

YOUNG OVERCOMER SERIES

INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMS

Raymond and Pamela Williams

Beautiful Feet Ministries

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Raymond and Pamela Williams
Beautiful Feet Ministries
P.O. Box 80051
Springfield, Massachusetts 01138

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Dear Fellow Laborer in Christ,

We thank you for choosing this curriculum. In your possession is a tool capable of, with your execution, reaching and discipling young people for Christ. We believe you will find this foundational series to be Scripturally accurate, easily digestible for young people, easy for you to use, and very affordable.

You can use this curriculum for young people's Bible studies, cell groups, youth groups or even children's churches. Pamela Williams has spent many years working with young people of various age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Most recently, she has spent several years working with “urban kids” and developing a “cell-group-for-urban-young-people prototype”—a segment of the population notorious for their hold-my-attention-if-you-can attitude and their blunt honesty. Through those experiences, the Lord helped Pam develop material that is versatile and adaptable enough to use with either elementary, middle, or high school age people. For instance, when you adapt the lessons for elementary-age children, you will probably need to shorten and sharpen the main points and stick with those, but for teenagers, you will want to provide them with nuances and details.

This curriculum is designed to cover very adequately the major Christian principles and to challenge young people to mature in their Christian growth. It also readies them to understand and participate in more adult oriented church services.

We have two years of this particular curriculum which is divided into thirteen week quarters. In your first thirteen week pack, you will find general instruction sheets (which include this letter), the weekly teachings, and additional activities.

We have tried to make the use of this curriculum as straightforward as possible. If you have any questions, however, or if we can be of any help, please call or write us.

We are including a group leader instruction sheet to give you a suggested meeting plan. In the following pages are a few keys to keep in mind to help guarantee your success in using this curriculum in general or in establishing a cell group or groups for young people in particular. I will follow the order of activities from your “Group Leader Instruction Sheet.”

For the prayer request and testimony time, keep it short, and slide from one into the other. If you get one or even a group of young people who, for their prayer requests, tend to give long, materialistic “Santa Claus” lists of goodies they want God to give them, and then for their testimonies of what God has done for them this week, they give long lists of stuff they've bought and that's been given to them, though you will certainly need to be patient (you just taught them that God cares about every aspect of their lives!), you will have to keep things running on the right track. They can take half of your and God's time running on the wrong track. Rather than pray for everyone else they can think of, our instruction to them is to keep their prayer requests personal. (What do you need God to do for you? This is more real and lends itself to interpersonal accountability within the group.) Quite honestly too, we just don't have the time to pray for everybody, everywhere, and if they want goodies from God, they can write those items on prayer request slips and place the slips in the prayer request box. Tell them—one material item on the request slip per week, please, or trust me they can take up all your time writing down every video game and every item of clothing they ever thought about owning. Most of them will probably perceive by your delight at the more responsible and thoughtful oral prayer requests and testimonies the direction you desire them to travel as they begin to grow in the Lord.

For the song, choose something that you feel will be meaningful. A song that flows with the theme of the week is a good choice. (We suggest using songs that are used in worship at your church.) Require the young people to participate in singing the song by standing, singing, etc.. If they don't participate, there really is no reason to include a song, and after all, part of your goal is to train your young flock to be able to participate in regular church services.

Part six is the meat and potatoes part of your meeting. It is your main reason for coming together. If you have time for nothing else, you really need to do this or risk doing a disservice to your young people. Early in the week read over the message, highlighting the main points. Digest the Bible truths for yourself, looking up Scriptures, meditating on them and praying for enlightenment. Digest the material until it becomes real in you. Let yourself get excited about what God's truth is doing in you and what you know it can do for the young people. Then when you teach, you are teaching what is real to you, from your heart. If you know your material thoroughly, you need only glance at the highlighted parts to be certain you don't forget any main points or nuggets. Most of us can agree that listening to someone read a lesson is about as interesting as watching paint dry. Be sure to include stating the “Theme of the Week” along with your lesson.

Although we include an abundance of Scripture references, this does not mean we intend for you to look these up with your young people. (You will note that the references are printed in smaller type unless we feel they need to be mentioned.) These references are for the benefit of the group leaders and church leadership or to answer specific questions that may arise during group meetings. Unless the curriculum actually says to look up a particular Scripture, we recommend that you do not take group time to look these up. We do, however, recommend that you thoroughly cover the "Theme of the Week" and the "Memory Verse" with the group, though don't belabor the time with the memory verse. Having the group repeat it (as a group) with you two or three times is sufficient.

