

Lesson 15: Leading a CARE Group

Introduction

How we lead a CARE group is one of the deciding factors for its success or failure. If a church wants to build up CARE groups, then it has to first invest in the training of leaders. Specifically, this means offering training and providing resources and support for the CARE group leaders.

Attributes of a good CARE group Leader

Good leadership isn't a coincidence! A good leader needs certain characteristics, attitudes, and abilities. Please read the following Bible verses and write down the attributes described therein.



1 Timothy 4:12-16: _____

2 Timothy 2:2: _____

2 Timothy 2:15: _____

2 Timothy 2:24-25: _____

2 Timothy 4:2: _____

1 Peter 5:1-3: _____

The attributes that a good CARE group leader should have are:

- Authentic faith
- Growth in faith
- Solid knowledge of the Bible
- A clear Adventist identity
- Willingness to learn
- A heart for people
- Humility and willingness to serve
- An exemplary lifestyle
- A willingness to venture something with God
- Organizational skills
- The attitude of a missionary
- Willingness to turn responsibilities over to other people
- The ability to train others, to motivate and to accompany during practical experiences.
- An understanding of teamwork and group dynamic processes.
- Willingness to work together with the church and to be accountable to the church.

Let's be very clear here. **We aren't looking for the perfect CARE group leader!** The attributes listed above are goals that we always strive to attain and grow towards. But it is important that the CARE group leader is willing to learn. Ellen White encourages us:

Quote #1

"He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have." (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 354)

Building a Core Team

The most important task of the leader is to build up a good core team, because a successful CARE group always originates from a strong core team. Ask God to show you who should belong to this inner circle. When this has been clarified, then the core team should meet alone for a while in order to lay a strong spiritual foundation for their project. It's better to take your time in the preparation phase than to start a CARE group too quickly and give up in frustration. The following things should be clarified while building a strong core team:

- The spiritual life of the members of the core team is the most important factor for success. Only when you personally have a deep, living relationship with Jesus will you be able to kindle the fire of faith in others. The first two modules of the discipleship course try to lay this foundation. The modules deal with such topics as salvation, assurance of salvation, being filled with the Holy Spirit, worship, prayer, and living a victorious Christian life. It is very important that the core team takes enough time to build this foundation.
- The core team needs a clear vision rooted in Jesus' commission. The members of the core team need to agree that the CARE group is there to lead people to Jesus.

- In addition, it is important that the members of the core team be committed to the same biblical values. If there are disagreements, they will eventually lead to conflict and disappointment.
- The core team phase is an important time of learning. Module three of this discipleship course deals with topics, which are important for the work in CARE groups.
- The members of the core team's spiritual life, their vision and values produce expectations, which should be clearly stated. In order to do that the following points are important:
 - We meet regularly and on time for the CARE group.
 - We pray regularly for each other and our guests.
 - We continually invite new guests.
 - We hold the CARE group in such manner that our guests feel comfortable.
 - We actively take part in the discussions in the CARE group.
 - We cultivate the friendships with each other and with our guests, also outside of our CARE group meeting.
 - The core team meets regularly to pray and to think about how the CARE group can be even better.
 - When there are tensions they are cleared up as quickly as possible.
- It is important for the members of the core team to make a binding obligation with each other in which their goals, values, and expectations are clearly stated.
- At least by now, it should be clear to everyone that the commitment of being in a CARE group is much more than promising a certain amount of time every week. It is important that the project is given priority. This might mean giving up other duties in the church in order to have enough time for it.
- The core team building phase is also a time to plan and implement mission activities. The point is to pray and work for those who we want to invite to our CARE group.
- In the core team building phase the team decides what topics will be studied at the CARE group.
- The core team should also agree on the division of roles in the CARE group.
- In the core team building phase a number of practical questions need to be answered, e.g.:
 - Time: It is important for the CARE group to meet weekly.
 - Place: We recommend that you always meet at the same place. The home must be easily reached by our guests and be available on a long-term basis to the CARE group. It needs to be large enough and comfortable.
 - Song books: Which song books will we use?
 - Budget: What kind of a budget does the CARE group have if it is necessary to buy song books, Bibles, or other mission material?
 - Food plan: What will you eat? Who will bring what?
- It is also important that the core team finds a time to meet separately. There they can discuss what is working well and what needs to be improved. In addition, you can talk about the guests and think about what they need in order to grow spiritually. These meetings are also a good opportunity to pray for them. In order to save time, this can be done via a telephone conference.

