

# Leader Orientation



REACHING PEOPLE.  
BUILDING LIVES.

## SECTION 1

### WHY SMALL GROUPS?

#### THE VISION OF SMALL GROUPS

We believe life-change happens through relationship. The best way to build strong, Christ-centered relationships is through Small Groups. We love to say,

**CONTINUED LIFE CHANGE HAPPENS IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS.**

Small Groups are vitally important to the foundation of our church and culture. We are a Small Groups church...but WHY SMALL GROUPS?

#### **1** SMALL GROUPS TAKE \_\_\_\_\_ (1) OF PEOPLE'S NEEDS.

- Small Groups provide care to the church.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)

- Small Groups allow Grace Church to care for the needs of the people, no matter the size of our church.
- Small Groups provide the personal touch that people need, especially in a crisis.

#### **2** SMALL GROUPS HELP PEOPLE \_\_\_\_\_ (2).

- God created us for relationships.

“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NASB)

- God redeemed us to be a part of His spiritual family.

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household...” Ephesians 2:19

- God grows us in community.
- Growth happens in Small Groups.
- Small Groups build lives, which builds leaders.

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Matthew 9:37-38

**SMALL GROUPS TAKE CARE OF  
PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND HELP  
THEM CONNECT AND GROW.**

# WHAT MAKES A GREAT SMALL GROUP LEADER?

## EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Everything rises and falls on leadership. Small Group leaders set the tone, culture, and attitude of the groups they lead. Here's what great small group leaders look like...

1

### **GREAT SMALL GROUP LEADERS TAKE \_\_\_\_\_ (4) OF PEOPLE'S NEEDS.**

- Pray for your Small Group
- Meet consistently and regularly, I.e. meet when you say you're going to meet.
- Communicate clearly and often. Follow-up with your Small Group Every week.
  - Send weekly e-mails to recap the assignment, include prayer requests, etc.
  - Follow up with individuals when necessary.
  - Provide weekly touch points (texts, e-mails, cards, phone calls)
- Listen well. Speak less, listen more.
- Suggested ways to further care for small group:
  - Provide Support during major life events, i.e. check in during times of crisis, visit people in the hospital, call, text, pray, and/or send cards.
  - Provide meals during times of need (new babies, recovering from surgery or illness).
  - Celebrate big moments together (anniversaries, birthdays, new babies, holidays).

2

### **GREAT SMALL GROUP LEADERS HELP PEOPLE \_\_\_\_\_ (5).**

- Create a welcoming Small Group environment.
- Help to facilitate organic friendships amongst your small group.
- When appropriate, try to meet with the couples/individuals in your group outside of your group.
- Set up (or invite people to) fun events outside of your group.

**GREAT SMALL GROUP LEADERS HELP PEOPLE \_\_\_\_\_ (6).**

- Help your small group members take their next step in their relationship with Christ.
  - Is their next step being baptized? Growth Track 101? A consistent devotional life? Find out what it is and help them take it.
- How do you do this? APPLICATION
  - Find out the salvation story of each person in your small group.
  - Find out the baptism story of each person in your small group.
  - If a member shows leadership potential, have an ICNU moment with them where you tell them that you see the leadership potential in them and describe the steps to become a small group leader.
  - Communicate with Grace staff and/or assigned small group coach.
    - Respond to emails (attendance records, report concerns, ask for help) - We track the wins. How we evaluate if what we are doing is working. Manage your group online. Update your roster.
    - Submit any wins (big or super small) to the Small Group Coordinator or at [www.gracelife.com/mystory](http://www.gracelife.com/mystory)

**GREAT SMALL GROUP  
LEADERS TAKE CARE OF  
PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND HELP  
THEM CONNECT AND GROW.**

### SECTION 3

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A SMALL GROUP LEADER?

## REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS OF SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Small Group Leaders must:

- Care about people.
- Complete the Growth Track
  - Church 101 + Membership (See Membership Form on Page 6)
  - Dream Team 201
  - Values 301
- Regular Giver
- Complete Small Group Leader Orientation
- Complete Small Group Leader Application (<http://www.gracelife.com/connect/#small-groups>)
- Interview with Small Groups Pastor
- (Pending Approval) Register Small Group



# GRACE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP STATEMENT

Having committed my life to follow Jesus and being in agreement with the values and vision presented in the Church 101 class and the Grace Church Statement of Faith, I now feel led to join the Grace Church family. In doing so, I commit to the following:

- 1. I will seek to love, serve, and honor God and continually grow in my relationship with Him.**
- 2. I will support the vision of my church by attending services regularly and giving financially.**
- 3. To facilitate community and spiritual growth in my life, I will participate in small groups and use my gifts and talents to serve my spiritual family.**

*Please Sign Below:*

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Please Print) (Signature)**

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
**If Applicable (Please Print) (Signature)**

# WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

## IMPORTANT BITS OF INFO & RESOURCES

There are 2 types of Small Groups that Grace Church promotes:

- (1) FREE MARKET SMALL GROUPS
- (2) CAMPAIGN SMALL GROUPS

Free Market Small Groups are small group that the leader gets to propose the content and the format of the small group. Small Group Campaigns are groups were the content, format, and discussion questions are provided, so leaders focus on gathering and facilitating.

