

A JOURNEY GUIDE FOR

# Cell Group Leaders

## Discussion Outline

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## *Introduction*

WHO SHOULD FILL OUT THE JOURNEY GUIDE FOR CELL GROUPS LEADERS?

Potential cell group leaders.

WHO SHOULD FACILITATE THE JOURNEY GUIDE DISCUSSION?

A pastor or an experienced cell group coach.

WHEN SHOULD THE INTERVIEW DISCUSSION BE HELD?

Any time that is convenient and mutually agreed upon.

HOW LONG SHOULD THIS TAKE?

One to one and a half hours.

SHOULD CURRENT CELL GROUP LEADERS USE THIS TOOL?

Yes! It will help any leader discover strengths as well as areas that need improvement.

*The Journey Guide for Cell Group Leaders* is designed to help you judge the potential of a prospective cell group leader. But it is only a tool. It is most effective when you come along side your leadership candidate and work with him. This booklet will act as a road map helping you and your candidate see where he is on the road to leadership and where he needs to go in order to reach the final destination. *The Journey Guide for Cell Group Leaders* can further help by allowing you to monitor the progress of a leader and see where they need to go next. Listen to his responses to the questions provided to see how you can serve him on his journey to leadership.

The questions in *The Journey Guide for Cell Group Leaders* are designed to elicit responses that reveal behavior patterns, instead of thinking patterns. They will help you discover the way your candidate responds in real situations and the extent to which he applies the beliefs he espouses in his own life.

The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. This is not to say that God cannot change people, He can; but without hard work and intentional focus, old behavior patterns tend to stick around. Identifying your leadership candidate's weaknesses will reveal her "growing edges" and assist you in designing a growth path for her. To complement this, certain questions were written to elicit descriptions of specific experiences and reveal how people have acted in the past.

Whenever a question begins with a phrase like "Think of a time when . . ." you will want to examine your candidate's answer carefully. These answers will reveal much about a person's life in the past and give clues to her future behavior in similar situations. Don't assume his first answer is her only answer. Ask about other experiences to see if a behavior pattern is being revealed. In many cases you will need to probe your candidate's answers to help him move from thinking or belief statements to actual descriptions of past behavior. Examine responses carefully and with love; your goal is to determine your candidate's readiness for cell group leadership and to discover areas where growth is needed.

Finally, trust the Spirit's guidance. Listen to what He would say to you as you minister to your candidate and help him get started in cell group leadership.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PASTOR OR CELL GROUP LEADER'S COACH

Read this guide provided for you from the last page of *The Journey Guide for Cell Group Leaders* before you meet with your candidate. It contains practical advice and will help you get a feel for the material before you start ministering to your leadership candidate.

### *Instructions for the Pastor or Cell Group Leader's Coach*

Every person has the potential to lead a cell group. God is no respecter of persons and research has shown that people of all personalities, backgrounds, economic situations, academic training, etc. have led cell groups equally well. If a person loves the Lord, loves people and is committed to the vision of the church, most likely he or she can be trained to be a cell group leader.

Obviously, not everyone will become a cell group leader. Sometimes it is a matter of timing. Some people don't want to let go of some things in their lives so that they can be free to minister. Others are not open to learning how to minister in new ways. Still, viewing every cell group member as having the potential to lead a group is the first step toward raising up a new leader.

As group members rise to the top and prove faithful in attending group meetings, serving others and reaching out to unbelievers, you will want to visit with that person and talk with them about the possibility of going through cell group leader training. This training will give them the skills to effectively lead a cell group.

Before potential leaders go through your training, you will want to spend some time with them to learn more about them on a personal level. This is where the *Journey Guide for Cell Group Leaders* comes in. Here are three simple steps for using this tool:

- Step 1: Give the *Journey Guide* to the potential cell group leader and have him or her fill it out.
- Step 2: Make an appointment to visit with the potential leader about the responses to the questions. It is best to take along the potential leader's current cell group leader for this time of sharing.
- Step 3: From the *Journey Guide* discussion, you will help the potential leader take new steps to enter into effective ministry.

## *Detailed Discussion Guide*

### SECTION ONE: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (PAGE 2)

In this section you want to discover how your candidate is doing in her walk with the Lord.

