**3 Roles for Guiding Groups**

Conference Plan for Adult Leaders

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**Purpose:** This conference plan details a two-hour conference experience for adult Sunday School and small-group leaders. The goal is to provide an overview of the book and to apply its content to the Bible study setting of conference participants.

**How to use this plan:**

* **Local church – Sunday School:** use this conference plan to train adult Bible study leaders prior to the start of the new Sunday School year. Many churches use this conference plan on a Saturday morning or Sunday evening in mid-August.
* **Local church – small groups**: use this conference plan to train new adult small-group leaders throughout the year prior to the start of new semesters of study.
* **Regional and state training –** use this conference plan to train Sunday School and small-group adult leaders at regional or state-wide events.

**PREPARE**

**Collect the following resources for use during the training event:**

* One copy of *3 Roles for Guiding Groups* by David Francis and Ken Braddy for each participant. The book can be ordered at [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com).
* Nametag for each participant
* Post-It® notepad (wall size)
* Permanent markers
* Marker board and dry-erase markers plus an eraser
* Audio-visual equipment such as tv/scan converter or data projector and a screen
* Extension cords
* Portable speakers for your laptop
* Remote control/laser pointer
* CD player, iPod, electronic tablet or phone, or other device from which you may choose to play music

**Download the following:**

* PowerPoint presentation: *3 Roles for Guiding Groups* ([www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis)).
* Handout: Teaching Methods
* Handout: Shepherding
* Handout: My Prayer/My Plan

**Prepare a display of the following resources:**

* *3 Roles for Guiding Groups* by David Francis and Ken Braddy
* Samples of ongoing Bible study resources from LifeWay including leader guides, personal study guides, commentaries, and other resources specific to each product family
  + Explore The Bible
  + Bible Studies For Life
  + The Gospel Project
  + Masterwork
  + YOU
* Samples of short-term Bible study resources

**Prepare the room for the conference:**

* Arrange chairs so they form a semi-circle facing a focal wall
* Place handouts for participants on each chair, along with a nametag
* Set up and test any electronic equipment you plan to use, such as a tv/scan converter or data projector and laptop
* Locate the temperature controls and adjust so the room is comfortable

**PRESENT**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**[PowerPoint Slide 1]**

* Have slide 1 projected as participants arrive. Have music of your choice playing in the background as participants arrive.
* Ask participants to use a permanent marker to write their first name on their nametag.

**[PowerPoint Slide 2]**

* After all participants have arrived, have them briefly introduce themselves to the group, sharing the following:
  + Their name
  + How long they’ve been a Bible study leader
  + The thing they enjoy most about their role as a Bible study leader
* Be sure to share your name, too, as the leader of the conference, and answer the same questions your participants did in the exercise above.

**[PowerPoint Slide 3]**

* Ask participants to answer the question on the slide – *Which One of These Roles is “You”?* – and to share with a fellow participant (most participants will feel an affinity for one of the three roles versus the other two).
* After a brief time for sharing, tell participants that although they may feel they are stronger in one of the three roles than the other two, they are responsible for all three as a Bible study leader!
* Encourage them to consider that they don’t have to be proficient in all three roles, but they can lead others in their groups to help them accomplish the tasks associated with each role. By involving others, the important ministry and work of the group can be accomplished, which allows the group leader (them) to play to his or her strength.
* Pray and ask God to bless your time together in the conference as He speaks to each person’s heart about their important role in leading a Bible study group.

**2. Chapter 1 – Teacher: Guiding the Group’s Bible Study**

**[PowerPoint Slides 4and 5]**

* Ask participants to read silently the first paragraph on page 12 of the *3 Roles for Guiding Groups* book.
* Ask participants to respond to the quote on slide 5 which is found in the paragraph they just read.
  + Do they agree or disagree with it? Why?
  + How is this definition different than the one you may have for the role of teacher?
  + How might acting as a “guide” benefit both the teacher and the group members?
* Explain the meaning of “teacher” as defined by Francis and Braddy (p. 12). A teacher is someone who guides group members to study God’s Word. The teacher may have a broader knowledge and understanding of the Bible than his group members, but he resists the urge to do an “information dump” and instead leads his group members to discover truths in God’s Word for themselves.

