SMALL GROUPS PLAYBOOK

5 Conversations Preparing You For Small Group Leadership
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Thank you for saying “yes” to exploring small group leadership at Restore Community Church. You are on the front lines of helping people find their way back to God. We are confident that it will be a journey of both joy and challenge, as you become an intentional disciple maker of those in your group.

We know your life is busy and we appreciate you taking the time to work through these conversations with your leader. The process works best if you do one conversation per week with your leader. You will also have the opportunity to practice leading the group and get some coaching and feedback.

Your leadership will make an eternal difference in the lives of the people you lead. We are thrilled you are joining the leadership community of Restore.

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 1:3-6

We are 100% with you,

The Pastors and Staff of Restore Community Church
MISSION OF RESTORE

The dream of Restore Community Church is to see the Spiritual Landscape of Kansas City changed.

WE DO THIS BY:

1. Helping people find their way back to God
2. Mobilizing Christ followers to change the world
3. Reproducing leaders, artists, and churches

WHY SMALL GROUPS

Jesus chose to change the world through a small group of people – his 12 disciples. When he left the earth, Jesus left his followers with the mission of making disciples:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

Following the example of Jesus, Restore’s primary strategy for making disciples is through weekly small group gatherings.

RESTORE’S SMALL GROUP STRATEGY

• Connect the unconnected
• Develop Character and Calling
• Catalyze a movement of discipleship by reproducing leaders and groups

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SMALL GROUP LEADER

• Be an Intentional Disciple Maker (IDM)
• Facilitate a small group that is an Intentional Discipleship Environment (IDE)
• Meet with a small group coach regularly for accountability and ongoing discipleship
• Attend Leadership Community and additional trainings whenever possible
• Reproduce leaders and groups
HOW TO USE THE PLAYBOOK

Meet regularly with your leader and work your way through each conversation using the discussion questions to guide you.

Throughout the process of apprenticeship, during small group time, use the following plan for “on the job” training:

I do, you watch, we talk
I do, you help, we talk
You do, I help, we talk
You do, I watch, we talk
You to, I watch, we talk
You do, someone else watches (when you apprentice someone else)

The “I” is the leader, the “you” is the apprentice. The “talk” is the review of group time at each one of your meetings. This allows the leader to give the apprentice feedback and sometimes the apprentice to give the leader feedback. We learn from each other and get better with each conversation.

Have fun!
DISCIPLESHIP
AS YOU BEGIN:
Apprenticeship is part of your Discipleship

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

The word “disciple” in the original language of the New Testament is mathetes which means learner or student. As opposed to the term “Christian” which appears only 3 times, the word disciple is used over 200 times in the New Testament as an identifier of one who follows after Jesus.

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus culminates his life and ministry with these words, known as the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The Great Co-mission is our joint mission with God to make disciples. Jesus Himself describes a disciple as one who is engaged in the mission of making disciples. In other words, integral to being a disciple is making other disciples. This is why the church exists and it is the primary mission of every Christ-follower: to make disciples.

At Restore, we want every leader and those apprenticing to lead to know that they are primarily an Intentional Disciple-Maker (I.D.M.). That means that you, the new apprentice, are a part of the Jesus Mission and God’s plan to restore this world back to Him. This is why it’s called the Great Co-Mission because you are literally on this mission with Jesus! A mission that started long before you and will continue long after. It happens one conversation, one relationship, and one person at a time. Regardless of your age, status, past, gifting, area of ministry you are serving in, or background - you are being invited into the Jesus Mission as an I.D.M. This is a mission that should you choose to accept it, will have a far-reaching ripple effect that reverberates throughout your home, workplace, community, and who knows, maybe even the world.

When you are an I.D.M. any environment you are put in becomes an Intentional Disciple-Making Environment (I.D.E.). An I.D.E. has 3 components:
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1. OUTCOME FOCUSED

At Restore, discipleship results in two transformational outcomes:

- **Becoming more like Jesus in character.**

  “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

  Galatians 5:22-23

Character is who I am becoming and it is manifested by the fruit of the Spirit. As we follow Jesus, our character begins to look more like His. At the root of character is the age-old question of every human heart: “Am I lovable?” As we look to Jesus to answer this question, we experience intimacy with Him. This ongoing intimacy with Jesus is what transforms our character. Jesus said it like this in John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing”. The second outcome is:

- **Living out our unique Christ-centered calling.**

  “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

  “God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.”

  1 Corinthians 12: 6-7

Calling is about what I am doing and is manifested by the gifts of the Spirit. As we follow Jesus, our calling becomes clarified and we begin to discover the distinctive purpose God has for us. The roles we fulfill (dad, mom, friend, manager, brother, sister, co-worker, etc.) begin to be expressed out of our true identity in Christ. At the root of calling is the age-old question of every human heart: “Am I meaningful?” As we look to Jesus to answer this question, we express a Christ-centered influence in the world.

