

INTRODUCTION

In 1982 a small group of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) staff-workers (Steve Barker, Judy Johnson, Jimmy Long, Rob Malone and Ron Nicholas, who coordinated their work) created *The Small Group Leader's Handbook*. Used by a variety of groups, including prison ministries and Officer's Christian Fellowship, that groundbreaking book was of great service to both the campus and the church.

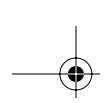
In 1995 another team (Jimmy Long [the group's coordinator], Ann Beyerlein, Sara Keiper, Patty Pell, Nina Thiel and Doug Whallon) wrote a new handbook called *The Small Group Leader's Handbook: The Next Generation*, which I edited. In the process of writing that book we found that one of the most valued features of the original book was the resource section. We decided that there was enough helpful material available to create a separate book of resources. Thus the *Small Group Idea Book* was born.

The book is a collaborative effort. We included ideas from small group specialists as well as InterVarsity staff and students from across the country. We particularly want to thank the Downstate Illinois team, who submitted the most ideas of any IVCF area and won a pizza party. Runners-up included Central/South New Jersey and Western Washington. Many ideas from the original resource section of *The Small Group Leader's Handbook*, compiled by Judy Johnson, are here as well.

The material made its debut on the InterVarsity Press website in the Small Group Idea Center, and readers were invited to contribute their ideas. This expanded edition includes ideas that we have gathered from the Web. We have also included ideas and an appendix from Dan Lentz and Michael Mack and their Small Group Network <www.SmallGroups.com>.

There are four sections which represent the four key components of a small group: community, worship and prayer, Bible study and outreach.





Ideas within each section are organized alphabetically. Using a mix of ideas from each of these four sections will help group members to grow in their relationship with God and one another.

Some of the sections are subdivided to make them more useful. In chapter one, "Community Resources," we have provided ideas that are appropriate for any phase of a group's life. You'll find ideas for the first few meetings of a small group, ideas for the start-up phase as people continue to question what the group is and whether they want to be a part of it, ideas for the shake-up or conflict phase when the honeymoon is over and group ownership is established, ideas for the live-it-up or action phase when real community is taking place and people are growing, and ideas for the wrap-up phase when the group disbands and needs celebration and closure. Outreach is divided into five key areas: getting started, serving others, reaching seekers, world mission and social action.

We plan to expand and update this book as needed, so if you have ideas you would like to submit for a future edition, feel free to send them to me at InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515. I can be reached via email at smallgroups@ivpress.com. (By submitting an idea you are granting InterVarsity Press permission to reprint your idea. If we use your idea and have a correct mailing address, we will send you a copy of the new edition.) You may also be interested in our small group resources located on the InterVarsity Press website. Visit there to send me your ideas or feedback on the book.

Small groups are a powerful way for people to connect with one another and experience the power of the gospel. May God bless your small group ministry.

Cindy Bunch

