

LEADING A SMALL GROUP

SMALL GROUP PURPOSE

We believe that ongoing change occurs as we are growing in a relationship with Christ, and that this happens best when we are prioritizing intentional relationships with others who are seeking this same goal. Small groups provide people with the opportunity to grow in their relationship with God and His church, in their personal relationships, in their ability to manage their time and finances, and in their responsibility towards their fellow man.

LEADER QUALIFICATIONS

- Be a born again follower of Christ.
- Regularly attend services at COTM.
- Tithe regularly at COTM.
- Be an approved COTM volunteer.
- Be in complete doctrinal agreement (no exceptions) with COTM.
- Recognize the Bible as the final authority for our lives.
- Be in full agreement with the COTM Small Group Purpose.
- Have the time, emotional capacity, and moral discernment to lead a group.
- Have the spiritual maturity to create and maintain a safe and confidential environment for the group members.
- Have a safe and stable home life.

4 ESSENTIALS OF SMALL GROUPS

1. Relationship— Relationships are the key to growing together.
2. Spiritual Growth— Discipleship is our ultimate goal.
3. Fun— Having fun as a group helps cultivate relationship and breaks down barriers.
4. Service— We believe in enlarging our hearts for our community.

ROLE OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER

As a small group leader, you are responsible for providing your group with vision, direction, and support. Leaders are successful when they are personally growing in their relationship with God, community with insiders, influence with outsiders, managing their resources well, and when they are leading their groups in such a way as to encourage the group members' growth in these four areas. Small group leaders are supported by the Church on the Move Pastoral staff – you are never alone!

EXPECTATIONS

- Lead the small group by facilitating the group meetings, monitoring group health, and promoting participation among group members.
- Commit to engaging in leadership development opportunities provided by the church.
- Identify and develop a future leader, and embrace leader development as a measure of success.

7 BEHAVIORS OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER

I. Cultivate Relationship – Personal

A. T3 Principle

1. Time
2. Trust
3. Truth

II. Think and Model Life Change

A. Celebrate life change

1. Commit to personal growth
2. Balance life experience with God's Truth

B. Make the small things BIG Things

1. Baptism
2. Salvation
3. Reading Bible, etc...

C. Four Measures of Spiritual Growth

1. Am I growing in my relationship with God?
2. Am I developing healthy relationships with family, friends and close associates?
3. Am I becoming a better steward of my resources?
 - a. Money
 - b. Time
 - c. Ministry gifts, etc...
4. Am I growing in my influence with outsiders?

III. Promote Participation

A. People are more open to participate when they feel welcome and comfortable.

1. Think visiting a Sunday school class for the first time.
2. Now, don't do that.

B. Set the atmosphere.

1. Clean and clutter free
2. Fresh scent
3. Temperature
4. Comfortable seating and arrangements (community circles not rows).
5. Refreshments
6. Create a distraction free environment.
 - a. Pets
 - b. Kids
 - c. TV's

C. Ice Breakers

D. Make sure everyone is engaged and comfortable.

1. Don't get trapped into just focusing on people you know and are comfortable with.
2. Some personalities will take longer than others to engage.

IV. Share the Responsibility

- A. Create volunteer positions.
 - 1. Snack Organizer
 - 2. Birthday/Anniversary Organizer

V. Provide Care

- A. Hospital
- B. Prayer

VI. Replace Yourself

- A. Identify the next leader or leaders.
 - 1. Keep in mind the qualifications
 - 2. Keep in mind that the person you would like to lose the least is probably the person that you need to raise up and send out the most.
- B. Develop Them
 - 1. Model
 - 2. Mentor: have your apprentice take over some responsibilities or lead various aspects of the Small Group as you watch, assist, correct and encourage.
(Matthew 10:1) And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

VII. Serve Together

- A. Enlarging our hearts for outsiders.
 - 1. Am I growing in my influence with people?
 - 2. Serving together strengthens relationship
- B. Setting up serving opportunities.
 - 1. Choose a cause.
 - 2. Let us know about it.
 - 3. Contact organization.
 - 4. Recruit and manage event details.
 - 5. Report stories, wins/losses (Was it worth it?)

