



# Leader Guide



# Group Life Leader Guide

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## **the foundation**

*“Americans are among the loneliest people in the world.”  
George Gallup*



## **Southeast Groups...moving below the surface!**

Historically, the kitchen has been where life's most meaningful conversations take place. It is here where people share experiences, discuss important decisions, and enjoy preparing a meal for others or enjoy being served by others. Over the years, our society has evolved into a culture of text messaging, cell phones, emails, drive through gourmet coffee bars, video conferencing, express self-serve checkout lines...all of which limit the amount of personal interaction we have on a daily basis. When placed in a group setting, we tend to discuss in detail about the weather or last night's big game. We only talk about things on the surface. Southeast Groups strive to provide a place where people can move below the surface and give others a sense of biblical community.

### **what is community?**

- A place where each individual experiences a sense of identity and belonging; where people are being Christ to each other by knowing and being known, loving and being loved, served and being served, celebrating and being celebrated.
- A process in which we move with a group of people from head to soul: from independence to interdependence, invulnerability to vulnerability, lack of accountability to presence of accountability.
- It is proof of a living God to a watching world.
- Community is what God allows to happen in a Small Group environment.

### **what is a Small Group?**

- A Small Group within the church is a voluntary, intentional gathering of three to twelve people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification, fellowship and outreach.

## why are Small Groups important?

- Small Groups are biblical. Small Group community was part of the early church and continues to be integral part of church today.

*(They) were baptized (1) ...and joined other believers...they worshiped together regularly at the Temple (2) met in small groups in the homes (3) for communion.  
Acts 2:41-42, 46*

- Small Groups help you build closer relationships with others.

*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17*

- Small Groups provide community and friendship.

*Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:25*

- Small Groups help us process and apply what we learn.

*Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man that builds his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24*

## why are Small Groups essential to life?

- Attract and lead people to faith in Christ.
- Connect people in deep and meaningful relationships with Christ and each other.
- Equip people to reach out to others with the relevant message of the Bible.
- Provide a predictable environment where people experience authentic community and spiritual growth.
- Help develop spiritual maturity in a believer that leads to evangelism.

Biblical small groups are designed to bring people together around God's Word for the purpose of becoming more like Christ.

[How to Lead A Group](#), NavPress

## examples of Small Groups in the Bible...

Jesus' ministry provides a very vivid picture of what Small Group ministry looks like and how it is to be implemented.

- Jesus began his ministry by building His small group, the disciples. Matthew 4:18-22
- Jesus imparted many of His teachings through small group. Matthew 26:6
- Jesus small group ministry supported His ministry to the large crowd.
- Jesus spent the majority of his time with His small group.
- Jesus taught spiritual issues through the context of His relationship. Luke 8:10
- Jesus used His small group for a place to train leaders. John 17

## Small Groups at Southeast...

***As Southeast Christian Church grows larger in membership, it must also grow smaller in personal connections.***

According to *The Church Growth Ratio Book* by Charles Arn, every person in the congregation should have at least **seven** friends in the church...**friends** not mere **acquaintances**. This ratio is a vital sign of life in any church. People need friends at church in order to make it their "home".

Being part of a Small Group will help provide a jumpstart to personal connections at church. The mega-church won't seem mega much longer. Very soon, your acquaintances will turn into friendships.

***at Southeast Christian Church, people have the opportunity to become involved with a Small Group in a variety of ways:***

- Join an existing group listed in the online database at [www.southeastgroups.org](http://www.southeastgroups.org)
- Form a new group with your neighbors, co-workers, friends or other members of Southeast
- Fill out a Group Life registration form and have the Spiritual Formation Team place you in an existing group
- Attend a ConnectingPoint event

## what is the vision for Southeast Groups?

One of the most important parts of forming a Small Group is to define the vision of the group. Why will the group exist and what will it accomplish during its life span. A clear vision statement will give the group a strong foundation to build upon. The activities of the group may change from meeting to meeting, but the vision stays the same.

Southeast Groups are from all walks of life, figuring out how to do life together and building lasting relationships with people they may have never even met.

Southeast Groups are **community based**...connect with people who live in your neighborhood!

Southeast Groups are **life stage based**...younger, older, single, and married people doing life together!

Southeast Groups are **open**...whether you are spiritually curious, or a long-time follower of Jesus, you are welcome to be a part of a group.

**Southeast Groups have a crystal-clear purpose...they are focused on providing an environment where people can:**

### Grow, Belong and Serve

#### a place to Grow...

Southeast Groups move below the surface by providing a place to Grow...

- **Learning together** - spend time discussing what God has said, what God has done, and what God is doing in our lives! Balance life experience with God's Truth and commit to personal growth in Christ.
- **Discerning next steps** - sometimes it's better to invite people to dinner before you invite them to church. Do they need resources? Or is it time to invite them to Southeast Group social activity?
- **Multiplying influence** - welcome new members to participate in group life and should have at least one "leader in training" to launch a new group as the Lord adds to their number. Group multiplication allows members to impact more lives than they could any other way.