For us, all of discipleship falls into these 2 areas: Character and Calling. If you were to ask: “How do I know I am a disciple?” We would ask: “Are you being transformed in your character and calling?” If you were to ask: “How do I know I am making a disciple?” We would ask: “Is that person being transformed in their character and calling?”
2. SCRIPTURE FOUNDED

The second component of an IDE is any environment where Scripture is the foundation and God’s Word, our Truth source, is integral to that environment regardless of what the “content” is. This means an IDM takes 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to heart: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

3. HABIT FUELED

The third and final component of an I.D.E. is any environment where we are cultivating formational habits. These ongoing habits are what fuels the transformation of our character and realization of our calling. The three habits we focus on are Celebrate, Connect and Contribute.

*Celebrating our relationship with God:*

- Bible Reading: Regular and consistent engagement with God’s word.
- Journaling: Writing down what God is saying and what we will do about it.
- Prayer: Engaging regularly in a conversation with God that includes both talking and listening.

*Connecting with others:*

- Participating in a weekly small group environment.
- Sharing: What is God saying to you?
- Accountability: What are you going to do about it?

*Contributing: Using your gifts on the Jesus mission of helping others find their way back to God*

- Contributing, apprenticing, and/or leading in a Restore ministry.
- Contributing, apprenticing, and/or leading outside of Restore.
- Growing in your financial generosity towards the local church.

Here is the crazy part: If you are an I.D.M. who creates an environment that is Outcome Focused, Scripture Founded, & Habit Fueled - ANY environment can be an Intentional Discipleship Environment. Whether
QUESTIONS:

1. When did Jesus first become real to you?
2. Share your first small group experience connected to a local church?
3. What made you say “yes” to being a Small Group Apprentice Leader?
4. How would you define discipleship? Have you ever been “discipled” and what was that experience like?
5. When you think of your character, what areas would you like to see Jesus transform?
6. When you think of your calling, how would you like to see Jesus bring clarity?
7. What stood out to you in the “What We Believe” statements? What questions do you have? Do these statements match your personal theology? Why or why not?

HABITS TO OUTCOME:

Based on what you read, can you articulate:

- Restore’s definition of a disciple?
- What is an I.D.M. and an I.D.E.?
- The 2 outcomes a disciple is growing in? Where you would like to grow in those 2 areas?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Schedule your next leader/apprentice conversation.
2. Read Conversation 2 and write your answers to the questions before you come.
3. Take the A.P.E.S.T. Fivefold Gift Survey - email or bring your results for the next conversation. [http://www.fivefoldsurvey.com](http://www.fivefoldsurvey.com)
4. “I do, you watch” in small group this week
LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS
Restore Community Church leaders will serve as catalysts in Restore’s mission of Helping People Find Their Way Back to God through a commitment to being intentional disciple makers (IDM). As such, we recognize that we are personal examples of disciples of Jesus.

While we look at the Leadership Expectations, it is important to keep in mind that none of us have “arrived.” We are not able to accomplish all of these things 100% of the time. However, we do agree together that these are the biblical expectations of leaders in the church and we are striving to grow in each of these areas.

### CELEBRATE: GOD

We gather together weekly to celebrate what God is doing in our lives and in the church.

### CELEBRATE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

God’s offer of salvation through Jesus calls for a response of faith. That response is demonstrated throughout the New Testament by repentance, acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior, and baptism by immersion. Repentance involves a change of heart and mind that causes us to want to put Jesus first in our lives.

When we commit our lives to Christ, we put our faith in Him to receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the public demonstration by which a believer is identified with Christ, His body the Church, and a life of followership. The act is one done in faith and submission to the Lordship of Christ. (Mark 1:9-11, Acts 2:38, Romans 6, Colossians 2:12)

### CELEBRATE THE WORD

Key to growing is better understanding of the principles found in Scripture (The Word). A leader will continually seek to increase his/her understanding of Scripture and model this value through daily time spent in the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15). A leader will seek to apply the principles learned from God’s Word in his/her everyday life, as well as encourage others to do the same.
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV) “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

CELEBRATE PRAYER AND OTHER SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

In order to grow in a relationship with Jesus, a leader will begin to incorporate specific disciplines into his/her life. No relationship can grow without communication. As much as we need to communicate with our heavenly Father, He desires to communicate with us. In fact, He created us to fellowship with Him. The growing spiritual life of the leader will include disciplines such as regular prayer, Bible reading, and meditation on the Word. It may include others such as journaling, fasting, sacrificial giving, etc.

