



Extreme Sunday School Challenge

Engaging Our
World Through
New Groups

Using This Handout Set

1. Make copies of pages 2 and 3, front and back, one for each person expected.
2. Make copies of page 4, one for half of the total number expected. After making the copies, cut the paper in half long-wise, created a long sheet that includes both the checklist and response form.
3. Conduct a meeting with people you believe to be a potential catalyst for starting new groups. Review the suggested steps using the content on pages 2 and 3.
4. Conclude the meeting by distributing a copy of the checklist with response form. Challenge attendees to commit to being a catalyst for new groups by signing the bottom portion of the form. Direct them to crease at the line and to remove the bottom portion. Encourage them to keep the checklist as a reminder of the steps they are committing to complete.
5. Gather the bottom portion and provide that information to your state Sunday School office. They will enter the information in a database and generate an email that includes links to information that will help people start new groups.



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How to Start New Groups

Your Role as a Catalyst to Start New Groups

One of the most important things a church can do is start new groups. New groups reach new people, develop new leaders, make more disciples, and allow more people to exercise their spiritual gifts leading to greater spiritual maturity. New groups grow faster and are more evangelistic than existing groups. Churches that regularly start new groups almost always experience consistent growth. Any church, regardless of its size, location, or ethnicity, can start new groups.

But starting new groups is not easy. You have to be intentional in your actions. Starting new groups requires a catalyst....and you are that catalyst! You must have the vision for reaching new people and be willing to do the hard work it takes to make it happen. Here are simple steps to start a new group.

- **Pray**

Pray for God to lead you to who you need to reach, assimilate and disciple. Pray for God to call new leaders to start groups. Pray for existing groups to support the creation of new groups by praying and releasing members to begin a new group. Ask God to bring awareness to people who are not participating in a group of their need for Him and for relationships with others.

- **Identify your target**

Decide who the new group is intended to reach. Young Adults? Single Parents? Students? Children? Preschoolers? Parents with Preschoolers? What segment of your congregation or community does not “fit” with your existing small groups? Is there an age span that is too wide? Who attends worship but does not have a group that is designed for them?

- **Select resources/curriculum that the group will use**

Use resources that address both the needs of people you are trying to reach and also the leadership abilities of the group leader. Order these prior to enlisting the leader so you can show them the tools they will have.

- **Enlist a leader**

Enlist a leader for the new group. Share your vision with this person. Pray with them and ask for a commitment.

- **Enlist “missionaries” from other groups to help start the new group**

Enlist “missionaries” from other classes that fit the target. It’s easier to start a group with a few friends who are willing to help the leader. Start with at least three people to be the core of the new group—a leader to lead the Bible study, someone to be responsible for reaching new people, and someone responsible for ministry.



Extreme Sunday School Challenge

- **Develop a list of prospects for the new group**

Develop a list of potential members for the new group. Include contact information with email, phone, address, etc. Help the new leader and core group contact people who are not currently connected to a group. Personal phone calls are much better than email or letters.

- **Select a date to start the new group**

New groups can start at any time. Consider starting new groups at the start of the new church year, January 1, or Easter Sunday, but don't limit yourself to these dates.

- **Choose a time, location, and room where the group will meet**

This may include cleaning out a room or using a nearby home. It could also mean using a room or home at a day and time other than the primary time in which groups currently meet.

- **Train the leader and core team**

Provide training for the leader and those who agree to help start the group. Provide expectations of leaders, job specific training, and information on the target group.

- **Start with a fellowship**

Plan and conduct a fellowship or interest party. Many people who will attend the new group are interested in making new friends. Offer a fellowship before the start of the new group and invite as many potential members as possible. Share about the new group and invite participants to attend. Consider enlisting an existing group to help with the fellowship/interest party and other activities.

- **Conduct the first Bible study session with the new group**

Make sure the leader and core group is ready! Arrive early and verify the room/space is ready to go! Allow time for fellowship and prayer.

- **Evaluate, encourage, and celebrate**

Evaluate the process, encourage the new group, celebrate new participants. Follow up frequently with the new group and leader as they work to build relationships with people. Encourage the group and leader to plan fellowships and ministry projects. Do life together.

- **Enlist and train additional leaders**

As the group grows equip the leaders to enlist and train additional class leaders, especially an apprentice teacher and ministry leaders. Encourage the group to pray to start a new group in the next 12-18 months as most groups cease to grow after 24 months. The apprentice should be trained to start and lead a new group, or assume leadership of the existing group while your leader starts another new group.

- **Begin the process again**



Extreme Sunday School Challenge

Your Checklist for Starting New Groups

I am the Catalyst

Starting new groups requires a catalyst....and you are that catalyst! You must have the vision for reaching new people and be willing to do the hard work it takes to make it happen. As you complete each step, place a check by the box and date it.

- ☐ Pray
- ☐ Identify your target
- ☐ Select resources/curriculum that the group will use
- ☐ Enlist a leader
- ☐ Enlist "missionaries" from other groups to help start the new group
- ☐ Develop a list of prospects for the new group
- ☐ Select a date to start the new group
- ☐ Choose a time and location or room where the group will meet
- ☐ Train the leader and core team
- ☐ Start with a fellowship
- ☐ Conduct the first Bible study session with the new group
- ☐ Evaluate, encourage, and celebrate
- ☐ Enlist and train additional leaders
- ☐ Begin the process again

(Crease along this line and remove the signed portion below)

I will be a catalyst for starting new groups in my church, committing to start at least one new group in the next 12 months with Jesus as the Cornerstone, the Spirit as my strength and the Father being honored.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Email: _____

Church Name (include city): _____



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