

# CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2003

## CALLING ALL BODY PARTS

Often we don't appreciate something until we're without it. Consider your next Coffee Break meeting minus the coffee. What if the volunteer who, up until now has faithfully arrived early to brew coffee, doesn't show that day? Imagine if the nursery workers decide to volunteer somewhere else.

I can hear Judy Reinink of Calvary CRC in Holland, Michigan say, "Coffee Break doesn't happen without coffee or nursery!" She knows. Over the years,

Judy has served in every position, including director. This season, she smiles, "I'm in charge of coffee!"

During our conversation we recognized the need for many servants—all parts of the Body—in ministering to women and children. Nursery, in particular, is crucial to setting the tone for a safe environment. Mom has to feel comfortable leaving her baby in order to join the Bible study in the next room. Danell Czarniecki,



Small Group Regional Rep for the Southwest U.S. agrees, "For some community women, it is the first time they have left their infant. They need a patient, understanding, loving, welcoming, I'll-care-for-your-baby-as-though-it-were-mine-atmosphere." That's what our dedicated nursery volunteers provide.

The reluctant conclusion, however, is that we may not fully appreciate the nursery volunteers. Let's struggle together with how best to value them; how do we communicate that Coffee Break wouldn't happen without them?

- Thank them verbally
- Write a note or letter
- Tell them specifically what you appreciate about them
- Share stories of what's happening in Coffee Break
- Communicate how vital their role is in the bigger ministry picture
- Acknowledge their ministry in a worship service
- Share compliments you receive
- Ask the moms to write a note of encouragement
- Pray for the nursery ministry
- Pray with the volunteer
- Treat them to lunch
- Present a bouquet of flowers
- Purchase small gifts or gift certificates
- During a craft night, make an extra item for volunteers

Appreciate each other. Affirm each other. Know that you are all part of the Body of Christ. Scripture captures the value of each individual this way: *Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits...the variety is wonderful.* 1 Cor. 12, *The Message*

Marjo Jordan, Co-Editor



Coffee Break



Small Groups



Story Hour  
Little Lambs



## THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

Looking for low-key opening devotionals for Coffee Break? Go no farther than your child's bookshelf. Children's books, particularly those for young readers, are great stories that make vivid points about the purpose of your study. They also make effective concluding devotionals at the end of a study. Through the years I have read and commented on the following:

**The Tale of Three Trees**—This American folk tale is ideal for a restatement of the gospel story. I used it as our conclusion for the study of Matthew. The story depends on the pictures, so use an overhead for a large group or make sure that all can see the pictures as you read.

**Frog and Toad**—All three collections by Arnold Lobel feature short stories and two vivid characters. I make points about the fellowship of our Bible study groups, the respect for other's differences, and the sharing we enjoy.

**Pierre**—This book by Maurice Sendak helped me emphasize that Bible study groups are about caring, just as God cares. In addition, the book invites audience response. The women were shouting, "I don't care," on cue and missed the change in the text, which made it the wrong response. The point? In Bible study we pay close attention to the text so that we get the response right.

**Chicken Soup with Rice**—This delightful romp through the seasons by Maurice Sendak proves chicken soup is always appropriate no matter what the weather. In Bible study, however, we will find a year-round Healer, Comforter, and Nourisher much more dependable than chicken soup.

**Because of Lozo Brown**—When we began the study of Mark, I read this humorous account by Larry L. King of a boy's fear of meeting a new neighbor. I pointed out that we will meet a friend too, one that may cause us initial misconceptions until we get to know him face to face.

Carol Veldman Rudie, Calvary CRC, Minneapolis, MN



Coffee Break

## LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

### ESL Coffee Break

When Seon Ju Park first set foot in her new Calgary, Alberta home, she didn't know much English—and she didn't know Jesus.

Park, her husband, and two young daughters emigrated to Calgary from Seoul, South Korea, about four years ago. "I had heard many times from several friends about church, but I was never interested in it. And I didn't know about God or Jesus," she says, struggling to make her English flow as smoothly as her native Korean.

Park, 33, eventually discovered an ESL (English as a Second Language) class taught by Grace Stolte. In time, Stolte invited Park to join a handful of other immigrant women in the ESL Coffee Break at Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church.