### 1. Free Market Small Group logistics

- You can meet as long as you want.
- You can choose whatever topic you want (approved by SG pastor)
- Be aware of who is in your group. New believers. Where are people?

### 2. Typical Small Group Meeting Timeline/flow:

- Meet and greet – may want to include dessert/snack. – 10-15 minutes (Ice Breakers)
- Before getting into content for the week, might be a great time to follow up on prayer requests from previous week
- Content/Discussion- 45 minutes to an hour (facilitate, don't preach)
- Prayer- 10-15 minutes
  - Leave time for group prayer requests and prayer
  - Keep a prayer log/journal and record each persons prayer request
    - Pray for each member and their requests each day (during devotions)
    - Have a group prayer strategy, e.g. Pray for the person to everyone's right, write requests on notecards and then randomly pass out, etc.
  - Keep prayer requests on topic (how to direct lengthy prayer requests that become "platforms")
- Dismiss the group (but be open for people to hang out afterwards).
  - Respect people's time by starting on time and dismissing on time.

### 3. Small Group EXPO:

- The Small Group EXPO is when people can sign up for small groups on a Sunday morning.
- The dates for the next Small Group EXPO are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Be at your table as much as you can. Please be at your sign up sheet after each service.
- Recruit, recruit, recruit. The success of your group is highly dependent on how many people you personally invite.

4. Helpful tips for a great small group:

- Don't let anyone dominate the conversation. Shutting down and redirecting.
- Try to draw everyone in to participate
- Don't be afraid of the long awkward pause. Embrace the awkward!
- Keep it positive
- Connect with group during the week through email, Facebook, something like that.

5. Coaching

- Each new small group leader has an assigned coach that they can go to with questions and ask for wisdom.
- Please utilize your coach.



# HOW DO I LEAD AND MANAGE GROUP DISCUSSIONS?

## FACILITATING LIFE-BUILDING DISCUSSIONS

### Leading Discussions:

The following suggestions will aid you in leading discussions and fostering healthy group dynamics:

- Arrange the group in a circle, if possible, so that everyone can see each other.
- Let the group know that you don't have all the answers. Don't feel pressured to know all of the answers. If a question is asked to which you do not know the answer, tell the person you don't know. Offer to do some research and come back the next time with a response for that person.
- Try to include everyone. Ask a more reserved person what they think about the topic you are discussing. Let them know they don't have to share if they don't want to
- Ask "open-ended" questions as opposed to "yes or no" questions. Not, "Did you like the Bible passage for this week?" but, "What did you like about the Bible passage for this week? or What did you get out of it?" Open-ended questions tend to promote discussion.
- Refocus if necessary. Don't allow tangents. Don't worry about offending one. Worry about the group experience for everyone.
- Acknowledge everyone who participates. Thank them for sharing, etc.
- Use summary statements to clarify discussion ("So, what I hear you saying is...")
- Ask questions in a conversational tone. Do not simply read them out of a book, or say, "What did you put for question number five?"

### Guarding Discussions:

While leaders are not to dominate discussions, that does not mean they are to back out of them.

Appropriate input at appropriate times can help the discussion stay on track, add depth to the discussion, or tie the discussion back in to the lesson for that evening.

It is the leader's responsibility to guard the discussion—stepping in to stop inappropriate sharing.

Below are a few situations to watch for...

- Don't allow people to confess anyone's faults (particularly their spouse's) but their own. Gossiping or griping about another person is not appropriate.
- Don't allow doctrinal discussion to become divisive or argumentative. Healthy discussion, even disagreement, regarding the tenets of the faith is to be encouraged, but must always be loving.
- Don't entertain negative attitudes toward the church. The Small Group leader is expected to support the mission and values of Grace Church, its philosophy of ministry, and its leadership. Encourage anyone with a specific concern to bring it to church leadership.
- Don't allow one person's continual problem to be the focus of the group. There are bound to be persons in groups that require extra care. Some of these people can be cared for and ministered to within the context of a Small Group; others may need help from someone professional or someone outside the group. Sound judgment is required here. Contact pastor for wisdom.



