

# **SMALL GROUP COACH TRAINING**

God's process for people to find freedom begins with having the right people in their lives. He designed us for community, and connecting in Small Groups is how we help people find life-changing relationships at First Church.

Your role as a Small Groups Coach is a vital part of successful Small Groups at First Church. Just as Small Group Leaders care for their groups, as a Coach, you care for the leaders. By covering leaders in prayer, developing a relationship with them, and serving as a resource, you are helping strengthen leaders and the powerful ministry of Small Groups.

The model for leadership covering in Small Groups is based on a principle we see in the Bible modeled by Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses.

*"Moses' father-in-law replied, 'What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you...select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens....If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.'"*

**EXODUS 18:17-23 NIV**

## THREE AREAS OF FOCUS FOR COACHING

### 1. Protect

#### **Pray for your leaders.**

The most impactful thing you can do is pray for your leaders. As you agree in prayer with your leaders, God promises to move.

*“Again, I assure you: if two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in Heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them”*

**MATTHEW 18:19–20 NIV**

Leading Small Groups at First Church isn't something any of us are asked to do alone. Your role as a Coach gives leaders support as you carry the responsibility to care for people together.

### 2. Connect

#### **Cultivate a personal relationship with your leaders.**

Take time to get to know your Small Group Leaders. Learn about their story, spiritual journey, and what motivates them to lead a Small Group. Knowing them on a personal level will not only help you serve them well, but it is also in line with how God tells us to care for the people He has allowed us to influence.

*Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.*

**PROVERBS 27:23 NLT**

#### **Communicate helpful information.**

You are the Small Group Leader's direct line of communication. Throughout the semester, regularly communicate information that will help them lead well. This can look like reminding them to be praying for their group, encouraging them to help people move one step, directing them to the Next Steps Survey, or helping them decide where to host their Small Group or how to invite people to attend.

Don't know the answer to a question? This is why you have support, too. Reach out to your Hub Leader to help you support your leaders as needed.

If you encounter a difficult situation with your Small Group Leaders, the team is here to support you. If one of your leaders is going through a crisis, you can provide prayer, encouragement, and

support. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask your Hub Leader. Also, you and/or the Small Group Leader may call the church and speak to the Small Group Pastor, Lavelle Jeane, at (281) 992-4538.

### **3. Grow**

#### **We are called to identify and develop leaders.**

*The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, ask him to send more workers into his fields.*

**LUKE 10:2 NLT**

#### **Help your leaders move one step.**

You have the opportunity to invest in your leaders by helping them grow and move one step in their leadership. By praying for them, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance, and connecting with them personally, you will be able to help them take next steps.

Questions to ask:

- What is one area you hope to grow this semester?
- How can I pray for you?
- What is an area of leadership that is challenging for you?
- What do you feel God is calling you to do through Small Group leadership?

#### **Help your leaders develop new leaders.**

By developing your leaders, you are modeling how they can develop leaders in their group. You can also help them identify potential leaders.

Here are a few ways to do this:

- Ask about potential leaders they have identified in their group.
- Help them know what to look for in potential leaders such as participation, a willingness to help, spiritual growth, and a connection to the life-giving culture of Small Groups.
- Remind them to invite potential leaders to Small Group Leadership Training at Step Four of First Steps.

## PRACTICAL COACHING IDEAS

Throughout the semester as you protect, connect, and grow your leaders, here are some practical ways you can care for them:

### **Make a connection at the beginning of the semester.**

- Introduce yourself and exchange contact information.
- Share more about your role as a coach and how you will support them throughout the semester you will:
  - Pray for them
  - Answer questions
  - Remind them of important steps like the Next Steps Survey and helping group members move one step
  - Help them develop as a leader
  - Help them identify potential leaders in their group
  - Be available to help and support them
- Give ideas for inviting people to attend their group such as:
  - Think of people in their sphere of influence like co-workers, friends, and neighbors
  - Be aware of people new to the church, new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved
  - Look for people who have leadership potential
  - Ask God to send the right people to your group

### **Visit your leader's group during the semester, especially if they are a first-time leader.**

- Communicate when you'll be visiting the group in advance.
- Remind the leader that the purpose of your visit is to support them and invest in the ministry they are personally doing through Small Groups.
- Be on time and participate.