**Question One:** "BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HOW YOU INITIALLY CAME TO KNOW CHRIST AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR."

This question should answer two simple questions. First, does your candidate have a testimony and if so what is it; and second, is he comfortable sharing it with you?

**Question Two:** "HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?"  
This question is not as simple as it first appears. Talk through it with your candidate and see where he is in his relationship with God. Take time to get to know why this answer was given. Give assurance that it's okay to start where you are, cell group leaders are not perfect. Pose the question again and see if this assurance causes him to change his answer. If so, be prepared to be encouraging and supportive while affirming that this is a tool to help promote growth, not point out "flaws."

**Question Three:** "DESCRIBE A RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH GOD THAT ILLUSTRATES WHY YOU CHECKED THE BOX ABOVE."  
This question should reveal an experience to support the checked statement. You want to see what your candidate does in her time with God since their relationship will be the foundation of her leadership. People often believe one thing about God's work in their lives, but they do not always have a recent experience to support that belief.

**Question Four:** "HOW MANY DAYS IN THE LAST WEEK DID YOU HAVE A QUALITY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD?"  
This is a very straightforward question. Probe further to find out how significant these times were, how much time was spent with God, and what activities were done.

**Question Five:** "PLEASE SHARE ONE SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE YOU HAD IN YOUR PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD FROM THE LAST WEEK."  
Much like question three, this is a follow-up question to the one before it. While your potential leader may be spending time with God, are those experiences impacting his life or is he "going through the motions."

## SECTION TWO: YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN MINISTRIES (PAGES 3-5)

This section is designed to reveal the previous ministry experience of your potential leader. It will show you how well she has ministered in the past and what her strengths and weaknesses are.

**Question One:** "WHAT MINISTRY TRAINING HAVE YOU COMPLETED?"  
Keep in mind that training in these particular areas may or may not equip a person for leadership. In fact, if the system was not focused on cell group values, this training could be a stumbling block because your candidate might have learned the wrong kind of information or be inflated by a false sense of superiority because he has had "formal training."

**Question Two:** "IN WHAT CELL GROUP MINISTRY HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED?"  
Examine the level of experience in cell group leadership your candidate

possesses through his answer to this question. Probe deeper to see whether or not this experience has actually prepared him to do these things in a real cell group. Did he actually help with the activity or was he just nominally involved? Has he lead the times he mentions or only assisted the leader? Does he sound as if he enjoyed the opportunities to help lead?

**Question Three:** "LIST THE MINISTRY ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PAST. CHECK THOSE YOU ARE CURRENTLY COMMITTED TO."  
Cell leadership requires time and effort. You need to know up front whether or not your candidate is overextending herself by taking on too many responsibilities.

**Question Four:** "LIST THE NAMES OF 3-5 PEOPLE YOU HAVE HAD A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE UPON FOR CHRIST." Can your candidate name three to five people? If so, what role did he play in their lives? Is he willing to be a Mentor? You want to find out how committed your potential leader is to developing others. Will he place a priority on mentoring people, and does he understand the value of encouraging others to deepen their relationship with God?

**Question Five:** "WHO WAS THE LAST PERSON YOU PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN LEADING TO CHRIST?" Talk about this person. When did this happen? Find out what role she played. She may not have been the one to actually lead the person in prayer to receive Christ. She may have prayed, listened, or served, etc. If a potential leader has not helped lead anyone to Christ, find out why. Is it a lack of training or a lack of opportunity; does this reveal a behavior pattern?

**Question Six:** "NAME A TIME WHEN GOD USED YOU TO MINISTER TO SOMEONE IN GREAT NEED." Is your candidate willing to be used by God to minister to others? Does he do actual ministry? Have your candidate describe such a time. How did God use him in that situation?

**Question Seven:** "HAVE YOU EVER PERSONALLY DISCIPLED ANOTHER PERSON WHO WENT ON TO EFFECTIVELY DISCIPLE OTHER PEOPLE?"  
The goal of a discipleship is not to transfer information but to infuse life. Discipling is the process of raising up disciples who will raise up disciples of their own. Does your candidate understand and practice this kind of discipleship?