James 5:13-16 (NIV) “Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

Also see, I Thessalonians 5:16-18

CELEBRATE THROUGH CORPORATE TEACHING, PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Growing and developing our relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church includes continuing fellowship and worship with other Christ-followers. This is not only beneficial to the personal spiritual life of the leader, but it is also an encouragement to other Christ-followers. Restore offers Celebration Services weekly as opportunities for corporate praise and worship. A leader will communicate the value of this event and his/her commitment to the Church through consistent participation in corporate celebration.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV) “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
CONNECT : THE CHURCH
We experience Biblical community as we connect with others regularly.

CONNECT THROUGH SMALL GROUPS
A leader will have a commitment to the type of genuine biblical community seen in Acts 2: 41-47. At Restore, we believe this biblical community is best experienced in the context of small groups. A leader will have a commitment to small groups demonstrated by personal weekly participation. They will serve as catalysts to connect others with groups.

Acts 2:46 (NIV) “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ”

CONNECT FOR CARE AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH
A leader’s role is to spiritually grow and develop 3C Christ-followers at Restore. Leaders accept the responsibility to provide care for the individuals to whom they are ministering. The leader is not personally responsible to provide all care for individuals, but rather to facilitate care by connecting Christ-followers to care for each other.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NIV) “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

CONNECT THROUGH APPRENTICESHIPS
The apostle Paul modeled for us the importance of apprentice leadership (2 Timothy 2:2). One of the most effective ways to reproduce and maximize ministry impact is to be committed to doing ministry in pairs, a leader developing an apprentice leader.

In order for the body of Christ to continue to make a difference, each leader must take upon himself the responsibility of leadership development. A main priority for leaders will be to invest themselves in developing apprentices as the future generation of leaders, so ministry can be multiplied.
2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

CONNECT THROUGH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A characteristic of a growing 3C Christ-follower is to be teachable. This is also true for the leader. A leader will model a teachable spirit through consistent participation in monthly Leadership Community, as well as other developmental opportunities. Restore is dedicated to providing excellent leadership training and equipping opportunities. Similar to participation in Celebration Services and small groups, participation in these leadership training opportunities benefits not only the leader personally, but also encourages Restore’s body of leaders.

CONTRIBUTE: THE WORLD

*We impact our world as we contribute weekly to God’s work using our unique talents, passions, and resources.*

CONTRIBUTE OF FINANCES (*moving toward 10%*)

The Old Testament teaches the principle of tithing — giving to God the first 10% of everything you have. Giving God the first 10% of everything you have is endorsed in the New Testament by Jesus but goes even further as we see a shift toward total stewardship of one’s life and resources. God expects us to live conscious of the fact that everything we have belongs to Him. We are simply stewards/managers of the resources He gives us while we are on earth.

With this in mind, contributing 10% of our income to God would be a minimum expectation for many people. For others, it would be a goal to work toward. A leader will seek to align him/her self with biblical principles and model God-honoring stewardship to those who follow them. (Luke 12:13-21; 18:18-30; 21:1-4; Matthew 23:23, 25:14-28).

CONTRIBUTE TALENTS AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

God gives every Christ-follower spiritual gifts and talents to be used to benefit His body, the Church. A leader will model the value of weekly contribution.

A leader will seek to discover how God has gifted him or her, and be accountable to the church for where/how to serve in ministry. The leader will encourage other Christ-followers to follow his/her example, discover their own gifts and talents, and use them in ministry for building up the
body of Christ at Restore and helping people find their way back to God. (I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4).

**CONTRIBUTE TO FAMILY**

A prime commitment for every leader is to their family. While the demands of church ministry can become great, it should never be at the expense of one’s relationship to their spouse, children, siblings, or parents. Restore is committed to building strong families. A leader will model a God-honoring commitment to their family, an example that is consistent in the home, in the Church, and to a watching world. (Ephesians 5 & 6).

**CONTRIBUTE IN SPEECH AND TEXT**

As a leader, what we say and type has great influence. It is expected that a leader’s speech will be a positive example to those who follow him/her. The Bible speaks of our tongue as having tremendous power — both for good and evil (James 3). A leader is expected to guard his/her verbal and digital speech carefully, being positive and encouraging, building up the body — always “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). A leader is also to be known as one whose speech and actions have earned them a good reputation in their community (Titus 2: 6-8). This includes the digital world of e-mail, social media and text messages. What we say on digital platforms can have more influence that what we say in person.

**CONTRIBUTE THROUGH PERSONAL TESTIMONY**

A leader will seize opportunities to communicate the meaning and significance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This will encourage the believer and challenge the unbeliever. It is important that a leader is able to clearly and concisely communicate a Gospel message within the context of his/her own spiritual journey. A leader will be able to support his/her story with Scriptural teaching as a valuable tool for personal evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20)

1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV) “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “leader”?
2. Are you more of a natural leader or natural follower?
3. What leadership roles have you held over the years? Did you enjoy them? Why or why not?
4. After reading “Leadership Expectations”, what concerns or questions do you have?

