

Small Group Leader Onboarding

Agenda:

Session 1: Healthy Small Group Leaders

Session 2: Healthy Ministry: Shepherd, Teacher, Leader

Session 3: Healthy Rhythms

Introduction

What's the win for group life? Why do groups meet?

Our Hope For Groups

It's the primary place where the church family practices accountability, belonging and care.

When someone is "cut to the heart" on a Sunday morning and responds in repentance, small groups help hold that person accountable.

It's how we practice the "One Anothers." It's how we protect ourselves from blindspots.

Without a group, think about how few minutes a week people get to be who they really are (with their hopes, injuries, feelings, and fears) with other supportive people and God in the room.

"I genuinely want to go because I get to spend time with people who care about the most important things in my life."

How do we get a group like that?

Vision:

Groups are disciple making communities practicing the "One Anothers" for the glory of God.

2 Cor 3:17-18 As we behold God's glory, we are being transformed into the same image.

Session 1 Healthy Small Group Leaders

Describe a really good leader from a group you've been in.
What made them great?

The #1 determinant of a Healthy Group is Healthy Small Group Leaders

The 5 C's of Influence

1. Character Your group's health and growth is more dependent on your spiritual health and character. The other 4 cs flow from Character.

Christian leadership is not primarily about skill, ability, personality, or a voice that carries a commanding presence. Good leadership arises first from character. A heart position of humility, a pursuit of holiness in reliance upon the Holy Spirit, that flows from a desire for God's glory.

Consider Moses, David and the first disciples

- a. Moses: Ex 3:11-12
 - b. David: 1 Samuel 16:6-12
 - c. Fishermen, tax collectors
2. Chemistry: Do We "Fit" together?

To lead well, you'll need to know the goals. Where are we trying to go?

Gospel City is about fulfilling the Great Commission, In the spirit of the great commandment. (Matthew 28:18-20. Matt. 22:38-40)

Gospel City vision: We want to Love God, Love People, and Make Disciples of All Nations

- a. 4 Distinctives
 - i. Bold, exegetical preaching
 - ii. Vertical, fervent worship
 - iii. Unceasing, passionate prayer
 - iv. Unafraid, Living sent evangelism
- b. 4 Gs
 - i. Glorify
 - ii. Gather
 - iii. Grow
 - iv. Go

This is who WE all are. But I want God to use YOU, your personality, gifts and experience to think, adapt, and contextualize to your group. You know your group better than anyone. As a leader, you might be the only one with the relational capital to say something hard.

We'll need to know you well too.

Outside of your family, how many people do you know really well? Names of their kids, crises they're facing, besetting sins.

We can't know all of you as well as I'd like.

Flock Leaders are so key here.

Know your Flock Leader.

If your Flock Leader isn't reaching out to you. Reach out to them! Grab lunch with them.

And with your pastor/Director.

3. Commitment

- Prayer
- Consistency- Have a consistent rhythm. Meet when you say you'll meet.
 - This fosters trust. Do what you say you'll do.
 - Some of the best small groups are when 1-4 people show up.
- Communication To your leaders and to your group
 - Regular communication throughout the week with your members
 - 2x per month w/ your Flock Leaders/Pastor/Director
- Preparation

4. Capacity

Do you have the capacity in your life to lead?

What are your priorities? List them.

What "Gets your time/focus" throughout the week, during a year?

5. Competence

How has God wired you? Has he made you into the kind of person that can foster community?

Session 2: Healthy Ministry: Shepherd, Teacher, Leader

Small Group Shepherd:

The One Anothers:

- **Love** one another (John 13:34 - This command occurs at least 16 times)
- Be **devoted** to one another (Romans 12:10)
- **Honor** one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)
- Live in **harmony** with one another (Romans 12:16)
- **Build up** one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- **Serve** one another (Galatians 5:13; Philippians 2:4)
- **Bear** one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:13)
- **Forgive** one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
- Be **patient** with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
- Be **kind** and **compassionate** to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- **Comfort** one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- **Confess your sins** to one another (James 5:16)
- **Pray** for one another (James 5:16)

Care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:14-25)

...But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

* Here is a model we use at Gospel City Church to demonstrate **CARE** for one another and demonstrate to a lost world that we are Believers!