Watch your young people's eyes. If you don't have their eyes, you don't have them. Watch for blank stares and puzzled looks. Ask them if they are following you. Make any needed explanations to be sure you're understood. Never allow yourself to waste God's time or the young people's time by going off on "bunny trails." "Bunny trails" can get many instructors onto Scriptural thin ice. We suggest, and for those under our direct supervision, we insist, that you stick with the material at hand, but by all means add any brief explanations or meaningful stories, as needed, to make sure your young people are following you. You will find that disciplining yourself to stick to the material at hand will make you a much more valuable instructor of God's Word. After all, it's God's Word that brings life. If a story will help to bring God's Word into focus, then fine. But, if not, you can be sure you are telling a story purely for your own entertainment. Even kids can tell when we are being windbags.

Only do the extra activities of part seven as time allows. That's not to say that these activities are unimportant. They are extremely valuable for training. That is one reason why the rest of the activities must be kept running along in a snappy fashion, with as little wasted time as possible. If you turn part seven into a snappy, game-like format, you'll find your young people cooperating so that they will have time for this part. They love the competition, teams, points, and rewards such as candy. Obviously, you won't have time to do every one of these activities each time you come together. Vary them to keep them interesting. As you invent games, let us know so that we may share what successfully works for you with other leaders.

We have found by experience that having snacks last is best if you have a hard to handle bunch. The young people will be more likely to work with you instead of against you if they know their snack hangs in the balance. One of our group leaders recently suggested prepackaging snack portions into plastic

sandwich-size bags. This has proven to be a great time saver and portion controller.

Keep your snack time to about fifteen or twenty minutes. This is enough time, and also keeps your work as a policeman of the conversations to a minimum. Be careful that the young people are not verbally abusing each other or using foul language.

Force yourself to end promptly. Start on time; end on time; and insist that parents pick up their young people on time. (Obviously, young people don't drive. We use the neighborhood cell group concept that has groups meeting in the neighborhoods where the children live. This takes undependable drivers out of the equation.)

For home groups, we recommend one hour to one-and-a-half hours total. (Ministry times done in conjunction with adult church services have their times determined by the length of the adult service.) At first you may feel that this amount of time is constraining, but working with urban young people, week in and week out, you will probably find that one hour to one and a half hours is plenty. Working within a one hour limit is something most group leaders can easily commit to and won't find draining. The young people will leave wanting more instead of wishing it would get over. You won't be competing with their homework time either. You will find that if you move along in a snappy, effective fashion (which young people like—remember television has reduced many attention spans to sound bites), you should have no problems covering your material. Trust me, you don't want to be completely done, with the young people milling around aimlessly! If you are using this material for purposes other than a home group and have more time to fill, part seven could fill up hours every week.

These techniques and these teachings have been successfully used for school age young people, elementary through high school. It is up to you as the group leader to adapt these materials to suit the age levels of the young people in your care. Ask God to show you how and you can be certain that He will.

In setting up neighborhood young people's Bible studies we strongly urge you to encourage only young people to attend who are within walking distance of a group or who can provide their own transportation. Providing rides can prove overwhelming for a group leader and can actually hinder work in one's own neighborhood as the group fills up with young people from the outside. Steady, long term growth seems to come when local neighborhood kids are reaching out to

other local neighborhood kids. For instance, if your whole group is filled up by a van load of kids who come from outside your neighborhood, and they should stop coming for any reason, usually because the van driver no longer "feels led," the group will have to start over. Don't hesitate to offer rewards to young people who bring more visitors. Usually, word that there is a loving person who gives us snacks every week travels fairly quickly. It is so exciting to see kids that you have led to the Lord bring other kids that are led to the Lord.)

If you wish, you may want to give a New Testament to each young person who comes to your group, but by all means, build up a supply of "complete" Bibles to keep on hand to look up Scriptures, to read, and to use for sword drills. Inexpensive Bibles can be purchased through ABS, IBS, and CBD. We will include their addresses and phone numbers in the "Resources" section of our material.

Please be encouraged that our Lord Jesus Christ will supply you with all you need spiritually, mentally and physically to enable you to minister to His young sheep and lambs.

May God richly bless you,

Raymond and Pamela Williams

Note To Pastors and Group Leaders:

Through the use of our training materials, your people can be well equipped to lead home groups for young people. However, your group leaders are chosen by you and they report to you. These groups are an outreach ministry of your church. Whatever we can do to be of service, please contact us.

