



Serve, Support, Strengthen

Small Group Leader Training Manual

Equipping Leaders to Shepherd and Serve



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Why Small Groups Matter

- Small groups foster deeper relationships, creating fellowship

Read these verses and fill in the missing words

Make; unity; bond

Ephesians 4:3: "_____ every effort to keep the _____ of the Spirit through the _____ of peace."

Burdens, fulfill, Christ

Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's _____, and in this way, you will _____ the law of _____."

Ourselves together; one another

Hebrews 10:25 NKJV "not forsaking the assembling of _____, _____, as is the manner of some, but exhorting _____, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- They provide a space for personal spiritual growth.
- Opportunity for practical application of the Word.
- Encourage accountability and mutual support.
- Core to fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)



The Role of a Small Group Leader

Life group leaders play a vital role in the spiritual health and growth of the church community. They are more than facilitators of discussions; they are shepherds who care for the spiritual, emotional, and relational well-being of their group members. These leaders create safe, welcoming environments where people can build authentic relationships, explore God's Word together, and grow in their faith. Life group leaders also provide guidance, support, and accountability, helping individuals navigate personal challenges and victories. By modeling Christ-like leadership, they

empower others to serve, disciple, and fulfill the Great Commission within a close-knit, supportive community.

Ask the group leaders to read through these passages, bring out the main thoughts regarding leadership

- 1 Peter 5:2-3 Shepherd and serve
- Mark 10:45 Willing and eager heart
- Matthew 20:26-28 Jesus is our role model
- John 13:14-15 Humility and servant heart
- Acts 20:28 Servant leadership
- Philippians 2:3-4 Caring and overseeing
- 2 Timothy 2:24-25 *Leaders are called to serve with humility and prioritize the needs of others.*

Ask the group to create a list in one minute of what the responsibility of a small group leader is.

- 1) Shepherd the group with love and care (1 Peter 5:2-3).
- 2) Facilitate meaningful discussions. This means preparation and prayer has to go into the planning. Even if you are using a video, make sure you are prepared. To be prepared means the video is already loaded and tested. You know what the content is about. You have created discussion points.

Let the leaders form groups of 3 or 4 people and read this verse to each other. Ask them what they think it means

Read 1 Peter 3:15 “always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”

- 3) Provide spiritual encouragement and accountability. Pray for your leaders and their family regularly. Create a members group such as an online group, or paper based group with information pertinent to your members. Make it clear that this is an open and accepting place where people learn to trust each other. For leaders and members, gently remind them of the

importance of maintaining their own Bible reading, prayer life, and personal walk with God. Encourage them to stay rooted in Christ (John 15:4-5) Help them process any difficult situations they encounter within the group and provide biblical advice or resources. This kind of mentorship helps strengthen their spiritual leadership and keeps them accountable to God's calling. **Ask leaders about answered prayers, check whether they are coping and encourage personal growth**

- 4) Pray for your members regularly. Create a members group such as an online group, or paper-based group with information pertinent to your members.
- 5) Foster an environment of trust and openness.



Building Relationships

- Focus on personal connections, not just Bible study.
- Spend time getting to know your members.
- Actively listen and be present.
- Celebrate milestones (birthdays, anniversaries, achievements).
- Encourage members to engage outside the group setting.

Notes:

Effective Facilitation

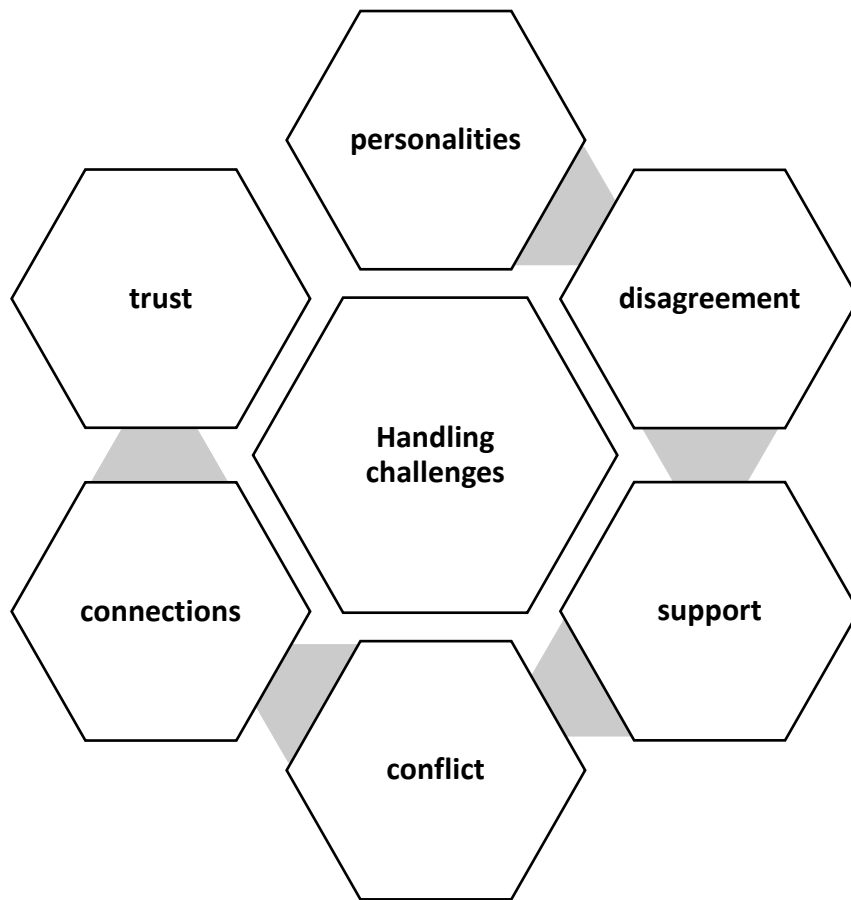
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Encourage participation from everyone, but be sensitive to the room. If someone needs to be quiet, then allow them but let people know questions are welcome
- Be sensitive to different perspectives.
- Stay on topic, but allow for meaningful tangents.
- Use a variety of formats (discussion, study, prayer, worship).

