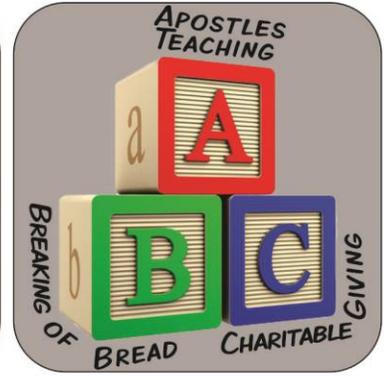
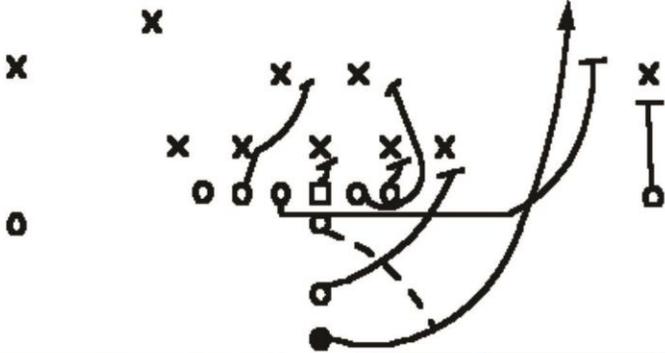


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the narrow road church

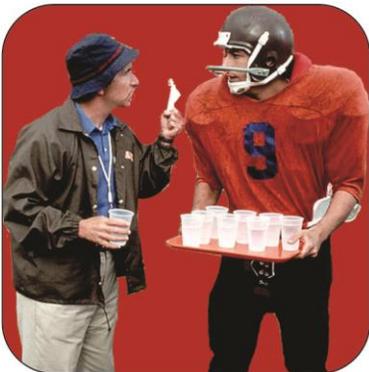
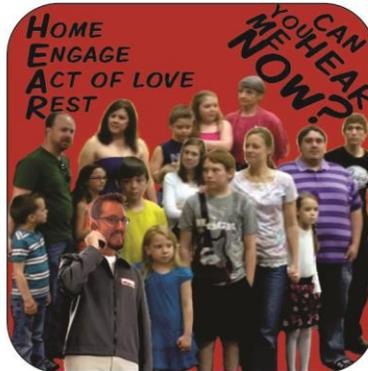
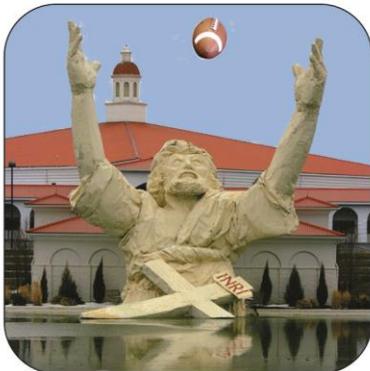
PLAYBOOK

