



# THE COMPASS

A TOOL FOR DISCIPLERS

## Leading a Small Group

### Conversation On the Journey

Small groups are usually at the core of a student's positive experience with Cru. It's where many great relationships develop and where tons of biblical knowledge is gained. Some of my favorite times on staff occur when I'm driving home after a great study. It's so much fun. For those who get to lead a group it can be extremely satisfying. But it's difficult to do it well.

Even Paul found it difficult on at least one occasion:

Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. (Acts 20:9)

An interesting small group is not only important for your movement, but apparently, also a matter of life and death.

There's no way you can teach someone to become a great Bible study leader in an hour, so I'm not going to set you up for that. Rather, I'm going to drop a couple principles and recommend two resources. Try to see your impartation of this stuff to your disciple, as a process, not an event. You can dole this stuff out over the course of the year, both at your small group, and during discipleship times.

### Resource #1: The Ultimate Road Trip

The Ultimate Road Trip is a small group leaders handbook. I don't know off hand what it costs, but it's worth it whatever it is. It is clear, funny, and loaded with solid information on how to lead a group. Be a nice guy and buy your disciple a copy. Honestly, it's the best resource I've seen for producing great small group leaders. Buy it for them and encourage them to read it. Too poor? Talk your campus director into buying them for every small group leader in the movement. He's too poor? Tell him to hit the support trail and raise some cash.

Available at [centerfieldproductions.com](http://centerfieldproductions.com) are a couple lessons entitled, "Crucial Elements" and "Guiding a Discussion." Check them out and then order a copy of the book from New Life Resources. It is online at [campuscruade.com](http://campuscruade.com) or by calling 1-800-827-2788.

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### This Week's Excursion

This week's lesson is meant to be a primer in how to train your disciple to lead a small group. Though the best thing you can do to that end is probably just to do a good job leading your own small group (assuming they are part of it), we'd like to offer a few thoughts that might help you set them up for success.

# Leading a Small Group

## Resource #2: The Community

Second, buy yourself, and them, a subscription to Cru.Comm. There you'll find studies that your disciple can use. Each lesson first teaches you the text, and then helps you figure out how to teach it to others. The studies are specifically designed to help you turn lost students into Christ-centered laborers. If you use it right, it will have the added benefit of making you look like a genius. Definitely get a subscription to it. By way of sneak preview, The Compass includes an article that should give you a sense of the Cru.Comm philosophy. It is entitled "How to Use Cru.Comm." Check it out in the resources section.

## Principles

Briefly in the principal arena, I'll remind you of the five E's of leadership development mentioned in the introductory article The Five E's of Leadership Development. Remember what they were? If not, maybe you could check out that article again. They are:

Education  
Exposure  
Environment  
Experience  
Evaluation

Let's hit each one briefly, as it concerns the small group leader you are developing. **Education.** This is where Road Trip comes in. You could give them the book to read and then each week during your discipleship time talk through one section or topic that you find particularly valuable. I can't overemphasize how much our Cru studies would improve nationwide, if all of our leaders read and applied this book. Get the book.

**Exposure.** If you want your disciple to lead a good group, it would be helpful if you show them how it's done every week. Be mindful that the students you lead will likely emulate you for good or for bad. Invest the time to lead well. For the ones you are discipling, let them look behind the curtain and see how you prepare, and why you do what you do each week.

**Environment.** The best place for them to practice leading a group is probably in your group. Make sure you aren't creating a high-pressure environment in which they would be terrified to lead (and fail). Hold the reins loosely, share the stage, value their contributions.

**Experience.** Let them lead a couple studies. When you do, vow to yourself, and them, that you will not speak unless they ask you a direct question. It's tough to lead a group when your leader is there correcting you in front of everyone, or giving a better answer to a question you just flubbed. Save your feedback for when it's all over.

**Evaluation.** In the right time (after the study is over) and in the right place (privately) give ample feedback. What did they do well? Be specific and encourage first! What could they handle differently? Remind them of an awkward moment and work through a better way to handle it. Again be specific. Don't be a wuss here. People will grow and improve because you help them recognize and address their mistakes.

## Next Steps

As mentioned earlier, this lesson is best communicated as a process, not an event. Nevertheless, I'd recommend two application points to get you started.

1. Assign them to read a section of The Ultimate Road Trip (that you bought for them since you are such a great discipler) and plan to discuss it in a following week.
2. Pick a date a few weeks out when they can lead the group. Have them begin to prepare using The Community.

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# Leading a Small Group

If you care about them, and they know it, they'll be able to take the criticism.

Developing small group leaders is a critical task. You can make a huge difference in students lives by setting the standard and then doing the difficult work of training your disciples to do the same.

## Side Trails

Leading a Small Group, The Ultimate Road Trip. New Life Publications.

Cru.Comm. New Life Publications.

Order at [campuscrusade.com](http://campuscrusade.com)

"The Five E's of Leadership Development."

"How to Use Cru.Comm."

"Crucial Elements."

"Guiding a Discussion."

Available at [centerfieldproductions.com](http://centerfieldproductions.com)

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