

Working Backwards

Objective for the study: To help all the Core Group leaders think critically about the closing of the semester so that their Core Group may have momentum when they come back. We are not trying to heap law on them, rather cast a lot of vision for what could happen if they are strategic and partner with what God is doing already in the lives of their Core Group.

Working Backwards:

First, a Vision piece from Pete.

Why is break so important? It's like training wheels for what could happen when they leave college. It gives them a chance to see how they will do out on their own. For some of them it's a new faith and they don't have anything grounded at home, just like they may not when they move for their job. Do they embrace the anchors over break, that will give a clear picture of what life will be like after graduation.

Well, here we are. The end of a semester. You've worked hard, you've had meetings one on ones, hang outs, bro sis hangouts, you've been apple picking and all that jazz but how to close out the semester? How do you leave them for a month and help them to continue the trajectory they've set while here at UVA. We've often said that home is a hard place to live holy, so what can be done to help them out? We're going to do a working backwards exercise today and tailor it to everyone's individual groups. You're all in different places now so your groups will look differently and how you do all of this will be different. Some of you have already planned the end of the semester out, some of you just realized that you should plan the end of the semester out, the goal is to help you think through where your group is and help them get to the next step.

1. First Fill out what the Ideal Core Group would look like coming back from break. So, what do you want it to look like? For each group this will be different.
 - a. excitement to see each other, deeper relationship with God, Bible and things they learned over break.
 - b. Is there anyone in particular that you would like to be there. Think through this.

Give them time to fill out this section while music plays.

2. Now we will move to the section called winter break. What would be necessary to do over winter break to help them get to this point of the ideal Core Group you mentioned in the step before.
 - a. Would you need to email each other, read blogs together, read the same book of the bible together, travel to see each other, phone calls?
 - b. How can you make winter break about more than trying to hold on to your faith and instead really diving deeply into what God has for them, learning how to ride without training wheels.
 - c. *I sometimes tell the story of Mike Roseberry who drove from Ohio to New Jersey to Nova back to Ohio to see all of the first years in his Core Group. And all of those guys became pillars of the fellowship, one became the president his fourth year. They were all at his wedding this past year also. Every. Single. One. Of. Them. It meant something to them. It's meant as a vision piece, not a you must do this piece.*

Give them time to fill out this piece with some music on in the background.

3. Now the last meeting: This one has two parts because it means the last Core Group and the last one on one that will happen with them. What would have to happen in the last Core Group and in the last one -on - one to be able to get your Core Group set up for the winter break you want them to have so that the ideal Core Group will come back in January.
 - a. You may hear around the room that some groups are going to do affirmations, that's great. I never led a group that was ready to do affirmations first semester, that's great to. It's important that you realize where your group currently is and help them get to where they need to be for the next two steps.

- b. How much vision will you have to cast in your one - on- one? Is there a certain area of their life that you need to challenge them in, knowing what break can be like?
 - c. Maybe it's something a little bit more practical. Do you need to exchange phone numbers in the last Core Group so the guys/girls can text/call each other over break?
 - d. Small Teaching on the SWOT analysis. We have another handout for you that we have been using for years in Chi Alpha, and it has always been helpful. It's called the SWOT analysis. It helps you and your Core Group think through the areas of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats going into the break. We have handed it out but we will also email out a copy. It is a great tool to fill out in the final Core Group, so they all know what the break could hold for them and they can focus on the positive things also (Strengths, Opportunities). They could fill it out in Core Group the same that we have been doing this today, some time to fill everything out. They could share some of their answers outloud. It would be great for them to leave with someone that is going to be a brother/sister with them in the trenches of break. If you don't do it in the last Core Group, I strongly recommend you do it in the last 1:1.
 - e. So what would those things be to cover in the last Core Group, how can you **end** the semester. There should be a time of ending. There can't be a fizzle out and leave without momentum. I know next week is Thanksgiving Break and then there's a basketball game that some of the male Core Groups will go to, but think through how can you end the Core Group this semester. So there is a sense of God's faithfulness and His trustworthiness. Don't let it fizzle out. Go get two for one wings one night, go to cookout after the game, hibachi grill, whatever has to happen.
4. Finally, go and do it!

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