or friends if they are willing.
7. **Agree on times and places to meet in small gatherings.** These can gather anywhere, on any day, and at any time that is convenient for their members, even if it is inconvenient for you.
8. **Learn Jesus' commandments and practice them together.** Jesus gave more than one hundred commands. The following are the main ones that the early believers practiced together:
 - Honor God together ("Love the Lord God with all your heart").
 - Show love to each other, to neighbors, to the poor and to enemies.
 - Baptize those who repent and want to follow Jesus.
 - Break bread together often, that is, celebrate communion or the Eucharist.
 - Give generously to help the poor and to support workers who need help.
 - Pray together often using Jesus' name for all kinds of needs.
 - Serve others together with whichever gifts, skills and abilities you have.
 - Learn all that the New Testament teaches and implement what you can.
9. **As soon as someone else can gather others, coach them.** Help them to do what you have been doing, as long as they need your help, and plan with them what to do in their upcoming gatherings.

REPRODUCTIVE GATHERINGS

Interactive training to launch gatherings that multiply



Based on the teaching of George Patterson
MentorAndMultiply.com

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Seven Practices



Make Disciples — enthrone Christ as Lord; maintain balance between law & grace, Scripture & Spirit.

Make tents — empower workers; maintain balance between self-supported and salaried workers.

Mix gifts — edify each other; maintain balance between worship gatherings and task groups.

Meet around Jesus — experience Christ, maintain balance between knowing him and doctrinal learning.

Meet in clusters— enlarge boundaries; maintain balance between little gatherings and big assemblies.

Mentor in chains — extend training; maintain balance between personal coaching and classroom lecture.

Multiply gatherings — expand the Kingdom; maintain balance between growth and reproduction.

Pray Together

Have all the participants bring any plans they have written and lay them in the center of the room. Have everyone gather around those plans. Hold several minutes of prayer, inviting everyone to ask God to make their plans become reality. Alternatively, you could have everyone hold their plans up to God as an offering during the prayers.

Questions for Further Dialogue

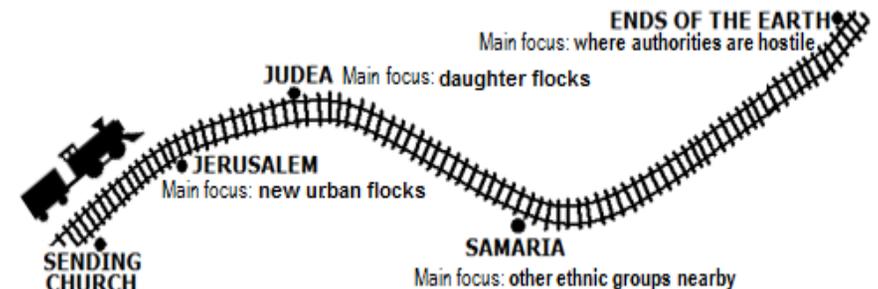
Welcome.

Welcome to Reproductive Gatherings: an interactive training to launch gatherings that multiply. Our prayer is that God would continually send you as a reproducing laborer in his harvest field and equip you for fruitful service.

Purpose

This manual can help you to **make disciples in the way that Jesus said**, just like his apostles did. Just before Jesus left this world to return to eternity, he ordered his apostles, “Go into all the world and make disciples ... by teaching them to obey my commandments.” (Matthew 28:18-20) He promised them, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Everywhere they went, Jesus’ apostles obeyed him by starting many little gatherings that learn to obey all his commandments. This process continues to this day, entering into 1000s of countries, ethnic groups, languages, families, and friends.

Please, use this manual as a guideline in training or coaching your friends, co-workers and others, so that they, too, will start many little gatherings of Jesus’ followers, and will help others to do so, in turn. They and you can lead highly-interactive training workshop sessions that enable their gatherings to obey their Lord’s command and witnesses with power in their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.



Jesus said to operate in one’s home place and culture, region and similar cultures and internationally in very different cultures (Ac 1:8).

Those whom you train in a workshop like this one will be able to start new gatherings, multiply those gatherings and keep them multiplying wherever they are needed. They will do so both amongst neglected social groups and with those who do not want to associate with “churches”.

Your training will:

- Boost their enthusiasm through fun role-plays, free discussion and supernatural experiences.
- Enhance their confidence by practicing vital skills together in temporary gatherings.
- Strengthen their interactive body life in small gatherings.
- Empower them to lead their own training workshops by following your model.
- Create a vision of what Jesus wants to do through them locally and beyond.

Gatherings

This manual employs the term “gathering” to mean any number of persons who band together to love Jesus by obeying his commandments, together. The Holy Bible uses the word *church*. Unfortunately, church has bad meanings for many folk. During the workshop, the participants will form little, temporary gatherings and will choose temporary leaders whom this manual calls “elders”.

Procedure

This is neither a class that you will teach nor a seminar that you will lead. Rather, it is a workshop in which you help participants gain insight, practice skills, have experiences and make plans.

This manual expects the workshop may take three hours of time or half a day, six hours or a whole day, or nine hours in a long day or spread over several days. Thus, each of the eight “modules” allows you to choose activities and materials that best meet others’ needs and fit within your available time.

Of the eight modules, present only those that meet the needs of the workshop participants and their gatherings. For example, if their main need is to learn to start their first gathering, use modules 1, 2, 4 and 6; if they are ready to multiply their gathering(s), use modules 3, 5, 7 and 8. You may also provide supplemental material and practices that you know will help meet their needs.

Discuss: Have someone read aloud **Ephesians 4:10-12**. Ask, “How does each of these gifted workers help gatherings to develop, grow and multiply?” (Affirm everyone’s suggestions, especially the following.)

THE “FIVE-FOLD” GIFTED WORKERS

Apostles: Those whom gatherings send to *extend* their gatherings into neglected groups and regions.

Prophets: Those who speak to *build up*, encourage and console individuals and gatherings.

Evangelists: Those who help *expand* by starting new gatherings in their city and region.

Pastors: Those who provide direction, care and *oversight* in gatherings and between gatherings.

Teachers: Those who help others to become better ‘disciples’ of Jesus through instruction.

Discuss. “What is the relation between ministry gifts and the workers whom the NT calls elders, overseers and deacons?” (*Good answers:* Every believer has a spiritual gift and can serve others in their gathering. However, a spiritual gift does not endow authority. Those who launch new gatherings can be called shepherds or provisional elders. Those who meet certain biblical qualifications can be specially appointed as overseers or pastors whom others can trust.)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND CHURCH LEADERS

All believers: all serve one another in love with the spiritual gifts that each one has.

Some believers: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers help gatherings grow.

Elders or overseers: Specially appointed leaders who have *speaking* gifts and guide the gathering.

Deacons: Specially appointed leaders who have *servant* gifts and care for practical needs in the gathering.

Announce that the formal workshop is about to end. All participants may now ask any question they wish. If you feel that their questions and your answer would help edify the whole workshop, then provide your best, brief answer. Otherwise, offer to make an appointment with the asker so that you can discuss their question in length at another time.

Discuss. “What are the next steps?” Review the section of this manual titled Follow-up. Emphasize that the workshop organizers are available to consult with the participants, to help them start their new gatherings, and to mentor them for as long as they need it.



Role play. Form several volunteers into three groups that stand up and put space between them. Introduce the groups as the Rounds, the Triangles and the Squares. (Have them wear their symbol, if it is convenient to do so.) Have them act out your narrative.

Explain that the Rounds, who are rich, have many gatherings, as do the Triangles who are poor, and that the Squares have too few gatherings. The Rounds appoint ‘apostles’ who they send to the Squares. On their way, the Rounds pass by the Triangles, who are culturally similar to the Squares but need no Round workers. Upon the Rounds arrival, the Squares refuse to greet them and talk with them. The Rounds give up and return home.

Discuss. “How would you advise the Rounds who still want to see the Squares have believers and gatherings?” (*Weak answer:* Let the Triangles do it.) Explain that the Triangles are culturally similar to the Squares but they lack resources. (*Good answer:* Have the Rounds and Triangles cooperate, each providing what the other cannot. Perhaps Rounds could provide a Triangle team with resources and an experienced mentor.) Perhaps continue the role play, depicting that cooperation, the mentor staying in the background.

Role play. Introduce five members of a gathering. After each of them ‘prophesies,’ ask the workshop participants will discern the speaker’s spiritual gift.

Apostle: “I would like to go start a new gathering amongst those new immigrants. Will you send me?”

Prophet: “We all have a lot of problems and grief, but I want you all to experience comfort from God.”

Evangelist: “Jesus died and rose to life so none of us has to go to hell. Please, trust him.”

Pastor: “Each of us has a spiritual gift, so let each of us share whatever we would like this evening.”

Teacher: “I would like us to review together seven commands of Jesus.”

