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Three Ways to Birth a New Small Group

by [Dave Earley](#)

While there are several ineffective ways to birth new groups, there is no one right way to birth a group. Any form of these three basic methods can be very effective. As can a combination of them.

1. Multiply: Two groups of equal size multiply from parent group.

The vision of multiplication is shared. A new leader and/or leadership team develops. Relationships are developed. Group members are given the option of staying with the original leaders or being a part of the new group. The goal is to have a nearly equal amount of folks committed to both groups.

2. Launch: Core group from parent group launches new group.

As in option one, the vision of multiplication is shared. A new leadership team develops. Group members are given the option of staying with the original leaders or being a part of the new group. However, having equal halves is not necessarily the goal. The new leaders understand that the new group will be launched without many folks from the parent group.

3. Plant: One person from parent group plants a new group while others remain as a part of the parent group

The planter can be either the original leader or a new leader.

Multiplying Suggestions:

1. Talk about multiplying early and often.

Start from the very first week. Describe the fact that one of the purposes of the group is to raise-up leaders who will be sent out to lead new groups. At least monthly, pray in the group about the new groups to be birthed from this group. Remember people are down on what they are not up on. Keep the group informed of the plans and progress each step along the way.

2. Talk about multiplying in positive terms.

Do not speak of “breaking up” the group, “splitting” the group, or “dividing” the group. Instead talk about “birthing” new groups, “launching” new groups, “multiplying” groups, and “raising-up” new groups and leaders.

3. Talk about multiplying in terms of the big picture.

In our metropolitan area there are over 850,000 unchurched people. Over 200,000 people live within convenient driving distance of our weekend worship services. Every new group that is born lowers the number of unchurched people. When we talk about birthing new groups, we talk about reaching more of the 850,000 people who are unchurched.

I find that when we begin to speak of multiplying people often resist. Then we ask how many of them were not in church or our group a year ago. This is usually over 90 percent. Then we ask, “What if the people who were in our group a year ago had been too selfish to give up their place in this group? Where would you be now?”

4. Pray about the best method and the best timing for multiplying.

It is possible to make the right decision at the wrong time. Maybe the group is ready to multiply, but the new leader(s) are not. Or maybe the new leader(s) are ready, but the group is not. Or maybe it is a poor season to launch. For us, summer is usually not a good season to launch. Pray about finding the best timing for the multiplication.

5. Set a date for multiplying.

Setting a date for multiplying is essential in achieving the dream of multiplying your group. According to Joel Comiskey's survey of 700 multiplying cell leaders,

"Cell leaders who know their goal – when their groups will give birth – consistently multiply their groups more often than leaders who don't know. In fact, if a cell leader fails to set goals the cell members can clearly remember, he has about a 50-50 chance of multiplying his cell. But if the leader set goals, the chance of multiplying increases to three of four." 2

6. Celebrate the new birth.

When the small group is ready to give birth have a party and invite friends. Ask the small groups pastor to preside over a special time of prayer, sending out the new group(s) and leader(s). It is a great opportunity to recast the vision for multiplying. Some churches may make this a part of their worship celebrations to make a visual statement of their priorities and vision.

Notes:

1. Joel Comiskey, Cell Group Explosion (Houston, TX, Touch Publications), p. 46.