

INTRODUCTION

As a youth director I trained youth leaders only once. My lack of satisfaction probably stemmed from the reality that I didn't know what I was doing. Besides, I was too busy doing things like summer camp. In 2012 a pastor in Omaha, Nebraska asked me to train youth leaders in his city. I immediately agreed because, as a youth director of a union, I was supposed to know those things—right? Wrong! That one training event many years earlier didn't go into my "success" file, so what should I do now?

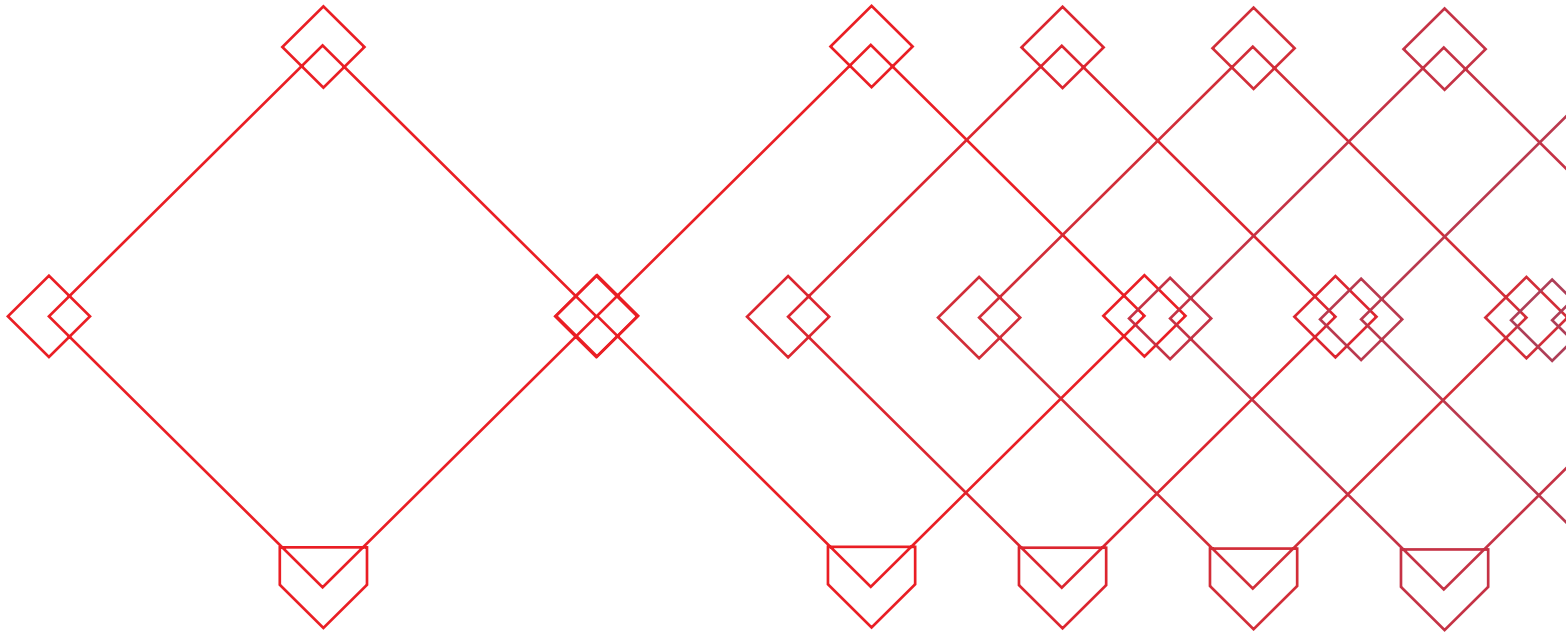
I searched my library for anything that I could use. I remembered an old syllabus from a seminary class I had taken from Steve Case. I called Steve and asked him about any manuals produced by the church to train local youth leaders in the years since I had taken his class. He didn't know of any. So I took the highlights from that manual and used it for the youth leadership training in Omaha. This one could be rated a success! We found the principles to be useful, pertinent, and helpful for youth leaders to this day.