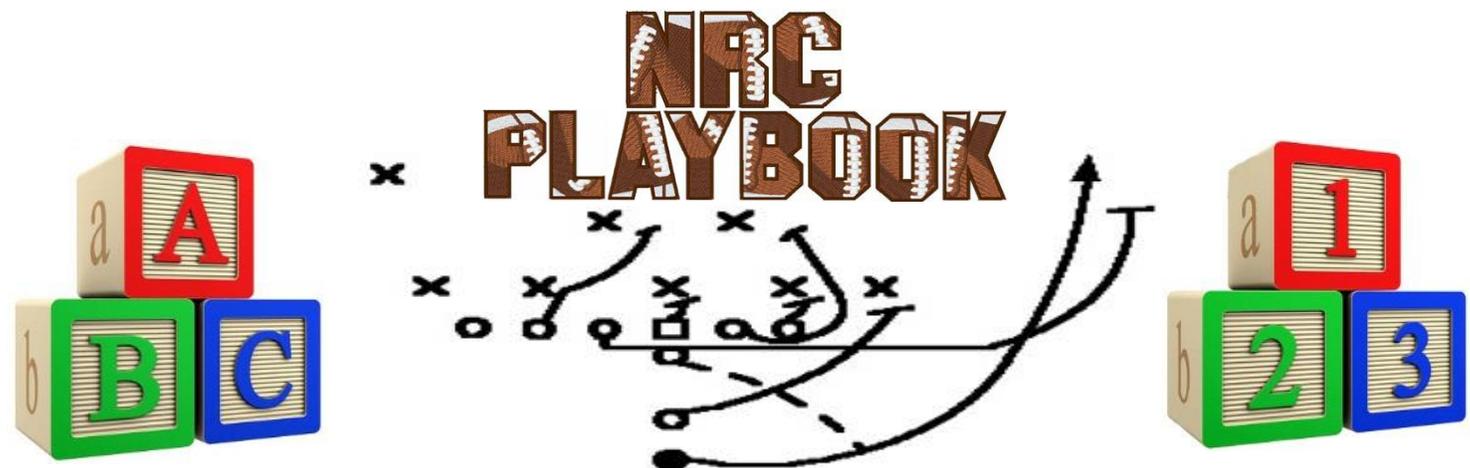


FILM ROOM = SUNDAY GATHERING
FIELD = MISSIONAL ACTION GROUP
THE FIELD MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO THE FILM ROOM AND THE FILM ROOM EQUIPS YOU TO GO TO THE FIELD



NRC VISION:
TO MAKE DISCIPLES THAT LIVE AS MISSIONARIES





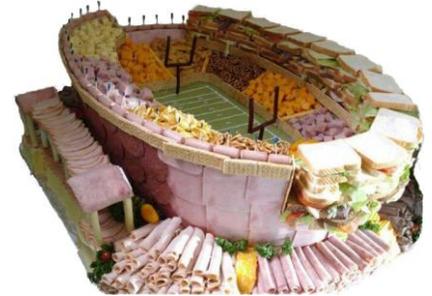
CORE ELEMENTS OF A CHURCH

Most churches excel in 1 or 2 of these core elements, but drop the ball in regard to the others. In fact, all 6 elements are difficult to include in a typical church service. However, Missional Action Groups (MAGs) are the perfect environment to incorporate all 6 elements into each gathering

A – APOSTLES TEACHING (Acts 2:42): In the Great Commission Jesus told his followers to make disciples and teach them everything He commanded (Matthew 28:20). Through the Apostles, God has graciously revealed His nature, His character, and has made His commands known to us. Missional Action Groups (MAGs) study God’s Word to learn how to obey and know Him personally. Nehemiah 8:8 says, “They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.” Those who are gifted to teach take the complex and make it simple so everyone can understand. Many evangelical churches focus heavily on the Apostles Teaching, sometimes to the neglect of the other 5 elements of church. However, since most people learn by doing rather than just hearing, the other 5 elements of church are essential in disciple making.



B – BREAKING OF BREAD (Acts 2:42,46): You can turn to almost any page in the gospels and you will find Jesus eating with someone. In fact, he shared so many meals with people that the religious elite accused Him of being a glutton and a drunk (Luke 7:34). Was it just about nutrition or did Jesus know something about meals that we often overlook? We know that the resurrected bodies we will receive at the second-coming of Christ will be imperishable. By definition, an imperishable body does not need nutrients to survive and yet we read about joining Jesus at a dinner celebration in Revelation 19. In the same way, one of the first requests that Jesus made after His resurrection was a bite to eat (Luke 24:41-43). There must be more to a meal than nutrition if we are still eating meals in the New Kingdom. Throughout history, families and communities have united over meals. There is a unique bond that develops as we enjoy God’s provision together as believers. Certainly, the Lord’s Supper was also an essential part of the “breaking of bread” that unites followers of Jesus, therefore, MAGs regularly eat together and celebrate communion.



C – CHARITABLE GIVING (Acts 2:44-45): As a spiritual family, we should not only share our spiritual blessings, but our physical blessings as well. Biological families are known for providing for the needs of each member of the family unit (Matthew 7:9). The Christian family should be known for their care and concern for one another to an even greater degree. Paul tells Timothy to command those who are rich “to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share” (1 Timothy 6:18). Additionally, Jesus declares an amazing truth about generosity in Matthew 25:40. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Living stingy is more serious than many of us realize. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are known for being the most wicked cities that have ever existed. The prophet Ezekiel exposes what was so sinful about these people. “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy” (Ezekiel 16:49). Generosity must be a hallmark of true disciples of Jesus.