A Framework for CARE

Connect

Connecting Before Correcting (Pr 18:13; Heb 14:15-16). Listen well.

- Exercise Hospitality : (1 Peter 4:9)
 - **Be Vulnerable:** Creating a safe place w/ No condemnation
 - **Demonstrate Compassion:** Listen well and be empathetic, be longsuffering, and patient (2 Tim 2:24-26)
 - **Go Vertical:** Go to the Scriptures in your life and others whenever you get the chance. Remind them of the gospel. The greatest problem has been solved!
 - **Pray**

Assess

Assess by Drawing Out the Heart (Pr 20:5):

Fruit always points to the root (since we are theological beings, everything we do is a demonstration of what we think about God. Our hearts are revealed through our behaviors, & thoughts.

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” – Luke 6:45

- **FRUIT** —
 - What’s their tone
 - What’s their countenance
 - What’s their body language
 - What are their behaviors? (**Angry, Foolish, Despairing, Fearful**)
- **TRUNK** —

Ask Heart Revealing Questions & get to the root of their heart
(Questions Prick the Conscience and accusations harden the heart)

 - Can you describe the situation? (Pr 18:13, 15, 17)
 - What were you thinking/feeling? (Psalm 139:23-24; Eph 4:22-24)
 - What did you want? (Matthew 6:19-21)
 - How did you respond? (Luke 6:43-45)
 - What was the outcome/consequences? (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - What is God trying to teach you? (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Listen to Understand vs. listening to Respond
(Draw out, don't give your opinion to solve the problem too quickly)

 - What lies are you choosing to believe (1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 10:5)
 - Look to clarify patterns of thinking.

- **ROOT —**
 - Discern the motives that drive thoughts and actions
 - What do they want that they are not getting or what are they getting that they do not want? (What they want could be sinful... Control, comfort, selfishness)
 - What do they believe about themselves and about God?

Respond

Respond in Grace and Truth (Jn 1:14-17; Gal 6:1-2)

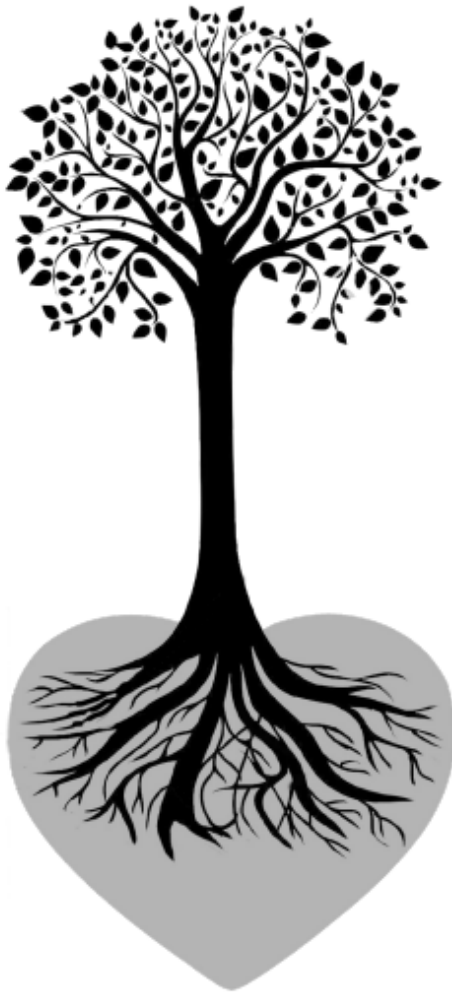
- **Relate & Acknowledge:** Let them know you heard them, you can understand where they are coming from, you see them, and you are praying for them. Let them know they are not a burden etc.... Reframe their issue biblically and **center their identity in Christ!**
- **Give Lasting Hope** (1 Cor. 10:13) **Remind them Biblical hope is a sure thing (Heb. 6:19-20).** Ways to give hope include:
 - i. Point them to the promises of God (Rom. 8:28-29; Rom. 5:1-5; 2 Pet. 1:3-4)
 - ii. Give testimonies of others as well as your own.
 - iii. Minister the word compassionately. Do not just dispense it.
 - It is better to give a few scriptures rather than too many.
 - Help the small group member to understand the Scriptures verse by verse rather than superficially skimming the surface.
- **Restore If Necessary:** the goal is always reconciliation and restoration, where or if necessary seek to bring restoration. More than likely, that will be the best form of encouragement and love they have faced!