That was when Park's need to know English bumped into her need to know Christ. "Grace showed me Jesus' love," Park testifies. "Then I went to the ESL Coffee Break group and met many other Canadian and Korean friends. Many of them are Christians."

Sometimes as many as ten immigrant women come to the ESL Coffee Break group at Emmanuel, Stolte says. They are from various countries, but several, like Park, come from South Korea. "Now in its fourth year, the ESL Coffee Break group is a good nurturing environment," Stolte says. "The other ladies who come are mostly Christian and so it is a good place for nurturing."

In addition to her Coffee Break study, Park and her husband have also attended a weekly couple's Bible study at the Stolte home. The Parks invited friends who were not Christians. "The Lord spoke dramatically to them in dreams," Stolte says, "and they are Christians now."

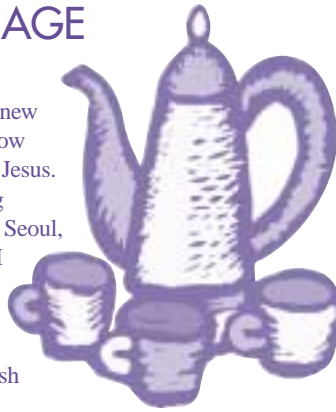
Stolte believes that Coffee Break with an ESL flavor is a great way to reach people with limited English ability. For the women who attend the group, it's about their only opportunity to practice English. "I can really judge the improvement in English," she says. But she is quick to point out that discerning spiritual improvements is better left up to the Lord.

"If I were in another country, I would love to have a friendly place to go to practice the language and to experience the love of God," Stolte says. "I would love that." Her eagerness to help immigrant women do both keeps her excited about the ESL Coffee Break. "We want to help them become assimilated. We are being a friend."

Park smiles broadly as she sums up her experience: "I was able to make new Christian friends when I went to the Coffee Break group. We can share about Jesus with each other. We can talk a lot because our situations are similar. The group helps us a lot. I settled in Calgary where I am now a believer in Jesus. I am growing in my faith and with my friends."

Don McCrory, Christian Reformed Home Missions

*Editor's Note: Open Door Books, available through FaithAliveResources.org, 1-800-333-8300, are excellent resources to help adults improve reading, writing, and speaking skills.*



**Her need to know English bumped into her need to know Christ.**

## SOLD ON INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

It's my job as a small group regional rep to brag about the Bible study materials for Coffee Break—Discover Your Bible, Discover Life and Inspirit/Get Real. But before you skip to the next article, let me tell you why I love these studies.

For nearly twenty years I've been using Coffee Break's inductive Bible studies (Discover Your Bible series). These studies played a big role in growing me as a disciple and teaching me love for God. As both a participant and a leader, I learned to be curious about God and His Word through Coffee Break questions. It provides the right amount of background information to answer my questions and lead me to discovery.

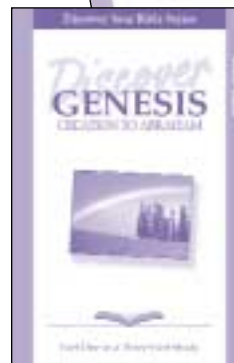
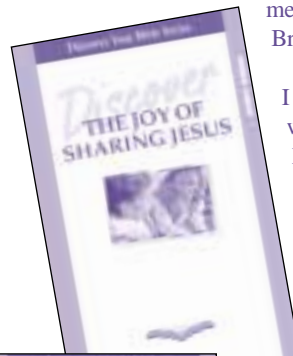
I'm not alone. My current Coffee Break group loves this material too. Consisting of mostly newcomers to the Bible, we dug into Genesis last year and so appreciated finding the answers right in the text. We couldn't believe how much we learned. Then over the summer we tried something different—a non-inductive study with a supplementary video. We had a great time, learned a lot and covered verses in just about every book of the Bible. But, **the group admitted they concentrated on getting the right answer, rather than really understanding one section of the Bible.** They told me, "We can't wait to go back to Coffee Break material."

Consider a cross-cultural example. I recently met a missionary couple who believes Coffee Break will play a key role in the future of Christianity in China. They've translated 30 Discover Your Bible studies into Chinese, print 10,000 copies at a time, and can't keep up with the demand. Discover Your Bible material is growing like wildfire both in the underground and in the official church of China.