HOW TO HAVE A HEALTHY GROUP

FACILITATING WITH EXCELLENCE

- Start and end on time.
- Strive to be a good listener.
- Be a facilitator, not a lecturer— your goal is to encourage personal interaction and self-discovery.
- Focus on what scripture has to say, not your own ideas and opinions.
- Maintain an atmosphere of love and acceptance, which will lead to open discussion. Never put down a person's comments or contributions.
- Don't force anyone to talk, but encourage involvement by calling on reluctant participants by name— this is also an effective way to regulate those who want to talk too much.
- Keep the discussion on track. If new issues are raised, suggest that you return to them after the current discussion is completed.
- Ask good follow-up questions to open up the group and to develop relationships.
- Remember, the goal is to build relationships, not necessarily to complete the study guide.

DEADLY DESTRUCTORS

- Inconsistent gatherings.
- Not enough members (open chairs).
- Not addressing a problem member.
- Not communicating with group members.
- Not caring for group members.
- Not following the curriculum.
- Not allowing others to participate (share the responsibility).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CHILDCARE

Can children be at small group meetings?

We want to create a comfortable environment that is free of distractions, so children may not be present at small groups meetings. We provide childcare reimbursements so that participants and leaders can utilize childcare during group meetings.

How do childcare reimbursements work?

We reimburse a pre-determined rate per child, per meeting. Reimbursement for one child is \$15, for two children is \$16, for three children is \$17, and for four children or more is \$18- this is per meeting, not per hour. Each person requesting a reimbursement must register and submit a reimbursement form each month to the Red Room or email it to groups@churchonthemove.com. Registration and the monthly form can be found at churchonthemove.com/groups.

What if I don't have a baby-sitter?

Church on the Move is not responsible for referring childcare providers or alternatives to childcare. We recommend collaborating with the others in your group to find a childcare provider that you can all utilize together.

SEMESTERS

What if I miss the deadline to register my group for this semester?

If you do not register your group before the deadline, we ask that you wait until the next semester to try again. In the meantime, you can join a group for this semester to get a feel for how small groups are.

How long is the commitment for leading a small group?

Leading a small group is a twelve week commitment, which includes the first Wednesday of every month when groups don't meet. After each semester ends, it's up to you and your group to decide whether you will continue meeting at the start of the next semester.

Why are there semesters?

It takes time for groups to build relationships and trust— when new people are added to a group, everyone often reverts back to a surface level introductory phase. The semester format for small groups allows groups to build relationships without the interruption of new people joining groups at random times throughout the year. It also allows group leaders and participants to have built-in breaks throughout the year, and allows them to step out during a particularly busy season of life.

Can my group keep meeting after the semester ends?

We recommend that groups meet on a recreational or outreach basis only during the off-time between semesters. This is a great time to organize a special group outing or a group serving event where you all volunteer together. It's healthy to take a break from the traditional small group setting, so for that reason we do not provide curriculum during the off-time. Just because you take a break from regular meetings, doesn't mean that you have to cut off contact with your group members. Be sure to keep up with them and be available for them when you can.

What if my group wants to keep meeting, but I want to step out of leading the group?

Whether you continue leading your group or not, you should always have someone in your group that you are raising up to be a future leader. You can either hand your leadership role to the person you have raised up, or if no one steps up to lead the group, your group members can sign up for different groups at the beginning of the next semester.

GROUP SPECIFICS

What types of groups are there?

The main categories for groups are Couples, Women's, Men's, and Students. The next category beneath those is broken down by location, meeting day and time, curriculum, and interest based (i.e. running, sewing, cycling).

What if no one signs up for my group?

The Small Group Finder should be used as a secondary tool for adding people to your group. Inviting people you know and people that you meet is the number one way to add people to your group. Don't wait for them to come to you, go to them!



Why aren't mixed-gender single's groups an option?

We believe in creating an environment for small groups that allows everyone in the group to feel comfortable and open to talk about the different issues that can come up during small group discussions. This is best achieved with people of the same gender. For those wanting to meet people of the opposite gender, there are many opportunities that people can take advantage of including section events, church-wide events, and volunteering!

Can dating couples attend a couples group?

Couples groups are specifically for married couples only. For couples who are dating or even engaged, we ask that they attend separate women's and men's groups until they are married.

When and where do groups meet?

Groups can meet on any day of the week, just not during service times (Saturday nights and Sunday mornings). All groups take a break from meeting during First Wednesday weeks, regardless of what day of the week you meet on. Groups can meet in your home, a co-leaders home, or at a location such as a coffee shop or cafe.