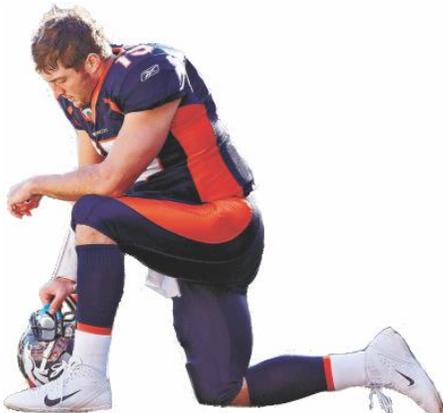
1 MISSION (Acts 2:47): Mike Breen says, “Study after study have confirmed that groups that try to start with a goal of a community, and hope somehow to move toward a mission, almost never get there... When we start with a mission, we always get a community, because we band together for a common goal.” God was adding people to the early Christian community every day as the church carried out the mission of making disciples (Matthew 28:19). Most Christians believe that daily conversions were never meant to be normative for the church and were simply a unique circumstance of the early church. However, when we take seriously our mission to make disciples by setting in place multiplication principles within our MAGs, the church family will grow exponentially in similar fashion to the biological family. Inwardly focused small groups that are not willing to divide and multiply, will not be able to maximize their potential for making disciples. In the Greek, the phrase “Go and make disciples of all nations,” is more accurately translated “while you are going, make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). We must be disciples who intentionally make disciples among our families, neighbours, and friends while we are going about the normal business of life. Additionally, it is important to unite as a group around a common mission to share the Good News with a particular people group that is chosen by the community. When a football team bands together to try to win the Super Bowl, they become a family.



2 TO FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:42): Matthew 18:20 says, “For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.” This is the heart of Fellowship. If I spent one day per week sitting near my wife and kids listening to someone else talk and then went away for the rest of the week, I would not be considered a good dad or husband. Yet this is exactly what most Christians do with their church family. Spending time with one another is a key element of what it means to live in community. In 1 Thessalonians 2:8 Paul says, “We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” What does sharing your life with someone look like? They conversed, they spent quality time together, they shared meals, they partied, they assisted one another in common tasks, all around enjoyed one another, and rallied around a mission. Our MAGs participants don’t just join in a weekly meeting, but they live life together all week. Hebrews 10:25 says, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”



3 PERSON PRAYER (Acts 2:42): In football, a long bomb into the end zone is usually called a “Hail Mary” or “Throwing up a Prayer.” It’s interesting that this play of desperation is the one that is connected to prayer. Many Christians think that prayer is something that desperate people do, but God’s desire is that prayer would be a way of life instead of an act of desperation. The church in Acts was devoted to conversing with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through prayer. God desires a real, personal relationship with us and we can draw near to Him whenever we simply speak to Him. Isn’t that the way relationships work? The more conversation, the closer the friendship. Deuteronomy 4:7 says, “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?” That is an amazing promise! There is something intensely personal and intimate about prayer that draws people together with God and with one another, therefore our MAGs place a high priority on conversing with our Heavenly Father, our Brother Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.



NRC PLAYBOOK



Community Values

Most people suffer from natural Myopia. We are near-sighted and at best can only see our own lives pretty clearly, but not the bigger picture and how we fit into the community of believers. The following community values will help bring into focus the bigger picture of God's design for the church.

S – SPIRIT LED (John 14:2 6): Jesus said, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” We must allow the Holy Spirit to take the lead or our MAGs will end up being another religious exercise with no power. Ephesians 5:18 says, “Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but keep on being filled with the Spirit.” The Greek word for “filled” carries the meaning of “constantly being filled.” It is an ongoing thing. A sailboat needs to be constantly filled with the wind in order to move forward. If the sail is not filled with wind then the sailboat is helpless and drifts along with the current. That is similar to our lives. We need to constantly be filled with the Holy Spirit or we will drift along with the current of our culture. You can't fill it on Sunday then sail around all week and fill it again the next Sunday. In a sailboat you need to turn the sail so it catches the wind and in our lives we need to turn ourselves in the direction of the Holy Spirit to follow where He is leading. It is when we act as the body of Christ and each use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to build up the body, that we will be a Spirit led church.