CELEBRATE:

• Share your baptism stories. If you’ve been baptized, share your baptism stories. If not, what questions do you have about baptism? What concerns? What would help you take a step towards it? (for more information, refer to Restore’s baptism conversation.)
• What spiritual disciplines (e.g. reading the Bible, praying, journaling, fasting, etc.) have been the most helpful in your journey with Jesus?

CONNECT:

• Acts 2:42-47 talks about fellowship of believers. How are you experiencing biblical community through small groups?
• How do you feel cared for at Restore? How can more of your needs be met?
• Restore values developmental opportunities for leadership training and equipping. What have you been learning from attending Leadership Community?
CONTRIBUTE:

- How is God challenging you in the area of generosity?
- How are you using your spiritual gifts to help others find their way back to God? If you’re unsure what your spiritual gifts are, take the spiritual gifts assessment available on Restore’s website.
- Which of the “Leadership Expectations” will come most naturally to you? Which will you struggle with?

Remember, we’re all growing in our ability to meet the Leadership Expectations. It is a process as we transform into the people God created us to be.

NEXT STEPS

1. Schedule your next leader/apprentice conversation.
2. Read Conversation 3 and write your answers to the questions before you come.
3. “I do, you help” in small group this week
FACILITATING IS ABOUT THREE SIMPLE THINGS
There are a few simple things we can do to create an atmosphere that helps people take next steps in their spiritual journeys. Although these things are simple, they are not easy, and often go against our natural tendencies as group leaders.

**THING ONE: STOP TALKING | START LISTENING**

“What you have to say as a leader is not as important as the thoughts of those present!” How To Lead A Great Cell Group Meeting, Joel Comiskey, Pg. 74

Have you ever been in a small group where the leader does most of the talking? The group members get bored, their eyes glaze over and before you know it, the group goes from 10 members to a faithful 2 or 3, the leader’s spouse and the group host. Small groups are designed to be relational, a place where we share our lives and stories with each other, which requires everyone to talk. So why does a small group leader often find themselves dominating the conversation?

There are multiple reasons a leader talks too much in their group: perhaps one of his primary gifts is teaching, so he just can’t help himself. Or maybe she is nervous or she doesn’t like silence, so she fills it up with chatter. Whatever the reason, a small group leader who talks too much will soon find themselves the only one showing up for group.

Proverbs 20:5 says, “The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, insight draws them out.” When leaders learn to ask good questions and actively listen to responses, it can change a ho-hum group time into a life-changing conversation.

The art of asking good questions begins with active listening.
• Listen to what is not said
  (gestures, facial expressions, etc.)

• Pay attention to responses and ask follow-up questions
to draw out more.
  - How does that make you feel?
  - What are your next steps?
  - Tell us more about that.

**THING TWO: STOP GIVING ADVICE | START FACILITATING DISCOVERY**

We want to tell others what to do, don’t we? Observe conversations: someone has a dilemma, they share their dilemma, and the people around them jump all over each other to give advice. It is like a feeding frenzy. The person who has shared rarely walks away feeling cared for and understood, and sometimes they can feel frustrated or incapable. The person who gives advice walks away feeling great. They are thinking, “I am so smart, I hope they follow my advice, then life would go better for them.”

Imagine a different scenario: a person shares a dilemma, and instead of everyone telling them what they should do, they respond with:
“Bummer, how does that make you feel?”
“What are you thinking about doing?”
“If you do that, what do you think the outcome will be?”
“What do you hear God saying to you about this situation?”
“What are you most afraid of?”
“What are you hoping will happen?”
“What do you most need?”
“How can we help?”

Advice giving communicates, “you can’t figure this out on your own, so I will figure it out for you.” Asking questions communicates, “you are capable and will figure it out; how can I support you?” When people discover their own next steps, they are more likely to take a step forward in their spiritual journey and experience growth.
THING THREE: STOP EXPERTISE | START BIBLICAL TRUTH

Often group leaders feel the need to justify their position as the leader by having the answers or knowing more than others. Here is some really good news: you don’t have to know it all! Hurray. Instead, our role as the leader is to facilitate an environment that allows the Bible to speak.

In group time, the Bible brings the teaching; our job is to help group members respond to that truth by asking questions that draw out people’s opinions and feelings. When group members have a safe place to unpack how they think or feel about something, they create room for God’s truth to be planted in their heart.

As group leaders, our job is to prepare for the discussion by reading the Bible passages being discussed, praying for wisdom and doing a little extra research of our own. It is not our job to be a biblical scholar, but if you are....lucky you. Just remember to keep asking good questions, drawing out the thoughts and wisdom of the group. Fight that temptation to teach a class; although classes are awesome, small group has a different purpose.