Do we have to meet at a house?

We believe that the best atmosphere for a small group is in a home, however, we understand that sometimes that is not an option. Other options for meeting places could include coffee shops or cafes.

Do I have to provide snacks at every meeting?

Having snacks and drinks available during a small group meeting can change the whole mood of the group and help put people at ease. If you don't want to provide snacks and drinks for every meeting, delegate some of the responsibility to other people in the group and let people take turns.



CURRICULUM

Can I use the curriculum of my choice?

We provide several pre-approved options each semester. If you have a specific curriculum that you want to use that is not pre-approved, it has to be submitted for approval at least four weeks prior to the start of the semester. You can email groups@churchonthemove.com with approval requests.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Email groups@churchonthemove.com with any other questions you may have.

SESSION ONE



NOTES FOR LEADING

Your first meeting as a small group is more of a social gathering. You may be eager to jump into the study, but beginning the process of cultivating relationships is essential to the group experience. The depth of your relationships will drive the quality of your discussions.

Before the meeting, send your group members an email/text or call confirming the date and time of the meeting and providing them with directions to your home. Let them know the start and end time to your group meeting. Letting them know this information helps to create a predictable environment.

ICE BREAKERS

On the night of the meeting, your job is to create an environment in which people can begin to connect. If your group members have already met and are comfortable with one another, you may not have to do much more than provide coffee and snacks or light desserts. If your group is meeting for the first time, you may want to use some icebreakers to help people ease into the conversation.

Using icebreakers is an essential small group skill. Begin with light and informational questions and then move to deeper and more personal levels as the group progresses together. Since this is your first group meeting, you probably want to stick mostly with Level 1 questions, maybe adding in a few Level 2 questions near the end of the evening.

NOTE: The Level 3 icebreakers are here for you to use later in this study and as you move into future studies.

Level 1: Information (What you know)

- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- What is your favorite city? Why?
- What day of your life would you most like to relive? Why?
- What does your name mean? Why were you named that?
- If your house were on fire, what three items (not people) would you try to save?

- What was the best gift you ever received as a child?
- If you suddenly lost your eyesight, what would be the thing that you would miss seeing the most?
- What was your first job? What do you remember most about it?
- Tell the group a brief story from your wedding day.
- If you could go to college (again), what would you study?
- You have been given a one-year sabbatical from work. What will you do?
- What has been one of the greatest adventures you have ever been on?

Level 2: Opinion (What you think)

- Who is one of your heroes. Why?
- Who is your number one advisor in life. Why?
- My favorite way to spend time is _____.
- Just for the fun/thrill of it, before I die I'd like to _____.
- I was (or would have been) voted "most likely to _____" in high school.
- I wish before I got married someone had told me _____.
- If you could leave the world one piece of advice before you died, what would you say?
- Who was one of the most interesting people you or your family ever entertained?
- Who was the best boss you ever had? What made him or her so good?
- People might be surprised to find out that I _____.
- Describe a grade school teacher that made a big impression on you (for good or bad).
- Each person in the group answer for the person on your right: " _____, I am so glad God made you because _____."

Level 3: Feelings (Who you are)

- What is your biggest fear about death?
- What do you miss most about childhood?
 - I am most like my mom/dad in that I _____.
 - One of my biggest pet peeves is _____.
 - When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- For what do you want to be remembered?
- An emotion I often feel but don't usually express is _____.
- Where do you go or what do you do when life gets too heavy for you? Why?
- In what area of your life would you like to have greater peace? Why?
- What is one of your biggest fears about the future?
- When you were a child, what was your favorite time of day? What did you like about it?
- In general, I worry too much about _____.

Before you end the meeting, ask your group members this question: *What do you hope to get out of this group experience? Let them know what you hope to get out of the experience of leading them.*

SESSION TWO

NOTES FOR LEADING

In Session 2, you'll explore the first of the Four Measures of Spiritual Growth: Am I Growing in My Relationship With God?

This session is a great opportunity for you to get a sense of where your group members are on their spiritual journeys. This will help you to better understand what they need from you as a leader.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Am I growing in my relationship with God?