Pastors, you will see tremendous growth in your group leaders, and your group leaders will be excited as they see this growth in themselves.

Questions and Answers for Pastors and Group Leaders concerning Young People's Home Groups. (This section can be used as an effective training tool in developing dynamic leaders.)

Question #1: Who is qualified to lead a Young Overcomers home group?

Answer: Any Christian that the pastor believes to be morally upright. The individual group leader is a parent or other person who agrees to have a group at his or her house. (Parents already have their own kids for a base group and these kids can make the best neighborhood recruiters. But anyone with a willing heart, teachable attitude, godly lifestyle, and willingness to “beat the bushes” inviting kids can be considered a candidate.)

Question #2: Does the group leader need to have a strong foundation in God's Word before he or she can teach this curriculum?

Answer: No! As long as the group leader adheres to the curriculum, he or she will be safe. This curriculum will help build a solid foundation in the people who teach it.

Question #3: What is the main thrust of this curriculum?

Answer #1: This curriculum is designed to be *easy* for anyone to use.

Answer #2: This curriculum can be used as an evangelistic tool by building a network of cell groups for young people.

Answer #3: The Young Overcomers curriculum is designed to give young people the foundation they need to function in a regular church service. We introduce all the “ologies” of seminary or Bible College, although you will never see the terms used in the curriculum. The complex vocabularies of theological definitions have been stripped

down to their most basic meanings. Later, when you teach the young people in church, they won't be lost, because they will have a foundation for you to build upon.

Question #4: What about teaching any curriculum lessons with which my church is not in agreement?

Answer: If your church teaches salvation by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, then there should be little with which you and we will differ. You can see that we do support the weekly lessons with abundant Scripture. If our curriculum were all fluff and no substance, then it may offend no one, but of what real value would it be? We strongly suggest that a pastor or overseer review all lessons before passing them along to group leaders. If you find a lesson or a whole topic with which you are not in agreement, then skip it.

Question #5: Do I keep all the church home groups on the same lesson each week or do I start each new group with Quarter #1, Lesson #1?

Answer: This is up to you. There are advantages to both ways. If you want to keep all your groups on the same lesson each week (this method does make it easier to do training and to monitor progress) the doctrinal drills will fill in any major gaps caused by starting groups on later lessons. If your group leaders recycle the lessons every two years, the first lessons will come around again.

Question #6: What do we do when we finish the two years of lessons?

Answer: We suggest you recycle these lessons over and over. Because the young people have heard Bible truths once doesn't mean they *know* them. We suggest you teach these timeless, foundational lessons again and again for optimal results.

Question #7: How much time and financial commitment does this require from a group leader?

Answer: The time requirement for a group leader includes only the time necessary to invite kids and keep them encouraged by making occasional phone calls, etc., time to study the week's lesson, pick a song, buy light refreshments (popcorn and Kool-Aid or some such similar treats), and the time spent doing the home group hour and

cleaning up afterwards. Also, group leaders may expect to have periodic meetings with whoever is overseeing this church program.

Unless the group leader is purchasing this curriculum, his or her main expense is to provide snacks and any motivational game prizes. Taking up offerings during group times can help with these expenses if so desired. (We do recommend having the leaders turn in the offerings to be used in an agreed upon manner.)

It is also up to the group leaders, under the supervision of the group overseer, to raise up a substitute so that the group doesn't have to be cancelled when the group leader is unable to do a meeting from time to time or in the event that the group leader doesn't want to continue doing a group.

Question #8: How much of a time or financial commitment is required of a church pastor and/or overseers?

Answer: Very little time is required and only a modest financial investment. This program is designed to be self-teaching and self-sustaining. A pastor will probably oversee or designate an overseer to have periodic meetings to assure that everyone stay "on the same page." These group leaders are evangelizing and pastoring their little flocks in the role of undershepherds to their pastors. When the system is worked as it has been designed to be worked, the burden on the pastoral staff is not drastically increased.

Question #9: How does the pastor or overseer keep up with what is happening in the home groups?

Answer: The group leaders are responsible to turn in weekly report sheets to their overseers. We have individual weekly report sheets with the first quarter's packet. Please make your own copies.

Question #10: How many young people can be in a home group?

Answer: How many young people can be in a home group depends on how many young people a group leader can control. Eight may be enough, but twice that many may be possible depending on the personalities involved, especially if a group leader has an assistant.