**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. “What you have to say as a leader is not as important as the thoughts of those present!” - Joel Comiskey. Do you agree with the author? Why or why not?

2. How can we as group leaders allow silence in order to let our group members process the question without things getting uncomfortable or awkward?

3. What is your natural tendency on the continuum below? How do you think you got this way?

   ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO DISCOVER THEIR OWN NEXT STEPS.

   TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY SHOULD DO.

4. In your opinion, is there ever a time when advice giving is appropriate? When would that time be?

5. How can we share the truth in our small group without coming across as the “Bible Expert”?

6. Which one of the following will be easiest for you? Which will be the most challenging?
   - Stop talking - Start listening
   - Stop giving advice - Start facilitating discovery
   - Stop expertise - Start Biblical truth
REVIEW LAST SMALL GROUP TIME:

- What went well?
- What could have been better?
- What can we do to improve the small group time?
- Is there anyone in our group who needs follow up? If so,
  - how can we do that?
- Who do you see making progress spiritually?

NEXT STEPS

1. Read Conversation #4 and write your answers to the questions
2. Set time for your next Leader/Apprentice meeting
3. “I do, you help” in small group this week – review group time at next meeting
4. Review the discussion guide and assign who will do which parts at the next group time
CREATING AN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP ENVIRONMENT
The primary purpose of small group is discipleship. So how do we create an environment where discipleship can happen? Great question, I’m glad you asked.

An Intentional Discipleship Environment (IDE) is:

- Outcome Focused
- Habit Fueled
- Scripture Founded

**OUTCOME FOCUSED**

It is so tempting to lead a small group as if it were a class. I teach, you learn. However, a real discipleship environment is much more then just learning about God, about Jesus and about the Bible. An IDE takes what we learn and uses it as fuel for transformation of our Character and our Calling. An IDE focuses on these outcomes:

**Fruit of the Spirit:**
Christ-like Character

**Gifts of the Spirit:**
Spirit-given Calling

An IDE changes the question from: “What are we studying?” to “How will we be different?”

**HABIT FUELED**

To keep our focus on the outcomes of Character and Calling we focus on habits that lead to these outcomes.

These habits include:

- Bible Reading
- Journaling
- Prayer
- Accountability
- Serving
SCRIPTURE FOUNDED

In any IDE, God’s Word, our Truth source, is foundational regardless of what the “content” is. This means an I.D.M. takes 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to heart: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE FOR TRANSFORMATION

Creating an environment where people can experience transformation can be tricky business. Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and admit we don’t have it all together and that we need to change in order to become more like Jesus…well, it’s just scary. We need to feel relationally safe and emotionally supported in order to embark on a journey of transformation. There are a few tools we can use to help people drop their defenses and begin the journey.

- Group Guidelines
- Discussion Guide
- Preparation
- Hospitality

GROUP GUIDELINES

Asking a group to adhere to a set of guidelines in relationship to others and to the group creates the possibility for emotional and relational safety. Please review the Group Guidelines in appendix 2. Use these Guidelines at the launch of every new group session.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A discussion guide gives you a plan to follow, and trust me you need a plan. A good discussion guide will have these elements:

Questions that help us learn more about each other:

- How did you experience prayer in your house as a child?
- What is one area of your life where you struggle to put your trust in God?
Questions that help us discover truth:

- What stands out to you about this passage of scripture?
- What is God saying to you in this passage?

Questions that help us take next steps:

- What are you going to do based on what God is saying?
- How can we help you take these steps?

H2O – Habits to Outcomes – leave 30 minutes each group time to huddle in groups of 3 (triads). It is in these smaller groups where you can create an environment of accountability. What is God saying to you? What will you do about it? How can we help you? Check in with each other throughout the week regarding your habits of Bible reading, journaling, prayer and service.

A discussion guide that focuses on outcomes will have all of these elements. If the guide you are using does not have these elements, add the in. Be intentional with your environment and you will see transformation.

**PREPARATION**

Pray for your group members and group time

Read over the discussion guide in advance

Write out your answers to the questions

Read the Bible passages and related commentaries in advance

As an Intentional Disciple Maker (IDM) your time in reading the Bible and in prayer has a direct impact on your ability to lead others.

**HOSPITALITY**

It’s best for your group if you have someone else host, so you have help greeting and caring for the group members. Whether it is a roommate, friend or spouse who hosts in your own home, or the group is hosted at someone else’s home, having a warm hospitable environment is a game changer.
• Start and end on time. No exceptions. Seriously. People won’t come back if you consistently go over time. 90 minutes is the ideal time for small group.

• Communicate weekly through text or email. Share prayer requests, remind people of the group and offer encouragement. When someone is missing from the group, reach out and let them know they were missed.