Each module will typically involve several activities. These may include:

Bible discovery. Each gathering will read together certain texts in the New Testament of the *Holy Bible* to find answers, and they will report its findings to the whole workshop.

Role play. Participants will perform short sketches or dramas, using their own words, that illustrate some principle or practice found in the New Testament. They will then discuss what it means for them.

Discussion. Participants will talk about their discoveries and experiences. You will suggest discussion topics and may answer questions that prove too hard for the participants to answer for themselves.

Prayerful planning. Each gathering will take time to pray about what it will do with the insight it has gained and the skills it has learned. It will then write up brief plans to implement following the workshop.

Preparation

The place. Try to hold the workshop in a home or in a place like that where new gatherings are likely to be started. Arrange seating in such a way that all participants can see each other’s face. Arrange for participants to be together to introduce each module, then go apart as little gatherings for worship, prayer, discussion and planning.

Materials. Furnish paper and pens for those who want to take notes. Every participant who is going to start new gatherings or train others, in turn, should receive a copy of this manual. If you are going to demonstrate mentoring materials like “Paul-Timothy” or *Train & Multiply*®, then have sample materials copied and ready.

The Lord’s Table. The first session of the workshop will start with the participants forming little gatherings. One of their first activities will be to celebrate the Lord’s Table, together. Have bread and cups ready for their use. One cup for each gathering will be enough. If the members do not wish to drink from a common cup, then they may dip their bread in the cup instead of drinking from the cup.

Coach role players. Look at each module in advance and find volunteers for the role plays. Coach them briefly in what to say in their own words.

Follow-up

New gatherings. This workshop will be one step leading to other steps. The workshop participants will make plans to start new little gatherings for their families, friends and co-workers. Some may be seekers, those who are looking into the life that Jesus offers. Others will be new believers. Only a very few should be long-time believers.

Multiply gatherings. A next step might be for participants to start another gathering. You may offer to help them do so. You may actually be present in a new group that starts, but only to help a new leader participant to get started. Within two or three times, you will no longer be present. After that you will serve the leader as a mentor or coach only for as long as they need your help.

Mentor new leaders. You will continue to meet with a few new leaders to listen to them report on their gatherings, to help them learn and acquire new skills, to plan with them and to pray with them for their gatherings. You will do so for several months, until they are able to do the same with other new shepherds.

Another workshop. All who attend this workshop may themselves hold a workshop for other new leaders. Some will want to attend another workshop like this one. You and they can hold as many as you may need.

Prayer

If most of the participants are believers in Jesus, then take up to half an hour for worship, praise and prayer. This manual does not recommend a sermon or teaching during this time, because the whole workshop will be a form of teaching and dialogue, one of the apostles' preferred methods. (Ac 17:17)

Notes:

Group activity #3. Have elders lead their gatherings in prayer followed by a discussion. Have them answer this query: "What are some ways in which our existing gatherings could cooperate better?" After seven to 12 minutes, have each gathering report one or two of its most serious recommendations.

Notes:

Group activity #2. Have elders lead their gatherings in prayer followed by a discussion. Have them answer this query: “What are some actions that our gatherings could take immediately, to launch new gatherings and train new leaders?” After seven to 12 minutes, have each gathering report one or two of its most serious recommendations.

Notes:

Module 1.

Gather a few family members or friends and worship together informally.

Objectives

- To know Jesus’ promises of his presence and power in gatherings that worship him.
- To feel confident inviting others to gather and experience the reality of Christ in their midst.
- To launch a new little gathering in the way that the apostles did in the New Testament.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants’ needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Discuss. “What do you expect God to do for you in this workshop?” (*Good answers:* grant vision, teach skills, provide ideas, show methods, give power, “show up” ...) “What are some specific questions you would like this workshop to answer for you?” Listen carefully, take notes and plan to answer those questions.

Discuss. What are some ways in which believers could worship that would keep them interested, involved with one another, and excited about Jesus? (*Good answers:* keep gatherings small, sit face-to-face, interact one with another, all share their insights, exercise their gifts, take turns leading, ...)

Notes:



Group activity #1. Have someone read aloud **Acts 14:21-23**. Have the participants form themselves into small gatherings of three to five members. Have each gathering choose someone as its “temporary elder”. Ask the elders if they are willing to serve, and ask each gathering if it is willing to follow. Pray briefly for the gatherings and elders. Explain that the elders are neither pastors nor clergy.

Discuss. “How did the apostles start gatherings?” “Who led those gatherings?” “How could we do the same, today?” (*Good answers:* We can start gatherings with new believers, anywhere. Appoint willing leaders. Coach those leaders. Empower them to do the same with others.)

Group activity #2. Have each elder lead their gathering in reading **(A) Matthew 16:16-19. (B) Matthew 18:18-20. (C) Matthew 28:18-20**. Each gathering is to answer this question: “What commands and promises did Jesus give in these texts?” Allow seven minutes for this exercise. At the end of six minutes, announce that they have one more minute.

Discuss. “What did Jesus command?” (*Good answers:* bind & loose, agree in prayer, go make disciples). “What did Jesus promise?” (*Good answers:* He will build his church. Death (*hades*) cannot prevail. They can bind and loose. He is present in their midst. He will be with them to the end.)

Explain. Believers can start new gatherings anywhere at any time. No permission is required other than the commands and promises of Jesus. He has promised his power to all who do so.

Notes:



Role play. Form the workshop participants into five groups that stand up and put space between them. Designate them Antioch, Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Have the groups act out what you narrate, choosing and laying hands on new workers.

Include these actions:

1. Elders at Antioch send out Paul who picks up Timothy at Lystra.
2. They come to Ephesus where they must appoint and train many leaders of new gatherings.
3. A businessman, Epaphras, comes from Colossae, believes, and is sent back to start a gathering.
4. Epaphras puts Archippus in charge of the work at Colossae.
5. Folk from Colossae take the gospel to Laodicea where a gathering meets in Nympha’s house.
6. From Laodicea, the Good News goes to Hierapolis.

Role play (continued). Explain that all those new leaders of new gatherings need help. Ask, “Who can Nympha go to for help?” (Archippus). Whom can Archippus go to for help?” and so forth. Summarize the “training chain” as Antioch elders → Paul → Timothy & others → Ephesian elders and others, including Epaphras → Archippus → Nympha → ... to this day.

Discuss. Have someone read aloud **2 Timothy 2:1-2**. Ask, “Who are the links of this training chain?” (*Good answer:* 1) Paul, 2) Timothy, 3) Faithful folk, and 4) Others [faithful folk].)

Discuss. Most living organisms reproduce through a male with a female. Paul called Timothy ‘my child.’ “What is the masculine side of starting new gatherings, and what is the feminine side?” (*Good answer:* Leaders training leaders as their ‘sons’ with gatherings birthing gatherings as their ‘daughters’.) “What are two activities that leaders and gathering must keep doing in order for the Good News to keep spreading?” (*Good answer:* Starting new gatherings and training leaders in those gatherings.)

Discuss. “In what ways did household gatherings cooperate?” (See “How NT Gatherings Cooperated”.)

Explain that gatherings normally form clusters but not power structures. Leaders are empowered to serve but not to command. The ‘autonomous local church’ is not a biblical doctrine. There is no one ‘true church’.

HOW NT GATHERINGS COOPERATED

A big community has many little gatherings.	Workers strengthened gatherings from town to town.
Gatherings met from house to house. New believers are added to little gatherings.	Gatherings sent greetings too others in distant regions.
Gatherings are taught by the same leaders.	Gatherings supported workers starting new gatherings.
Several gatherings formed at the same time.	Teachers were sometimes sent between gatherings.
Apostles appointed elders in gatherings.	Financial help was sent between gatherings.
Leaders met to discuss and settle disputes.	

Role play. Introduce, Teacher and Evangelist, leaders from two gatherings. You are their mentor.

Mentor says, “Well, let us hear about what is happening in your gatherings?”

Teacher reports, “Our gathering knows the Bible very well. We have two gifted teachers who know the Word. However, no one has come to faith in Jesus in more than a year!”

Evangelist reports, “Well, our situation is just the opposite. We have a couple of gifted evangelists who bring in new believers almost every week. However, they are all ignorant, because we have no good teacher.”

Discuss. “How would you advise Teacher and Evangelist?” (*Weak answer:* merge their groups, exchange leaders. *Good answer:* have each leader send a worker from their gatherings to help the others’ gatherings.)

Role play. Continue the role play and let Mentor help Teacher and Evangelist plan to cooperate.

Group activity #3. Have the elders come aside for a brief training. Tell the gatherings that they can pray for each other or just listen to the training. Celebrate communion with the elders in a simple way that they can do with their gatherings. Have the elders serve their gathering.

Note: A simple way to partake of the Lord’s Table.



