

Direct Connect



APRIL 2007

Welcome to *Direct Connect*!

The e-newsletter, *Direct Connect* debuts! Designed for small group leaders in Coffee Break, Story Hour and Little Lambs evangelistic programs, *Direct Connect* provides ideas, insights, information and resources. Please encourage your leaders to [subscribe](#).

Small Talk is also for you.



Some of you have been receiving *Small Talk* since 1998 (a segment of the former *Connections* newsletter). If that's you, know that *Small Talk* will continue to arrive at your mailing address. If you want to also be notified when *Small Talk* is posted online, subscribe at this [same page](#). Notice we have already posted the [Spring 2007 issue of Small Talk](#).

37 Years and Counting: Coffee Break Still Works

"I had the privilege to be part of a Coffee Break Bible study for approximately five years when my children were small--both as a member and a group facilitator. Coffee Break nurtured in me a great love for the Word of God, brought needed fellowship into my life, fostered relationships



that continued through the years, and set me in positions where I was able to lead other women to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Thank you for this valuable ministry."
-- Gretel Deem, Northwest Michigan

God Uses Google

She sat reflectively in front of her computer screen. Convicted by the Sunday sermon at First Baptist Church in Los Lunas, New Mexico, Rose Anne Curtis knew she needed to reach her neighborhood in a more intentional way. Sure, she modeled Jesus, but modeling wasn't enough if her neighbors continued to follow different religious paths.

"So, what do I do?" she asked God. "Well, what do you want?" she sensed His response. Rose Anne typed in "Bible studies for unchurched women." The Google search landed her on links for [Discover Your Bible](#) materials and the [Coffee Break](#) program.

Just for fun: try googling "Coffee Break" or "Coffee Break Bible Study." Do you find your church website listed?



Raising Up New Leaders

When Rachele Apol moves from one military base to another, she takes along Coffee Break. To Japan. To Turkey. Back to Virginia. She knows the importance of mentoring her replacements. "One of the things important to me as a leader is to make sure that as I leave, there are qualified leaders in place to carry on projects and tasks that I have been involved in. Coffee Break is obviously something I hope continues even as I leave."

Overseas, Rachele doesn't have the benefit of readily-available [Coffee Break training](#) led by a [Small Group Ministry Developer](#). But you do!



"What Does the Hippo Say?"

Kadin's mother, Michelle, did not know how to respond to his question. Her two-and-a-half-year-old son, familiar with the Little Lambs CD, knew the answer: "What does the hippo say? Hip, hip, hip, hippopotamus. Hip, hip, hooray, God made all of us!" As Kadin burst into the Mary Rice Hopkins' chorus, Michelle decided he was ready for the full version of the song ([Sing-Along Creation Songs CD](#)). The CDs that accompany the Story Hour or Little Lambs program are available at [FaithAliveResources.org](#). As leaders, you may want to offer CDs as a resource to the parents of your little ones. What a great way to connect the Bible stories and songs to the home!



Beautiful Bouquets

Growing Coffee Breaks experience growing pains. Questions arise--how to divide groups, how to change groups, how to keep the evangelistic focus, how to better embrace new people. As Coffee Break Director Sheryl DeWeerd prayed about these challenges,

God answered with a visual; while driving her bus route, she noticed a beautiful garden. That was her inspiration! Here's how it could work for your growing Coffee Break.

Imagine at your last Coffee Break meeting of the season, your leaders stand in front of the group each holding a fresh-cut flower bunch of the same variety and color. The individual flowers represent the group members. One leader holds "her group" of yellow tulips, another holds white daisies, another red roses, or blue irises, or pink snapdragons.

Point out how each Coffee Break group is beautiful, and how over time they begin to look very much alike. Next have each leader exchange flowers with the other leaders and create a beautiful mixed bouquet. Aha! What a striking representation of diverse, new beauty.

Sheryl took this exercise with her Coffee Break at Cascade Fellowship one step further. At the bouquet's perimeter, she bent one flower, noting how a group member often goes through difficulty, pain and brokenness. Ignored, the flower would be unable to stand or survive.

She moved the damaged flower toward the middle of the bouquet: "Imagine what happens when we surround others with love, prayers, acceptance and compassion."

The mixed bouquets help us see change as opportunity for growth and support. Was the transition to new groups perfect? No. But it allowed for new relationships and ministry blessings that wouldn't have happened without change.

Thanks for sharing your story with us, Sheryl. You've helped us support each other. Please [e-mail](#) your stories of struggle and blessing.



Resources

Discover Your Bible (DYB) [Hebrews](#) now available! Explore the teachings of who Jesus is and why faith in Him matters today. Notice the downloadable sample chapter at the Faith Alive website (40 pages). Many DYB studies have downloadable sample chapters. Perhaps leaders could modify these free samples as a filler lesson. Faith Alive Christian Resources' editor Paul Faber recommends these [Discover Your Bible](#) lessons: Elijah-Elisha, Esther, God in the Psalms, God of Second Chances, Easter, Prayer, Fruit of the Spirit, Sermon on the Mount, Joy of Sharing Jesus, Power of Forgiveness.



Small Group Evangelism Conference 2008

Christian Reformed Home Missions' Chicagoland Team will host the next biennial Small Group Evangelism Conference, July 18-20, 2008, in Lombard, Illinois. We hope many Coffee Break, Story Hour and Little Lambs small group leaders plan to attend. Listen to a colleague who attended in July, 2006: *I needed this conference as motivation and inspiration to get our next Coffee Break year started. Harvey Carey and Ray VanderLaan reminded me and confirmed our purpose on this earth and challenged me to get back to work!!* For those of you interested in 2006 conference CDs, they are available from [OT Studios](#), 800-808-8173, otstudios@otstudios.com. A downloadable form is available at [this link](#).



Ministry Spotlight

[Grace Fox](#) loves to encourage women on their spiritual journeys. Check out her [books](#), *10-Minute Time Outs for Moms* and *10-Minute Time Outs for Busy Women* or sign up for a free, monthly [e-newsletter](#), [Growing with Grace](#).



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