• Have simple snacks and drinks available. Nothing too complicated. Create a sign up sheet and have group members share responsibility for snacks.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which element of the IDE (Outcome focused, Habit fueled, Scripture founded) seems most natural for you to create? How can you keep these three things a priority in your group?

2. After reading the group guidelines, which ones will come naturally for you and which ones might be challenging for you?

3. What discussion guides/small group curriculum have you had experience with in a small group setting? What worked or didn’t work about these different guides?

4. How does carving out time for H2O create increased accountability for your group? How can you insure that you make this part of your group a priority?

5. Of the suggested steps for preparing for your group, which will be easiest and which will be challenging? What is your plan for carving out time to prepare for your group?

6. Evaluate the hosting of your current group. What is going well? What could be improved?
REVIEW LAST SMALL GROUP TIME:

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- Who needs follow up?
- Who do we see taking steps forward?

NEXT STEPS:

- Schedule your next leader/apprentice meeting
- Read Conversation #5 and write your answers to the questions
- “You do, I help” in small group this week
- Review the discussion guide and assign who will do which parts in the group time
MANAGING CHALLENGING PERSONALITIES
Even if you have been attending a small group for just a short time, you know that small groups are made up of unique people with challenging personality types – including me and you.

Check out what Jesus says about some people who sound ready for a good small group:

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few’.” Matthew 9:35-37

These harassed and helpless people are the same people who are ripe for harvest, ripe for finding their way back to God. These people who are sheep without a shepherd are the kind of people you will find in your small group.

Skilled small group leaders recognize the importance of balancing grace for the challenging personalities on one hand, with the needs of everyone in the group on the other. The following are some common personality characteristics that might call for some extra attention from the group leader:

- **MONOPOLIZING MIKE**

  Mike talks from the moment he enters the room until the moment he leaves. He shares the same stories over and over whether they are relevant to the subject of group time or not. When Mike begins to talk, the group settles in for the long haul and appears bored and restless, and often the energy is drained from the discussion time.
• **SHY SHERRY:**

Sherry seldom shares in small group time. She has trouble looking people in the eye when she does talk. She attends group regularly, but the group members know very little about her. It is easy to forget that she is even there.

• **EXPERT ED:**

Ed is an expert on every topic, especially the Bible. When the group discusses any topic, Ed always chimes in with the “right” answer. Once Ed shares his thoughts or opinions, the rest of the group is reluctant to share because Ed clearly believes he is always right. Ed begins his sentences with statements like, “Clearly, the Bible is saying ______.” Or “Don’t you know that it means ______?”

• **ANNE THE ADVICE GIVER:**

Annie knows what everyone should do, and is looking for opportunities to share her advice. Often when a group member shares a struggle, Annie will immediately say, “you SHOULD ______.” Although Annie desires to be helpful, her advice is usually unsolicited and simplistic.

• **PAUL THE PARENT:**

Paul started bringing his newborn baby to small group when she was just 2 weeks old. It was fine in the beginning; the baby slept through the whole group and no one even knew she was there. As time went by, Paul’s amazingly cute and quiet baby turned into an even more adorable toddler. She walked around the group sitting on each person’s lap while the group gushed over her. Although fun for everyone, Paul’s daughter was becoming a distraction, keeping the group from being able to experience a meaningful discussion.
Although the above characteristics present different challenges for the group, the interventions are similar:

- **INTERVENTION #1 - PRAY FOR GOD’S WISDOM.**

- **INTERVENTION #2 - BE PREPARED TO INTERRUPT.**
  
  Although we were taught as children never to interrupt, as a small group leader, interrupting someone can be a great gift to the group. The group will be relieved that someone is in charge and will thank you under their breath. Acknowledging what you are doing may ease the awkwardness of interrupting someone. A group leader can say something like, “Annie, I am so sorry. I am interrupting; I think we need to move on from here and go to this next question.”

- **INTERVENTION #3 - AFFIRM APPROPRIATE SHARING.**
  
  When the difficult personality demonstrates positive sharing in group time, affirm them with a comment like, “thank you for sharing.” After group time you might say, “Ed, when you asked what others thought about the text instead of sharing your opinion right away, it really helped other group members open up; that was great.”

- **INTERVENTION #4 - TALK TO THE PERSON OUTSIDE OF GROUP TIME.**
  
  Most difficult people do not want to be difficult. You may say something like, “Mike, I’ve noticed that Sherry does not talk very much in group time. I was wondering if you could help me out. Would you be willing to keep your thoughts quiet for the first half of small group next week? Perhaps if there is some silence in group time, Sherry will be able to organize her thoughts and be willing to share.”