**[PowerPoint Slide 6]**

* Call attention to the two important relationships found on pages 13-14 in the “Relationships” section of the chapter.
  + A teacher’s relationship with God
  + A teacher’s relationship with group members
* In groups of 3-4 people, ask participants to use a Post-It® sheet to record as many advantages as they can for a teacher to know the names, backgrounds, and current life stories of the people he teaches. After a few minutes, call for groups to share their answers.
* Read the quote by Bruce Raley on page 14 of the *3 Roles for Guiding Groups* book: “Real teaching requires a relationship.” Challenge participants to get to know each group member and each guest who attend their group.
* Ask participants to brainstorm ways that a teacher can effectively build relationships with the people he teaches (list responses on a marker board or a Post-It® sheet). Some answers might include:
  + Inviting one person or couple to have lunch each week after church.
  + Working with the group’s fellowship leader to schedule ongoing monthly times for fellowship (game night, lunch as a group after church, monthly missions or service projects, day trips, etc).
* Call attention to the first key relationship on slide 6: God. Remind participants that they teach and lead from the overflow of a strong devotional life. Emphasize that Jesus often spent time alone with His Father to pray and focus on His relationship with God the Father (Matt. 14:23). As leaders, we should all follow that example as well.

**[PowerPoint Slide 7]**

* Call attention to the *Ruts* section of chapter 1 beginning on page 16 of *3 Roles for Guiding Groups*.
* In the margin of the book on pages 17 and 18, instruct participants to list any (and all) teaching methods they’ve used in the past six Bible study sessions they’ve led. After a few minutes of reflecting, call for them to call out methods they’ve used (list these on another Post-It® sheet).
* Ask the participants to scan the paragraph on page 17 that describes some of the methods Jesus used when he communicated God’s Word to people (the paragraph begins “If you feel a little hesitant…”).
* Ask, “If Jesus used different methods to teach, why do you think teachers often get locked into using only one or two methods?” Allow time for responses.
* Ask, “If you were a group member who was a visual learner (you like charts, posters, videos, etc) but your teacher was a lecturer, what might this cause you to do? Guide the discussion as participants offer their ideas.
* Invite group members to think about how many different methods they’ve seen in the conference so far:
  + Music
  + Visuals (PowerPoint slideshow, Post-It® notes, handouts, etc)
  + Verbal (discussion as a group, discussion in smaller groups)
  + Paper and pen activities
  + Reflective activities (they have been directed to think about certain things)
* Help participants see that different methods will keep their group members engaged in Bible study, just as the different methods used so far in the conference have served to keep them engaged and learning.
* Distribute the **Teaching Methods** handout, encouraging them to review the information. Challenge them to try a new method.

**3. Chapter 2 – Shepherd: Guiding the Group’s Care**

**[PowerPoint Slides 8 and 9]**

* Guide participants to scan the opening paragraphs of chapter 2 (p. 21) in *3 Roles for Guiding Groups.*
* Note that shepherding has influenced the writing in the Bible.
* Focus attention on the hard life of shepherds as seen in Jacob’s comment to his father-in-law (p. 21).
* Remind the participants that a second role given to those who guide Bible study groups is the role of shepherd, a role that can be challenging and hard at times, since it involves caring for people.

**[PowerPoint Slide 10]**

* Divide participants into 3 groups and assign one of the 3 requirements from page 22 to each group.
* Ask the groups to read the paragraph assigned to them, and to develop a list of actions a leader might take in order to more effectively fulfill that requirement (give each group a Post-It® sheet for them to record their insights).
* After a time, allow one representative from each group to present their findings to the entire group.

**[PowerPoint Slide 11]**

* Using information from pages 23-25, deliver a brief mini-lecture about how the following “Rs” are all tied to knowing the people who are in our Bible study groups (shepherd-leaders are most effective when they contact every member every week, know their hurts and needs, have tools to help them record and remember the situation of their group members, and love them genuinely through good times and bad).
  + Recruiting (p. 23)
  + Relationships (p. 23)
  + Resources (p. 24)
  + Routines (p. 24)
  + Ruts (p. 25)
* After the brief mini-lecture above, ask: *If you decided to take your shepherding to a new level starting this week, what would be different?* Give participants time to think about this and instruct them to use the **Shepherding handout** as a place to jot down their plan.
* Call for a time of reporting to see how each participant plans to be a better shepherd to his or her group.
* Invite participants to read Luke 15:3-7 in their Bibles and to describe how this parable might be applied today to their Bible study group.

