



THE WITNESS SECTION – DOING EVANGELISM THROUGH YOUR SMALL GROUP

There are some great bible study notes out there and often they contain good resources for small group worship too. Frequently however, they don't support the missional side of a Lightwave Group. These notes by small group expert Laurence Singlehurst could be used alongside such bible study notes to help you to develop the witness of your group. They are particularly suitable where a group has identified a long-term dedicated mission in a particular session – for example reaching out to new housing in the area or running an afterschool fresh expression of Church for teens involving cooking. We are publishing them in word format so that you can alter them as you need and you could edit them easily for use in an online small group.

1. Vision

Each small group has accepted a vision to see how their group could grow through running a project in the local community. These projects can be diverse and the hope would be that individuals contacted through the projects would begin a journey of faith and hopefully join the small group.

Discuss this vision and refine it for your group and then lift it up to the Lord in prayer.

2. Heart Motivation

A project like your group is undertaking will take at least two years and perhaps longer. So where does the energy come from that gives each of us the motivation to see this happen?

John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that he sent his son so God's motivation was his love for people. Mission and evangelism are not a method even though we use methods at the heart of it is praying that God will give us a big heart and we will care for the community and the people in the place we start the project. So, let us spend a few minutes praying for each one of us by name that God would give us a big heart for the people we are hoping to reach out to.

3. The Team

Luke 10:2 says the harvest is plentiful, pray ye therefore for the workers. Our small group is the team that is going to make this project happen and it's going to happen through our gifts, our different characters and our capacity to work together. So, let us pray for one another that we will identify the gifts and the talents that each one of us may have to contribute to this project and that we will have the grace to work together in a dynamic and caring way.

4. Evangelism

As you start your project it's important to understand that there are two categories of relational based evangelism. We are seeking to reach out to people on a relational basis perhaps contacting them through the project that we start. When we do mission in this way I call it pioneer evangelism as we are going beyond our existing relationships into a new space to see God at work. At the same time we are still in relationship with our friends, neighbours, colleagues; our front line and this is

called network evangelism and obviously that will continue. You will still be a friend to people where you work and doing what you do and your faith will have an impact in that setting.

Discuss in your group these two different expressions of evangelism.

5. Decisions

This project will require lots of different decisions, whom, where, when, how, resources etc. So how do we make these decisions? As Christians we have perhaps two co-equal means of guidance and godly decision making. I call these Principle and Revelation. Revelation is that through prayer and other ways we may have felt the holy spirit speak to us about a particular people group, a particular village a particular type of project and that is good. But also God has given us the capacity of Principle where we can co-work with him using our intelligence and our gifts to also find out the answer to the questions of whom, where, when, how etc.

Discuss this in the go up and give an example of decisions made by Revelation and by Principle.

6. Principle outworked

Guidance is sometimes hidden in plain sight and that means it is often placed inside the team members. So, good questions to ask ourselves as a small team is what are our passions, what are each one of us interested in because it is good to use that passion as energy for the project. Secondly, what skills do we have in our midst and can any of them be used as a good direction for us in doing a project. What are our different interests that we might have? So, go round each member and ask them what skills and passions they have in relation to people and community and what are their interests and see if this gives you any clues re your project.

Discuss, reflect and pray.

7. Resources

Part 1. Sometimes the right project stares us in the face because we have a particular resource in terms of buildings or access to equipment. Around the country many pop-up coffee shops, health spaces, have arisen because a church has a particular asset or is able to get hold of a particular resource in a village in an area. So, discuss and reflect. Are there any resources available to your group that might also give you an indication of the type of project that you could do?

Part 2. Another resource that we can look at is there is an organisation called The Cinnamon Network, website: www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk. The Cinnamon Network has brought together 32 pioneer projects other churches and other groups have done and the people who initiated these projects have written them up and they offer training and resources for other groups to do these projects. On their website are short videos of two to three minutes. Over the next few small group meetings why don't you watch one or two of these videos and see if one of these ideas fits your situation. If they do they will save you a lot of hard work as they have already had to find the best practice and how this idea works.

8. Needs of the community

One of the primary ways that people have found guidance again and again for this type of project is to ask what are the needs of the particular community or village. Are there elderly people who might need help, are there teenagers with little to do? Does the village lack a place to gather, for example, a coffee shop? The more you understand the needs of the community the better it will be so a good suggestion would be for the whole group to meet in the village, walk around it, gather information

and then make a list of the needs that you have found out and place them in list of priority and begin to pray for the top three.

9. Your framework

It's useful to have a framework for your idea which helps you to strategise and to plan. Laurence Singlehurst, in his book *Sowing Reaping Keeping*, lays out a framework which he has modified. John 3:16 has three dynamics to it which might help us. 1. Encounter – God sends his son – mission begins with an encounter – our project starts at an encounter, be it a coffee shop, or befriending people on the streets. And the goal of that encounter is not to see people come to faith there and then but is to establish trust and relationships where the people we are reaching out to can see that we the team are normal people and they begin to like and trust us. Then when they understand that we are people of faith because they like and trust us it is not weird and they begin to get a new sense of what Gd is like. So, the encounter is the first level of that project and this is the bit that you will do week in month out year in year out dependant on what you do. 2. Engage - John 3:16 talks about believing. 40% of people in the UK do not believe that Jesus is a real person so a lot of people have a long journey to faith and this is the engaging process. It is offered to the people that we are meeting through our encounter as a choice. Would you like to come to this event, would you like to read this? We do not want to put pressure on people or violate the trust that they have given us in coming to our project. 3. Embrace - there is a time where we want to encourage people and embrace faith for themselves and begin their own spiritual journey so if someone has spent a year with us in an encounter space then shown some interest in engaging then we might be able to say would you like to come to an Alpha which is an ideal way to see people embrace faith. So in your group appoint a scribe and describe your project in these three ideas, how will we encounter people how will they engage and embrace. You might find Laurence Singlehurst's book *Sowing Reaping Keeping*, available from www.celluk.org.uk, a helpful resource.

10. shape your project

So it might be time to put your best ideas in writing and put a little strategy on encounter, engage and embrace around each project and as a group pray and reflect on which of these projects you think is the right one.

11. Begin

Having chosen a project you need a project plan. What resources does this project require, what are the skills and the assets needed, what do we already have, what don't we have. This will create a list for prayer and begin to form a timeline of how you might do this project.

12. Consider your plans

Discuss your project in your group. How are you going through your planning, pray for your project and see if you can start a timeline and find a date to begin.

13. Pray for the village or the people group you are going to reach out to. If at all possible set up three prayer walks where you have a good idea of what you are going to do and a possible start date, pray for your village or people group or your project.

14 and 15 Repeat 13