The Roles in the CARE group

The CARE group creates a setting in which each member of the core team is encouraged to work and help according to their gifts and desires. Not everyone can lead the Bible discussion, but everyone can contribute to the success of the whole. Some make their home available; others can keep the prayer journal or make up the food plan. Everyone can bring something to eat, can make positive contributions to the discussions, and pray for others. An important responsibility of the leader is to see that each member of the core team can contribute according to his/her talents and abilities. When a person actively participates in the group, they identify with the CARE group and his/her abilities will grow.

The following roles and duties are needed in a CARE group. Naturally, one person can take over more than one position:

- CARE group Leader
 - Instead of making the decisions alone, he/she helps the group to live out their values and reach their goals.
 - Everything that we previously discussed about the duties of a CARE group leader are also included.
- Co-Leader
 - He is the substitute for the CARE group leader.
 - Supports the group leader in all of his/her duties.
 - Also prepares the lesson topic and sometimes leads out.
- Host
 - Makes his home available and creates a warm and relaxed atmosphere.
 - Focuses on the needs of the members and always has an open heart and an open door.
- Prayer Coordinator
 - Keeps a prayer journal with all the prayer requests.
 - Encourages people to pray.
 - During the week he sends prayer requests to the core team members.
- Food Coordinator
 - Makes a food plan and sees to it that the burden is divided fairly.
- Discussion Leader
 - Leads the Bible discussion in the CARE group.
 - This task is usually done by the CARE group leader and the co-leader.

Multiplying CARE groups

When more people start attending the CARE group, it begins to grow like a cell. At some point, it is natural to divide and start new CARE groups. It is important to remind the core team that this was their ultimate goal: conversions, spiritual growth, and founding new CARE groups. If the core team doesn't keep this goal in mind, the CARE group will quit growing after it reaches a certain size. Not only will the numerical growth be hindered, but spiritual growth will suffer as well.

It is extremely important to understand that the goal of a CARE group is not to meet for years under the same conditions, even though the group has grown very close and would prefer to always stay this way. When a CARE group decides to divide because the group has become too large, there are many new opportunities for both spiritual and numerical growth.

When a CARE group thinks about dividing, the following things are important to consider:

- The key to a new CARE group is a new leader. That is why it is important that the CARE group leader gives responsibilities to his co-leader and trains him so that he can grow into his new duty.
- The new CARE group leader needs a strong core team to accompany him. At least 3-4 people are needed in the core team for a new CARE group.
- A monthly meeting of all the CARE group leaders and co-leaders is necessary so that they can share and discuss their challenges and receive assistance.
- Establishing a new CARE group isn't done spur of the moment. It is important that the core team thinks and prays about it for several months.
- When the core team has agreed on the goal of establishing a new CARE group, the next step is to explain this to the other group members and guests and ask them to pray about the matter.
- First, there should be unity in the core team as to who goes to which group. The other group members should be able to choose for themselves. But the group should be equally divided. If possible good friends should be kept together in one group.
- It is also important that the church votes on this plan so that they are informed and, when necessary, can provide assistance.
- Initially both groups can meet in the same place, but after the meal together, they should go to separate rooms for Bible study, discussion, and prayer. During this transition period the lesson topics can be oriented towards the goal of the new CARE group. For example, topics could be about how Jesus and the early Christians won people.
- When the time is ripe, the CARE groups meet together one last time. There should be a ceremonial farewell including a prayer of dedication. From here on out, the new CARE group meets independently in its new location.

Start!

This is the last lesson on CARE groups. Now it is important that you put into practice what you've learned. If it remains a theory, you will forget all that you have learned. Plus, there are so many things to learn about CARE groups that can only be learned by participating in a CARE group. You can't imagine how many experiences with God are waiting for you if you are just brave enough to take this step! You will have to learn a lot of new things, but start with what you have and you will experience how God multiplies your knowledge and abilities. We may make mistakes, but we can learn from them. God isn't looking for perfection, but rather a heart that is willing and ready to serve!

If you start this journey with God, you will see friends become part of the CARE group and make decisions for Jesus. You need to realize that it isn't the method that makes the difference. Of course, there are many things that we can do to make it easier for your friends to find Jesus. But in the end it will still be God's work:

"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

The Lord adds! It is my sincere desire that you will experience this!

Challenge

1. Continue to pray for the people on your prayer list and keep your eyes open for opportunities to bless them and give them spiritual encouragement.
2. Pray together for the friends on your joint prayer list, who you want to invite to your CARE group.

3. Create a plan for starting your CARE group.



Bible Study

Please study **1 Thessalonians 2:1-12** carefully and take notes on the content, meaning, and life applications of these verses. Be sure to write down good questions for each.

What does the Bible say? (content, meaning, application)	How can I ask questions about this? (Questions on content, meaning, and application)