I called Steve again and we decided to create a series of youth ministry training sessions and materials. You are holding the first in the series. If you're a youth director, here's a resource you can use to train youth leaders in your conference. If you're a youth leader in a church, you can use this yourself. And if you're a young person, you can be a youth leader right now. Use this resource and put it into practice.

Our prayer is that God will use *A Place To Belong* to raise up and equip many youth leaders who will know what they are doing and why they are doing it.

And may God be glorified.

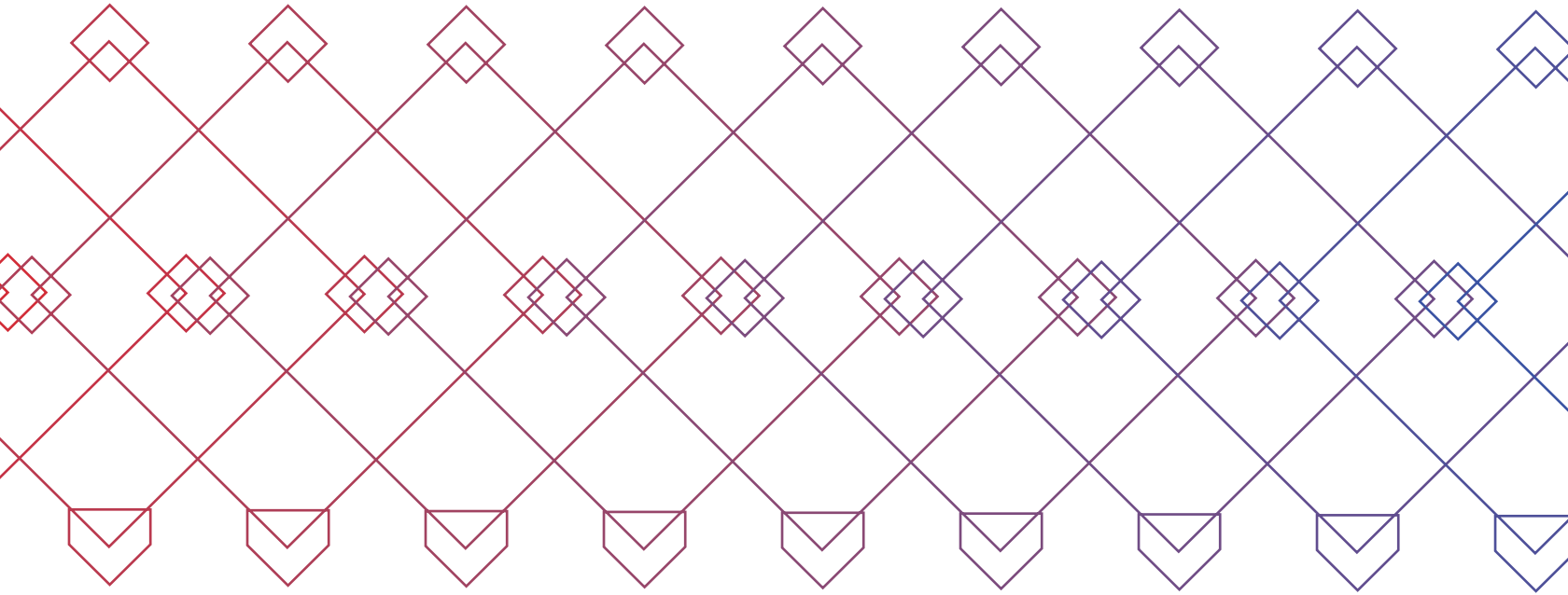
HDC & SC



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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate *A Place To Belong* to my parents, Ralph and Eleen Reynolds-Cisneros, and to my elementary school teachers at Boulder Junior Academy, now Vista Ridge Academy especially Connie Nowlan. They created a safe place to belong where I was loved and introduced to Jesus Christ.

HDC

To Bill Smith, my hero and mentor in youth ministry. Thank you for immersing me in so many NNEs!