**Question Eight:** "THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU FEEL YOU WERE ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE AT ENCOURAGING ANOTHER PERSON. BRIEFLY WRITE ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE."  
Probe for specific things your candidate did to provide encouragement. Did she listen to the other person before offering words of comfort? Does she understand how to be an effective listener? Be sure to listen carefully and be an encouragement yourself.

**Question Nine:** "IN A TIME WHEN YOU HAVE FOUND BEING A LEADER A GREAT CHALLENGE, HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT?"

All leaders struggle. You want to see how your candidate will react in times of stress. What will he do when faced with a challenging leadership situation? Search for specific details and see if this reveals any underlying behavior patterns such as anger or a tendency to give up too easily.

**Question Ten:** "WHO IS THE LAST PERSON WITH WHOM YOU FORMED A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP?"

In order for relational evangelism to be effective, Christians need to establish and cultivate friendships. A cell group leader must model this for other members. This question helps you see if this potential leader will be one who does that.

**Question Eleven:** "THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU COMMITTED TO A TASK AND UNCONTROLLABLE CIRCUMSTANCES INTERFERED WITH YOUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE THAT TASK. WHAT DID YOU DO?"

Look carefully for behavior patterns in this answer. Probe further for particular responses to this situation. Does your candidate's behavior reveal maturity, reliance on God, and perseverance?

**Question Twelve:** "HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS?"

Is your candidate reaching out to people in his neighborhood? See why he knows these people and see if he sees these relationships as potential witnessing opportunities.

**Question Thirteen:** "DESCRIBE A RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH A NEIGHBOR THAT WAS SIGNIFICANT."

Is your candidate really reaching out? Look for the kind of answer that would reveal more than a superficial relationship. Many people claim to know their neighbors even if they don't have deep relationships. This will likely answer the question of whether or not she views these friendships as ministry opportunities.

**Question Fourteen:** "DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME YOU ENTERTAINED PEOPLE IN YOUR HOME."

Does your candidate open his home to people? You want to hear about an actual experience, not just hear "I love to do that." Encourage your candidate to think about a time when he entertained and had a good experience. What made it successful? What happened during this time to make it special or memorable? Were there any rough times? When was it? (You don't want something 3 years ago.) Did he do anything to fix the problems that arose? What, if any, obstacles did he overcome to have people over? Did he enjoy it?

### SECTION THREE: WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING (PAGES 6-7)

The title of this section says it all. You want to find out how a potential leader will respond when she doesn't feel that her performance is under scrutiny. This section should reveal your candidate's personal beliefs in situations primarily outside of the cell meeting. It should give you a good understanding of how much she relies on God and is willing to give her life over to Him.

- Question One:** "THINK OF A RECENT TIME WHEN YOU WERE TRANSPARENT BEFORE OTHERS. WAS IT A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE? WHAT MADE IT SO?"  
How does your candidate feel about being transparent? This will tell you something about his ability to lead others into transparency. If his response is negative, how might it color future efforts to be transparent? Will it be a problem? A person not yet fully comfortable being transparent is not necessarily excluded but make sure that the hesitancy to share can be overcome.
- Question Two:** "IN A RECENT EXPERIENCE OF FEELING LONELY, HOW DID YOU RESPOND?"  
Does your candidate withdraw from others in times of loneliness? Is he willing to admit that sometimes even the most introverted of people need help from others? Encourage him to seek someone out who will help him work through rough times.
- Question Three:** BRIEFLY DESCRIBE A SITUATION WHERE YOU USED YOUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO BENEFIT SOMEONE ELSE. HOW DID YOU FEEL DOING THIS?"  
Probe her response to find out if she is capable of making personal sacrifices for others. Does she demonstrate it visibly through finances, and if so, what effect does this have on her life?
- Question Four:** "THINK OF THE LAST TIME YOU EXPERIENCED SPIRITUAL FAILURE (SIN). HOW DID YOU RESPOND?"  
Cell members don't need to see perfection, but they need to see how their leaders handle personal imperfection. They need to see personal failures handled in a biblical way (confession, humility, restitution). How does this potential leader handle that type of situation? If she says that she hasn't experienced failure, she either misunderstands the question or is unaware of her own sin. This question is intended to deal with significant failure, things which would leave people broken before God.
- Question Five:** "IN A RECENT EXPERIENCE WHERE YOU UNDERWENT STRONG TEMPTATION, HOW DID YOU HANDLE THE SITUATION?"  
Probe your candidate's response for spiritual self-awareness. Look for an awareness of the spiritual struggle going on around him and an understanding that even as a leader he might fall into one of satan's traps. Does your candidate involve himself in a system that will help keep him from falling? Will your candidate build accountability to cover his areas of