It's easy to take something familiar for granted. So, when you next hold a Discover Your Bible study guide, recognize it for the wonderful tool it is, thank God for valuable study materials, and pray for the church in China.

If you haven't used Discover Your Bible, Discover Life, or Inspirit/Get Real for awhile, rediscover them at [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org) or view the enclosed flyer. You won't be disappointed.

Sam Huizenga, Small Group Regional Representative, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee



## Connections NEXT ISSUE/January

- Conference Registration Brochure
- The Message of the Egg



## THE MOPS CONNECTION

**L**ori, a young mom with two preschoolers, was adamant. “I need to get out of the house and meet with other moms.” Seeing others in her situation, she enlisted her church’s support and started a MOPS group. She distributed flyers in pediatrician’s offices, libraries, grocery stores and churches—anywhere you’d find moms with young children.

MOPS International (Mothers of Preschoolers) is a church-based ministry that encourages moms to be the women God intends them to be. They value mothering, relationships, lifestyle evangelism and leadership development. They provide a quality MOPPETS program for children age six and younger, and can boast an incredible web-site: [www.MOPS.org](http://www.MOPS.org)

Most MOPS groups meet once or twice a month and offer women a variety of options, from speakers, to crafts, to health ideas, to pampering themselves. Mentor moms are available to encourage and advise if necessary.

You may be more familiar with Coffee Break and Story Hour than MOPS. Have you ever considered how the two could partner?

- As relationships build between moms, bridges also build to the church and its ministries. MOPS women who desire to learn about the Bible and Christian living could be invited to join Coffee Break, a parenting small group, or an introductory fellowship group at your church.
- The evangelistic Story Hour and Little Lambs curriculum fits perfectly for the children who attend MOPPETS. The age-appropriate Bible lessons introduce the children to God in a meaningful and fun way.
- Coffee Break is a wonderful next step. Moms leave MOPS when their last child enters Kindergarten. What a great segue for these moms.
- Churches may choose to run Coffee Break and MOPS simultaneously or on alternating weeks, both taking advantage of the Story Hour/Little Lambs curriculum.

Think about how your Coffee Break could meet community needs. Pray for God’s vision and wisdom in impacting women and children for His kingdom.

## BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

**G**od’s blessing—His activity in our lives, His shaping, gifting, and coloring remind me of the artist who creates a masterpiece. Taking personal enjoyment in its beauty, but unable to keep it to himself, he desires to inspire and impact others.

In the same way the Artist God created a masterpiece (you) so that you bring pleasure to Him as well as others. God has blessed you...so that you will be a blessing.

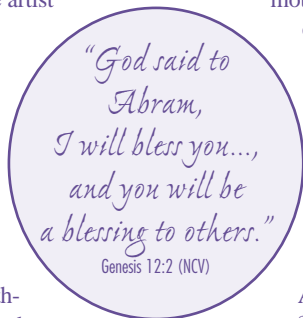
I’m still learning this. Afraid he’d be injured, I didn’t want my son to play football this season. But God made him athletic, talented and strong, so maybe it’s part

of how he carries out God’s mandate for his life. My daughter is a wonderful mother to her five young children. It must bring God pleasure as she brings up these new followers of Jesus. God gave me passion for those in Little Lambs, shaping my life so I can shape others.

How has the Master Artist shaped and colored you? We’re not perfect yet, but

on the other hand, the Artist certainly knows what He’s doing! Pause today to thank God for how blessed you are; then be a blessing to someone else.

*Diane Dykgraaf, Story Hour/Little Lambs Specialist*



## GOD USES A LOGO

**I**t all started with a T-shirt. A Story Hour leader encountered an old friend, Betty, who noticed the handprint logo she was wearing and asked if she worked in a preschool. The leader explained her involvement in Story Hour, a Bible story program for preschoolers that met at church. Noticing Betty’s grandson, she invited them both to the next Coffee Break and Story Hour meeting.

Much to her surprise, they came. Betty was delighted to be warmly welcomed into the women’s group while her grandson enjoyed Story Hour. This experience matched what she was longing for.