Question #11: What if a group grows so large that it needs to divide?

Answer: Praise God! Here are some possible solutions. Two people can share responsibilities on different nights or on the same night in different rooms. (Remember, these are neighborhood kids. If you move to a different house, it must be close by.) Or one person can do back-to-back group meetings on the same night. In this fashion, one person can actually handle as many as four different groups over a three or four hour period. Note the following format: (Please note that the groups are shortened to forty-five minutes each.)

Group 1 arrives at 5:00 PM and has snack from 5:30-5:45 with group 2.

Group 1 is dismissed at 5:45.

Group 2, which has already had snack, is in group from 5:30 until 6:15.

Group 2 is dismissed at 6:15.

Group 3 arrives at 6:15. They meet for snack with group 4 which will arrive at 6:45.

Group 3 is dismissed at 7:00.

Group 4 meets until 7:30.

In this format, the youngest kids would be included in the early group or groups because of factors such as bedtime. Under this format there may or may not be a song; prayer time will be general for the whole group, and testimonies won't have a separate time, but may be shared during snack.

If you desire, the full hour may be maintained. Then groups will run, say, from 5 until 9 or from 4:30 – 8:30. Again, the youngest kids should meet first. Eight to nine is not too late for middle to older teens. The main reason for running back-to-back groups is so that a group leader can keep his or her involvement to one night a week. Arranging for a substitute is also less complicated when activities are confined to that one night.

Question #12: How do these groups grow?

Answer: Group leaders invite kids (you need to talk to the parents of younger kids), pass out flyers (kids can help), offer little rewards to the kids in their groups for bringing other kids. Usually young people in the neighborhood know other young people. Kids bring kids and spread the excitement. As mentioned before, parents with school age children and even grand-parents who are available, make ideal group leaders because they are not starting from scratch. They should be excited to provide a quality teaching for their own kids and the

neighborhood young people. This also provides a way for parents to get involved with helping their own children discover the joy of evangelizing neighborhood kids – kids their kids are probably hanging out with anyway. Of course, people who don't have children can do this ministry but will have to work a little harder getting out the first couple of kids. Of course, group leaders need to get to know parents and young people in their neighborhoods and need to *ask people to come*. You can make up invitation flyers that group members can pass out.

On nice days, a group may want to meet in the group leader's front yard or other suitable location close by for a little free advertising. Many apartment buildings have suitable outdoor areas. Yes, the group may be distracted by the sights and sounds of the outdoors, but let them know why they're there. Every weekly group meeting obviously won't be held in a noisy apartment courtyard, a lawn by a busy sidewalk, or a *nearby* park, but these are great fishing holes, and some effort is usually required in order to grow.

Treasure the group leaders who aren't discouraging you and others by saying, "Yeah but..." to every idea, but rather who are willing to try anything that might work and who don't mind doing a little brainstorming on their own. There's everything to gain from the effort.

To dovetail this evangelistic outreach with your church's overall evangelistic outreach, as your group leaders collect names, addresses, and phone numbers of the young people in their groups, the parents of these kids can and should be targeted for home visitation.

Question #13: How do I handle unruly kids?

Answer: You are limited in a home as to what you are able to do to *make* a young person behave. Basically you are limited to asking him or her to be good. If you have a helper, you may try removing a young person from a group for a few minutes. You may have to ask the young person to not come for the following week but tell him he may come the next week after that if he or she can handle it. If someone is continually making the hour miserable for everyone, there really is no point served in this young person continuing to come until it has been

determined that he can function within a group. Let his parents know what is going on and that ministry is available through your church (if it is). Let this young person know you care about him. What you may not do is belittle, ridicule, humiliate, or in any way strike, shake, or physically punish any child. Please also remember that young children do not understand sarcasm, making this a very inappropriate verbal response on the part of a group leader.

Pastors,

We caution you to have your group leaders sign some sort of agreement which states that they

- agree to stay within your church's doctrinal guidelines;
- agree that he or she has read all training materials and will use them as they are designed to be used;
- agree to stay within the confines of the weekly teaching format;
- agree to turn in whatever weekly or monthly report sheets you think you need to be able to effectively oversee your groups;
- pass along to you some kind of permission note from parents stating that their children may attend group meetings, be water baptized, go on trips, etc.;
- agree to anything else you think they need to agree to, for everyone's protection!