## a place to **Belong**...

Southeast Groups move below the surface by providing a place of belonging...

- **Discovering stories** - listen to each other, and find out where you have been, where you are now, and where you are going.
- **Eating together** - share meals together frequently and get together outside of the regular weekly meetings
- **Playing together** - have fun doing things like hobbies, exercise, vacation, and kids' activities together!

## a place to **Serve**...

Southeast Groups move below the surface by helping others...

- **Demonstrating kindness** - consistently get off the couch, and go out into the community to show kindness to others and care for one another (i.e. meet your neighbor, hospital visits, meal preparation, prayer, community resources).
- **On the weekends at SECC** – regularly serve together as a group at church (i.e. greeters, parking lot attendants, childcare, communion)
- **In the neighborhood** - identify needs in your community, and work together as a group to meet them (i.e. serving opportunities in Parker and Denver Metro Area).
- **And beyond** - build a house in Mexico together, or consider assisting one of the missions we support at SECC.

## myths about facilitating or hosting a group...

### Common excuses to why someone decides against being a group facilitator or host.

- **I am not a Bible scholar.**

TRUTH: The leader helps to facilitate an environment of mutual learning and sharing. Leaders help to control and generate conversation about a passage of scripture or topic. It is not the responsibility of the leader to be a “know it all” or expert on the passage of scripture or topic.

- **I am not a great speaker.**

TRUTH: The format of a Small Group is different than that of a Sunday school class or sermon. The leader is to help facilitate discussion, not provide great lectures. The less the leader speaks and the more the group members share, the better.

- **I am not an experienced leader...I don't know what to do.**

TRUTH: Do you love Jesus? Do you love His Word? Do you genuinely love people? These are the prerequisites for being a Small Group leader. The Holy Spirit has promised to be our teacher and our guide. As we rely on the Holy Spirit and work at leading a Small Group, we will grow in our leadership skills. Also, the church and your Small Group ministry team are available to provide support and training for new leaders.

- **I am not gifted as a group facilitator or host.**

TRUTH: As a leader, make use of the diverse gifts that God places within your Small Group. Delegate some of the tasks of leading and preparing for the group to members who have strengths in these areas. Use your gifts and let others use theirs. You need not do it all.

- **I am not good enough or holy enough.**

TRUTH: No one is good enough. The great thing about leading a Small Group is that it does not depend on our goodness, but upon the work of God. We are the vessels that God uses, but he is the one that accomplishes the work. Besides, no one wants a perfect leader. They want someone who is real and transparent.

## **characteristics of a servant-leader...**

**What does it take to be Small Group facilitator? What skills are necessary to lead a group of people below the surface with others and with Jesus? The Bible provides clear insight into these characteristics. A good facilitator:**

- Loves God, loves others.
- Has a growing relationship with Jesus.
- Is willing to serve others and help them reach their potential.
- Is committed to learning.
- Has an understanding of Scripture.
- Is willing to spend the necessary time to get the job done.
- Is confident in the work of Jesus Christ.



## **before the meeting...**

*Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but  
hasty shortcuts lead to poverty. Proverbs 21:5*



## preparation for hosts...

**The most important ministry a host can accomplish is to help people feel completely welcomed and wanted. Here are some tips on hosting:**

- Be prepared. Greet people with an encouraging word they come in the door. Be ready well in advance of the starting time to greet people as they arrive.
- Be sure you are well supplied. Running out of supplies (chairs, cups, plates, etc.) could send a message that there isn't enough room for someone.
- Arrange for the seating to be at the same level.
- Don't forget the munchies! Food is a great catalyst for community building. Plan to have light snacks or desert. A great way is to have a group communicator email a sign-up sheet for people to bring snacks.
- Check the lighting and temperature of the room to make sure it is comfortable.
- Eliminate distractions. Put your pets in a separate room for the evening. Turn off the ringer on the phone (let calls go into voice mail) and ask that everyone silence or turn off their cell phone.

## preparation for facilitators...

**As you prepare to facilitate the group discussion, consider these tips to facilitate with excellence. You will be setting an example to others who might want to facilitate a lesson in the future. Not being prepared also can give members the false impression of that Small Groups are not a priority.**

- Start and end on time.
- Strive to be a good listener.
- Serve as a facilitator, not a lecturer. Your goal is to encourage personal interaction and self-discovery.
- Focus on what Scripture has to say, not your own ideas or opinions.
- Maintain an atmosphere of love and acceptance, which will lead to open discussion. Never put down a person's comments or contribution.
-

## preparation for facilitators (continued)...

- Don't force anyone to talk, but encourage involvement by calling on reluctant participants by name. (This also helps control the overly talkative.)
- Acknowledge responses when appropriate.
- Keep the discussion on track. If new issues are raised, suggest that they be tabled and returned to after the current discussion is completed.
- Ask good questions to open up the group and to develop relationship within the group.
- Remember the goal is building **relationships**, not necessarily completing the study or discussion.