Notes:

Handling Challenges

- 1) Dealing with different personalities. It might be beneficial to do personality or temperament workshop for leaders.
- 2) Handling theological disagreements. Encourage humble and respectful dialogue. Focus on core beliefs, and main focus point. It is ok to say you can come back to the issue and research it. Use scripture as the final authority, and encourage members to do the same. Know when to pause the discussion. It might be wise to revisit the conversation later, or in a private conversation.
- 3) Supporting members through personal crises.
 - Listen with compassion and patience
 - Allow the person to share their struggles without interruption or judgment.
 - Active listening shows care and validates their emotions, fostering trust and connection.
 - Pray and offer spiritual support
 - Pray with and for the person regularly, reminding them of God's presence and faithfulness during difficult times.
 - Share relevant Bible verses or spiritual insights to encourage them and point them to God's promises, without being overwhelming.
 - Connect them with resources and practical help
 - Offer guidance by connecting them with appropriate church resources, professional counsellors, or support networks. If possible, coordinate practical help (e.g., meals, transportation, or childcare) through the life group to meet their immediate needs.
- 4) Addressing conflict within the group.

Add in any points to the image that you can think of.



Spiritual Leadership

Lead by example in your walk with Christ (1 Timothy 4:12).

Be diligent in your own prayer and Bible study life. Tips for improving our own spiritual life

1. Set a specific time and place: Choose a regular time of day for Bible reading and prayer, whether in the morning or evening, and stick to it. Setting a designated space for this quiet time can help create a habit and reduce distractions. Even 10-15 minutes daily can make a difference.
2. Use a Bible reading plan: Books, apps, topical studies thematic study all helps keep us focused and give direction.
3. Start with prayer: Before you read, ask God to give you understanding and reveal how the passage applies to your life. This opens your heart to hear from Him and helps you focus on spiritual growth rather than just reading for knowledge.
4. Journal your thoughts and prayers
5. Keep it simple and consistent
6. Model humility, patience, and love.

7. Encourage group members in their personal spiritual growth.

8. Disciple and raise up future leaders.

Notes:

Fostering Prayer in the Group

- Lead prayer with sincerity and openness.
- Encourage members to pray for each other.
- Create an atmosphere where prayer is natural and comfortable.
- Keep a record of prayer requests and updates.
- Celebrate answered prayers and offer support for ongoing needs.

Notes:

Serving Together

- Encourage the group to serve together in church ministries.
- Plan outreach or service projects as a group.
- Emphasize the importance of using spiritual gifts for the kingdom.
- Serve the group itself through care and support.

Notes:

Creating a Healthy Group Environment

- Be authentic and friendly
- Care when someone has an off week
- Create a space where everyone feels welcome and included.
- Be aware of the different spiritual maturity levels within the group.
- Foster a sense of belonging and community.

- Respect confidentiality and build trust.

Notes:

Handling Logistics

- Choose a consistent meeting time and location. Choosing life group according to location seems practical, and can encourage friendships
- Communicate clearly and regularly with the group.
- Use tools (email, messaging apps) to stay connected between meetings.
- Be mindful of the length of the meetings.
- Plan group social activities outside of study times.

Notes:

Supporting the Church's Vision

- Align the small group with the church's overall mission and goals.
- Encourage participation in church-wide initiatives.
- Be a link between your group and church leadership.
- Make sure your group remains focused on Christ and His mission.

Notes:

Resources for Leaders

- Books, devotionals, and Bible study guides.
- Podcasts or sermons from trusted sources.
- Church leadership meetings and training.
- Online tools for facilitating group discussion.

Notes:

Structuring a bible study

- Open with a welcome and prayer
- Ask random Bible quiz questions, on the level of your audience, which will be interesting and make them think, but not let them feel intimidated.
- Give an overview of the topic, and close with the overview as well
- Encourage members to use their own Bibles, hardcover or Bible apps
- Have readings, where volunteers are allowed to read. If someone is not keen, it should not be a problem as we want people to feel comfortable and non-threatened

Notes:

Closing

You are an essential part of God's work in this church. Leading a small group is a privileged task, and God has called and equipped you for this role. Keep pressing forward, trusting in His guidance.

What happens when the life group grows?

A good size for a Bible study group typically ranges from 6 to 12 people. This size is ideal because it allows for meaningful participation, where everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts and insights, while still fostering a sense of intimacy and community. Smaller groups create a more comfortable environment for personal reflection and discussion, making it easier to build relationships and provide spiritual support. Groups larger than 12 may struggle with effective engagement, and discussions can become less personal. However, the group size can vary depending on the nature of the study and the dynamics of the participants. Bigger groups might attract people, but people grow in fellowship, friendship and support in the smaller groups. If you have a large group, it might be a good idea to split into smaller groups at times.