

# workmatters™

Bridging the gap between faith and work



## **WorkMatters™ Small Group Startup Guide**

January, 2008 Edition



## **Small Group Startup Guide**

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January, 2008

To our new WorkMatters Small Group,

Welcome to WorkMatters! We are excited to have yet another new Small Group join the WorkMatters ministry. You are about to embark on an awesome journey.

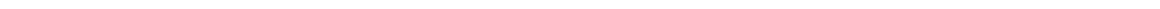
Are integrity, character and ethics growing or shrinking in the workplace? Do workers believe their work really matters to God? Can you be an outstanding worker and a growing Christian simultaneously? Is the workplace a mission field?

Dealing with issues such as these is what WorkMatters is all about. WorkMatters is a nondenominational ministry focused on one very simple idea, to ***bridge the gap between faith and work...and do it out in the workplace.***

Our passion is to help workers understand that *their work does matter to God* and to use that knowledge to make their faith and their work more fulfilling, effective and influential. So, welcome to WorkMatters. We look forward to meeting you and supporting you in your journey!

God bless,

David Roth  
President, WorkMatters





### **Our Mission**

*Bridging the gap between faith and work.*

### **Our Vision**

*We imagine a day when leaders, businesses and churches In Northwest Arkansas are transforming our culture by integrating faith and work.*

*We envision Sunday Christians having a seven-day a week faith, spiritual leaders intentionally influencing their workplace, and consequently, nonbelievers seeing Christ at work.*

*We see WorkMatters contributing to the global faith and work movement.*

WorkMatters™ is a nondenominational non-profit organization. It was founded in April 2002 at Central United Methodist Church in Fayetteville, Ark.

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## **Starting Your WorkMatters Small Group**

### **Mentor**

Every Small Group has a founder, someone who has in one way or another initiated the process of starting this new group. There is an important responsibility that goes with that founding role and that is to mentor this group.

The Mentor insures that the Small Group Leader has received the Small Group Startup Guide and has reviewed it with the leader so that they are comfortable in facilitating the group. The Mentor will attend the first meetings to share the WorkMatters mission, purpose and vision. They will assist the leader in facilitating the group in defining the objectives of that particular group and assisting them in deciding on the curriculum that they will use. In general, the Mentors role is to simply help the new group get started and then to check in with the Leader and the group from time to time. In addition, the Mentor is responsible for encouraging the Leader and the group participants to plug into and utilize the events and resources available through WorkMatters.

### **Facilitation Leader**

The typical Facilitation Leader responsibilities include: recruiting group participants, assisting in choosing the group's curriculum, securing a meeting room, communicating meeting time and location to participants, attending as consistently as possible, ensuring the meeting starts and ends on schedule, and facilitating the discussion. Some groups may choose to rotate the facilitation lead within the group over time. With this approach, the primary Leader would facilitate only on their turn. This works well as it relieves the leader and gives others an opportunity to gain experience in leading a small group.

It should be noted that group participation is totally voluntary. Group Leaders should feel free to encourage participation, but should never push or unfairly chastise someone who cannot attend a meeting. We must be sensitive to the fact that we are meeting in the workplace and respect the responsibilities individuals have to their jobs.

To a large degree, the group leaders control the level of success achieved in that group. Their ability to orchestrate meetings and provide follow-up between meetings is important. Their success in recruiting new members and retaining current members is key, as well. Finally, they are vital in encouraging their group members to attend WorkMatters monthly Eight-to-Five Unplugged events and the annual Leadership Conference to reach outside of your company to learn and grow from a broader network.

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## **Facilitation Guide**

You have an important role to play in making this experience helpful for everyone. In any group situation, a leader needs to get things rolling and keep things moving. That's your job! If you do it well, the other natural dynamics of the group process will take care of everything else.