weakness? You may get the response “prayer” or “Bible reading.” What you want to see, in addition to traditional answers, is whether or not your candidate is willing to be transparent and vulnerable.

**Question Six:** “CONSIDER THE LAST TIME YOU RELOCATED TO ANOTHER CITY. WHAT WERE YOUR PRIMARY REASONS FOR MAKING THE DECISION?”  
Is your candidate likely to make a commitment to this cell group and stick to it? Did they seek God in the decision to move? Much ministry can be left undone because we are tempted away from God’s plan for our lives (promotions, hardship, etc.). This is a good time to teach that if God has called us to be leaders, satan will bring distractions, and that too often we focus on his distractions rather than on God’s purpose for us.

**Question Seven:** “THINK OF A RECENT MAJOR DECISION. DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID TO ARRIVE AT THE DECISION YOU MADE.”  
You are looking for a decision making process here. Is God included in her decision making process? Does she seek wise council during these times?

**Question Eight:** “THINK OF A RECENT TIME WHEN YOU DID NOT GET YOUR WAY. HOW DID YOU RESPOND TO THE SITUATION?”  
Can your candidate deal with rejection? You may need to probe these things: What did he think? How did he feel? What was his emotional response, and what was his verbal/active response? There is a difference between being assertive and being aggressive, between being gracious and giving up.

#### SECTION FOUR: YOUR AVAILABILITY FOR MINISTERING (PAGE 8)

How willing is your candidate to present her time to God and let Him use her. Does she have the time and energy to commit to a cell group?

**Question One:** “THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU WERE ASKED TO ACCEPT A RESPONSIBILITY YOU FELT YOU DID NOT HAVE THE TIME OR ENERGY TO DO. HOW DID YOU RESPOND?”  
How will your candidate handle becoming overloaded? Does he sacrifice his ministry when he feels that he does not have enough time? Is he prone to say ‘yes’ even when he should say ‘no’ to new responsibilities?

**Question Two:** “IS CELL GROUP LEADERSHIP A RESPONSIBILITY THAT YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME AND ENERGY TO DO?”  
Talk honestly about why your candidate feels this way. Take the time to listen and see how much his heart seems to be in leading a cell group.

**Question Three:** "IF NOT AND YOU FEEL GOD IS CALLING YOU TO LEAD A GROUP, HOW WILL YOU ADJUST YOUR LIFE?"  
Talk through this process with your candidate. What steps can she take to rearrange her life? Are the suggestions made practical ones? If not, point out possible conflicts of interest and anything that you feel may have been overlooked.

**Question Four:** "IF MARRIED, IS YOUR SPOUSE SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN CELL GROUP MINISTRY?"  
This is a simple yes or no question that could make all the difference for your candidate. A cell group leader is crippled if a spouse objects. Talk about how the spouse can be brought into the vision of cells or see what else can be done.

#### SECTION FIVE: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LEADERSHIP (PAGE 9)

Will your candidate be able to work within the existing structure of the church and be willing to mold his vision to the one imparted to the churches leaders?

**Question One:** "HOW DO YOU REGARD THE VISION AND STRATEGY OF YOUR CHURCH?"  
First of all, does you candidate know what the vision and strategy of your church are? If so, what are his views on the subject? Work through the church's vision together and make sure that your candidate's vision can be aligned with it.

**Question Two:** "THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU DISAGREED WITH THE VISION OR STRATEGY OF A CHURCH YOU WERE INVOLVED IN. HOW DID YOU RESPOND?"  
Let your candidate know that disagreement is not wrong. This section will help you see how she has responded in the past and how she might respond in the future. Does she understand that she must come to the leadership directly with any disagreements and avoid backbiting?