Soon after, Betty walked into the bookstore where I work, looking for a Bible. She talked excitedly about a group she and her grandson had attended. As I listened, I realized Betty had found Coffee Break and Story Hour!

The adventure continued, because right after Betty left the store, the Story Hour leader walked in! It was definitely a God thing. I told her about meeting Betty, about selling her a Bible and about the wonderful experience in Coffee Break and Story Hour.

The Story Hour leader could only blink back the tears as she recognized God had used her and something as simple as a T-shirt to introduce two people to Himself.

Never underestimate God!

*Mary Werkhoven, Small Group Regional Representative, Pacific Northwest*



Story Hour  
Little Lambs

STORY HOUR

# idea center



## Coffee Break

### STONE MEMORIAL

The Joshua 4 study, when a person from each tribe gathered a stone from the Jordan River for a memorial, impacted Bethel CRC's Coffee Break in Lacombe, Alberta. Using stones the size of an apple, simple craft paint and puff paint, Margaret DeVries says the women created their own memorial to place on holiday tables. As in the Bible story, when someone asked about the stone, that was their opportunity to tell about the wonderful things God has done.

### BEGIN VALENTINE'S DAY

Who says Coffee Break has to begin in September? When Betty Hordyk of Casnovia Baptist in Michigan found Dollar Store coffee mugs with hearts, she couldn't resist. She stuffed the mugs with invitations and started a Coffee Break on February 14.

### GIVE A BOOK

#### DAFFODILS IN THE BATHTUB AND OTHER MEDITATIONS

Ruth Donker

Speaking in a warm, open style of her joys and sorrows, see the beauty of creation through her eyes—beauty even in an old, cracked bathtub.

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\$9.95<sup>USD</sup>/\$14.45<sup>CDN</sup>

#### SISTER STORIES

Daily Inspiration

from the Lives of Ruth and Esther

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These two Old Testament women knew what it meant to trust God and live courageously during tough times. In these meditations listen to their hopes, dreams, struggles and trials that will inspire new ways to tell your own faith story.

#160425 \$7.95<sup>USD</sup>/\$11.55<sup>CDN</sup>



Available through Faith Alive Christian Resources, 1-800-333-8300 or shop online at [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org)

one has left for the day. Here are some suggestions:

#### For Little Lambs (two- and three-year-olds):

- "Follow Me" game. Begin standing. Have the children follow your simple motions. Touch your head, flap your arms, reach up high, bend down low, etc. You can hop, march or walk in place. If you have time, make a small obstacle course out of things in your classroom and lead your group through it. You can hop over pillows, crawl under a table, weave through a line of chairs, and make it up as you go.

#### • Animal Walks. Imitate animals

such as an elephant, kangaroo, crocodile, bunny, frog, or crab. Ask your children what animal they would like to be, and imitate that animal.

- "Snowman Song" from the *Wee Sing, Children's Songs and Fingerplays* songbook, available from your local bookstore. Another favorite activity for Christmas from this same songbook is "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" with action verses (verse 1—clapping, verse 2—jumping, verse 3—twirling).

#### For Story Hour

##### (four- to six-year-olds)

- Guessing Games. Say, "I spy with my little eye something blue," and give specific clues until someone guesses correctly. Then it's their turn to be the spy. Or try putting on your thinking caps, and say the following, "I'm thinking of someone \_\_\_\_," and keep giving clues until a child guesses correctly. You could use references to that day's Bible story. Clues for the story of baby Moses, for example, would be someone small, who cries, or had a blanket.
- Hide-and-Seek Games. Hide an item in your room or sit in a circle and pass a small item from hand to hand. Ask a child to stand in the center of the circle to guess. Watch your Story Hour curriculum for a variety of ways to connect Hide-and-Seek games to your lesson.
- *Let's Play!* Group Games for Preschoolers, Copyright 1996, Group Publishing, Inc., available from local bookstores or [www.groupublishing.com](http://www.groupublishing.com).



Modern Worship songs for the next generation. Available at your local bookstore or [www.worshiptogether.com](http://www.worshiptogether.com), kids and adults will

love to sing along with these worship songs.

