



tips for youth workers JUNE 2008

SUMMER HIATUS FOR SMALL GROUPS

While most of us enjoy the more relaxed, less scheduled pace of summer, when small groups stop meeting, there can be a feeling of loss, because the support we enjoy as a group member may not be there for awhile. Whether you participate in a small group or lead one (and your class with children and youth counts as this!), there are things you can do to 'keep the connection' going even if you don't get together with your small group every week. Why not try some of these ideas to combat any negative feelings about disbanding for the summer?

Group Memory Verse or Chapter – Is there a passage or even an entire chapter of the Bible your group would like the challenge of memorizing over the summer? Find ways to keep each other accountable for this important decision!

Keep a Journal – Give each group member a blank journal to record their prayers and God's answers over the summer months. It will provide amazing encouragement to your group when you reconnect and share evidence of God's faithfulness from your journals.

Prayer Partners – Summer vacation may take group members far and wide, but there's no reason why your group couldn't decide "no matter where we are, we'll stop and pray for each other at 4:00 p.m. every Tuesday." If possible, keep each other informed about prayer concerns.

Get Disciplined – Agree to read individually the same book on the topic of Spiritual Disciplines (one good one is: *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* by Ruth Haley Barton, IVP Books, 2006 ~ ISBN-10: 0830833331) and commit to incorporating at least one new discipline into your life this summer.

Saving for Service – Decide as a group before you break for the summer to sacrifice personal comfort in some small way (say an ice cream cone a week) in order to save money for a service project. Collect spare change and in the fall, donate funds toward a project, such as the Women's Ministries Territorial Project 2008, where funds are being raised to help Salvationists in Mexico fight human trafficking and provide programming to keep children off the streets in a caring, protective environment. To donate, write to: *The Salvation Army, Women's Ministries Territorial Project 2008, 2 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1P4*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 from the New Living Translation reminds us that our faith is a continuous thing, and never in hiatus, so take heart at these encouraging words from Scripture:

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."

Idea adapted from: "Small groups: Ways to Take a Break" by Linda McCullough Moore in Discipleship Journal Issue 141, May/June 2004. For more small group ideas, subscribe to Discipleship Journal. Ordering information at: www.discipleshipjournal.com