GROUP LEADER INSTRUCTION SHEET HOME CELL GROUP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Praise and Worship: We recommend that you include a time of praise and worship. We also recommend recorded music of songs that are used in your adult church services. Most people like to include praise and worship early in the meeting.

1. Each week begins with greeting the young people and inquiring as to how they are. At some time, either when they arrive or as they are leaving, give each young person a hug or a pat on the back—one time is enough for each meeting, unless the young person initiates the contact. You may need to work up to this with some of the kids. Be careful to in no way call attention to the hug itself (this can be embarrassing), but do this quietly, quickly, and unobtrusively—keeping any physical contact godly and above reproach. For example, between males and females, a hug should involve arms, not chests. Okay? You will quickly find the young people seeking you out for a hug if you forget.
2. Ask if anyone has a praise report. “What has Jesus done for you this week?”
3. Ask if anyone has specific prayer needs.
4. Open in prayer, addressing any particular prayer needs in prayer, right then.
5. Receive offering.
6. Do the week's teaching with any appropriate altar call/response time.
7. With any time left over, do *either*
 - a. Bible Book Names
 - b. Doctrinal Drills
 - c. Sword Drills
 - d. Designated Chapters From the Bible (a little at a time)
8. Closing prayer and prayer over snacks.

9. Snack time - 15 or 20 minutes is more than sufficient. Remember, you will have to “police” their actions and speech. Too much free time usually means trouble. You can do snack time at the beginning, middle, or end of your allotted time. For a rowdy crowd, snack time at the end means they have to cooperate with you or else run out of time for snacks!

10. God bless you! You are doing a wonderful work with eternal consequences and rewards!

**YOUNG OVERCOMER
GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT FORM**

- | Yes | No | During Young Overcomer Group Times: |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | I agree to stay within the bounds of my church's doctrinal beliefs. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree that I have read all of the YO training materials and will use them as they are designed to be used. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree to abide by the guidelines in these training materials. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree to stay within the confines of the weekly teaching format. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree to turn in any required report sheets in a timely manner. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree that I have prayed about leading a YO group and I believe God has directed me to do this. Therefore I will be faithful to hold my Weekly groups, cancel only when absolutely unavoidable, and will do my best to arrange for a responsible substitute who has the approval of my pastor or group overseer. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree to give one months notice if I decide to stop being a group leader. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree that I will do no corporal punishment before, during, or after group time. |
| ___ | ___ | I agree to contact my pastor and to discontinue doing my group immediately if at any time I choose to no longer abide by the terms of this agreement. |

Group Leader Signature _____
Pastor or Overseer Signature _____
Date _____

YOUNG OVERCOMER
WEEKLY REPORT SHEET

Leader's Name: _____

Date: _____

List All Members:

Name:	Present Yes/No	Name:	Present Yes/No
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Total Attendance: _____

Special Needs: _____

Evaluation Of
Group Time: _____

Names, Addresses and Phone Numbers of New People:

**YOUNG OVERCOMER
PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM FOR
GROUP ATTENDANCE**

I agree that my child/children _____ (name/names)
may attend a weekly Bible activity at the home of _____ (group
leader's name).

Signature: _____
Parent/Guardian

**YOUNG OVERCOMER
PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM FOR
WATER BAPTISM**

I agree that my child/children _____
(Name/Names)
may be water baptized.

Signature: _____
(Parent/Guardian)

**YOUNG OVERCOMER
PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM FOR
HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM**

I agree that my child/children _____

(Name/Names)

may be prayed for to receive the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues.

Signature: _____

(Parent/Guardian)

RESOURCES:

For Bibles:

American Bible Society
1865 Broadway
New York, NY 10023

or

American Bible Society
PO Box 1069
Orange, CT 06477-9879
1-800-32 BIBLE (1-800-322-4253)

International Bible Society
PO Box 35700
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3570
1-800-524-1588

Christian Book Distributors
PO Box 7000
Peabody, MA 01961-7000

For Inexpensive Novelty Prizes:

Cromers
1241 Assembly Street
PO Box 163
Columbia, SC 29202
1-800-322-7688
Fax (803) 779-4743

M.K. Brody Wholesalers
1101-09 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, IL 60607
(312) 666-9520

Kipp Brothers Wholesalers
PO Box 157
Indianapolis, IN 46206
(317) 634-5507

Rhode Island Novelty
19 Industrial Lane
Johnston, RI 02919
800-528-5599
Fax: 800-448-1775