



SMALL GROUPS LEADERSHIP GUIDE

"DAY AFTER DAY, IN THE TEMPLE COURTS AND
FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE, THEY NEVER STOPPED
TEACHING AND PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS
THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH."

ACTS 5:42

WHY SMALL GROUPS EXIST

SMALL GROUPS HAVE ONE, SIMPLE PURPOSE - TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. WE BELIEVE GOD CREATED US TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS AND ONLY THEN CAN WE EXPERIENCE THE FULL LIFE HE INTENDS FOR US.

WE BELIEVE LIFE CHANGE HAPPENS IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONSHIPS.

MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE HARD TO FIND, AND SMALL GROUPS EXITS TO MAKE LIFE - CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS RELEVANT AND ACCESSIBLE TO YOU.

AT FIRST CHURCH, WE BELIEVE OUR CHURCH MUST GROW **LARGER** AND **SMALLER** AT THE SAME TIME.

WE BASE OUR SMALL GROUP MODEL ON THE EARLY CHURCH AS DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. IN ACTS, YOU CAN READ ABOUT THE TREMENDOUS GROWTH OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, WHERE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS IN HOMES HELPED LAY THE FOUNDATION.

OUR SMALL GROUPS MODEL

1

A PLACE TO CONNECT | 1 CORINTHIANS 9:22

WE WERE NOT MADE TO DO LIFE ALONE. GOD CREATED US FOR COMMUNITY

2

A PLACE TO PROTECT | 1 JOHN 3:16

IT IS THROUGH LIFE TOGETHER THAT OUR PROBLEMS BECOME SMALLER, AND GOD USES OTHERS TO BRING SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

3

A PLACE TO GROW | PROVERBS 27:17

WE BELIEVE EVERY PERSON IS CREATED WITH GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD. BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS.

WHAT A SMALL GROUP LOOKS LIKE

YOUR LIFE IS YOUR GROUP

WE WANT PEOPLE TO GATHER TOGETHER BASED ON THE THINGS THEY ENJOY AND ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM. FREE MARKET LEADERS FORM THEIR GROUP AROUND THEIR INTERESTS.

WE HAVE THREE TYPES OF GROUPS: INTEREST BASED, DINNER PARTIES, AND BLOCK PARTIES.

HOSPITALITY

- Organizing things for the group
- Creating a welcoming atmosphere and casual fellowship with one another

DISCUSSION

- Leading and directing the group to discuss Sunday's message
- Getting people to share & asking questions to engage others
- Lead in an activity
It will vary based on what kind of group it is your leading

PRAYER

- Ask for prayer requests from each other
- Pray at the beginning and the end of each group meeting

SPIRITUAL

- This is what differentiates your small group from your neighborhood gatherings.
- Always find a way to include the Word of God in your activities or discussions

SMALL GROUPS ARE NOT A PLACE FOR BUSINESS, OFFERINGS, UNAPPROVED MATERIALS OR SPEAKERS NOR CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS.

YOUR ROLE AS A LEADER

KEYS TO A LEADER

COMMUNICATE

TALK WITH OTHER LEADERS ABOUT YOUR SMALL GROUP. BE SURE TO HAVE CLEAR COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR GROUP EACH TIME YOU MEET. GOD HAS A PART FOR ALL OF US TO PLAY IN THE CHURCH, AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS COME ALONGSIDE THE PASTORS AND STAFF TO HELP CARE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH.

EQUIP THEM

THE PRIMARY ROLE OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER IS TO HELP GROUP MEMBERS MOVE ONE STEP IN THEIR WALK WITH GOD. HELP THEM TO FIND THEIR NEXT STEP.

PREP, PREP...and then PREP

AVOID FEELING UNPREPARED BY PREPARING WELL. PRAY AND WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS OF WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY. DON'T RUSH YOURSELF OR WAIT UNTIL THE NIGHT BEFORE TO START PREPARING FOR YOUR GROUP.