- *Singalong Praise Songs* by Jon & Jacquelyn Negus, *Singalong Creation Songs*, or *Singalong Miracle Songs* by Mary Rice Hopkins. These CD's or tapes are available from [www.faithaliveresources.org](http://www.faithaliveresources.org) and were developed especially for Story Hour.

Preschoolers love them!

- *The Ballad of Little Joe*, a Veggie Tales video - This fun, entertaining video teaches young children a lesson in facing hardship and can be found at your local Christian bookstore.

### LET'S PLAY!

Young children love to play! Games can be great learning tools, too. Try planning a game activity in your session that reinforces the theme of the day. Often we discover extra time at the end of our session while we wait for moms to pick up their child. This is a good time to play a game. You can begin just before the end of class time and continue as the children are being picked up. Keep playing until every-

### STAY CONNECTED

Looking forward to Christmas and a few weeks vacation from Story Hour? Here are ideas for staying connected to the children during break.

- Take a group picture of the children to send them. On the back write, "Can't wait to see you on Tuesday at Story Hour (Little Lambs)!"
- Send a letter home with mom before the break, suggesting some Christian gift ideas and including the words and actions to a few of the children's favorite songs.
- After Christmas send a postcard to the child with a note that you're looking forward to the first day back in Story Hour.



### GIFT IDEAS

Quality Christian gift ideas for preschoolers:

- *I Could Sing of Your Love Forever - Kids* - This CD or tape contains 12



## Story Hour Little Lambs

### CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2003  
A Small Group and Coffee Break Evangelism Quarterly Newsletter, Betty Veldman Wieland, Diana Klungel, Marjo Jordan, Editors  
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[www.smallgroupministries.org](http://www.smallgroupministries.org)  
[www.coffeebreakministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org)

# SMALL TALK

## FOR SMALL GROUPS

WINTER 2003

### IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM

The church I recently attended intrigued me. People poured energy into ministries and programs designed for those outside the church. The building style, the worship, the announcements, and weekly programs all seemed focused on impacting the neighborhood. I asked one of the members, "How did this happen?" The sure reply, "We have a saying around here, *It's not about us; it's about them*. We base all our decisions on that statement."

Was I impressed! This was not a megachurch. This was a regular church with regular people implementing really

good decisions about how to be disciples and make disciples. What if more churches made such bold decisions?

Imagine already-saved followers of Jesus turning their focus toward *them*, and becoming a community of healing, wholeness, restoration and life. Think about what that might look like. A focus on them might take the form of a practical Life Skills class or an Alpha course instead of the regularly scheduled Bible study. Some small groups might decide to move meetings out of the church building and into the community. Others might mentor single parents and model acceptance and love to their children. Councils

might alter the worship in ways to make room for the new. It reminds me of a shepherd who would leave the 99 in the fold to search for the one that was lost.

Dare to challenge yourself and your church family! Ask what it would mean in your location with your unique gifts, talents and passions to adopt such a saying: *It's not about us; it's all about them*.

Diane Dykgraaf, Small Group Regional Representative, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee

### IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Small group growing pains are reality for a church located near a university. In the shadow of Notre Dame, Granger Community Church of Southbend, Indiana targets young professionals and young married couples. They're learning, and adjusting, and sharing their experience. Todd Wessels, Home Missions Small Group Regional Rep for Illinois and Indiana, gleaned the following from a recent seminar:

- Give leaders permission to pursue their passion. Free them; don't micro-manage.
- Begin a relationship with someone first; then personally invite him to your group. When people are simply referred to a small group, only 25% show up. When people are invited, as many as 80% attend. But before the small group invitation, invite them for a meal or sit together during a worship service. Develop the relationship first.
- Since it's all about relationships, create a variety of opportunities to build relationships—from a retreat setting to short-term small groups that meet around a specific topic.
- When short on managers or coaches, consider grouping leaders as small

*continued*

#### Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women



- Dynamic Worship
- Inspiring Keynotes
- Personal Growth & Nourishment
- Fellowship & Encouragement
- Leadership Training
- Cross-Denominational Sharing

*You will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8*

July 23-25, 2004

Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario

Hosted by Coffee Break, Story Hour, Little Lambs and Small Group Ministries  
[www.coffeebreakministries.org/www.smallgroupministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org/www.smallgroupministries.org)



Small Groups

# SMALL GROUPS

continued from front

groups who support and encourage one another.