SC

The purpose of this manual is to give you the tools to make your youth group *the* place to come each week.





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CHAPTER 1



Before long youth will want to get involved and bring their friends. Why? Because they will really love youth group. As a youth leader, you can form the foundation for your youth group. It is important to invest time and effort to acquire these tools for yourself.

Remember youth group is based on friendships. Youth need to feel safe and accepted.

Plus your youth group is special. Your youth will come to know their Best Friend – Jesus Christ.

OUR GUARANTEE

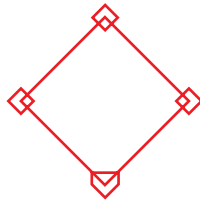
"We guarantee that you can have more friends than you know what to do with."

Does that sound impossible?

Start by learning the skills outlined in this manual.

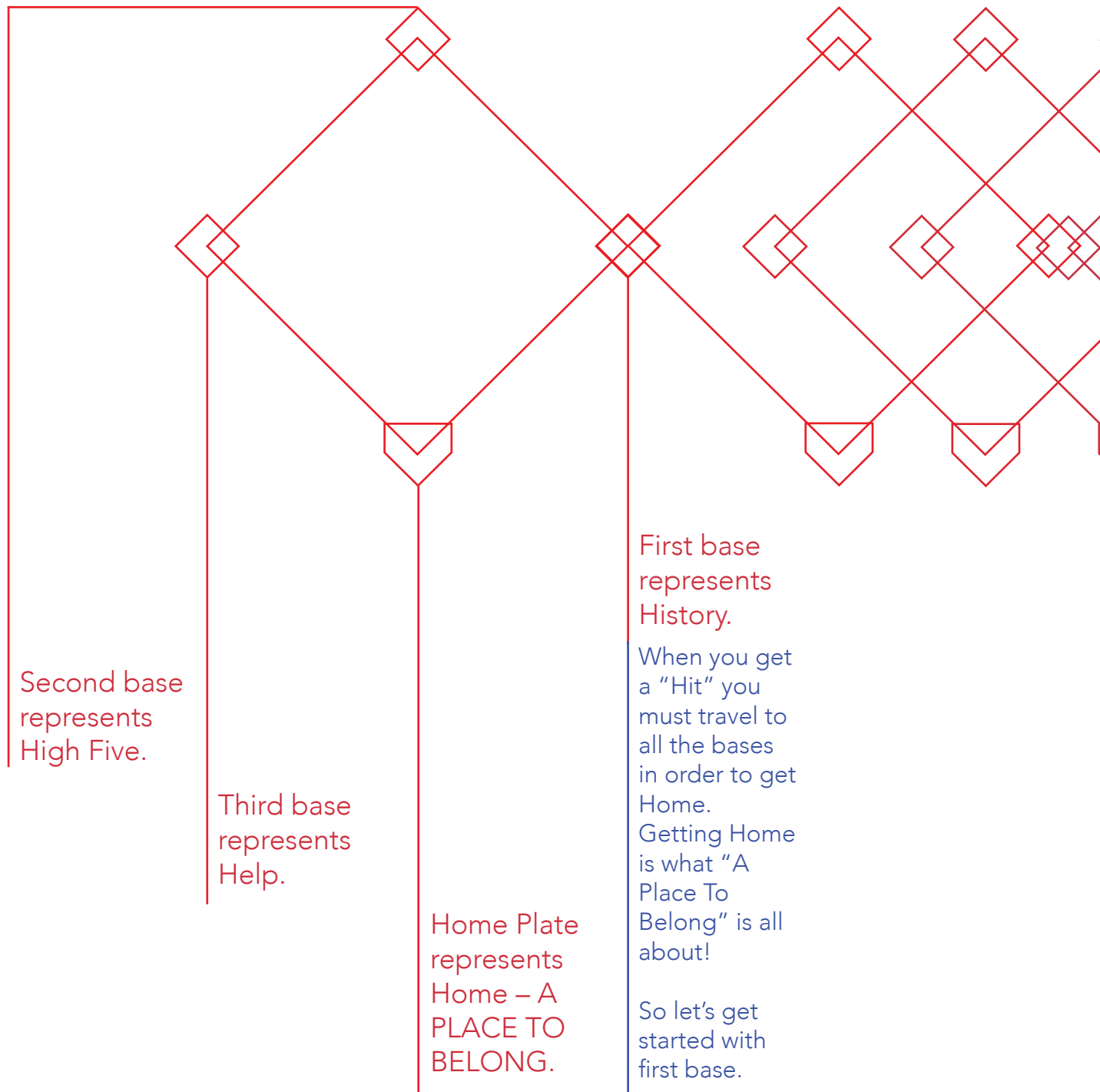
HOW?