- **INTERVENTION #5 - GET HELP.**
  
  The personalities we shared here are pretty mild concerns that happen in all group settings.
Sometimes we come across group members who have personality issues that are more severe (i.e., divisiveness, clinical depression, severe marital difficulties, or personality disorders). On these rare occasions, seek the advice of your coach or ministry director. There are times when we may need to advise a group member to seek professional counseling. Always consult with your coach if you have a group member you believe is potentially harmful to themselves or others.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Jesus described the people like sheep without a shepherd. Why do you think he used this metaphor?

2. What characteristics are common with the harassed and helpless people of our culture?

3. What do you find scary about people who seem harassed and helpless? Or what draws you to them?

4. What are some of the challenging personalities you have encountered in your experiences in small group?

5. In the movie Star Trek, Spock said, “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.” Do you think this statement applies to small groups? Why or why not? Is there ever a time when the needs of the individual come before the needs of the group? If so, what might be the circumstances?

6. Okay, okay....we know YOU could not possibly have a challenging personality, but if you had to pick one, which of the characters most resembles you in your weakest moments?

7. Which of the interventions listed above do you feel most comfortable with? Least comfortable with?
REVIEW LAST SMALL GROUP TIME:

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- Who needs follow up?
- Who do we see taking steps forward?

NEXT STEPS

- Schedule your next leader/apprentice meeting
- Read Conversation #5 and write your answers to the questions
- “You do, I watch” in small group this week
- Review the discussion guide and assign who will do which parts in the group time
WHAT'S NEXT?
DEVELOPING 
AN APPRENTICE
“My fruit grows on other people’s trees.”
-Bob Buford, founder of Leadership Network and author of Half Time

Read Exodus 18: 12-23

WHY SHOULD I HAVE AN APPRENTICE LEADER?

Restore has chosen to follow the Leadership Structure laid out by Jethro in his conversation with Moses.

- Apprentice Leader
- Leader – develops and cares for an apprentice leader(s)
- Coach – cares for and develops up to 5 leaders
- Small Group staff director cares for and develops coaches

With intentional and ongoing leadership development, we believe that more and more people will find their way back to God.

Paul writes about leadership development in his letter to Timothy. The strategy of the early church was to develop and disciple leaders who then developed and discipled more leaders. And the early church grew exponentially as a result.

Read 2 Timothy 2:2

The more leaders we have the more people can grow in their relationship with God and others.
WHO SHOULD BE AN APPRENTICE LEADER?

So, you may be wondering who should be your first apprentice? Great question! Here are some things to look for in your apprentice:

- Faithful—they have good momentum and direction towards God.
- Available—they can make space in their life for Small Group leadership.
- Teachable—they are open to growing and learning more all the time.

HOW DO I DEVELOP AN APPRENTICE LEADER?

Have an ICNU conversation (simply means tell someone what you see in them, why do you think they’d make a great leader?). Grab a copy of this playbook and work through it with your apprentice, and follow the “I do, you watch, we talk” process outlined, while discipling them along the way.
WHAT WE BELIEVE
ABOUT GOD

We believe there is one divine being who has existed eternally (Genesis 1:1-2, John 1:1-3). He exists and reveals Himself to man in three distinct, equally divine persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 14:16 & 17). While we cannot fully comprehend His divine nature, it is possible for people to know Him. At the beginning of time, God created the entire universe and all its creatures (Genesis 1, Psalm 102:25-27, Hebrews 1:10-13). He continues to exercise His supreme power to sustain His creation (Colossians 1:15-20). Throughout history He has expressed His desire to be our God and to have a personal, eternal relationship with us (Deuteronomy 4:32-35, I Thessalonians 5:9 & 10). We believe that God loves us and wants what is best for us (John 3:16).

ABOUT JESUS

We believe that Jesus is the eternal divine Son of God (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-20). He chose voluntarily to be made in human likeness and was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Luke 1:34). Although He lived a sinless life, He allowed Himself to be executed by crucifixion. His death paid the penalty for the sin of mankind against God (Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:20). However, as prophesied, He rose from the dead three days after His execution (Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:36-43). After appearing to witnesses on a number of occasions for forty days, He ascended into heaven where He now serves as the Mediator between God and man (Matthew 28:16-20, John 21:1, Acts 1:9-11). We believe that at the end of time on earth, He will again visibly return to earth to complete His eternal plan (II Thessalonians 2:8-12, II Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 1:17, 22:7).

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

ABOUT MAN

God created mankind to live in relationship with Him (Genesis 2:15-18, 3:8). However, the first man and woman were deceived by Satan (Genesis 3:1). They rebelled and chose to be wrongfully independent from God (Genesis 3:6 & 7). Their decision alienated them from God (Genesis 3:21-24, Romans 5:12). Every human being since that time has suffered the consequences of that rebellion (Romans 5:18 & 19). We all fail to please God and are open to Satan’s deception (Romans 3:23 & 24). Our failure to please God, unless a relationship is reestablished with Him, results in condemnation under God’s judgment and would cause us to spend eternity in hell (Luke 13:1-5). Furthermore, there is nothing we can do on our own to reestablish our relationship with God (John 8:34-36).