Encourage

Encourage Abiding in Christ and Application in Community (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

- **Encourage** does not mean “don’t exhort.” Sometimes the best encouragement comes in the form of an exhortation!
 - **Discern** Next Steps: Hope Groups, Counseling, Further meetings etc...
 - **Develop** a Care Plan: Read a book, pray, journal, don't be afraid to give them some homework!
 - **Consult** with Flock Leader and or Pastor if necessary and give informed consent (let them know you will be talking to Flock Leader, if it's needed)
- **Discuss** what part of the C.A.R.E. model would be hardest for you.

THE FRUIT TO ROOT DIAGRAM



Describe the situation ... what was your response to it?

FRUIT (BEHAVIOR)

ANGER

Interrupting / Defensive
Impatient / Irritable
Critical / Judgmental
Sarcastic / Harsh

FOOLISHNESS

Deceiving / Lying
Joking / Distracting
Insensitive / Immature
Attention-seeking / Emotional

DESPAIR

Hiding / Escaping
Complaining / Grumbling
Lonely / Dependent
Self-conscious / Shy

FEAR

Controlling / Avoiding
Second-guessing
People-pleasing
Enabling / Appeasing

What did you think or feel in this situation?

TRUNK (THOUGHTS)

ANGER

Bitter / Vengeful thoughts
Condemning / Judging
I'm right / Can't be wrong
I'm entitled

FOOLISHNESS

Selfish / Blame-shifting
Obsessive / Fantasizing
I'm a trouble maker
I can't help it

DESPAIR

Defeated / Doubting
Self-pity / Jealousy
I'm a loser / Why go on?
I'm unworthy

FEAR

Perfectionistic / Self-protective
Victim mentality / Shame
I'm damaged goods
I'm unlovable

What did you want?

ROOT (MOTIVES)

ANGER

Control
Authority
Power

FOOLISHNESS

Pleasure
Attention
Greed

DESPAIR

Comfort
Affirmation
Escape

FEAR

Security
Acceptance
Peace

The Small group Teacher:

Core Classes are the best environment for **learning** the Bible. (Great Content)

Home Groups are the best environment for **living** the Bible in community. (Great Care)

Men's and Women's are a great balance.

How to lead a good discussion:

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

As a teacher, your job is to help the group grow through a knowledge of the scriptures:

1. What's Right, through **teaching**
2. What's not right, through **reproof**
3. How to get right, through **correction**
4. How to stay right, through **training in righteousness**

Asking good questions is one of the most important skills for you to hone.

- 1. So many questions kill discussion, kill thinking. We've all heard them:**
 - a. How much should we love Jesus? (obvious)
 - b. Did Jesus show humility? So Should we? (rhetorical)
 - c. When did the Exodus happen? (Right/Wrong)
 - d. How can we love God? (vague)
- 2. Heart-Targeting vs. Behavior-Oriented Questions**
 - a. Don't ask: What can you do to stop blowing up when you're angry?
 - b. Ask: What lies are you believing in your moment of anger?
 - c. What are you trying to accomplish when you're using anger?
- 3. Extending Questions**
 - a. 3 powerful phrases that communicate "We want to actually hear from you."
 - i. What do you mean?
 - ii. Tell me more...
 - iii. Really?
- 4. Redirecting Questions**
 - a. Don't let those who talk more dominate your discussions.
 - b. Invite others by asking: Joe, what do you think about this?
 - c. We'd love to hear what you have to say.
- 5. Clarifying Questions**
 - a. Don't be afraid to seek clarification; don't leave things unclear
 - b. Instead, ask: Can you be more specific?"; "What I hear you saying is..."
- 6. Application Questions**
 - a. Don't just ask "what" questions: What three things would help a person struggling with fear?