**Question Three:** "HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY?"  
Probe to see why your candidate chose his particular answer to this question. How is this going to mesh with your system of leadership? Do you think that this candidate will be able to work through any possible conflicts with the leadership?

**Question Four:** "THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU WERE IN CONFLICT WITH SOMEONE IN SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY OVER YOU. HOW DID YOU RESPOND?"  
This question should give you a good example of how your candidate may have actually responded to a situation in the past where he was in conflict with the leadership over him. Seek to discover whether or not your

candidate will actually respond in the fashion that he indicated in question three. See if you can understand how and why he reacted this way in the past and whether or not this is a pattern of behavior or an isolated incident.

#### SECTION SIX: A GOOD LEADER IS A GOOD SERVANT (PAGE 10)

Use this section to teach your candidate about servant leadership. If your candidate has any questions, this is an important time to answer them. Walk her through the characteristics of a servant and see why she chose the number on the scale that she did. Does your candidate truly feel that she is serving God to the fullest extent of her abilities? If so, that's great; if not, encourage her by letting her know that God will be developing these attributes in her life.

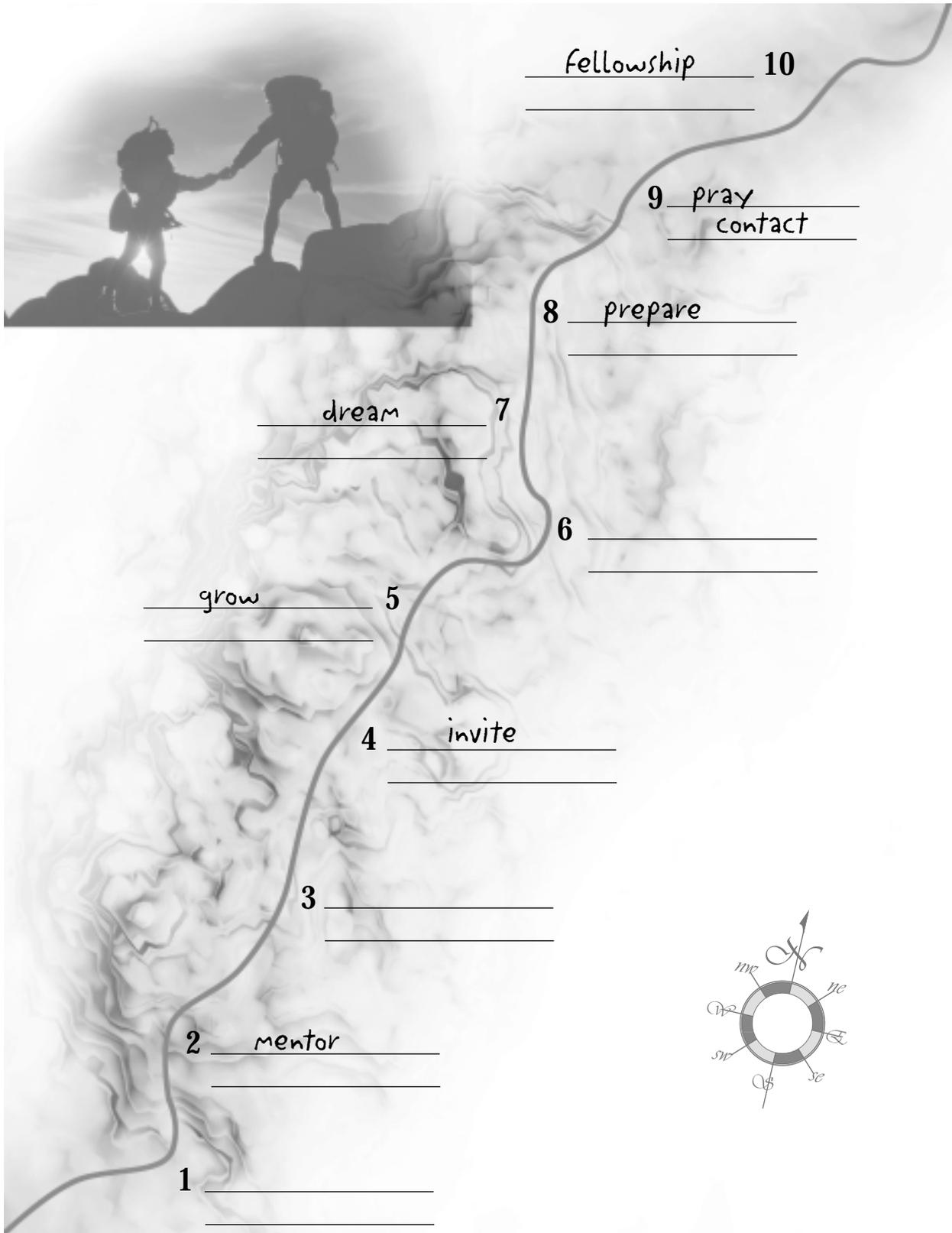
#### SECTION SEVEN: BE A PROACTIVE LEARNER (PAGE 11)

