

When discussing – use a proactive leadership style – clear direction, yet flexible

Leaders _____ Ph.#

Hosts _____ Ph.#

Small Group
Commitment Form
Leader's Guide

Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this form is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

SMALL GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Small Groups exist to develop friendships that lead to spiritual growth. We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARING

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable. *Icebreakers are provided in this manual to help get sharing and conversation flowing.*

STUDYING

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

Our Goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not answer all the questions. VERY IMPORTANT: People need to know that you will not get through the entire discussion guide.

SUPPORTING

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

SERVING

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to . . .

1) Focus on Spiritual Growth as a top priority (Romans 8:29).

Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep this our focus

and stay on topic.

2) Accept one another in love just as Christ has accepted us (Romans 15:7). - *we will have different preferences and opinions*

- 3) Take care of one another in love without crossing over the line into parenting or taking inappropriate responsibility for solving the problems of others (John 13:34). *If crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals, etc.*
- 4) Treat each other with respect in both speech and action (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).

Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once

Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge, or fix – unless

someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand,

that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.

Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator – be careful, I as leader might have to help you.

Be careful of gossip prayers – For example "We need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ..."

No put downs

IMPORTANT: Confidentiality – what is said here, stays here –(unless it threatens safety in which case the group leaders will seek help from Small Groups department or proper authorities.)

- 5) Keep our commitments to the group – including attending regularly, doing the homework, and keeping confidences when requested (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).

Please give us a call if you can't make it to Small Group so we know what's going on if we can pray for you.

GUIDELINES & COMMITMENT

1. Dates We'll meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on _____.

2. Time We'll arrive between _____ & _____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing. *fill in blanks*

3. Children Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing new-borns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group.

4. Study Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. *Not answer every question.*

5. Prayer Our group will be praying each week for one another and other specific requests. *Remember -being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people not to want to come to your group. If you have new people n your group you might want to say something like this – " it's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray" - let them know you'll talk about this more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray.*

6. Homework & Attendance

Joining a Small Group requires a commitment to *attend each week and do the homework ahead of time*. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! **Commitment is the KEY to a healthy group!**

Most weeks the homework will require from twenty to thirty minutes to adequately prepare for the group study and discussion. The quality of our group discussion is directly related to our commitment to fill out the discussion guide before the group meets.

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____.

- Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (a good group starts with good preparation.)*
- Make sure that everyone is with you (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*
- Most weeks require 20-30 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.*

7. Desserts - *Have everyone sign up for a night to do dessert*

8. Group Social & Service Project - *Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As*

leader and host have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates.

Choose a date or ask them to bring their calendars the next week. New groups are preferred to have their social by mid quarter.

9. Other – *Have the members sign the group Covenant now if they are ready. If not, they are welcome to wait until the next meeting to sign.*

We agree together in Christ to honor this commitment.

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

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