



Vision – Mission - Strategy GroupWords

Back in my Campus Ministry days there were three foundational principles that guided everything we did — every program, every class, every decision. Through the years these three principles have become a guiding influence for me in every ministry I have been a part of. They can provide a ministry track for preaching, youth, missions, family life, personal counseling, etc. I would like to suggest these principles as a way for a Small Group to evaluate its progress and chart its future.

It helps me to move from theology to practice by thinking through the following stages:

STAGE 1 — VISION

Passion For God, Compassion For People

Of course, this vision comes from Jesus as he lays out the top two commands of all time.

- *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. (Matthew 22:37-38)*
- *And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:39-40)*

STAGE 2 — MISSION

UpReach, InReach, OutReach

- Our first priority is to God. Reaching **UP** to Him is our first mission. Everything else builds on this foundation.
- One kind of neighbor is in the body of Christ. As each member has a need, other members reach **IN**, and respond with care. As each member has joy, the others share.
- Another neighbor has no relationship to the Lord. And so, we reach **OUT**. Every heart filled with Christ is a missionary. Every heart without Christ is a mission field.

STAGE 3 — STRATEGY

- **UpReach Strategy** — List, explore, pray about, and then put in place specific plans to promote each small group member's personal relationship with God.
- **InReach Strategy** — How can a small group be a place of intimacy, community, and family? What can be done to encourage the “one another” faith described in scripture?
- **OutReach Strategy** — How can your small group, on a weekly basis or on special planned occasions, become a witness to non-Christians?

UpReach, InReach, OutReach ... I've not found a life situation or a ministry where these principles could not speak to or guide. Talk through them as a group.