

SMALL GROUP COACHES GUIDE



Dear Action Church Small Group Coach,

Proverbs 27:23 tells us to, “be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.” There’s a powerful and important initiative laid out in this verse, know the condition of your flock. In fact, this verse goes as far to say, “be sure you know”, as in you better know.

Knowing the condition of our flock is something we are passionate about at Action Church and why we’ve developed a Small Groups coaching structure. This biblical mandate of knowing the condition of our flock highlights why your role, as a Small Groups Coach, is so important.

Small Groups are a place to connect, grow, and be known; you are a part of making sure this happens through your role as a coach. Our hope is that this guide will serve as a valuable resource as you lead, support, and provide spiritual covering for the Small Group Leaders of our church.

We pray you will remain encouraged, knowing the time invested in the lives of our leaders will produce much fruit. We thank God for each of you and the sacrificial leadership you are modeling in this role. Thank you for helping us care for Small Group Leaders.

Together we are making a huge difference!

The Action Church Team

A VISION FOR COACHING

Everyone, including leaders, needs a person to speak into their lives, to know them, love them, and support them. God uses relationships to stir, awaken, and unlock things within us. In terms of leadership, a leader feels cared for, understood, and motivated to speak truth and life into those in his or her group. Suddenly ordinary people have become extraordinary instruments in the hands of God.

Effective coaching is coming alongside and empowering Small Group Leaders in our church. ***Coaches possess a heart and desire to help Small Group Leaders develop into their full potential.*** Small Group Leaders need a coach to encourage them, care for them, pray for them, and love them during their season of leadership.

THE ESSENCE OF YOUR ROLE

A coach's responsibility is to provide a spiritual covering for Small Group Leaders at Action Church.

In the most basic form, a Coach's role is to pastorally care for Small Group Leaders through relationships, praying for them, and helping them identify next steps.

What Does An Effective Coach Do?

An effective coach does the following things:

- *Pray for your Small Group Leaders and their group daily.*
- *Develop meaningful relationships with your Small Group Leaders.*
- *Equip and encourage Small Group Leaders in their personal relationship with Jesus by highlighting next steps.*
- *Encourage Small Group Leaders in identifying and recruiting new Small Group Leaders.*
- *Visit your leaders' groups at least once during the semester to support and offer feedback.*

EXPECTATIONS OF THE COACH-LEADER RELATIONSHIP

What should Small Group Leaders expect from Coaches?

- Spiritual covering through prayer
- A healthy and consistent relationship
- Consistent support and care

What should Coaches expect from Small Group Leaders?

- A humble, teachable spirit
- A healthy and consistent relationship
- Consistent support, care, and communication

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Good coaches ask intentional questions. *As you build relationships with your Small Group Leaders, ask deeper questions that will uncover thoughts, beliefs, and feelings.*

Human nature is to speak first, listen second. Listening is a skill we develop and requires intentional effort. Listening builds comfort, makes people feel cared for and valued. Great coaches listen to identify the heart of issues, situations, and concerns. Effective listening also allows you to ask good questions. Great coaches ask great questions.

Below are some basic principles to guide your question asking.

- **Understand their spiritual journey.** How did they come to know Christ? Who has been an influence to them on this journey?
- **Understand their life history.** What is their family like? What were the major turning points in their life?
- **Understand their heart.** What brings them joy? What do they dream about?

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- **Affirm their gifts and abilities.** Every leader will have strengths and weaknesses. Offer a balance of developing their strengths and encouraging them in their weaknesses.
- **Teach from experience.** Every experience, good and bad, provides an opportunity to learn. As leaders share with you, listen for examples that can serve as learning experiences for all your leaders.
- **Solve problems with them.** Problem-solving requires listening and understanding. Utilize the location pastoral team when necessary.
- **Learn together.** You will not know the answer to every issue or problem your leaders will encounter. When you don't know, admit it and work together to find it.
- **Celebrate wins together!**

NEXT STEPS

One of your roles as a Small Group Coach is to encourage your leaders to understand the spiritual condition of their group members and help them move one step in their faith. By emphasizing this importance, we are ensuring that every person attending a Small Group is growing spiritually.

Our win and main role is to help people take their next step. Some examples of ways a Small Group Leader may help do this are:

- If members of the group are not saved, then share Christ with them or invite them to a Sunday service.
- If members have not taken the step to be water baptized, help lead them to a baptism Sunday. Rally around them by attending the service together and celebrating their decision with the other Small Group members.
- If members have not yet discovered their purpose and calling, then help walk them through Action Steps.
- If members have discovered their purpose and calling, but are not yet operating in these gifts then encourage them to serve on the A-Team.
- If members lack spiritual discipline, such as Bible reading and prayer, then challenge them with a plan and provide resources as needed.
- If you feel some members of your group possess the ability to lead groups of their own, encourage them to lead or co-lead a Small Group in the upcoming semester.