Explain that in many regions, folk do not have enough cups for everyone to have one. Their culture may not allow them to drink from the same cup. So provide one cup for each gathering with a small amount of beverage in each cup. Likewise, supply a small amount of bread, cake or biscuits.

Bring the elders together for a brief training, while their gatherings pray or listen. Instruct the elders that this will be a real communion, not a mere simulation. However, they are not to take time to explain the meaning of communion or to read scriptures. They may pray very briefly, not lead a “communion service”.

Explain and demonstrate how each member will pass the bread to his neighbor saying “This is Jesus’ body”. They will hold the bread and wait for the cup.

Explain and demonstrate how each member will pass the bread to his neighbor saying “This is Jesus’ blood”. Upon receiving the cup, each one will dip his bread in the cup and eat it.

Discuss. “What did you experience?” “What did you do that required no special equipment, training or permission?” “Could you do this anywhere?” “Could you do so in secret?”

Explain. Each of us should have a partner with whom we start new little gatherings, and we should empower others to do the same.

Discuss. “Who are some folk whom you know that you could gather together to learn about Jesus?” (*Good answers:* family members, room-mates, friends, neighbors, students on campus, new believers who do not have a church, old believers who are tired by traditional church...)

Group activity #4. Have the elders lead their gathering in discussing whom each one could invite to a new gathering, where and when. Let them form plans to do so. If their culture writes down plans, then let them do so. After ten or 15 minutes, tell them that they can continue their planning later.

Planning Notes

Discuss. “In what ways are gatherings like elephants and rabbits?”

Show, tell or ask about the following:



Mature in 15 to 18 years
1 baby per pregnancy
Fertile 4 times a year
22-month gestation



Mature in 4 months
Average 7 babies
1-month gestation
Family can increase to more than ten million in 3 years

“What are the strengths and advantages of each?” “Which kind of gathering could more quickly make disciples in a big populations?”

Module 8.

Foster cooperation between gatherings, in ever-expanding clusters.

Objectives

- To know several New Testament patterns of new little gatherings forming clusters.
- To feel responsible to oversee continual expansion and extension of new little gatherings.
- To plan and coordinate cooperation between gatherings.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants’ needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Group activity #1. Have assistant elders lead their gatherings in reading together one of these biblical texts: **(A) Acts 2:44-47. (B) Acts 14:21-23. (C) Acts 15:22-27. (D) Romans 16:1-16. (E) 2 Corinthians 8:16-21. (F) 2 Corinthians 11:8-10.** Each gathering is to answer this query: “In what ways did gatherings cooperate and relate one to another?” After four or five minutes, have each gathering report their findings.

Notes:



Discuss. “Why is it important to provide leaders of new little gatherings with teaching that they can apply immediately?”
(*Good answer:* We mentor fellow leaders as a kind of on-the-job training, to meet the urgent needs of their gatherings.)

“What is the place of bible schools?”

Notes:

Group activity #5. Have the elders lead their gatherings in more planning and prayer, asking the Lord whom they should gather, when, where, for how long, how often...

Planning Notes

Discuss. Have someone read aloud **1 Timothy 4:13**. Ask, “How could you teach others to lead a bible study if they do not know the Bible very well?” (*Good answer:* Read a text together and pose a few questions. Let everyone answer from what they read in the text.) Recommend the following bible discussion questions.

OPEN-ENDED BIBLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from this text about God or Jesus?
2. What did you learn from this text about human beings?
3. What did you learn from this text about what we should do?

Group activity #6. Have the elders lead their gathering in a short bible study. Assign any text such as **(A) Matthew 6:25-34. (B) Luke 11:5-13. (C) Romans 12:17-21. (D) Ephesians 5:15-21. (E) James 1:1-6.** The members can take turns reading a verse of the text. The elder should then pose the questions, allowing anyone to respond briefly.

Role play. If any of the workshop participants are going to work in regions where civil or religious authorities may prove hostile towards the starting of new gatherings, then do the following.

Prepare two individual in advance to act as “police” when you give an agreed signal. Have two or three others demonstrate a “simple way of worship” by hearing and repeating short phrases of a Psalm 23. After verse 1 has been read and repeated, the police rush onto the scene shouting, “You are under arrest! This is an illegal meeting!” They arrest the leader and drag him (or her) away, threatening the others, “We will arrest you, too. But we are not telling you when.”

Discuss. “This happens daily around the world. How can a little gathering avoid being found out?” (*Good answers:* keep gatherings small, move from place to place, avoid public meetings, train leaders in secret, talk, pray and sing in soft voices.) “What should you do if you are arrested?” (*Good answers:* What Jesus said to do in Matthew 10:16-31. Show no fear. Explain the Good News when asked. Tell the truth, for police hate liars. Do not offer secret information. Arrange in advance for friends to find your passport and papers, to inform those who can pray, and to contact a friendly official.)

Discuss. “Where and when could there be official opposition to the starting of new little gatherings in our city?” (*Good answers:* On school campuses, amongst immigrants, in religious communities, anywhere neighbors complain) Note that in many countries, including our own, some who start new little gatherings may have to violate some rules or laws in order to obey Jesus.

Discuss. “What kind of materials are there that mentors can furnish to trainees?” (*Good answers:* Bible texts and short readings from other books.) If it is appropriate, introduce a program of need-driven, menu-based study lessons for new leaders. Perhaps “Paul-Timothy” (www.Paul-Timothy.net) or “Train & Multiply”® (www.TrainAndMultiply.com)

Group activity #3. Have all workshop participants form little groups of two or three individuals. Have one mentor the other by following the steps in of “An Easily Reproducible Mentoring Method.” Afterwards, if time allows, let them reverse roles and follow the steps again. If time allows, have any of them report to the workshop what they experienced in their mentoring session.

Role play. Designate any three workshop participants as clients seated in a restaurant. You are their waiter who carry a pad and pen, or pretend to do so.

You ask each of them separately, “How many times have you eaten here, before?” Listen to the number of times they answer, and reply, “Then you must take meal number (say the next number higher).”

Finally, explain to all of them, “This is my restaurant and I know which food is best for you.”

Discuss. “Is this how restaurants operate?” If there is ample, time, repeat the skit asking each client, “What can we prepare for you, today?” commending each on their choice. Explain that educational institutions follow the first approach, training in many subjects for a far future, whereas most leaders and their new little gatherings have urgent needs requiring timely help and immediate application.

Role play. Walk from one side of the room to the front, carrying a stack of book or papers. Without smiling, announce that this is the first day of a Theology course at some bible school.

Start to lecture, “Today, we shall discuss the Hebrew names of God. The first of these is Elohim, underscoring his great power...”

A student raises his hand and interrupts, “Teacher, can you help me? My neighbor wants to become a follower of Jesus, and I do not know what to say and do.”

Feign to consult a calendar and announce, “We shall teach about evangelism next year, second term.”

Notes:

Role play. Explain that you are mentor, a new elder, and that you mentor newer elders. One of them, Shepherd, is with me now.

Mentor starts, “Let us start with asking God for wisdom.” (Feign to pray.) “I would like to hear your report on what your gatherings have been doing.”

Shepherd reports, “You know, we went prayer walking, just like you taught me. A household, who invited us in while we were prayer walking, trusted Christ, so I baptized them. Now, how can I get them to become a gathering?”

Mentor replies, “Well, let us make a plan for what you will do with them this week. I would like you to study Acts 2:42 and find what new little gatherings are supposed to do together. Then, help those new believers to start doing each of those activities. We shall practice those skills today, before you leave. We shall also pray for them by name. I am keen to hear your report when you come back, next week.”

Discuss. “What are several steps that Mentor and Shepherd took together in the role play we just saw?” (Affirm any of the following steps or activities.)

AN EASILY REPRODUCIBLE MENTORING METHOD

1. Meet together one-on-one or in a small group.	5. Assign a reading that corresponds to the plan.
2. Pray together for wisdom from the Holy Spirit.	6. Review what was learned since the previous session.
3. Listen to a report on (a) what happened and (b) on what needs to happen next.	7. Practice together any needed new skill.
4. Plan together what Shepherd will do next.	8. Pray together by name for members of the gathering.

Role play. Ask for a volunteer who actually leads a gathering or who is ready to start doing so. Explain that you would like to hold a short, real mentoring session. When someone is willing, then sit near each other while all the others watch and listen. Follow the steps of “An Easily Reproducible Mentoring Method,” in any order. Really pray and listen carefully. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you and to the volunteer. Lay a plan, assign a reading, and intercede for the volunteer’s gathering and by name for any individuals who were mentioned.

Discuss. “What happened?” (Listen to all who wish to comment.)

Explain that such sessions normally last an hour or more. “What if a trainee only wants to talk about hard problems and bad sins of members?” Explain that Satan will often seek to side-track us with problems. So, never spend more than half your mentoring time discussing bad stuff. Pray and commit it to God. Then, move forward and plan together how the leader will edify his gathering.