God wants everyone to be a learner for him. The types of learners that we have supplied here are a generalized list designed to broadly define learning types. Be sure to encourage your candidate that he need not be constrained by the definition of the category that he falls into. Assure him that anyone who is willing to try can become a proactive learner. Take advantage of the scale given to see where your candidate is the strongest. Be sure to encourage him in that area and use it as a base upon which to build up his confidence. He really is capable of putting these habits into his life.

#### SECTION EIGHT: THE HABITS OF EFFECTIVE CELL GROUP LEADERS (PAGES 12-14)

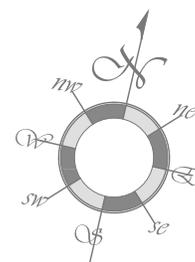
These habits are the foundation of effective small group leadership. The goal is to help your leader develop these habits in his life. Discover why he has chosen to assign each number to each habit and then walk him through his journey map. After determining the accuracy of his numeric evaluation place each habit next to its proper number on the journey map. (Sample of completed journey map on the next page). This should give both of you an excellent idea of where he is heading and where he needs to grow in order to become an effective cell group leader. The book *8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders* helps a person to develop these habits as a part of normal life. This book is a great tool for cell group coaches to use with his leaders.

## Sample of Completed Journey Map



The image shows a topographic map with a winding path that starts at the bottom left and moves towards the top right. In the upper left corner, there is a silhouette of two hikers with backpacks standing on a mountain peak, one holding the other's hand. The path is marked with numbers 1 through 10, each followed by a blank line for a step name. Some steps are already filled in with handwritten text.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 mentor  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 invite  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 grow  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 dream  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 prepare  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9 pray  
contact
- 10 fellowship



## SECTION NINE: FACILITATING THE GROUP MEETING (PAGE 15)

This section is simply an evaluation of whether or not your candidate is familiar with the four W's of a group meeting. You may want to walk her through a practice cell agenda just to see if she is sure of what she is doing and so you can be sure she understands each aspect of the cell group meeting time. If, however, you use a cell meeting outline different from the 4 W's given here, explain your own outline instead. How does it correlate with the four basic parts of a group meeting? What parts of a cell group meeting does your church do differently (or the same way) and why? Affirm that your cell group leader training will equip her to lead an effective meeting.

### WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE RESULTS OF THE JOURNEY GUIDE DISCUSSION?

If a potential leader reveals issues that cause you great concern, do not prepare him for leadership yet. Watch out for a rebellious pattern toward leadership, hidden sin, a lack of time and an inability to adjust schedules, or problems at home. These problems do not disqualify a person from cell group leadership, they just reveal that certain issues must be dealt with beforehand.

A potential leader will reveal strengths and weaknesses. Make sure you encourage her in her strengths. Do not reprimand her weaknesses. Only indicate that you will mentor her and show her how to develop her weaker areas.

After 6-12 months of leading a group, have the cell group leader fill out another *Journey Guide for Cell Group Leaders*. This will open the door for you to discover areas where he has grown as well as opening your eyes to see new areas that still need growth.