ABOUT THE BIBLE

God divinely inspired human authors to write the sixty-six books of the Bible. He communicated through these writers the values, principles, and ideals which please Him and are in our best interests (II Peter 3:15 & 16, II Timothy 3:16 & 17). We believe the Bible is entirely accurate, complete, and reliable. We look to the Bible for the revelation of the character of God and the final authority on all matters of faith and conduct (Deuteronomy 6:24 & 25).

ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Our inability to reestablish our relationship with God leaves us dependent on God’s mercy (Romans 3:23). God graciously provided the means to reconcile this relationship through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, Romans 5:11, I Corinthians 15:56 & 57, Colossians 18-23). Our relationship is reestablished when we make a commitment to accept Jesus as God’s Son and our Savior and Lord (Romans 6:23, Acts 2:38). Through faith in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life (John 16:12-15, Hebrews 10:12-14, I Peter 3:18-22).

Practically speaking, this acceptance is demonstrated through both a private and public commitment. We demonstrate our commitment privately by faith (acting upon our belief that God has the power to save us) and repentance (turning back to God and depending on Him to control our lives). We publicly express our commitment by confessing our acceptance of God’s salvation and submitting ourselves in Christian baptism (Acts 2:38, 8:34-39, I Peter 3:21 & 22).
ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Once our relationship is reestablished with God, we naturally want to spend time with Him and know Him better (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27). The Holy Spirit enlightens us as we read God’s Word, the Bible, as we communicate with Him in prayer, and as we enter into loving relationships, with other Christ followers in biblical community. (II Peter 1:3-8). In this way, we begin to know God more intimately.

As we become acquainted with God we desire to be like Him and please Him (Galatians 2:20). This process of spiritual development motivates us to seek ways to serve God and prepares us to spend eternity in fellowship with Him (James 2:14-17, Revelation 21:5).

ABOUT THE CHURCH

We believe the Church represents Jesus Christ to a needy world (John 17:11-18, Ephesians 3:10). The Bible speaks of the Church as Christ’s body (I Corinthians 6:15, Colossians 1:18). It compares it to a living organism, where Jesus is the head (I Corinthians 11:13, Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 5:23). God arranges the parts of the body, Christ-followers, just as He wants them to be. He gives each Christ-follower special functions to perform for the good of the body (I Corinthians 12:4-11). To remain healthy, the body’s members must work together (John 17:20-23, Romans 15:5-7, I Corinthians 1:10). Each part contributes to the growth and maturity of the body (Acts 4:32-35, Romans 12:4-8). God works through the Church to reconcile a lost world to Himself through Jesus Christ.

For this reason, it is important for Christ-followers to regularly gather together for the purpose of celebration (Acts 2:42). During celebration, Christ-followers are equipped, built up, and encouraged through teaching, fellowship, prayer, and communion (I Corinthians 11:23-26, Galatians 6:1-2). Celebration in this way enables believers to serve one another and the unchurched people in their sphere of influence (Exodus 34:10).
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SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES
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The purpose of this group is to grow in love towards God and others. As we grow, we will experience transformation in our character and we will begin to live out our calling (purpose).

We will use scripture as the basis of our discussion, but we understand that the content of our discussion is not the goal, it is a vehicle for transformation of character and calling.

We encourage the habits of scripture reading, prayer and accountability to fuel our transformation.

We agree to the following expectations:

- This group will normally meet every ____________(day) at ______________(time).
- We will end by ____________ (time). Starting and ending on time is our priority
- We will meet at ___________________________________________________________________________________________ (address)

We agree to the following values:

1. Priority

   Because we believe in the value of community, we agree to give priority to our group meetings. If we are running late, or cannot attend we will let the group know.

2. Confidentiality

   We agree that whatever is shared here stays here. This includes what is shared through phone calls, e-mails, etc. We want this group to be a safe place to grow.

3. Participation

   Everyone is encouraged to participate equally without any one person dominating the discussion.
4. Openness

We will seek to be open and honest with each other. Our small group is a place where we can take off our masks, be ourselves, and be accepted for who we are.

5. Respect

We agree to communicate in ways that are respectful, and to give advice only when it is requested. We will strive to be available to one another and listen, encourage, support, and tell the truth in loving ways.

6. Open Chair

We agree to keep an empty chair for others and seek to reach out to people like us who need this place of caring and growth.

7. Mission

We plan to develop an apprentice leader, so that the group can eventually multiply creating even more space for others to get connected.

__________________________________________ __________________
Signature      Date