

The logo for Catalyst Groups features a stylized 'C' composed of three overlapping curved segments in blue, green, and orange. To the right of this graphic, the words "Catalyst Groups" are written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Catalyst Groups

A catalyst is somebody or something that makes a change happen or brings about an event.

Purpose: The purpose of these groups is to serve as a catalyst for spiritual and personal growth in the life of our members and their families, and to spur growth in the Sunday School of Shades Mountain Baptist Church.

Plan: The Sunday School class forms at least one group (depending on class size) made up of 4-5 couples. These should not be care groups as they need to remain open and fluid. Catalyst groups will be closed groups in order to protect the viability of the group in terms of trust and relationship building. As the need for additional groups arise, we will start new groups from the class.

When do the groups meet?: The groups will meet primarily on Wednesday nights from 6:00 pm until 7:30 pm. Children will have a full array of activities in which for them to be involved so childcare will not be an issue. The first meeting will be on Wednesday, September 9, 2009.

Where will the groups meet?: The groups will meet primarily on the church campus. I will provide meeting space for your group.

Who leads the groups?: The groups will be lead by someone within the group that has been equipped for the task. It should not be assumed that the SS teacher will lead the group.

How often do the groups meet and what is the format?: The groups should meet 2 out of 4 Wednesdays as a whole – meaning all the couples meet together. At least 1 Wednesday night a month the groups should have the men and women meet separately for accountability.

Who will train the group leaders?: Gary Harvey will provide training and guidelines for leading a small group and provide some helpful tips on seeing the small group flourish on Wednesday, August 19, 2009 at 6:30 PM.

What are the benefits of utilizing Catalyst Groups?: The benefits are numerous and significant –

1. It grows us as individuals closer to the Lord
2. It grows us as believers closer to one another
3. It grows us as husbands, wives, moms, and dads
4. It provides men's accountability and women's accountability
5. It helps develop leaders for the future
6. It has a direct impact on the Sunday School class

What will the groups study?: I will provide a listing of resources. If your group does not like any of the choices, I will work with you to find the best fit for you. In other words, this is a great opportunity to custom design a curriculum that meets the needs that your group is facing with strong Biblically based study material.

Practical Results from Catalyst Groups

I. Connectedness

Catalyst groups create three important connections:

- 1) Connections within the group occur as the group takes on a “family” role. Rather than being a mini-seminar with everyone focused on learning from a speaker, people get to know each other in personal ways.
- 2) Connections outside the group grow as connectedness becomes a way of life. Experiencing relationships within the group gives members a model to relate to their spouses, families, kids, friends, etc.
- 3) Closer connections with God develop as people connect in the group. Our vertical disconnection often has to do with our horizontal disconnection. 1 John 4:20 says, “If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” (ESV)

II. Honesty

In catalyst groups, people learn the value of telling the truth to each other and to themselves. Many people are afraid of honesty because of their life experiences. They have learned that honesty makes others angry, that people might withhold love from them, that it harms others, or that they themselves have been wounded by the truth. In a catalyst group, members will learn how healing and freeing the truth can be when it is shared in a “no condemnation” setting.

III. Integration of Character

Integration is “the state of accepting, experiencing and dealing with all parts of ourselves, good and bad.” An integrated person lives in self-aware reality rather than just experiencing parts of reality. The Bible teaches the opposite of integration—what James called being “double-minded” (James 1:8).

IV. Normalizing Struggle

An underlying assumption of Catalyst Groups is that all members are expected to make mistakes and to bring those mistakes before the group. When this process takes place—people see they do not struggle alone and that it is normal to struggle in life. This is the opportunity the Bible speaks about in Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (ESV)