Group activity #7. Have the elders lead their gatherings in planning the first four meetings of a new gathering, based on **Acts 2:42**. Discuss how you would help seekers and new believers to get started with each of the activities listed in that bible text. (**Note:** “fellowship” in the New Testament means to share things in common, especially to meet each others needs.) If they have time, have them also plan a meeting for an older gathering, using any of the activities cited in **Acts 2:37-47**.

Planning Notes

Module 2.

Love the Lord Jesus by obeying his commands together, before all else.

Objectives

- To know by heart Jesus' basic commandments from Acts 2:37-47.
- To feel love for Jesus above all else, and to help others to feel the same.
- To make disciples in the way Jesus said, by teaching them to obey all that he commanded.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants' needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Discuss. Have someone read aloud **Matthew 22:36-40**. "What does God's law seek to help humans do?" (*Good answer:* love him and one another.) "How can humans come to love God and one another?" (*Good answers:* Respond to God's love, obey his words, receive Christ, walk in the Spirit...)

Role play. Introduce Marco and Lupita

Marco: "Lupita, that shirt I bought does not fit me. While you are out shopping, will you take it back to the store and get my money back?" (Pause.)

Lupita: "Marco, the grass around the house is getting too high. Could you cut it this Saturday instead of playing golf?" (Pause.)

Discuss. "What motivates you to do what someone asks of you, even if it is not convenient?" (*Good answer:* my love for them.) "When is it right to obey and to disobey others?" (*Good answer:* legitimate authority.) "What is biblical legalism?" (*Good answer:* trying to please God by keeping the OT law.) Comment that some believers mistake obedience for legalism, whereas obedience is an act of love. Have someone read aloud **John 14:15** or **15:14**. "How does Jesus expect us to express our love for him?"

Group activity #1. Have assistant lead their gatherings in reading together one of the following texts. **(A) Matthew 10: 1, 5-8; 11:1. (B) Mark 6:7-13, 30-31. (C) Mark 13:1-5. (D) Luke 9:1-6, 10; (E) Luke 10:1-4; 17-20; (F) Acts 1:1-9.** Each gathering is to discover **not** *what* Jesus taught, **but** *how* he taught.

Discuss. . After about four minutes, have each assistant elder report on one way in which Jesus trained his apostles. "What are some ways in which Jesus trained his apostles?" (Affirm any of the following.)

HOW JESUS TRAINED

Train in big groups and in little groups. Answer leaders' questions and needs. Share all your authority with new leaders. Have them pray out more workers. Commission them and send them in teams. Give instructions to new workers.	Plan with workers what they will say and do. Introduce affordable methods. Let them learn by doing, on the job. Allow workers to leave those who reject them. Listen to workers report on activities & results. Have workers pray for signs and wonders.
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Group Activity #2. Have assistant elders lead their gatherings in reading together one of the following texts. **(A) Acts 20:17-20. (B) Acts 20:26-36; (C) 2 Timothy 2:1-2. (D) Titus 1:5; 2:1.** Each gathering is to discover **not** *what* the apostles taught, **but** *how* they taught.

Discuss. After about four minutes, have each assistant elder report on one way in which the apostles trained new leaders. "What are some ways in which Paul trained new leaders?" (Affirm any of the following.)

HOW THE APOSTLES TRAINED

Meet by appointment. Trainees remain as elders leading gatherings. Demonstrate humility, even tears. Teach anything profitable, eventually everything. In public and from house to house. Focus on both leaders and their gatherings.	Instruct in pastoral care of gatherings. Commend them to God and his grace. Covet no one's money. Pray with trainees about their gatherings. Extend training to four generations, or more. Appoint elders at every location.
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Notes:

Role play.

Oldie: “Can you and I get together before each meeting? I can help you find answers to their questions and plan what you will share with them.”

Newbie: “Alright, if you will help me, then I will try to lead them.”

Discuss. Ask, “How soon can a new believer start to lead another new little gathering?” (*Good answer:* as soon as they have an opportunity.) Ask, “How is a new leader in a gathering different from a pastor or a clergyman?” (*Good answer:* Anyone can lead a gathering. Pastors and clergyman must meet many criteria.)

Role play. Explain that several weeks later, Oldie and Newbie are talking about Newbie’s new gathering.

Oldie: “How are things going in your gathering?”

Newbie: “Well, several members are now meeting separately with their own friends, and they need a leader. Can you mentor a leader for that new gathering?”

Discuss. “How many new leaders can someone mentor?” (*Good answer:* Many leaders do not have time to mentor more than two or three others.) “Who else can mentor new leaders?” (*Good answer:* Mentors enable their trainees to mentor new leaders, in turn.)

Role play.

Oldie: “I am sorry. I do not have time to mentor someone else.”

Newbie: “Well, then, who will mentor the new leader?”

Oldie: “You will. You will do with the new leader what you and I do together. Every time you and I get together, I will help you plan what you will do and say to help the other leader, in turn.”

Role-play. Have someone read aloud **Matthew 7:24-27**, a phrase at a time, waiting for others to act out each phrase. Have two builders use boxes, children’s blocks or just pretend. Have all the participants blow like the wind. Have a third volunteer sprinkle a little water from a cup to represent rain.

Discuss. “What made the difference between the two kinds of builders?” (Best answer: putting into practice the words of Jesus.)

Discuss. Have someone read aloud **Matthew 28:18-20**. Ask, “In what ways are we believers to make others disciples for Jesus?” (*Good answers:* go; baptize; teach.) “Teach what, doctrine? Sermons?” (*Good answer:* to obey.) “Obey what?” (*Good answers:* obey Jesus’ commandments).

Explain. In Matthew 18:18-20, the only command is to “go make disciples”. Have someone read aloud **Acts 14:21-23**. Jesus’ apostles normally made disciples of new believers by gathering them together. There are always two phases to making disciples: baptizing new believers and teaching how to obey Jesus’ commands.

Group activity #1. Have the ‘elders’ lead their gatherings in a bible study. Each one should have someone read aloud **Acts 2:37-47** and have someone take notes. Together, the members should answer this question: “In what ways did the believers at Jerusalem obey Jesus’ commandments?” Allow seven minutes, then ask each gathering to tell one answer, in turn, till all the answers are heard.

Notes:

Discuss. “What are some basic commandments of Jesus that any new gathering can practice together?” (*Good answers:* Repent, receive the Spirit, baptize, gather in my name, teach, pray in my name, break bread, give, love God, make disciples...). “How soon did the apostles baptize new believers and where did they celebrate communion?” (*Good answers:* as soon as possible, and in their homes.)

Group activity #2. If the gatherings did not do so in the first module, then have them celebrate the Lord's table now.

Group activity #3. Have the elders lead their gatherings in a discussion of their church or cell group outside of this workshop. They are to answer this question: "Which of the basic commandments needs more attention?" The members should then make some recommendations to strengthen their group's loving obedience to those commandments. Allow seven minutes, then ask each gathering to tell one answer, in turn, till all the answers are heard.

Notes:

Module 7. Mentor leaders of new gatherings, enabling them to mentor others, in turn.

Objectives

- To know how to mentor new leaders in ways that they can imitate with others.
- To feel free to release control and to empower new leaders.
- To extend chains of leaders mentoring new leaders who start and lead new gatherings.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants' needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Role play. Introduce Shepherd and Member.

Shepherd: "Well, Member, I see that there are several folk who like to meet with you and learn about Jesus from the Bible. I think you should start a regular gathering."

Member: "We would like to do so, but we have no one to lead us."

Shepherd: "Member, you can be their leader."

Member: "Me? I don't think so. I'm not qualified and I would not know what to do."

Discuss. "What are some reasons why many folk do not want to take leadership in a new little gathering?" (*Good answer:* Lack confidence, knowledge, and experience.) "Who can give advice to a new leader of a new gathering?" (*Good answer:* anyone who has a little more experience can mentor someone who has less experience.)

The **believers** feign to pray over the son who starts to say, “Ba, ba, ba...”

Grouchy asks him, “What! Can you not speak our language?”

The **son** replies, “Of course I can speak our language.”

Grouchy quickly asks two or three others to come hear his son talk.

Grouchy says to the believers, “Now, tell us how we can know your God.”

Discuss. “What is prayer walking?” (*Good answer:* A small team moves through an area asking God to “bless” the population, to break the power of evil, and to call folk to faith in Jesus.) “Why is it important to pray over populations?” (*Good answer:* Jesus said that we can bind Satan by praying, and we can release those whom he has held captive. **Matthew 12:28-29; Luke 4:18-19.**)

Group activity #3. Have the elders lead their gatherings in a time of planning for evangelism. Each member should prepare a list of three to five names of individuals or families, who, they believe, may be willing or ready to hear about the original Good News. The gathering should pray over these lists, mentioning each name to God. Plan together what each one is going to do: who, with whom, when, where, how, with what materials. Have members pray for each other, that God will lead them to children of peace.