1. On a scale of 1-5, where would you rate your relationship with God?
 - a. Why did you give yourself this rating?
 - b. Why not higher?
 - c. Why not lower?
2. How do you think you grow in your relationship with God?
3. What does it mean to grow in your relationship with God?
4. Where would you like to grow in your relationship with God?
5. What do you think are some key components to having a good relationship with God?
 - a. Why do you think these?
6. Name someone that you know that you believe has a good relationship with God.
 - a. What is it about this person that makes you think they have a good relationship with God?
 - b. Could you see yourself being like this? Why or why not?
7. Why is it important to have a growing relationship with God?
8. If someone asked you to describe God, how would you answer?
9. If someone asked you who Jesus is to you, how would you answer?
10. How can this group help you grow in your relationship with God?

SESSION THREE

NOTES FOR LEADING

In Session 3, you'll explore the second of the Four Measures of Spiritual Growth: Am I Growing in My Relationship With Others?

Pray this week for the relationships beginning to form in your group. Pray that God will use them to grow you and your group members and to change your lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Am I growing in my relationship with others?

1. What are some important relationships in your life?
2. What would you like to improve about these relationships?
3. When you envision a perfect husband or wife, what kind of person do you see?
 - a. Why do you envision this kind of person?
 - b. Where did you get this picture or idea?
4. Name someone in your life that you respect for their ability to function in the relationships with those closest to them.
 - a. Why did you name this person?
 - b. What is it about them that stands out so much?
 - c. Could you see yourself being this way?
5. Where do you need to grow the most in order to function better within the relationships that you're in?
6. What is a challenging relationship that you're in now or have been in previously?
 - a. What makes it challenging?
7. Where does God come into play in your human relationships?
8. What's an important characteristic to have to be successful in your relationships?
9. For singles- what kind of relationship do you want to have? How can you prepare?
10. How can this group help you grow in your relationships with others?

SESSION FOUR

NOTES FOR LEADING

In Session 4, you'll explore the third of the Four Measures of Spiritual Growth: Am I Becoming A Better Steward of my Resources?

In order to encourage openness and transparency, introduce your group to these values and goals before starting the discussion:

CONFIDENTIALITY—for authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

RESPECT—group members should never say anything that will embarrass their spouses or other members of the group.

Remember the best way to encourage your group members to be open and transparent is for you to model openness and transparency.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Am I becoming a better steward of my resources?

1. What are some things that you have charge over as a steward?
 - a. Which area listed would you like to grow in the most?
 - b. Why?
2. What do you think of when you hear the word “stewardship?”
3. What would your life look like if you grew and became a better steward of your resources?
4. What are some things that you would do if you became a better steward?
5. Who would you consider to be a great steward?
 - a. Why this person?
 - b. Do you see them doing anything differently than other people?
 - c. Is this something that you could do?
6. Where does God come into play when it comes to you being a steward?
7. Why is it important to become a better steward?
8. Who is impacted by your stewardship ability?
 - a. Who is counting on you?
9. What’s a key characteristic of a good steward?
10. How can this group help you become a better steward of your resources?

SESSION FIVE

NOTES FOR LEADING

In Session 5, you'll explore the fourth of the Four Measures of Spiritual Growth: Am I Growing in My Influence with Outsiders?

This week we will discuss how small groups are designed to reach outside the church into our communities— family, friends, and co-workers who are all a part of our lives, but who are outside of the church.

As a group you will discuss this behavior of consistently thinking, "Who will fill the open chairs in our group?".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Am I growing in my influence with outsiders?

1. Why is your influence important?
2. Who in your life needs your influence?
3. Have you ever tried to gain influence with someone in need of a relationship with God?
 - a. How did it go?
 - b. What did you do?
4. How do you grow in your influence of those in need of a relationship with God?
 - a. What's one thing you can do to grow in your influence of those in need of a relationship with God?
5. When you picture someone who has great influence with those in need of a relationship with God, what kind of person do you see?
 - a. Can you see yourself being this kind of person?
 - b. Why or why not?
6. Name someone who has influenced you in your relationship with God.
 - a. What have they done that makes them so memorable to you?
 - b. What is something that they did that drew you to a relationship with God?

7. Name a key characteristic necessary to be a positive influencer.
 - a. Why this characteristic?
 - b. How does this characteristic affect others?
8. What are some things that you can do to help lead people towards a relationship with Jesus?
9. What would happen to the world around you if you grow in your influence?
10. How can this group help you grow in your influence with those in need of a relationship with God?