



Publication of the Small Group Ministry Team
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Spyhopping

It was the first week of February and my husband and I went to Hawaii with good friends from our church. Our purpose aside from relaxation was to do some whale watching. We went out from the city of Lanai on the island of Maui in a large tourist type boat, and then on the days that followed on some smaller commercial crafts. We saw many whales with their babies and large whales breaching at a distance. Then one day we decided to go out in a very small motorboat that only held a few tourists. The owner took us to a different area of the bay and cut the motor off. We were all surprised when a humongous whale came gently out of the water and appeared to be treading water very near our boat. I can only assume it was a female who was checking us out. Her entire head was out of the water and she rotated her body around and then stopped as one of her eyes looked straight at us. We were scarcely breathing as her tremendously huge eye looked carefully at us. I first thought what a wonderful mammal this is and the eye kept each of us mesmerized. The eye appeared to me like the eye of God as she was observing our every move, our every whisper and every thought. We had no idea what the beautiful creature would do, because she was definitely in control of the situation. When a whale comes up out of the water in this manner it is called *spyhopping*. Spyhopping is controlled and slow and can last for minutes if the whale is sufficiently inquisitive about who or what it is viewing. After satisfying her curiosity, she slowly slipped back under the water and swam away. It was an extraordinary event that I will always remember.

What does spyhopping of a whale have to do with the small groups of our church? We were a small group in this small boat and although we were not engaging in a Bible study lesson, I truly believe we were in awe of what God has created for the sea and I am sure there were prayers being offered. As we continued back to the dock we were all quiet as we contemplated our breath taking experience. One of the things we do in small groups is share these special times when God makes an impact on our lives and how these experiences do relate to the teachings of Jesus. Jesus said these words about his followers:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they know me. I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish; no one can pluck them out of my hand. *John 10:28*

The Editor

Small Group News

Attention! Small Group Leader

For some time now I have been asking that the small groups be entered into our database. This is important for the Care Ministry because it gives us the names of those who are close to each other and a support network in time of need. Also, I would really appreciate a call from your designated Small Group Shepherd (or by default the Leader if you have not selected a shepherd) when one of your members is seriously ill or in the hospital. I realize that you are very busy and this is one more thing you need to do, but I would be happy to put the information into the database if you would provide me with the names in your group. Thank you in advance for providing this information!

Susan Bollman, Care Ministry Associate

Small Group Leader's Input Needed

The Small Group Ministry Team and the Care Ministry need for you to input the current names of your group members into the SFC database. You only need to do this once!

Here is all you do:

Go to <https://sfc.ccbchurch.com> If you don't have a username or password yet you may click on **Sign Up** at bottom left, complete the form being sure to click **Submit**. Log into your group and click the group participant's tab at the top right hand side of your screen. Enter the names of your group members. Email och@saratogafederated.org if you need assistance and one of the church database team members will help you.

Does your small group have a name?

It has been suggested many times that your small group should have a name! We have a few small groups who have adopted a special name to identify their group. Names that can be remembered are *The Beatitudes*, *The Wisdom Seekers*, *The Tea Timers*, *The Spiritual Formation Group* and *Parents with Growing Families*. I am sure there are others. The newest name of Joe Berg's small group is *The Owls*. It stands for *Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors!* Thank you Dorothy Laughlin for giving us this good news! If your group has a name or you choose a name this summer, please drop a note on the Small Talk's editor's email. Identify your group leader and your group's new name and any special significance it may have.

Building Community at Church

Your participation in a church the size of SFC is very important. In an effort to help you "connect" the Small Group Ministry Team has formed short-term Connection Groups that will be meeting this summer for a few weeks. Connection groups are designed for you to meet and get to know people in the church with whom you may not otherwise come in contact. People who may have the same interests, might be going through a similar season or situation in their life, or are simply interested in growing in faith with people having the same desire. Keep watching the Sunday slides and church bulletin for new opportunities, and visit the Small Group table in the courtyard between services where your questions can be answered. You can also contact Olivia at 867-1000, ext. 246 for more information.

The Connections Groups that are planned for this summer include a group for people interested in taking guided bike rides together in the area, a Bible study on prayers of the New Testament, a newly-formed small group for people new to SFC, and a small group opportunity on the topic of redemption. So get involved, meet new people, stay connected for the summer, and help us build a stronger SFC community!

New Small Groups for the Summer

Prayers of the New Testament

Group Leaders: Joy Carlough, Camille Chapman, Diane Hartsell

Wednesday evenings, June 23 – August 11 at 7 pm. Join us as we look at the prayers of Mary, Simeon and Anna, Peter, Paul, John and Jesus himself. Their words and patterns can serve as rich models for us in our own conversations with God.

Breaking Free: The Journey. The Stories; a Beth Moore Bible Study for Women, Group Leader: Terri Goehner, Wednesdays starting June 23 and ending September 1. Meet in Room 111/112 (in the children's area). Time: 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Join this study to discover through themes from the book of Isaiah the transforming power of freedom in Jesus Christ. God intends for you to know and believe Him, glorify Him, experience His peace, and enjoy His presence. Contact Terri at 408-406-0259 or terri@goehnergroupp.com.

Great Beginnings: Open the Door to Genuine Community, Group Leaders: Larry and Carla Bjork, Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9:15 pm. Six interactive sessions are fun, easy, and perfect for developing a sense of connection. Learn the key ingredients for creating a great community.

Community Groups: Bike-riders, Group Leader: Bob Sutterfield, Join Bob and others on guided

bike rides the first Sunday of every month. Meet in the upper parking lot at church for a 2 pm ride.

BOOKS FOR READING



These books are recommended for fathers to help in daily living.

A Man After God's Heart: When a Father's Spirit Soars (Thomas Nelson, 2007) This book includes stories, quotes, and verses that celebrate the adventure of fatherhood.

God's Words of Life for Dad's: from the NIV (Inspirio, 2007) This inspiring book is filled with NIV scripture, devotions, and topics such as courage, money, and wisdom specifically chosen for dads.

Time with God for Fathers (Thomas Nelson, 2010) A ninety day biblically based devotional for fathers to help dads in their daily Christian life.

A Legacy of Faith: Things I Learned from My Father by Ruth Graham (Inspirio, 2006) The author is Billy Graham's third daughter. She uses personal insights, unpublished letters, and photos to present a rich portrait of her father. She shares the lessons he passed on to her in love, humility, grace, loyalty, and authenticity.

The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg (Zondervan, 2009) Life is not about any particular achievement or experience. The most important task of your life is not what you do, but who you become. Your life is God's project, not yours. This book is a must read for both men and women.

Community Outreach Ministries

Your small group has an opportunity to serve these ministries

Downtown Ministries - Joe and Marilyn Berg (408-867-3299)
or Jim Nichols (408-248-6836)

Advent Ministries Group - Bob Leonard (408-741-0213)

CityTeam Ministries - Jeff Cherniss (408-232-5600)

For an overview of needs and service for this ministry go to

<http://www.cityteam.org/hr/SJvolunteer.html>

Robin Hood Ministries – Keith Fraker (867-7830)

Community Pregnancy Center - Marjo Spencer (408-354-0958)

**Send news to Small Talk Editor, Sue Shannon
E-mail shannon.sue30@gmail.com or call 408-399-9264
Deadline for the next issue: 8-1-10**