PROVIDE GUIDANCE

PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP WILL BE AT DIFFERENT PLACES IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES AND EACH PERSON WILL HAVE DIFFERENT NEXT STEPS TO TAKE. YOU WILL NEED TO HELP GUIDE THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, HELP THEM TO START PRAYING REGULARLY OR START TITHING OR ATTENDING A SUNDAY SERVICES.

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER: HOW TO PRAY

- PRAY FOR ANY REQUESTS GROUP MEMBERS SHARE
- ASK FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR GROUP
- PRAY THAT GOD WILL OPEN PEOPLE'S HEARTS TO HEAR HIS TRUTH AND FOR AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP

PRAYER IS A **FOUNDATION** OF OUR CHURCH, AND IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP.

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

Doing Small Groups every week creates a consistent, welcoming space for people to gather for a purpose. As a leader you are praying for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

TOP TIPS

PRAY DAILY

Pray daily for the members of your group and that they would make Him the center of their lives.

CO-LEADER

Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.

CONNECT

Connect with group members outside of weekly meetings through phone, text, email, social media or face-to-face. Also encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well.

FUN

Have fun through laughter and by creating an relax and enjoyable environment.

TIME

Respect people's time by beginning and ending on time.

INVITE

Invite members to attend church services and events with you like First Wednesday services, conferences or outreach.

RALLY

Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

HAVE A BACK UP

IF YOU ARE TRAVELING FOR A WEEK OR ARE SICK,
HAVE A PLAN B WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP. HAVE A
CO-LEADER TO HELP SO THAT YOU ARE NEVER
SCRAMBLING OR NOT PREPARED.

DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

TO BUILD PEOPLE
UP THROUGH GOD'S
WORD



TO LIVE OUT AND
BY POINTING
PEOPLE TO CHRIST

The time of discussion creates a safe, welcoming space where people can share and be heard, listen to others and grow together. God's heart is for us to share life with others.

PREPARATION

BE EXPECTANT

- Listen to what God is sharing with you personally, these are the keys of connecting the message to your life first - then it will flow out.
- Take good notes while in church services and while reading.

MESSAGE NOTES

- Read over notes.
- Re-read key passages of scripture.
- Pray over the message and the individuals in your Small Group to have a revelation from the message.

TALK WITH YOUR COACH

- Share what you got out of your preparation and what you want to talk about.
- Your coach's number one priority is to pray for you daily. Reach out to your small group leader if you have a need, prayer request or concern.

DURING THE MEETING

GAUGE THE ATMOSPHERE

Is the group big or small? If it is a larger group discussion works better splitting up into two groups to help more people engage in the conversation.

SET A TIME FRAME

Honor the people in the room and have a set time goal of when you want to start and end discussion. We suggest 1 hour of talking and connecting and 1 hour of discussion and prayer to balance the night.

HAVE A GAME PLAN

Pick a few key scriptures/points from the message to dig deeper into rather than just skimming through the whole message. Have questions ready to build on each other.

BREAK WALLS DOWN

Warm up the room if necessary when you start the discussion with a fun question, opening in prayer, introducing yourself, or sharing the history of small groups and purpose of the night.

DISCUSSION

KEYS TO REMEMBER

- 1 ENGAGE**
Ask questions that are open for everyone to answer. Don't spend too much time talking yourself.
- 2 REDIRECT**
As the leader of the group, feel confident to redirect the conversation with another question or thought if it gets too off topic from the heart of the message.
- 3 BE FLEXIBLE**
Let God into the room; pray during the night and for the people in the room, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you. If the night didn't hit an expectation don't feel it is on you. Keep the focus on pointing people to Jesus and building the church.
- 4 PRAYER**
End the night strong in prayer. Having people either break off and pray in groups or as a big group asking for prayer requests and praise reports. Create a culture during the week to be praying for the requests from the small group and checking in on how they are doing.

FOLLOW UP

PURPOSE

FOLLOW UP AFTER EACH MEETING TO CONNECT AND PLANT PEOPLE IN THE HOUSE

Follow up and connection build and establish people in God's House. We have a heart for the one because of God's heart for us.