- b. Ask “how” questions: How exactly are you going to apply what we just learned in the next week?

7. Interactive Questions:

- a. Why do you think....
- b. How would you have reacted.....
- c. How would you explain this to a non-Christian?

8. Wait time: They haven’t thought about it as long as you have.

- a. Be ok with awkwardness.
- b. Be OK saying I don’t know. Let’s both research and come back next week with what we’ve discovered.
- c. Be open to the spirit
 - i. Pause and pray... Linger. Don’t get in a hurry.
 - ii. Acknowledge, respond. Practice active listening.
 - iii. Know when to chase the rabbit

Small Group Leader. It’s not what you do. It’s what others do because of your leadership.

Leader-only ownership is a ticking time bomb for burnout.
It prevents the flourishing of the gifts of others.

Announcements: Have a plan and stick to it. Plan for fun, service, breaks.

Prayer Requests: Journal them and remember what God has done and is doing in your group.

Following up with absent members. As soon as the group is over, text non-communicating absentees letting them know they were missed, and asking how the group can serve them. Asking them if they’ll be there next week.

Meal/snacks: Some groups do a meal each time. Some do snacks, some just drinks, share the loads. Break bread together occasionally.

Allows the others in your group to discover and operate in their natural giftings/skill sets.

Hosting: It’s great if the leader isn’t also the host. Don’t feel the need to have everything just right. It’s good to allow people to see your house as it actually is the rest of the week.

Leave the dishes in the sink and members/like family just help you do dishes before group?

One way to know if your home is their home: Will they open your fridge?

It’s not only vital for **you** to give these things away. It’s important that **your group takes**, and owns the group’s success. **It gives them opportunity to grow in their own gifting.**

The best thing you can give away is **your group itself!**

Leverage your group for the greater good of the community. In your neighborhood:

Meet neighbors

Know their names

Bring a welcome basket to a new neighbor

Offer help

Throw a party

Halloween

Have a garage sale

See groups as part of the larger vision for Gospel City to Love God, Love People and Make Disciples of all nations.

Through multiplication.

Every group will end. How will yours?

Will it fizzle out over the course of a year?

Splinters into other groups?

Or can you help fulfill the mission of the church to make disciples by planting a new group?

Session 3: Healthy Group Rhythms

An Evening in Group

Creating an atmosphere of vulnerability and trust through hospitality

Meet when you say you'll meet. Begin and end on time.

Be warm, hospitable, inviting and other-focused.

Allow room for some lingering (Be ready early, stay late)

Cancel rarely. Some of the most effective times in groups are when just a few show.

Announcements

Communication can work in many different ways. Learn how your group likes to communicate and work to do it that way

- Emails
- Text threads
- Group messaging apps
- Facebook page

Be consistent, follow through, but don't bombard them!

Discussion

Prepare to Lead Well

PRAY

- Pray for your small group!
- Consider your group as you pray—the struggles you know they may be dealing with and what God may be teaching them.
- Pray that God would reveal to you areas that would be good topics of discussion and that He would lay on your heart topics and questions that would relate to your group.

PLAN

- Set some time aside to look over the discussion plan, group questions or whatever you have decided to focus on for your group time.
- Have a plan of where you want your small group discussions to end. We always want to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit leading our discussion, but go into this time with a plan of what questions you want to get to, what topics you want to discuss and even specific people you want to hear from.
- Be aware of your time and know how much time you want to allot for certain questions.

PREPARE YOURSELF

- Know yourself well enough to know what time and space you need to be ready to lead
- Prepare your heart to lead your group and examine yourself for anything that might hinder you from leading well.