It's like a baseball diamond.

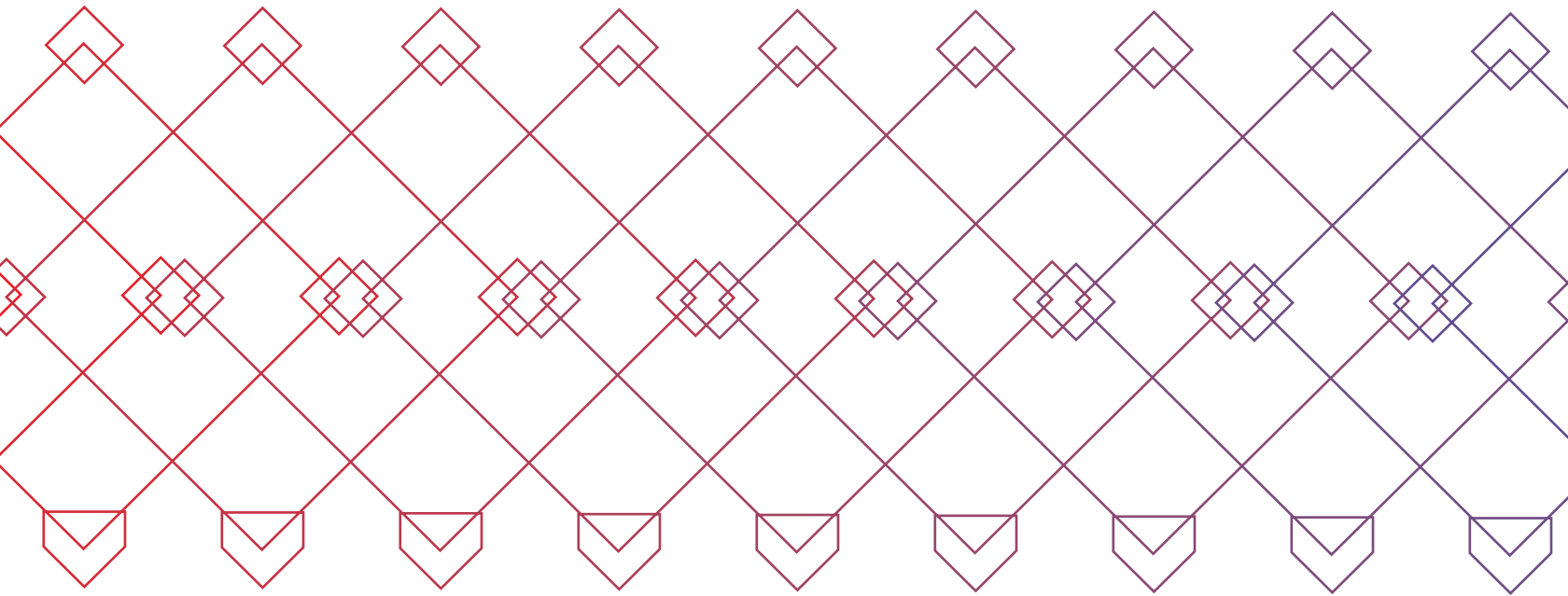


BASEBALL DIAMOND ANALOGY

WHAT DO THE BASES REPRESENT?



The baseball diamond analogy is adapted from Lyman Coleman's *Youth Ministry Encyclopedia*



Q: How many bases does a baseball diamond have?