Planning Notes



Role-play. Introduce two individuals named Obedient and Tradition. Obedient has just come home from Jerusalem and meets Tradition.

Invite the participants to correct anything that Tradition says.

T: Obedient, what were you doing at Jerusalem?

O: We repented of our sinful deeds.

T: You must not make folk feel badly with repentance. Just ask them to make a decision for Jesus.

O: They baptized about 3,000 of us that same day.

T: Those baptisms were not valid unless they were performed by an ordained Reverend.

O: We broke bread in homes to celebrate the Lord’s Table.

T: That was wrong. Only ordained clergymen have authority to serve the Eucharist.

O: We show love one to another, enjoying fellowship in the Lord.

T: Such unbridled emotion is an abomination before the Holy God.

O: We got together to pray every day.

T: You followed the authorized prayers found in our official worship manual, did you not?

O: We took up collections and gave to the poor and needy.

T: Oh, no! You must bring your titles and offerings into the store house here at our chapel.

O: We made disciples by telling folk about Jesus and teaching them to obey his commandments.

T: That is a doctrinally-weak thing to do. You must teach others our denomination’s official theology.

Discuss. “What are the sources of authority that determine the practices in a gathering?” (*Good answers:* commandments of Jesus and his apostles or the New Testament; apostolic practices that were not commanded; and ecclesial traditions.)

Explain. Three levels of authority:

1. *Commandments of Jesus and his apostles.* We must lovingly obey these above all else.
2. *Apostolic practices that were not commanded.* We must not forbid these if they fit our culture.
3. *Human traditions.* Many of these are helpful, and we may follow them if they do not hinder level 1.

Discuss. Cite several examples of commands, practices and traditions, asking the participants to classify each one according to the three levels. (i.e. baptize [1], baptize the same day [2], baptize after completing a doctrine course [3].)

Explain. The Old Testament is the Word of God and is very profitable to study, but Jesus' followers are not to keep Law of Moses. We are to obey the commandments of Jesus, instead.

Group activity #4. Review seven basic commandments of Jesus while performing culturally-acceptable gestures. Have all the participants stand up and perform the same movements. The following are suggestions that you can replace with more acceptable ones.

1. *Repent, believe the Good News and receive the Spirit.* (Turn round, look up and lift your hands high.)
2. *Baptize.* (Pinch your nose and dip down as though in water.)
3. *Love God* (Point upwards); *love neighbor* (open arms towards others); *love one another* (Turn to another and shake hands or grasp and shake your own hands); *love enemies* (clinch fists).
4. *Pray in Jesus name.* (Place your hands together, palms upward ready to receive.)
5. *Break bread.* (Pretend to take something from your left hand and feed yourself with your right hand.)
6. *Give to meet needs.* (Pretend to take something from your left hand and give it to another.)
7. *Teach others.* (Hold hands together, palm up, as though an open Bible.)

After seven minutes, have each one report one point, until all the points have been told. Especially underscore any of the following points:

JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS FOR STARTING NEW GATHERINGS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Keep asking God for willing Good News tellers. | 6. Seek to enter homes, whole families. |
| 2. Authorize others to exercise spiritual authority. | 7. Heal the sick, the addicted and the oppressed. |
| 3. Go in pairs or small teams. | 8. Tell the original good news. |
| 4. Take no excess 'baggage' (equipment). | 9. Expect opposition. |
| 5. Avoid being side-tracked with social obligations. | 10. Debrief with those who return, listening carefully. |

Discuss. "How to recognize a person of peace?" (*Good answer:* Anyone who proves responsive to your message and is influential in their community, whether they have a good or bad reputation. Some persons of peace will come looking for you! Persons of peace usually bring others to learn about Jesus.)

Discuss. Have someone read aloud **Luke 8:38-39**. Ask, "How important is it for us who follow Jesus to tell others what we believe God has done for us?" (*Good answer:* our changed life and testimony are powerful.)

GUIDELINES FOR A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Keep it brief, less than one minute in North America. | 3. Tie your experience to faith in Jesus who died for us humans, rose to life and gives his Holy Spirit. |
| 2. Mention verifiable things that Jesus promised such as a changed life style, new joy, fresh hope, and strength to do what you believe is right. | 4. Avoid condemning others. |
| | 5. Try to answer others' questions in a gentle way. |

Role play. Introduce two believers who walk through the room, silently praying for God to bless folk.

As they pass **Grouchy's** place, he stops and demands, "What are you doing in the neighborhood?"

They reply, "We pray to God to help folk in their needs. What would you like God to do for you?"

Grouchy chuckles and points to his son: "My son was born mute and has never talked. Can your God help him?"

Group activity #2. Have the elders lead their gatherings in writing a very brief explanation of the Good News that they could use to lead seekers to put their faith in Jesus. They should consult “Main Points of the Original Apostolic Gospel”. Have them include some way in which folk could express their repentance. After seven to ten minutes, have each gathering read what it has written.

Notes:

Discuss. “What did you understand about Jesus when you first believed in him?” “What are some questions and objections that others have about faith in Jesus?”

Group activity #3. Have the assistant elders lead their gathering in reading aloud together one of these texts: **(A) Matthew 10:1-14; (B) Mark 6:7-13 & 30; (C) Luke 9:1-6 & 10; (D) Luke 10:1-11.** Have them answer this query: “What are some instructions from Jesus for helping his Good News keep on spreading?”

Notes:

Role play. If someone has a knack for doing so, let them compose a song of these seven commandments and teach the other to sing it.

Group activity #5. Have elders help their gatherings memorize those seven basic commands of Jesus, practicing the gestures.

Group activity #6. Have elders lead their gatherings in a time of prayer, asking God to help them start and lead gatherings that will obey the commandments of Jesus above all else. They should make a covenant with one another before God that they will:

- Baptize new believers without needless delay.
- Celebrate the Lord’s Table often with reverence.
- Cultivate loving fellowship, forgiving and serving one another.
- Receive free-will offerings to meet urgent needs.

Role-play. An officer meets with three sergeants and says, “We lost the battle, and the commander wants some answers.” S/he asks a first sergeant, “Your orders were to secure the hill. What did you do?” S/he answers, “We did not trust our map, so we made our own.” To a second, “Your orders were to guard prisoners. What did you do?” S/he answers, “Guarding just is not our gifting, so we went on reconnaissance.” And to a third, “Your orders were to supply the troops. What did you do?” S/he answers, “Orders are legalism, and we operate by grace.”

Discuss. “What happens when believers fail to obey Jesus commandments, in love?” (*Good answer: Satan fills the void with legalism.*)

Notes:

Module 3.

Worship God together, and serve one another, in love.

Objectives

- To know the categories of ministry activities described in the NT.
- To feel deep reverence for God and gain a profound love for one's fellow believers.
- To lead believers in exercising all the ministries required by the NT.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants' needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Role play. Coach three individuals in advance to do this in their own words. The three sit together. Explain that they are a gathering and they have worshiped. They are now sharing one with another.

One says, "You know what a thief I was. This week I was tempted to steal at my place of work. But I prayed to Jesus and he helped me not to steal." The others nod, Yes.

Another says, "I want to report that ever since this gathering has been praying for my husband, he has stopped beating me." (Or "Ever since this group has been praying for my anger, I have stopped beating my wife.")

The third one listens, then falls to his knees and declares, "This week, I stole from my employer and I beat my wife. I need Jesus!"

Discuss. Have someone read aloud **1 Corinthians 14:3** and **14:24-25**. How do unbelievers come to faith in Jesus by visiting a little gathering? How can all "prophecy"? (*Good answer:* all the believers can talk about what God has been doing for them, "give testimony". Some will speak a message revealed by God, "prophecy". The Holy Spirit convinces listeners.)

Restart the skit and ask your question, again.

Raja replies, "Yes."

You add, "Okay, repeat after me: blah, blah, blah."

Raja says, "Blah, blah, blah".

Now, pull Raja outside his circle and warn him about his family and friends who will try to pull him back. Introduce Raja to the others and explain, "This is your new family."

Discuss. "What did I do wrongly?" (Decision without repentance or clear faith in Christ. No teaching of Jesus' commandments. Non-biblical language. Extraction.) Ask the family and friends, "What do you think of Raja's decision? Of his new faith? Of me?" (Let them answer in their own way.)

Discuss: Put Raja back with his family and friends. "How could we have done this better?" (*Good answers:* Ask for repentance and baptize. Leave Raja in family. Evangelize his family and friends.) "If they become believers, where should they gather for worship?" (*Good answer:* they will be a new, little gathering.)