- Realizing that today's culture views the church as less and less relevant, struggle with meeting people where they are, not where you want them to be. Relate honestly with them.



Small Groups

**"At least there's one thing I give God thanks for; without this group and our Bible study, I would feel really distanced from my faith. Although I don't have a church, I do have a group of Christians who provide encouragement and strength." —Kim**

## EL MOMENTO OPORTUNO

### Perfect Timing

I keep relearning this verse, *God's ways are not our ways*. Truthfully, I often fight the temptation to argue with God about His timing. I profess to trust Him, but would I order things in His divine, all-knowing way? Not likely. Scripture reminds me, not only are my ways not His, but His way is perfect. Over time, my perception and reflection tends to concur. Thankfully He is patient in the process.

Two friends of mine also live out this reality. In August, 2002, we welcomed Marti Palmer as our small group representative for Northern California and for Hispanic ministries. Marti plunged into her new role, contacting small group and Coffee Break leaders, churches, and Hispanic ministry leaders. Building relationships drew her attention and energy. She naturally interfaced with Viviana Cornejo, who serves the overall Hispanic ministry from the Grand Rapids office. In fact, Vivi's love for small groups and sense of God's calling was so apparent that she trained with Marti to serve as a workshop leader in the Midwest. God's arrangement delighted us.

When employment changes in Marti's family entered the equation, it appeared God recruited and called Vivi for an additional purpose. Due to Marti's circumstances, Vivi shifted from workshop leader to small group representative. The timing for this process supplied exactly what we needed, and we are thrilled to partner with Vivi. God also developed a unique and probably everlasting friendship between two wonderful women.

Please join us in thanking God for Marti's service and in welcoming our new small group representative, Vivi Cornejo ([cornejov@crcna.org](mailto:cornejov@crcna.org); 616-224-0809).



*Pictured from left: Marti Palmer and Viviana Cornejo*

Diana Klungel, Small Groups Program Director

## RESOURCES Available through Faith Alive Resources, 1-800-333-8300, [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org)

NEW

### DISCOVER TITUS & PHILEMON

Learn the important Christian principles

Paul faces in a head-on challenge in the letter to Titus—principles he had to put into practice as he handles a delicate situation in the letter to Philemon. (4 lessons)

*Study Guide*

#152640CT \$3.50<sup>US</sup>/5.10<sup>CDN</sup>

*Leader's Guide*

#152645CT \$4.75<sup>US</sup>/6.90<sup>CDN</sup>

### DISCOVER THE JOY OF SHARING JESUS

Motivate and train your small group members to discover the joy of sharing Jesus with others.

(4 lessons)

*Study Guide*

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*Leader's Guide*

#152635CT \$4.75<sup>US</sup>/6.90<sup>CDN</sup>



### ONE CHURCH, FOUR GENERATIONS

*Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church*

Gary L. McIntosh

Find practical suggestions for types of ministry and worship styles that will draw each generation.

#220107CT \$14.99<sup>US</sup>/21.75<sup>CDN</sup>

GIFT IDEA

### HUNTING SEASON

*Insights for Living from a Seasoned Hunter*

Maury DeYoung

Excellent devotional book for the unchurched outdoorsperson.

#220107CT \$9.95<sup>US</sup>

### OTHER RESOURCE

### THE COMPLETE BOOK OF QUESTIONS

*1001 Conversation Starters for Any Occasion*

Garry Poole

Divided into ten categories, questions range from light-hearted to feelings to opinions. Available through [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com).

\$12.99<sup>US</sup>/19.99<sup>CDN</sup> ISBN 031024420X

## BEGIN AT LENT

### Small Group Idea

Consider beginning a small group during Lent. You could explore ways to respond to moviegoers, sure to be impacted by Mel Gibson's *The Passion*, due for release before Easter. Editor Marjo Jordan saw Gibson and a clip of this movie; read more in the September issue of *LifeLine* at [www.menslife.org](http://www.menslife.org).

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Consider these small group names:

- Silver Seekers
- Good Reads
- Soul Food
- Table Talk
- Masterpizza Theatre
- Street Surfers
- All That Jazz
- Bravehearts
- Sons of Thunder

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