P – PATIENCE (Galatians 5:22): Patience is an important virtue that must be directed toward those inside our MAGs as well as those outside. Doug Fields said, “Patience is not a passive attitude.... ‘Putting up’ with someone is an active skill that refuses to sacrifice relationships on the altar of our personal rights or preferences.” Jesus’ appreciation for diversity is evident in the people with which He was willing to surround Himself. In I Corinthians 1:26 Paul says, “...think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.” These early disciples were the “losers” of society. Usually “losers” fit into that category because they possess idiosyncrasies that are annoying to others. If we were honest with ourselves, we would readily admit that we are all “losers” to some degree and other people are not going to

fully appreciate all of our quirks and neither will we appreciate the quirks of all the other “losers” around us. This is where patience comes in to play. James says, “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (1:19). People will know that we are followers of Jesus by how well we love each other and our willingness to overlook the faults of others (John 13:35). It is also important that we are patient with those outside our MAGs. It is not an effective evangelistic strategy to rush people into the kingdom. Our goal is to build relationships and disciple people the way that Jesus did. Jesus did not pressure people, but simply taught the truth. It is likely that His disciples were not even truly saved until sometime after the resurrection, more than 3 years after he started to disciple them. Jesus was patient with his disciples and we must be patient with those that we want to lead to Christ.



E – EVERYBODY PLAYS

(1 Peter 2:9): The Bible often refers to the church as the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:14 says, “the body is not made up of one part but of many.” One part of the body cannot say to another part, “I don’t need you.” Every part is essential. Therefore, this is a major value for our MAGs. Everyone should be involved in discipleship, not just the “pastors.” Most churches make this claim, but then act like the pastors are more important or more essential to the task than everyone else. In fact, we give them the special title “pastor.” The gift of pastor/shepherd is just one of the 5 gifts. We need apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers along with the shepherds (A.P.E.S.T.) according to Ephesians 4:11. Verse 12 goes on to indicate that when those who are gifted in these five areas come together, they equip others to do the work of Jesus Christ and in so doing the body is “built up.” Matthew 23:8 says, “Don’t let anyone call you ‘Rabbi’ for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters. And don’t address anyone here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father.” And as if missing this completely, a billion Catholics call their priests “father” and 800 million Protestants give their leaders the title “pastor.” We must absolutely change this paradigm if we ever hope to be a New Testament church. There are enough benchwarmers in the church at large that live by the philosophy, “we pay the pastor to do that.” You are the church and your participation is critical to the mission of Jesus Christ.