Role play. Introduce two men go to a religious house of prayer. One is a politician, the other a priest. The priest looks upwards and prays, "Oh, God, You know how good I am, how I do all the right ceremonies. I thank you that I am not like this crooked politician." The politician looks downwards and prays, "Oh, God. I feel so sorry for the way I have lived to this day. Please, forgive me."

Discuss. "Which of the two men will God accept?" (*Good answer:* The one who repented.) "What is repentance?" (*Good answer:* choosing to leave one's bad ways.) "What is the importance of baptizing those who repent?" (*Good answer:* baptism is the Bible's way of confirming folk's repentance and faith.)

Notes:

After seven minutes, have each elder report one point at a time, till all their points are made. Underscore any of these points from those texts:

MAIN POINTS OF THE ORIGINAL APOSTOLIC GOSPEL

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Ancient prophets predicted a coming one, whom the Jews called Messiah. | 6. Jesus promised to forgive all who repent. |
| 2. God empowered Jesus to perform miracles, freeing folk from Satan's power, showing that he is the promised Messiah. | 7. All who trust and obey Jesus receive God's Holy Spirit and eternal life. |
| 3. Jealous religious leaders and political authorities killed Jesus by nailing him to a wooden cross. | 8. Jesus went up into the sky from whence he reigns as Lord over heaven and earth. |
| 4. The third day afterwards, Jesus physically rose back to life and came out of his grave. | 9. Jesus ordered his followers to baptize new believers teaching them to obey his commands. |
| 5. Jesus appeared to eye-witnesses, proving it was he, ordering them to tell this Good News everywhere. | 10. Jesus will one day return to earth, raise the dead and reign as King over the world forever. |

Discuss. "What kind of account is the Good News?" (*Good answer:* a true story, a narrative, history.) "What forms can a story take?" (*Good answers:* writing, conversation, pictures, drama, song, Lord's Table...)

Explain that there is little theology in the Good News. The atonement is not explained; the resurrection is central.

Discuss. "How can the Good News prove powerful without a lot of explanation and theology?" (*Good answer:* Trust the Holy Spirit to apply the story to their needs. For examples: Jesus delivered folk from Satan, and some folk want deliverance. The authorities persecuted Jesus, and folk feel persecuted. Jesus conquered death, and folk are afraid of death. Jesus forgives everything, and folk feel worried about their evil deeds.)

Role play. Explain that you are going "to share the gospel" with your friend, Raja.

You hold a Bible and point to it, saying, "Raja, I have peace in my heart from the Jesus of the Bible. Are you ready to 'accept Jesus as your personal Savior'?"

Regardless of his reply, stop the skit and explain, "In this method, we are how many persons?" (Two.)

"In reality, however, there are several others present, too." Choose individuals to come forward and form a circle around Raja: parents, neighbor, drinking buddy, girl friend.

Explain. One effective way to bring others to faith is to have them visit a gathering of believers where everyone shares. Thus, the continual starting of new little gatherings is the most effective way of "evangelizing" a population. Some try to start a gathering within walking distance of everyone in their area.

Group activity #1. Have some elders lead their gatherings in reading **Acts 2:42-47**. Have the others read **1 Corinthians 14:26-31**. They are to answer this question: "What are some normal activities of believers when they gather together?" After seven minutes, have each gathering report one activity, in turn, till all the activities have been reported.

Notes:

Discuss. God has not dictated any particular form. What does God care about when we praise Him? (*Good answer:* Praise must be done sincerely, from the heart.)

Discuss. “What are essential elements of worship that gatherings should do at least once a month?” (*Good answers:* praise, prayer, confession, communion, apply the word, fellowship [sharing], giving.) “What external forms could you use to praise God?” (*Good answers:* Singing, reading Scripture, chanting, dancing, praying, raising hands, standing, kneeling, sitting or lying face down, in silence or with everybody speaking aloud.)

Role play. Two men stand in a chapel, praying.

One says, “Oh, God, I thank you that I am so good. I pray every day and I give to the poor. I thank you that I am not like this politician.”

The **politician** prays, “Oh, God, you know how bad I am and how I have cheated. Please forgive me.”

Discuss. Which of the two men will God more likely hear and forgive?

Discuss. What are some elements of worship that a gathering might practice less often? (*Good answers:* Appoint new leaders; send out workers; anoint the sick; approve a budget; hold a common meal; invite in the poor...) Explain that some gatherings do some of these almost every time they meet.

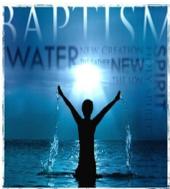
Role play. Have a volunteer leave the room quietly at an agreed signal. S/he knocks as the door (or says loudly, Hello!).

Say, “let me answer the door.”

When you open it, s/he announces, “I have just trusted Jesus! I’m saved!”

Reply, “That’s nice!” and push the person out of the room and slam the door shut. Return to your place. Pause.

Invite the person to come back in and ask, “When I pushed you out and shut the door, how did you feel?”



Discuss. Baptism is how gatherings normally receive new believers as members. In many cultures, new believers will not feel that God has accepted them unless the believers accept them. Have someone read **Acts 2:41** aloud.

Optional. If someone asks about the proper mode or method of baptizing, remind them that this is not a course in doctrine and defer to local practices. If you must, then you may observe that denominations have different forms and meanings for baptism, but all those meanings remain biblical ones; what they all have in common is that baptism brings new believers into their gathering.

Discuss. “What are some ways in which evangelism happens that would be hard for folk like us to do?” (Listen for responses such as: Big-name speakers. Expensive equipment. Legal permits. Highly talented personnel. Lack of materials.) “What are some cultural beliefs and practices that actually hinder the Good News flowing between folk?” (Examples: Misunderstood jargon, talking only to strangers, foreign-sounding message, extracting believers from their families, having special evangelists, methods & materials.)



Group activity #1. Have the elders lead their gatherings to discover “the Original Good News” as Jesus and the apostles taught it. Assign these texts, one per group: **(A) Luke 24.44-49; (B) Acts 2.22-40; (C) Acts 3.13-26; (D) Acts 5.29-32; (E) Acts 10.34-48; (F) Acts 13.23-41; (G) Acts 17:1-4; (H) Acts 17.22-31; (I) 1 Corinthians 15.1-8.**

Have the gatherings answer this query: “What are the main points of the gospel from your text?”

Notes:

Module 6.

Tell the original Good News, and let it flow unhindered to others.

Objectives

- To know the original, apostolic Good News and how it normally spreads.
- To feel confident that the Good News will spread throughout a population.
- To equip believers to share the Good News among friends, family, social groups, towns and regions.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants' needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Role play. Introduce two individuals, Abrar and Brihma, who walk slowly side-by-side, talking about the event that they attended earlier today.

A: "What a big crowd gathered to hear the evangelist!"

B: "Yes, but we could never get a crowd like that in our town."

A: "How powerfully he spoke through loud speakers!"

B: "We could never afford such equipment."

A: "The music was so moving!"

B: "We cannot make music like that." (Three seconds of silence.)

A: "Do you think we could ever evangelize our town?"

B: "I don't think so."

Role play. Announce that you are going to demonstrate an Old Testament form of worship. Pretend that you are pulling a sheep by a cord, as a volunteer, on hands and knees, says, "Baa, baa." Arrived at three chairs arranged in a row, ask for two volunteer "Levites". Have these pretend to bind the sheep's feet, and place it upon the "altar". One pretends to have a knife. Say, "Wait till I lay my hands on the sheep's head and confess my sins and those of my household. This will take a while..." "Now, slit its throat." Shout, "Oh, there is blood everywhere, guts, excrement, flies. It stinks. How repulsive, how disgusting!"

Discuss. "Why did God set up such a dirty, repulsive system of worship?" (*Good answer:* Because our sins are repulsive to him.) "What should be our attitude about our sins, when we come to the Lord's Table?" (*Good answer:* We should feel sorry about our sins and confess them. We should be glad that God forgives us our sins.)

Discuss. "How soon should a new little gathering begin celebrating the Lord's Table?" (*Good answer:* Right away.) "How often?" (*Good answer:* New believers should celebrate the Table often, maybe every week, for they may have many sins to confess their many sins, and they need a sense of forgiveness.)

Discuss. "Why is it important to plan for little gatherings?" (*Good answer:* to ensure that gatherings obey all the commands of Jesus.) Explain that it is harder to plan little meetings than big ones that always follow the same pattern or liturgy. Explain that the Holy Spirit may lead a gathering to depart from their plan.

Group activity #2. Have the elders lead their gatherings in a planning session. Have them plan what to do in one or more worship gatherings. If there will be a long break before the next workshop sessions, then have them agree to meet alone as a little gathering and follow their plan. At the next workshop session, have the elders report on what they did. Let anyone report on their experience and how they felt.

Planning Notes

Discuss. Review the follow chart of New Testament “ministries” that gatherings normally practice.