1. Clarify expectations up front. Everyone should agree on the purpose of the group and the level of commitment before you get started.
2. Come prepared. At a minimum, this involves reading the book and previewing the particular session that your group will cover. Doing so will give you confidence and a sense of where things are headed during the discussion. Moreover, your preparation sets a critical example for the other participants. It tells them how seriously you take the group, and therefore, how seriously they should take it.
3. In preparation for some of the sessions, you'll need to select from among several questions/case studies/exercises that are closest to your group's situation. You probably won't have time to discuss all of these. Instead, choose the one that seems to be most relevant to your group. Another method is to ask the group which they felt was most pertinent and cover that area. You will not be able to cover everything so be sure to do what the majority feels is appropriate, not just follow your own assumptions.
4. Some of the questions may ask for painfully honest disclosure. To make this kind of vulnerability possible and healthy, you must agree to maintain confidences, to avoid judgment, and to strive for honesty even when it's uncomfortable.
5. Your goal is to keep a lively discussion going. You can do that by probing people's responses, asking for clarification, and playing the devil's advocate. Of course, others in the group should be encouraged to do the same. Whatever you do, avoid "teaching" the content of the book.
6. Keep the discussion focused. The materials are designed to help you think and talk about important issues. Avoid rabbit trails. Make sure everyone participates. This is a discussion, not a lecture or platform for one person's point of view.
7. Don't let someone dominate the group with his or her opinion or personality. You may have to referee at times. Also, try to get each participant – especially the shy or quiet ones – to say at least one or two things at each session.
8. Keep track of the time. Before the group meets, think through how much time should be allotted to each section of the session. That way you can keep things moving. The ideal length of time for a session is about an hour.
9. End the discussion on time. People have other responsibilities and commitments. If the session lasts too long, they may develop a negative attitude toward the group. By contrast, cutting off a lively interaction will bring everyone back with enthusiasm. Leave them longing, not loathing!

Note: These facilitation coaching tips are taken from the workbook that accompanies *Your Work Matters to God*.

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### **Meeting Format Suggestions**

WorkMatters Small Groups typically meet weekly for one hour in a workplace setting, such as a conference room or employee break room. Some groups meet in the morning prior to working hours or at lunch. Groups range in size from 4 to 10 people. As the group grows too large, it will split and form two groups. Our desire is to keep the meetings simple, relaxed and valuable. Confidentiality is a must, so that the discussions are rooted in trust.

The composition of a group may be similar occupations, geographic location, or areas of interest. Many groups are employees within the same company, while others come from a variety of fields and backgrounds. Other groups include faculty, staff or students in a campus setting. Each group has the flexibility to focus their curriculum and discussions on the areas of greatest interest for the members. We provide a *Curriculum Guide* that offers a range of subjects such as “integrating faith and work,” “balancing life’s priorities” or “spiritual growth at work”, to name a few.

#### Typical Schedule:

12:00	Arrive, eat lunch, fellowship (some arrive early, if feasible)
12:15	Prayer requests
12:25	Opening Prayer
12:30	Lesson and Discussion
1:00	Wrap-up and Close

#### Focus:

- Be Biblical
    - Be grounded in the Bible to help bring Christ into our work, as well as the rest of our lives, in order to be stronger Christians and workers.
  - Be Relevant
    - This platform is intended to allow each of us to bring current life and work issues to the workplace, with the goal of sharing, discussing and applying it to our work and faith.
  - Be Open
    - All are welcome and encouraged to attend, participate and contribute.
  - Be Accountable
    - Hold each other accountable for our attendance, actions, support and participation.
  - Be Confidential
    - Trust is critical in developing relationships and confidentiality is critical in developing trust. Therefore, all discussions that take place in this Small Group stay with the members of this Small Group.
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## **Stages of Small Group Development**

Small Groups have a birth, life and death. These are the 5 typical stages of development in a small group.

### **Stage 1 - Forming**

- People checking it out
- What's the purpose?
- Who is here?
- Who is the leader?
- Test the waters
- Different expectations

### **Stage 2 - Storming**

- What is acceptable in this group?
- Lots of questions
- Experimenting with their role in the group
- Leader deals with that by:
  - Don't panic
  - You didn't do anything wrong
  - You can't fix it
- Change? Some may decide not to and drop out

### **Stage 3 - Norming**

- Must storm before you can norm
- "Group mindset" is created
- People's input is wanted and accepted

### **Stage 4 - Performing**

- The group takes off and hits it's stride

### **Stage 5 - Reforming**

- Sometime things have to scatter in order to start over
  - Typically a good thing
  - Question to consider: is the group continuing to operate because it is familiar?
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### **Board of Directors**

Tom Frase – Chairman of the Board	Senior Pastor, 1 <sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church, Russellville, AR
David Roth – President	WorkMatters, Inc.
Jo Kaye Bandy – Secretary/Treasurer	Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Spencer Frazier	J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc.
Joe Goddard	Cardinal IT Resources
Steve Graves	Coaching by Cornerstone
Jim McCormick	Shell Lubricants
Bill Seeger	Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
Jack Sheridan	General Mills

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