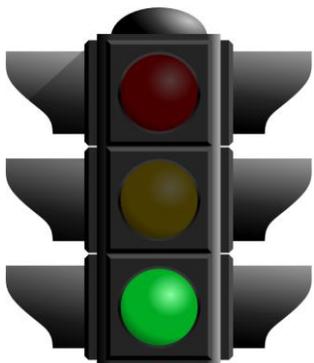
C – CENTERED ON JESUS

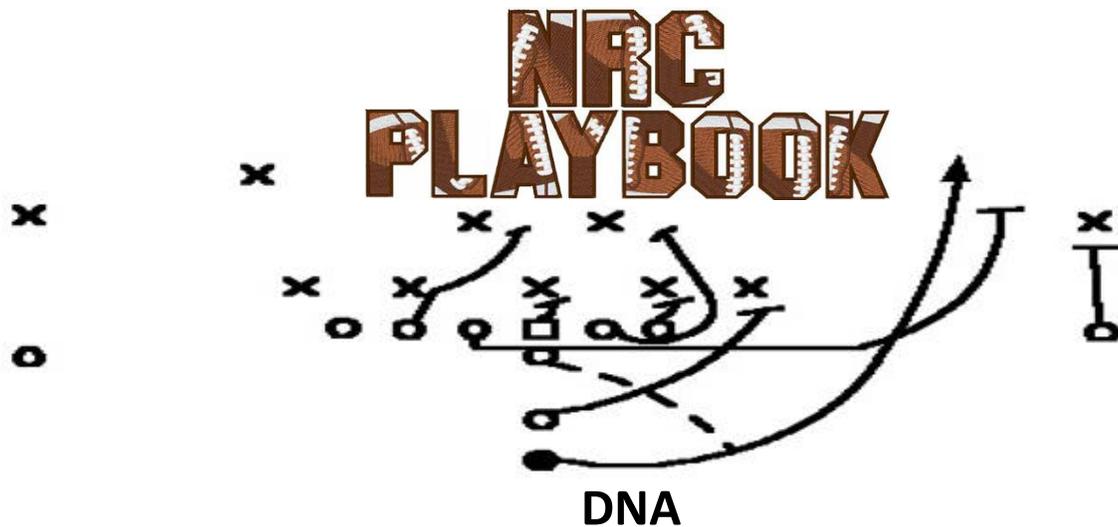
(Colossians 1:17): The foundation of our faith is not a book, a philosophy, or an ideal; instead it is the person Jesus Christ. It is easy to set Jesus aside in all of the busyness of “church” life. One of the saddest commentaries in the whole Bible is the story of Samson. He had finally given away the secret to his strength, his hair was cut and the Bible says that he thought he would go out and shake himself free as before, “but he did not know that the Lord had left him” (Judges 16:20). Would you know if Jesus did not show up today, or would you continue on with religious business as usual? Jesus is not interested in your religion; He is interested in a relationship. The story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10 is a good comparison of one sister who was content with focusing on Jesus Himself and the other who was focusing on the busyness of working for Jesus. Martha was preparing a huge meal for Jesus and the disciples, but the description given of Martha in verse 40 is not “hardworking,” “dedicated,” or “selfless.” Instead, Martha is described as “distracted.” There was something far superior on which Martha could have placed her attention. In fact, in verse 42 Jesus claims, “Mary has chosen what is better.” Mary gave her undivided attention to Jesus and that is better than whatever else you are focusing on today. The end game of our Missional Action Groups is to know and love Jesus. John 17:3 says, “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”



S – SENT BY JESUS

(Matthew 28:19-20): It is an interesting paradox that a Christian community is drawn closer together as the members look outside themselves. We have been sent into the world by Jesus to make disciples. Most people who have participated in a mission trip have likely experienced this reality. As they rally around a common mission, the group experiences deeper unity and a sense of purpose. Unfortunately this connection quickly dissipates as the group returns to “normal life.” This uncommon unity is the reality that our Missional Action Groups tap into as they consistently live on mission together. Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples. In fact, this mission is so important that Jesus repeated it 5 times, in 5 different ways, in 5 books of the Bible (Matt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47-48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8). Paul talks about the mission for his life in Acts 20:24. “My life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus – the work of telling others the good news about God’s wonderful kindness and love.” Our community will deepen as we band together under this mission (see also 1 Mission under Core Values of a Church).





What does it mean to follow Jesus in all of life?
 How do we align the major rhythms of our life around Jesus, His life, and His mission?
 HEAR is the DNA of the Narrow Road movement.
 In our Sunday Gatherings, in our Missional Action Groups,
 and in our smaller inspirational gatherings we inspire each other to live an incarnational way of life.
 The following questions and acronym will help us stay on track with the life and mission of Jesus.

2 Questions:

1. What am I hearing God say? (Response?)
2. What am I hearing people say? (Response?)



H- Home- The home is the first expression of the church. What does home life look when it is centered on the life and mission of Jesus. How does Jesus impact, parent/child and brother/sister relationships? How does Jesus impact the way your family lives day to day, lives in the neighborhood, and handles adversity?