DEVELOPING NEW 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

An important part of your role is to help leaders understand the importance of identifying and encouraging leadership potential in others.

The most practical way to do this is by inviting members to attend Small Group Leader Training.

Your role as a coach is to help identify potential coaches throughout the semester. When recognizing possible coaches, utilize these strategies:

- **Share ministry together.** Give prospective coaches one leader to encourage and watch the potential coach grow.
- **Include prospective coaches in leadership gatherings and Small Group visits.** When you meet with your leaders or visit their groups, you have an opportunity to show a prospective coach to what it is like being a coach.

What to look for in a Potential Coach:

- Love for Christ and the church
- Genuine interest in people
- Life-giving spirit and personality
- A passion for helping others become successful
- A teachable spirit

SEMESTER TIMELINE

Throughout the semester remember to pray for your Small Group Leaders daily. We believe this is an important role of being a Small Group Coach. Below is a suggested timeline to care for your Small Group Leaders:

Week One: Call your Small Group Leaders and co-leaders to introduce yourself as their coach and give them your contact information. Discuss the Move One Step initiative with them and pray with them about the semester.

Week Two: Call your Small Group Leaders and schedule a date to visit their group.

Week Three: Meet with all of your Small Group Leaders. Remind leaders to assess where members are spiritually and help them identify their next step.

Week Five: Visit your leaders' groups.

Week Seven: Schedule one-on-one meetings with your Small Group Leaders. This could be coffee, a meal, or a FaceTime call.

Week Nine: Schedule second meeting with all Small Group Leaders. Continue to emphasize next steps. Encourage leaders to invite potential new leaders to the end of the semester Celebration.

Week Eleven: Attend with your leaders and potential leaders the end of semester Celebration night.

A COACH'S VISIT

Ideally, a coach will visit their leaders' groups at least once during the semester. During those visits, here are some key things to do:

Contact the leader.

- Do this in advance to let them know you will be attending.

Arrive Early.

- Confirm the role they would like you to play in the group meeting, but allow them to lead the group as usual.
- Pray together for them, for the people in the group, and for the meeting.
- Assure them that you are there to support them.
- Greet the group members as they arrive.

Observe the meeting.

- During the group time, you will want to observe the health and dynamics of the group.

Things To Observe During a Group Visit:

Leadership Skills

- *Were the objectives of the meeting accomplished?*
- *Did the leader involve and listen to everyone? Following the 70/30 rule.*
- *How is the relationship between the leader and the group members?*
- *Did the leader pray at the end of the group meeting?*
- *Did you observe potential leaders in the group?*

Group Dynamics

- *Did the leader stay on topic?*
- *Did the meeting start and end on time?*
- *Did the group maintain a life-giving and upbeat atmosphere?*

Care

- *Did the leader allow time for questions?*
- *Were next steps given or identified?*
- *Did the leader ask for prayer requests?*

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

During individual or group meetings with Small Group Leaders be sure and address the following areas. Remember to be an encourager at all times!

Spiritual

- Is prayer an emphasis within the group?
- What do they feel God is teaching them?
- Is their relationship with Jesus growing?
- Are they experiencing any struggles?

Relational

- Are marriage, family, and personal relationships strong?
- Are they getting to know those in their group?
- Have they helped members of their group take their next step?
- How is their relationship with you? Anything they need from you they feel like they aren't getting?
- Are they identifying and encouraging prospective new group leaders to attend Celebration night or small group leader training?

Personal

- Are there personal issues that need to be addressed?
- What is their personal next step?

NEXT STEPS I CAN SHARE WITH MY GROUP MEMBERS

What Are Some Next Steps I Can Share With My Group Members?

Everyone in a group will be at different places spiritually. The vision of helping them take their steps is not to get them to do everything at once, it's to help identify where they currently are spiritually so leaders can help them practically take a next step to grow. Small group leaders can encourage the following next steps:

- Invite them to attend service with you.
- Invite them to an Encounter Night, a special Action event, or 21 Days of Prayer.
- Share how Action Steps impacted you personally and invite members to attend.
- Invite them to consider being water baptized. Invite your Small Group to be there to celebrate with anyone from the group that takes that step.
- Share how you personally find time to connect with God, worship, and pray.
- Encourage them to learn more about areas like spiritual warfare, Freedom, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and tithing by watching previous messages at theactionchurch.com.
- Invite them to participate in an Action outreach group or event.
- Encourage them to join the A-Team.