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."
Philippians 2:4

STEPS

- 1 PRAY FIRST**
Pray for people by name and ask God by His Spirit to plant them and establish them, He will anoint our efforts and work in partnership with us. We will be less burnt out about follow up if we pray first then step out in faith as we go through these steps
- 2 CALL & CONNECT**
Following up with a call or text and connecting someone new at church
- 3 REPORTING**
Throughout the semester, respond to your leaders about group attendance (track in Planning Center weekly), potential new Small Group Leaders and how members are moving one step.

Encourage Share scripture Pray Next steps

CONFIDENCE AS A LEADER

IF YOU ONLY DO WHAT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING, YOU DON'T NEED GOD. GOD'S BEST IS OFTEN FOUND OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE.

WHEN YOU SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE BY LEADING A SMALL GROUP, HE WILL EQUIP YOU AND GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH AND WISDOM TO LEAD WELL. PHILIPPIANS 4:13 & 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

WHEN YOU FEEL UNCERTAIN ABOUT LEADING A GROUP, USE SCRIPTURE TO OVERCOME THE LIES OF THE ENEMY.

GOD HAS CREATED YOU

When you feel like you don't have the time, remember God has created you for this, and His timing is perfect. "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." Ecclesiastes 11:4

GOD EQUIP

When you feel unqualified, remember God has equipped you. "It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of His new covenant." 2 Corinthians 3:5-6

GOD USES IMPERFECT PEOPLE

When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember God uses imperfect people. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

HOW TO START A SMALL GROUP

DIRECTIONS

Ask God for direction about what group to lead and who to invite.

INVITE

Invite people you know or meet to come check out your group. They can sign up online.

DECISION

Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time.

PRAY

Pray for God to do great things through your Small Group.

REGISTRATION

- Semesters are Fall, Spring and Summer
- Wait for the announcement of registration to open up for the semester
- Register your group online at firstchurch.com/smallgroups and your group will be entered in the Small Group Directory

THANK YOU!

Send thank yous to the new people that signed up to start building the relationship and connection.

SUPPORT

You are never alone in creating community. We have pastors and staff who are all working alongside you to invest in great Small Groups at First Church.

MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TO BECOME A SMALL GROUP LEADER

- + Become a member of First Church of Pearland
- + Complete First Steps Course at First Church
- + Attend a Small Group Leadership training
- + Complete the Small Group Leadership application
- + Complete a one-on-one interview
- + Must sign Commitment and Honor Code of a Small Group Leader

FAQ

How can I recruit people to come to my group?

- Start with people who you already know, in your sphere of influence (co-workers, neighbors, friends).
- Find people around you who are new to the church, are new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people you think you can help realize their potential
- Ask God to send the right people to your group.

Where can I hold my Small Group?

We encourage Small Group to meet outside the church building in the places where you like to spend your time. Some of the most common meet places are coffee shops.

Where can I find Small Group Curriculum?

We have a variety of curriculum suggestions available to you
Email info@firstchurch.com

Does my group have to meet weekly?

We encourage meeting weekly each semester in order to build genuine relationships.

Does First Church offer childcare during Small Group Meeting?

You are welcome to choose to offer childcare at your Small Group. The church does not provide it.

How do I measure if group members are moving one step?

- How did you get connected to this Small Group?
- What are you most looking forward to in the group?
- Do you attend First Church?
- What brought you to First Church?
- Have you ever been part of a Small Group before?
- What do you feel like God has been doing in your life?
- What are you focused on in your life right now?
- Are you familiar with 21 Days of Prayer?
- What area of your faith are you hoping to grow?

FAQ

What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer? It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them.

What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me or the group that requires more attention beyond what I can provide?

If you encounter a difficult situation within your Small Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask. You can call First Church at 281-992-4538, if needed.

How can I share stories of life change from the Small Group semester? We love hearing about lives that are changed through Small Groups. You can share your stories with your Small Group Leader/Coach. You can also share your own personal stories through your social media and tag #firstchurchsmallgroups