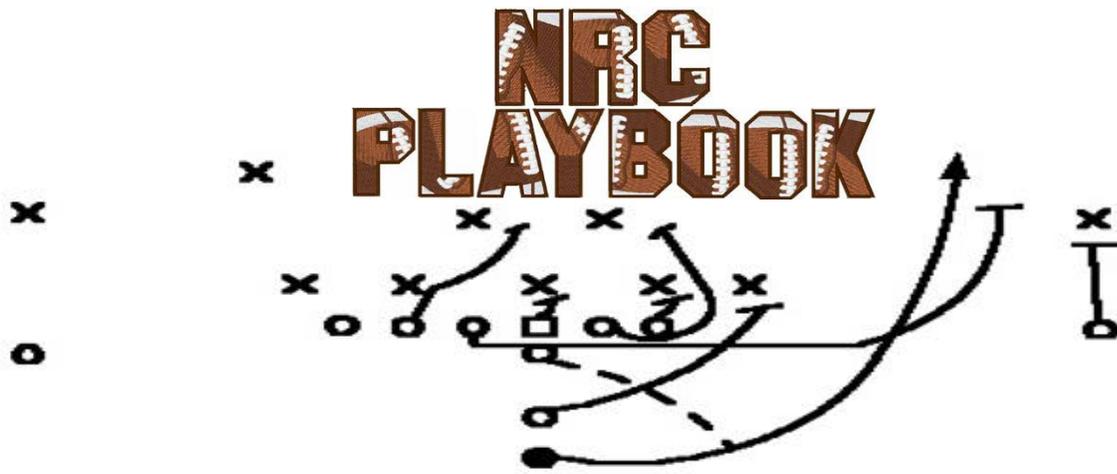
E- Engage- Who am I currently engaging that doesn't know and follow Jesus? Who do I eat meals, drink beer, take walks, and have coffee with? Who are my friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family that don't know Jesus? Am I praying for these people? Am I a part of their lives? Am I showing and modeling the life of Jesus in these circles?



A- Act of Love- How can I show love today?
 How can I show love this week?
 Who does God want me to bless?
 Who is alone, hurting, or awkward that I can reach out to?

R- Rest- Do I take action out of a place of solitude or am I running on fumes? Do I take quiet time of meditation to rest with God? Does God direct my day, life, and attitude, and does He have the freedom to call audibles with my schedule? Time with God is not another thing to add to the schedule, it's actually about taking a break and allowing Master Jesus to refocus us.





A MISSIONAL ACTION GROUP IS NOT...

... **A SMALL GROUP** – Small groups tend to be inward focused and an end unto themselves. MAGs focus on community by uniting around a common mission.

... **PRIMARILY A BIBLE STUDY** – Bible study is one of the core elements of a MAG, but it is not the only activity in which the group participates. James 1 indicates that we deceive ourselves if we only listen or study the Word but don't act on it. Acting in love is more important than puffing ourselves up with knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1).

... **A WEEKLY MEETING** – We have a tendency to turn God and others into a program instead of living in relationship. MAGs usually meet weekly, but miss the boat if that is the only interaction. Christian brothers and sisters should act like a family and share life together (1 Thes. 2:8).

... **A SERVICE PROJECT** – The Missional goal of our MAGs is to make long term connections to shape and change lives, not to just participate in individual work projects where we interact with different people all the time. Service projects should always connect you to a specific people group and not just a task.

... **EXCLUSIVE TO ADULTS** – MAGs should be modelled after the family unit. Most families understand that it is not beneficial to ship children off to boarding schools to be raised by others. In the same way, kids are an essential part of MAGs. When you are unsure of what to do with the children, think about the family. In most families the kids eat dinner with the adults. During special occasions they may set up a card table for the kids in another room and sometimes they hire a babysitter and the adults spend some time alone.

... **PRIMARILY AN AFFINITY GROUP** – Sometimes traditional small groups identify themselves by a common hobby, interest, or life experience. MAGs may initiate through a common interest like weight loss or playing music, but eventually must transition to a more inclusive format. A primary goal of our MAGs is to disciple the lost, so we must be willing to reach people that do not share our particular interests.

... **AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB** – MAGs must be inclusive when it comes to those who are far from Jesus. A MAG cannot be "closed" and fulfil its purpose. Unbelievers are always welcome at our MAGs because we want God's family to continually expand.

... **INFLEXIBLE** – MAGs should be free to change the focus of a meeting when it becomes necessary. If a member of the group shares about a crisis in his/her life, the group should transition the focus to helping that individual instead of trying to complete the agenda and squeeze in a quick prayer request at the end.