- Challenge yourself to dig deeper, to grow in understanding of context and interpretation.
- Prepare to be as vulnerable as you expect your small group to be.

Discussion that Draws out the Heart

- The goal of group discussion is to amplify the results of each person's individual response through their interaction together.
 - Drive heart change discussions rather than behavior change. Though the outcome of heart change will be evident in external behavior, we want to be discussing what God is doing in our hearts and celebrate the outcomes (God Sighting Stories!)
- God's work achieves its life-changing effect on people through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The effective group leader will act as a guide, not as an authority and teacher, recognizing the authority is the Bible and the teacher is the Holy Spirit.
 - You can be such a leader and teacher as you rely on the Holy Spirit to turn the Bible discussion group into a fruitful ministry which will bring women to salvation and change lives for all eternity.

Accountability

The secret sauce of friendship: "What you too!" Learn that you're not the only one who:

- Struggles with doubt
- Doesn't like to read
- Drops the ball on your family
- Start with a smile on Sunday but end the day in anger
- **Give the gift of going 2nd (be willing to share first & model)**

Your group should feel like a hospital waiting room, not a job interview waiting room

Have a mechanism in place to call someone back when the sharing moves from reflection on self.

Use biblical terms for our issues

Accountability Questions: Guardrails at the top or a trauma hospital below?

When confronted with temptation, accountability forces you into one of 3 decisions:

1. Sin and hide it during accountability. Fake it... Which will harden your heart.
2. Sin and confess it.
3. Don't sin

Questions to ask weekly:

1. Worship attendance/participation: What was meaningful to you from this Sunday's service? (Don't let folks get comfortable watching online weekly)
2. Evangelism: "Were you able to engage someone with the gospel (or at least spiritual things) this past week?"

3. Serving: “How did you serve others this week? Are you being useful to the body? How is that going? How are you growing in your gifting?
4. Bible Reading: What is your current plan to spend time with the Lord in His word daily? What is he teaching you currently? (share a verse)
5. Sin Mortification: How are you waging war against sin? What temptations have you met? How were you delivered? What have you thought, said or done this week that dishonored God?
 - a. Prayer (Ps. 51, Ps. 139:23-24)
 - b. Corporate and personal worship (2 Chron. 20:21)
 - c. Armor up (Eph. 6:10-18)
 - d. Preaching the gospel to others and yourself (Eph. 6:19-20)
 - e. Fight for delight (desiringgod.org)

Prayer

Make sure you save the time for it!

- Be specific in prayer requests and try to direct prayers for HEART issues over PHYSICAL NEEDS.
- Find scriptures to accompany the prayer request.
- Come up with an action plan, and have them write it down!
- Follow up! Encourage and ask how the action plan is going.

Here are a few great ways I have seen prayer time organized:

1. Have them partner up, and follow up
2. Using note cards or sticky notes
4. If you are crunched for time, have each person pray their own prayer
5. Suggest a theme from that week’s discussion

Every Week in Group

- Text the group once
- Email reminders/Questions
- Contact Absentees after Group
- Read the Gazette on Friday Evenings/Saturday Morning

Every Month in Group

- Connect with your Flock Leader (Phone call, meal, coffee... but more than text)
- Connect with any new members
- Update group roster
- Once an apprentice has been identified (sometime between 6-12 months) allow them to lead,

Every Quarter in Group

- Have a 1 on 1 with someone in your group
- Make a plan.
 - Plan out meetings, service projects, weeks off
 - Develop a rhythm that is sustainable for your group and your family. Think through vacations, etc. In most contexts, we'll take a break in December and Summer. You don't have to.
 - Communicate that plan to group and do your very best to live it out
- Invite feedback from the group "How are we doing at accountability, belonging and care?"
 - Ask: Are we accomplishing the vision for groups?
 - Exhort members to step into roles that serve the group
 - Pray with apprentice for your group by name
- Kill the elephants
 - Conversation feels sluggish lately, Why do you think that is?

Every Year in Group

- Attend 3-4 trainings
- Make sure your group has been evaluated at least once by a flock leader or a ministry leader