**[PowerPoint Slide 12]**

* Ask participants to recall a teacher from their past who made a big impact on them. Invite stories to be told, listening for stories about teachers who cared for and ministered to the participants. Be ready to share a personal story about a former teacher who was influential in your life because of the way he or she cared for you outside of the classroom, expressing a godly concern for your spiritual growth and overall well-being.
* Summarize the text in the Rewards section (p. 26) to help participants realize that although they may not be their church’s best leader from a technical standpoint, because of the way they care for their group members they are most likely considered to be the best leader by their group members because of the love and concern shown outside the group time.

**4. Chapter 3 – Guiding The Group’s Mission**

**[PowerPoint Slides 13 and 14]**

* Ask participants to complete the activity on page 28 in *3 Roles for Guiding Groups* (the activity invites them to name leaders and to consider whether or not they consider themselves to be a leader).
* Call for responses and write names of leaders on a Post-It® sheet.
* Remind participants that even if they do not view themselves as leaders, they are!

**[PowerPoint Slide 15]**

* Ask participants to focus on the 4 requirements mentioned on pages 28-29.
* Instruct them to answer the question near the top of page 29 with a fellow participant.
* Emphasize that all four requirements must be met if a leader is to be effective.
* Ask participants to consider what might be the effect of a leader achieving only 3 of the 4 requirements (consider identifying one of the requirements as something that is not met, then brainstorm the consequences; for instance, what would be the effect of a leader not having godly character? Consider going through the list and rotating the requirement that is not met and discussing the consequences)

**[PowerPoint Slide 16]**

* Call for volunteers to answer the question on slide 16 (taken from the activity on page 30 of *3 Roles for Guiding Groups*). List responses on a marker board or a Post-It® sheet.
* Emphasize how important it is for group leaders to be clear on what they and their groups are expected to accomplish.
* If someone is unclear on what their group is expected to do, encourage them to contact the appropriate staff leader at their church to find out.

**[PowerPoint Slide 17]**

* Divide the participants into two groups and assign the Exodus 18 passage to one group and the Acts 6 passage to the other. Instruct them to read the verses on the PowerPoint slide and determine what leadership principles should be gleaned.
* Allow time for responses to the above activity, stressing how important it is for leaders to recruit others to help them accomplish the work of their Bible study group.
* Call for volunteers to share success stories that describe times when they’ve recruited people to help lead the group.

**[PowerPoint Slide 18]**

* Briefly outline the 3 ruts mentioned on pages 34 (also listed on slide 18).
* Lead a discussion related to each of the 3 ruts. Help participants discern the harm that takes place when a group finds itself in any of these 3 ruts.

**[PowerPoint Slide 19]**

* Divide the participants into three groups and assign one of the additional 3 “Rs” found in the section titled *Results* (pp. 35-36) to each group.
* Give groups time to read and summarize the section they’ve been assigned.
* Allow a spokesperson from each group to present the main points contained in their assigned section.
* Lead a brief discussion as to which of these 3 additional “Rs” the participants believe their group does best (and worst). Discuss the long-term effect on the church if their weakest “R” is not strengthened.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**[PowerPoint Slide 20]**

* Distribute the **handout** titled **My Prayer/My Plan.**
* Instruct participants to spend a few minutes jotting down two things:
  + **My Prayer** – what they would like to see changed in themselves and in their groups over the next 12 months
  + **My Plan** – action items that are (1) measurable (2) achievable.
* Allow a time of sharing so that participants can hear what God has impressed on the hearts of fellow conference participants.
* In a final few minutes, ask each participant to identify one key thing he or she heard during the conference that was the most impactful to them as a teacher-shepherd-leader.
* Remind participants about the following:
  + [www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis) (and the free conference materials and other downloadable helps for leading conferences about this book)
  + **End-of-chapter plans**. These can be used separately from this conference plan, or use it to augment this conference plan. The 45-minute teaching plans at the end of each chapter can be used by a church to lead quarterly training in the contents of this book. These teaching plans could also be used together to create a longer conference plan than this one.
  + **Other David Francis books in iBooks**. Don’t forget that previously published books by David Francis are available as free PDF downloads from Apple.
* Close the conference by praying for the participants.
* Dismiss