MINISTRIES REQUIRED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT

Shepherding Ministries:

1. Counsel those with personal or family problems (Example: Philemon).
2. Oversee a gathering’s spiritual life; correct the unruly; restore the straying (Acts 20:28-31).
3. Organize and lead to help believers employ their spiritual gifts in ministry (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:3-11; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:7-11).
4. Strengthen marriage and family life (Ephesians 5:21—6:4).
5. Evaluate all ministries regularly and keep improving them (Titus 1:5).

Teaching Ministries:

6. Learn, teach, apply and obey God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
7. Disciple children, new believers and adults to equip them all for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
8. Train pastors, evangelists, church planters and missionaries (2 Timothy 2:2).

Character Building and Mercy Ministries:

9. Cultivate loving fellowship among believers and among gatherings (1 Corinthians 13).
10. Worship in spirit and in truth, as a family and as a body (John 4:24).
11. Develop personal prayer, family worship, and spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18).
12. Give to local and mission work, as wise stewards of that God has given you (Luke 6:38).
13. Care for the sick, needy and mistreated (Luke 10:25-37).

Evangelistic and Missionary Ministries

14. Tell the Good News to those who do not know Jesus or believe in him (Acts 1:8).
15. Start new gatherings or cells locally (as in Acts chapters 10, 13 and 14).
16. Send missionaries to neglected peoples in distant lands (Matthew 28:18-20).

Notes:



Discuss. “Can unbelievers start or lead new gatherings?” Such gatherings are called ‘seeker groups’ in which folk come to learn about living by faith in Jesus. If unbelievers organize such a group, you could coach them in advance in how to present certain bible stories for their friends. You would remain available to answer questions, if they wish.

Discuss. “What is the relationship between an older group and a newer one that it helped start?” (*Good answer:* They are like a mother and her daughter. They communicate and do projects together. They sometimes worship together. The mother can help her daughter when the daughter starts a grand-daughter gathering. And so on.)

Notes:

Discuss. “Where will you find enough leaders for new little gatherings?” (*Good answers:* start with someone who is able to gather others. Have every gathering watch for willing leaders.) Have someone read aloud **Titus 1:4-8**. “What are some traits to look for in potential leaders of new little gatherings?” (Especially agree with those traits listed below.)

TRAITS OF POTENTIAL LEADERS

Willing to be appointed.	Not addicted to substances .
Local folk known to the members.	Neither violent nor greedy.
Sometimes more than one in each gathering.	Hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled,
Above reproach in their community.	upright, holy, and disciplined.
Morally respectable.	Teaches what you teach.
Neither arrogant nor easily angered.	Able to distinguish truth from error.

Discuss. “Can women start or lead new little gatherings?” (*Good answers:* Anyone can gather others and lead them in learning about Jesus.) Point out that all believers have spiritual gifts without regard for age or sex. Women can perform all the spiritual gifts. Everywhere in the world where gatherings are rapidly reproducing, the majority of new gatherings are started and led by women until a man is ready to do so.

If there is controversy about gender in “church leadership,” then point out that in the NT, elders were adult family men, and agree to talk about it at another venue at another time. If there is a need to validate women as leaders of new little gatherings, then have individuals read aloud any of the following bible texts:

WOMEN LEADERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Women apostles. Here we are not talking about the Twelve but about ordinary church-planting apostles. Junia and her husband Andronicus (Romans 16:7) were well-known apostles [not “known by the apostles”), as were Priscilla and her husband Aquila (Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; etc.).

Women prophets. Anna, a prophetess, blessed Baby Jesus (Luke 2:36-38). Four daughters of Philip, an evangelist, prophesied (Acts 21:9). Paul told women, along with everyone else, that they could prophesy in the church (1 Corinthians 16:24,31) in submission to their husbands.

Women evangelists. The first evangelists were women (Matthew 28:7), and women figured amongst those who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Euodia and Syntyche labored with Paul “in the gospel” at Philippi (Philippians 4:2,3).

Women shepherds. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15,40), Nympha (Colossians 4:15), Julia, and the sister of Nereus provided leadership for churches that met in their homes (Romans 16:15).

Women teachers. It is normally older women who teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Priscilla, along with her husband, Aquila, mentored Apollos, a competent teacher, in their home (Acts 18:24-26).

Group activity #3. Have the elders lead their gatherings in another planning session. Have them plan what to do in one or more worship gatherings that will include something new from this list of NT ministries.

Planning Notes

Discuss. “How often should a gathering begin doing some new activity or ministry?” (*Good answer:* whenever a gathering sees a need that it can meet, and whenever it sees that they have been neglecting a ministry that pleases the Lord.)

Module 4.

Teach believers to exercise their ministry gifts and listen to the Holy Spirit.

Objectives

- To know the categories of ministry gifts described in the New Testament.
- To feel confident that the Holy Spirit will lead the body and enable members to serve.
- To empower and train every believer to employ their ministry gift.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants' needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Role play. Have someone read aloud **Ephesians 4:7-11**. Five individuals sit in a gathering. After each one speaks, ask, "What is this one's ministry gift?"

Apostle: "There are many immigrants in our city that have no gathering. I think we should help them."

Prophet: "We all struggle with many things, and I want you to know how much the Lord loves you."

Evangelist: "Jesus died to forgive us and returned to life to save us. I hope you will all repent and trust him."

Shepherd: "I want our gathering to obey Jesus together, and I have some ideas about how we can do so."

Teacher: "There are several bible verses that we should read together. Let me explain..." If someone answers wrongly, reply, "Maybe. Does someone have another idea?"

Group activity #1. In each gathering, if someone would like to serve as an assistant elder, then have the elder appoint them to do so, at this time.

Group activity #3. The little hives may now return to their mother gathering, if they seem too little. Have the elders lead their gathering in a time of prayer, vision, discussion and planning:

- Ask the Lord Jesus to indicate to any or to all how you want to help their gatherings multiply.
- Let all praise him and pray to him, or read Scripture up to him.
- As any member gets a vision, let them describe it, and let the others pray it up to the Lord.
- Time permitting, lay some tentative plans for multiplication, noting persons and dates.
- Ask for willing co-workers, for coaching help, and for the Lord to bring in new believers.

Planning Notes

Discuss: The Business Model. Have someone read aloud **Acts 18:1-11**. Invite the participants to tell the story in their own words. Emphasize important points: (a) viable trade and self-support, (b) discuss Jesus with seekers, (c) find receptive folk; (d) work with households; (e) baptize new believers; and (f) shift to training leaders. Ask, “What were Paul’s two main skill sets?” (*Good answer:* tent-making and gatherings.)

Group activity #2. The Urban Hiving Model. If possible, arrange this with the elders, in advance. Have each gathering divide into two littler gatherings, one to be led by the elder and the other by the assistant elder. Have the members choose whom they will go with. Have the elder’s group members lay hands on the other group members, then have them move to form a separate group. We want the birth of a new group to feel positive, joyful though painful, like having a baby, not negative, a tearing apart, like getting a divorce.

Discuss. What were you feeling as you multiplied and separated? (Grief, loss, separation?) Explain that most gatherings do not divide. Hives cannot go far, remain ethnically the same, and can prove costly.

Role play: The Shepherding Model. Have someone read aloud **Acts 20:28-30**. Explain that wolves are anyone who twists truth to draw believers away to themselves. Ask for a volunteer who will play a “shepherd” who has authority to kill wolves. Next, have five to 15 others gather closely around the shepherd as his gathering of sheep. Then, appoint two or three more as wolves who circle round the gathering. Explain these **rules:** Wait till you say, Go. Sheep cannot move; if a wolf touches a sheep, then the sheep dies (stoops down); if the shepherd touches a wolf, then the wolf dies. Say Go. Let the game continue till the killing stops.

Discuss: Explain that one person cannot effectively care for more than about a dozen others. When a gathering gets too big, the elder needs help. Ask, “What could the shepherd do in order protect the sheep better? (*Good answers:* form them into smaller gatherings and delegate authority to a leader in each gathering.)

Role play (continued). Have the shepherd choose two or three helpers who now have authority to kill sheep. Run the game again until it is clear that the wolves cannot get to the sheep.

Group activity #2. Have the assistant elder lead the gathering in reading one of the following texts: **(A) Romans 12:3-10. (B) 1 Corinthians 12:7-12. (C) 1 Corinthians 12:27-31. (D) 1 Corinthians 13:1-6. (E) 1 Peter 4:7-11.** Have them answer these queries: “Which believers have a ministry gift?” (*Good answer:* All.) “What are some of the ministry gifts?” (See the chart below.) “What is the over-riding guideline in the exercise of ministry gifts in a gathering?” (*Good answer:* Love one for another.)

Discuss. “What are the classes of ministry gifts?” (*Good answer:* the gifts are of two general classes called Prophecy and Service, or Speaking gifts and Serving gifts.) “What is a good way to keep ministry gifts in balance?” (*Good answer:* Have all believers either do more sharing verbally or in rendering practical help to others.)

