

This fall, we intend to **move towards small groups** with young people in our Sunday evening Faith Formation programming. Here are some of the reasons why as we shared them in our e-newsletter:

7) **Small Groups are Expandable** July 25, 2018

You will run out of space and money if you try to build enough specific space for groups to meet at church. On the other hand, as long as groups can find corners, hallways, the middle of worship spaces, and the outdoors, we will never run out of space.

At Saddleback Church, they have adult small groups spread over 100 square miles. Buildings should not limit the number of small groups we can have. That's like letting the shoe tell the foot how big it can get. Buildings are just a tool for ministry. Invest in people; they will last forever.

6) **Small groups can meet anywhere.** July 25, 2018

The Bible says, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20 NIV).

A comment from our spring ALPHA small group participants: This is why we have used small groups for the Confirmation core meetings in January. With three-four different offerings of time, we attempt to meet the diverse schedules of our candidates. – Scott (Youth Ministry guy)

5) **Small Groups are Relational** July 18, 2018

You can't have a conversation with 600 people or 60 people, but you can have a conversation with six people. Generally, when there are more than 10 in a group, people stop talking. It is impossible to learn how to love your neighbor as yourself unless you are involved in a small group of some kind. You don't need a lot of friends in life, but you do need a few good ones, and you find those solid, supportive friendships in small groups.

Sometimes I hear people say they don't want their church to grow larger because, if it does, they won't know everybody in the congregation. Based on that mindset, a church shouldn't grow beyond about 60 people. The average person knows 67 people.

A comment from our spring ALPHA small group participants: I like small groups because I get to know others and form relationships outside of mass. – Fred (Adult)

4) **Maximum Participation** July 11, 2018

Finally, small groups deliver maximum participation. There are opportunities to discuss the issues with others in the church. Church life issues can be discussed openly among trusted friends.

Mission can be planned out and participated in together. Lives are sharpened and leaders developed. Small groups are an absolute necessity for involving as many people as possible in the life and ministry of your church.

A comment from our spring ALPHA small group participants: In small groups, individuals are more present and engage more deeply because they are expected to contribute. This allows for more connections. – Mary Carole (Parent)

3) Deeper Friendships June 27, 2018

With a sense of community in mind, the third factor is that small groups deliver deeper friendships that double as accountability. When people know you, really know you, your life becomes far more transparent, including your sin..

Others learn to read you and will call you out for those sins, creating opportunities to deal with real-life difficulties as they surface. This is part of what we should expect from good friends.

A comment from our spring ALPHA small group participants: ***"With small groups, it's easier to share ideas with one another. It was great to have a space to talk to others"***. – Karl

2) Community June 20, 2018

Second and closely related to the first, smaller communities act more like, well, *communities*. That may seem like a given, but the bigger the group is, the less like community it feels. The kind of community I am advocating requires a level of intimacy easily lost as numbers grow. You simply cannot know everyone beyond a certain point, and you certainly will not open up about your struggles and sins in a large group of people you don't know.

A comment from our spring ALPHA small group participants: ***'I loved how everyone was so kind and I felt happy that Everyone was gladly accepted.'*** - Cate

1) Personal Discovery June 20, 2018

First, personal discovery happens in small groups better than large groups for a number of reasons. You can learn, ask questions, involve yourself in the lives of others, and generally make yourself vulnerable among other people who are doing the same in small groups. You just can't do that in sermons. There is no conversation, no feedback, and no questions. There's no room to challenge the preacher or even question any part of what's being taught. Spiritual growth happens better with others, in community, with open lines of communication and freedom to

speaking into one another's lives.

A comment from our spring ALPHA small group participants: ***I like the fact that we were able to express ourselves.*** - Geraldo

k - o - i - n - o - n - i - a June 6, 2018

Last Thursday, Karthik Nemmani, 14, of McKinney, Texas was named the 91st Scripps National Spelling Bee champion Thursday after correctly spelling "koinonia."

Why is that important to us? Here's the definition: 1) the Christian fellowship or body of believers 2) intimate spiritual communion and participative sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community

Throughout the summer, ***this e-bulletin will offer a series of brief notes regarding why we are working towards developing consistent and stable small groups*** throughout our Sunday evening Faith Formation programming for grades 7 - 12. The reason is that our hopes are that they might have a better experience of the church... of koinonia. To make this happen, we will need youth and adult leaders!