- Ask the leader to introduce you to the group so that everyone feels comfortable.
- Evaluate if the group has the life-giving culture of First Church Small Groups.
- Make notes of feedback or ideas that will help the leader continue to strengthen the group and grow their personal leadership.
- Encourage the leader and celebrate the wins. Do you see things like genuine relationships formed, people engaging in conversation, and group members openly sharing prayer needs? These are signs of a healthy group and should be celebrated! If you don't see these things, guide the leader on ways to cultivate these group dynamics throughout the rest of the semester.
- Help the leader identify potential leaders in their group.
- Remind the leader how they can help people in their group move one step.
- Maintain a relationship with your leader.
- Create opportunities to connect with leaders over coffee, lunch, or in between services on Sunday.
- Send email and text updates to leaders reminding them about upcoming opportunities at First Church like water baptism, First Steps, Small Group Leadership trainings, and Hub events.
- Help them accomplish important goals like group rosters and attendance, the completion of the Next Steps Survey with their group, and helping members move one step.
- Host an end-of the-semester celebration with your leaders.

## EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Here are some guidelines on what to look for when you visit a group, and areas to help the leader grow as needed.

### **Leadership Skills**

- The leader is helping members move one step in their faith.
- New leaders are being identified and encouraged to complete Small Group Leadership Training.
- The objectives of the meeting are accomplished.
- The leader stays involved and listened to everyone.
- The relationship between the leader and the group members feels healthy.
- The leader prays during the group.
- The leader stays on topic.
- The meeting starts and ends on time.

### **Group Dynamics**

- The group maintains a life-giving environment.
- Everyone participates in prayer time.
- Members participate in discussion and are engaged.
- Everyone is included, and no one overwhelms the conversation or is completely left out.

### **Care**

- The leader allows time for ministry to happen within the group.
- The leader emphasizes the Next Steps Survey initiative.
- The leader asks for prayer requests.

## NEXT STEPS

One of the best resources you can direct your Small Group Leaders to is the Next Steps Resource (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/yrynjbm4Oedbemd/Next%20Step%20Resource.docx?dl=0>). The goal for every Small Group is to help each person move one step forward in their faith. As a Coach, you can help leaders keep this a priority and help them implement practical ways to help people move one step.

### Next Steps Survey

Coaches play an important role in the Next Steps Survey Initiative. The Next Steps Survey helps us measure the health of Small Groups and how our church is growing spiritually. A link to the Next Steps Survey will be sent out to Small Group Leaders near the end of the semester, and you will help ensure leaders, co-leaders, and their groups complete the survey.

## BEING PART OF THE SMALL GROUPS TEAM

As a Coach, you are an important part of the Small Groups Team. Not only can you help your leaders grow, but you can also help strengthen the Small Groups ministry as a whole in the following ways:

- In addition to praying for you leaders and their groups daily, also pray for God's favor and direction over the entire Small Groups Ministry as we help people grow in their faith.
- Help complete Small Group Leadership Training Interviews with new leaders at Step Four of the Growth Track and trainings at the beginning of each semester.
- Participate in the recruitment of new leaders at your campus as directed by your Hub Leader.
- Ensure your leaders and their groups complete the following:
  - Group rosters in the Small Groups database.
  - Next Steps Survey.



## HELPFUL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

As we help people find freedom in Small Groups, ministering to them through the Word of God is one of the most powerful ways to care for them.

We encourage you to memorize Scriptures, which will equip you when you are walking someone through a tough situation, as well as give you strength throughout the semester. Also, as you pray over a Small Group Leader, try inserting that leader's name in the Scripture to make it more personalized.

Here is a list of powerful Scriptures that you can apply to any situation:

*“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

**MARK 12:30-31 NKJV**

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NKJV**

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

**PROVERBS 3:5-6 NIV**

*My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

**ISAIAH 55:8-9 NLT**

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*

**1 JOHN 5:14-15 NIV**

*No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," Says the Lord.*

**ISAIAH 54:17 NKJV**

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

**EPHESIANS 6:10-28 NIV**

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

**ROMANS 8:28 ESV**

*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago*

**EPHESIANS 2:10 NLT**

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

**JEREMIAH 29:11 NIV**

*You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

**MATTHEW 5:14-16 NIV**

*No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**ROMANS 8:39 NLT**

*Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never, never fail you nor forsake you.” That is why we can say without any doubt or fear, “The Lord is my Helper, and I am not afraid of anything that mere man can do to me.”*

**HEBREWS 13:5-6 TLB**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NIV**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

**JAMES 1:2-4 NIV**

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 NIV**

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

**ROMANS 10:17 ESV**

*One day the apostles said to the Lord, "We need more faith; tell us how to get it." "If your faith were only the size of a mustard seed," Jesus answered, "it would be large enough to uproot that mulberry tree over there and send it hurtling into the sea! Your command would bring immediate results!"*

**LUKE 17:5-6 TLB**

*Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*

**ISAIAH 41:10 NLT**

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

**HEBREWS 11:1 NIV**

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

**JAMES 1:5 NIV**

*Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety*

**PROVERBS 11:14 ESV**

*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.*

**ROMANS 8:1-2 NLT**

*"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*

**ISAIAH 1:18 NIV**

*Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14 NIV**