Role play. Introduce two leaders who are talking about how they serve their gathering.

One says, “Well after a year in this gathering, you and Sally (or Harry) have done a pretty good job of arranging the meeting place and organizing meals, but you seem to be getting tired. However several members have commented that you are the best teacher in our gathering and they would like to hear more from you.”

The other replies: “You are right about our getting tired. You, too, have been teaching well but I see how you struggle to prepare, whereas you seem full of energy during outreach to the poor.”

Discuss. “What kind of gift or ability should elders have and what kind should deacons have?” (Elders are supposed to be able to teach, whilst deacons must desire to serve in practical ways.)

Notes:

Group activity #3. Have assistant elders help believers to discern their ministry gifts from God.

Explain:

- It is not necessary for you to know for sure which gifts God has given to you. Each believer should simply start serving where there is a need.
- God will give special motivation for you to do certain things, which can be an indication of gifting. God will lead each one into ministries where they will become fruitful.
- Believers may receive more than one gift, and they can use a gift in more than one ministry.
- Good leaders help other workers to find what they can do well, and let them do it.

Have leaders read these names of Bible persons who modeled ministry gifts. Let the members say with which ones they strongly identify. For example, believers with the gift of leadership might identify with Joshua.

Gifts from Romans 12:6-8

Giving: Barnabas
Exhortation: Peter, John
Mercy: The Good Samaritan
Prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah
Teaching: Ezra
Leadership: David, Nehemiah

Gifts from 1 Corinthian 12

Wisdom, knowledge: Solomon
Helps. Aquila and Priscilla
Apostle: Paul
Discernment: Nathan
Healing: Elisha
Administration: Nehemiah
Miracles: Elijah
Tongues: Cornelius
Faith: Abraham

Gifts from Ephesians 4

Evangelist: Philip
Shepherd: James

Discuss. A little gathering will not have all the ministry gifts. “What can a little gathering do if it needs a ministry gift that it does not seem to have?” (*Good answers:* Have someone from another gathering help them for a while. Ask God for the gift the gathering needs. Ask God to bring someone who has the gift.) There is always another way, when you do not have needed gifts. Have someone read aloud **1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:8**.

Group activity #4. Have elders ask each member of the gathering to tell in a sentence or two, if they wish, the kind of ministry they have or would like to have. Then, before the next one shares, have the gathering lay hands on the person and pray for God to make their ministry gift apparent and fruitful.

Discuss. “Whom should the gathering empower to help with starting a new gathering?” (*Good answer:* Any one who feels motivated to do so.) “How does **Ephesians 4:11** apply to a situation like this one?” (*Good answer:* God gives apostles to gatherings.) Explain that most apostles were ordinary believers, not the 12.

Role play: The Joppa Model. Ask for five volunteers. Name them Peter, Cornelius, Angel, Servant, and Brother. Find a small sheet (or pretend). Recount the story of **Acts 10**, as the five act out what you say. Emphasize points that participants need to learn, perhaps: Peter’s cultural bias; both prayed, God acted first; Peter’s small team; friends and family gathered; the original gospel; receiving the Spirit; immediate baptism (done by whom?); a few days of instruction.

Discuss. “What did Peter do that you could do to help a gathering get started?” (*Good answer:* Pray, await an opportunity; take a trainee; go into a home; tell the original Good news; baptize; instruct new believers.)

Group activity #1: The Antioch Model. Have the elders lead their gathering in reading together **Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:21-23; and Acts 14:26**. Have each gathering answer together this question: “How did the Antioch gathering reproduce itself?” After seven minutes, have each elder or assistant report one observation from their study. Summarize their findings.

THE PAULINE CYCLE

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (a) Leaders pray. | (f) Visit and encourage them . |
| (b) Leaders appoint apostles. | (g) Appoint elders. |
| (c) These go tell the good news. | (h) Commend them to the Lord. |
| (d) Make disciples. | (i) Leave. |
| (e) Form them into gatherings. | (j) Report. |

Notes:

Module 5.

Agree among yourselves to start small gatherings that will start others.

Objectives

- To know several biblical models of gatherings starting new gatherings.
- To feel responsibility to help gatherings reproduce.
- To multiply gatherings and saturate the city with the Good News.

Instruction

- Choose those activities that you have time for and that best meet participants' needs.
- Choose role-players in advance and coach them briefly in what they are to say in their own words.

Role play. Introduce the steering committee of an established gathering. Three individuals sit together.

Nearsighted starts, "We have an heavy agenda, so we must not waste time."

Upstart interrupts, "Before we get into the agenda, I would like for us to talk about those homeless new believers who need to start gathering."

Nearsighted objects, "You know, we have our hands full taking care of your own gathering. Besides, we don't have enough finances for another gathering." He pleads with the workshop participants, "You agree with me, don't you?"

Discuss. "How soon can a gathering help another one get started?" (*Good answer:* As soon as the Lord makes it possible.) "Whose responsibility is it to start new gatherings?" (*Good answer:* All who obey Jesus' command to make disciples.) "Since all living things reproduce their own kind, what should produce a gathering?" (*Good answer:* An existing gathering.)

Role play. **Upstart** explains, "But I don't think it would cost anything to help those homeless believers have a gathering."

Nearsighted concludes, "Look, we just do not have anyone qualified to start a new gathering."



Group activity #5. Have the elders lead their gatherings in a study of how the Holy Spirit speaks. Assign to each group one or two of the following texts: **(A) Matthew 10:16-20. (B) John 14:23-27. (C) Acts 4:29-31. (D) Acts 13:1-8. (E) Acts 15:24-29.**

(F) 1 Corinthians 14:29-32. Have each gathering suggest some guidelines for hearing from the Holy Spirit in their gatherings. After seven minutes, have each gathering report one guideline at a time.

Notes:

Role play. Explain that a gathering is taking place. One of the members speaks up and says, "Before we do anything else, I have a message from God. The Holy Spirit spoke to me in the night and revealed to me what each one of you is supposed to do with the rest of your life, and who is supposed to be the permanent elder over this gathering." Ask, "What should the other members of this gathering do, now?"

Guidelines for hearing from the Holy Spirit.

- Make sure that you are willing to follow his guidance.
- Ask for his guidance when gathered in Jesus' name.
- Do not despise prophecy, but evaluate it. Take time together to be quiet and listen; then, share together your thoughts.
- Verify from Scripture what you suppose was his message.
- Expect confirmation from other sources, a sense of peace, spousal agreement.

Mistakes in listening for the Holy Spirit

- Accept an individual's testimonial without confirmation.
- Substitute hearing from the Spirit for obeying Jesus' commands.
- Ask for approval for a practice that Scripture condemns.

Discuss. The Holy Spirit normally speaks to gatherings, not so much to individuals. When someone says, "The Holy Spirit told me to do this or that," recommend that you all pray and ask Him what he wants to say to the gathering."

Enhance your gatherings hearing from the Holy Spirit

- Teach and exercise Jesus promise that his 'sheep' hear his voice. John 10:27
- Ask him to guide your gathering in obedience to Jesus' commandments. Luke 11:13
- Allow all believers to speak and to share from their ministry gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7
- Do not seek only one or two gifts to the exclusion of others. 1 Corinthians 12:28-30
- Promote prophesying in gatherings. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

Group activity #5. Have the gatherings take ten or more minutes to exercise ministry gifts. They should start by acknowledging His presence amongst them. Next, they should spend a minute or two praising Jesus and thanking the Father for his kindness to them. Then each one can share something, such as tell a need, say a prayer, speak encouraging words, express an insight, read a Scripture, lay hands on someone (if culturally appropriate)... If someone takes an unfair amount of time, then the elder should say, "Good, let us consider what you have said so far. You can share more, later. Who else wants to speak?"

Role play. Introduce Evangelist; s/he immediately starts moving among the participants saying things like, "We must all go tell others about Jesus." Introduce Teacher; s/he immediately moves around saying, "We must all study our Bible more." Introduce Servant; s/he immediately goes around saying, "We must all help the poor more." Stop them all after a few seconds and have them take their seats.

Discuss. "What happens when believers do not use their gifts and abilities in harmony with other believers?" (*Good answer:* They become unbalanced, fanatical and discouraged.) "What are some advantages of having all the believers participate actively together in their gatherings?" (*Good answer:* many are helped, strengthened, encouraged.)

Group activity #6. Have the gatherings listen to the Holy Spirit. Have the elders announce that the groups will take ten minutes (or some other number of minutes) to remain completely silent. Have the elders start by praying briefly, "Lord Jesus, what do you want us to do with what we have learned in this workshop, so far?" During their quiet time, members can write down what they feel the Lord may be telling them to do. When the time is up, the elder should ask the members to share what they have written, if they feel it is appropriate.

Listening and Application Notes