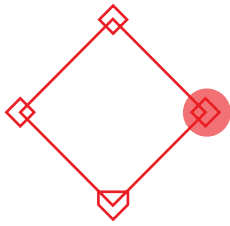
A: There are three bases in a baseball diamond. The fourth is called, "home plate."

Q: How do you score a run in baseball?

A: You start at home plate, but you don't score a run until you go around all the bases.

In this lesson the bases represent something very important.

1st BASE History



GROUP ACTIVITY NOW:

For Large groups

#1 GETTING ACQUAINTED ACTIVITIES

Something in Common

Start out with calling for people to get into two groups—those who are wearing shoes with laces and those who are not. This is a low risk exercise. Right away people have something in common with another person—their shoes.

How many in your group?

If your group is small (up to 10 people) you can share things in common within your group, such as clothing colors, birth order, favorite foods, pets in the family, etc.

If your group has more than 10 people, you can break into smaller groups by clustering in a bunch of different smaller groups, such as which toothpaste brand you use, color of eyes, month of birth, last digit of cell phone, number of siblings, etc.

If you want to end or transition with a specific number of people in the small groups, say something like, “Get in groups of three” or “Get with two other people whose hair is a different length than yours” or “sit back-to-back with someone about the same size as you.”

For more ice breaker ideas, just Google “ice breaker games.”

History is getting the individual young people to share something about themselves. History includes a person’s name, members of their family, their interests, opinions and feelings. It could include what they did last week, last year, or when they were a child. The youth leader must learn creative ways to bring out information in a disarming way.

Here are seven creative ways for people to do “History”

GROUP ACTIVITY NOW: In groups of 3 #2 GAMES TO WELCOME NEW PEOPLE

Go around the circle and have each person use a positive adjective that begins with the same sound as their name, such as Happy Holly or Jubilant Jeremy or Friendly Fernando.”

Continue around the circle, adding the next person to the recited list, until everyone is introduced. Continue around the circle twice to seal the names in memory.

OTHER WAYS TO DO 1st BASE #3 SHARING PERSONAL STORIES

Go around the circle responding to a statement like, “Describe one of your happiest moments.” Or “Describe a favorite vacation you remember.” The individual has a choice among several potential positive experiences.

Can you think of other creative positive questions?

#4 STUDYING THE BIBLE

Ask questions that lead people to share some of their history, such as “What do you share in common with this Bible character?” Or “Describe a time you faced a challenging situation.”

#5 INTERACTIVE GAMES

Play a game and then talk about it some. For example, play “Thumb War” and then talk about what happened with you and your partner. You can extend this to include, “Describe another time when you were in a duel of some type with another person.”

#6 FIELD TRIPS

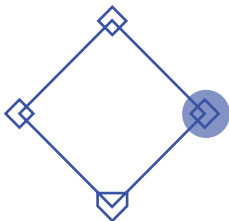
Look around your town or city. Take an excursion to a park, a shelter, a cemetery, an intersection, a monument, a different church, or someplace else. Plan in advance to go to a place that could relate to a future Bible study.

#7 COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service activities put you in touch with others as well as the people in your group. You can also combine your youth group with others from your church, or have your church youth group join others who are already doing a community service project.



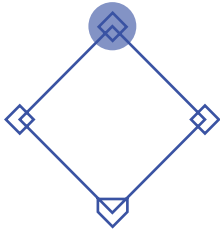
1st BASE History



Here are five ways **NOT** to do "History"

- #1 Give lectures or "talks." Youth get enough of that at school.
- #2 Don't learn people's names.
- #3 Focus on information.
- #4 Sit in rows; face the front.
- #5 Read aloud from printed stuff.

2nd BASE High 5



Here are five ways **NOT** to do "High 5"

#1 Only be with people you know.

#2 Be stoic (or sneer).

#3 Laugh and point at someone.

#4 Talk only about yourself.

#5 Use "put downs." Youth group should have few rules. One rule is: "No put downs." This ensures youth group is a safe place. Ask the youth to enforce this rule.