## group details...

**One great aspect about Small Groups is that they can provide a predictable environment where people experience community and spiritual growth. In order for this to take place, the following details about the group should be considered within the first few meetings so the group is...predictable.**

- Where will the group meet and how often?
- What is the ideal size for YOUR group?
- Is your group a demographic or neighborhood based group?
- How much time will be allocated to each meeting?
- How and where will you recruit for your group?
- What will be the agenda and activities of the meetings?
- Responsibilities – Who does what?
- Curriculum?
- Will childcare need to be provided? If so, how will it be handled?
- How will the group's effectiveness be evaluated?
- When will the group multiply?

## choosing a study...

*60% of the Christian life is showing up with other believers. Quit worrying about fill in the blanks. It is about relationships.  
-Murphy Belding, Southeast Christian Church, Louisville KY*

For newly launched groups, spend the first two meetings sharing a meal along with icebreaker type games or something else fun. Immediately start cultivating relationships and getting to “know” others within your group. During the second meeting, talk about what topics might be of interest for a group study. Consider the level of material for your group. For example, a new group would most likely not want to tackle an in-depth study of the Old Testament.

### **Here are some questions to consider when choosing your next study:**

- Is there a common interest within the group?
- Study a book of the Bible or a topic?
- Is the study God honoring and Biblically based?
- Is the group open to prepare homework between meetings?
- How much time do we have for study?
- Is the study consistent with teachings and doctrines of our church?
- What direction is the Holy Spirit leading our group?

### **The Spiritual Formation Team is available for suggestions on curriculum. Also, the following are resources that can assist your group:**

- Small Group curriculum guide located at [www.southeastgroups.org](http://www.southeastgroups.org). This guide also has a listing of video based studies available in our library.
- Weekly study guides based on the sermon at Southeast. These guides can be downloaded at [www.sechristian.org](http://www.sechristian.org).
- The Internet.
- A 30% discount off MSRP is available for curriculum ordered through Southeast. Please contact the Spiritual Formation Team about ordering curriculum. Plan ahead as it takes 1 – 2 weeks for delivery.

## roles within a Small Group...

While everyone shares the responsibility of making the Small Group happen, there are vital roles that each group must have. These roles will help members take “ownership” of the group as well as equipping others for future multiplication of a group.

**Small Group Coach** – This person will be assigned to several groups primarily to provide support and encouragement to facilitators and hosts.

- A coach will assist in recruitment and enlistment of facilitators.
- A coach will help facilitators with inspiration and to assist in keeping groups focused on goals and values.

**Facilitator** – This person will facilitate the group’s meetings, although they will also share the responsibility of facilitating with other group members. This person will provide encouragement to all members of the group.

- Group facilitators will communicate with their coach or SFT on a regular basis with changes to member info and group updates.
- Group facilitators will embrace the group vision and values, guiding other members along the way.

**Host** – This person will host the Small Group at their house and provide encouragement and support to the facilitator. The host will ensure that the home is setup in a fashion that is conducive to a positive group experience and free of distractions.

- In some cases the facilitator will host a group, although not highly recommended. In that situation, one person in your group should be assigned to encourage and support the facilitator.

**Communicator** – This person will communicate meeting times, locations and events to all potential and current group members via e-mail, phone calls and snail mail. This person will also coordinate any group activities that occur outside of meetings.

- The communicator will take care of any details that need to be done between now and the next meeting.
- The communicator role should be assigned to a group member who is not currently serving as a facilitator or host.

**Member** – This person is a committed member of the Small Group who actively participates and may facilitate the group themselves from time to time. The member is a vital element to the health and growth of the Small Group ministry.

**during the meeting...**

*For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. Matthew 18:20*



## twelve keys to facilitating a Small Group with confidence...

- **An effective facilitator loves people.**
  - Small Groups are all about people.
  - We should be more concerned about people receiving ministry than convincing people to agree with our principles.
  - People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- **Pray, Pray, Pray.**
  - Jesus often withdrew to lonely places for prayer and meditation.

*Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. Luke 6:12*
- **Teach the Word, not your Opinions.**
  - Personal convictions.
  - Eternal truths – this is what you should focus upon
- **Use visuals and illustrations.**
  - Jesus always used parables to teach.
  - Use current events, funny stories and personal anecdotes.
- **Please, don't use "Christian-eze."**
  - John Wesley practiced speaking his messages to an 8-year old girl.
  - Don't use words like sanctification", "redemption" and "consecration" unless you can make them easily understood by new believers and seekers.
- **Speak the truth in love.**
  - Talk "to" your audience, not "at" your audience.
  - Use words like "we" and "us".
  - Don't speak a message publicly to a group that is intended to be spoken privately to one particular person.

*...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head (Christ). Ephesians 4:15*

- **Facilitate with enthusiasm – it is a sin to be boring.**
  - Your audience will only be half as excited as you are.
  - You cannot represent reality as fiction. We have the words of life to offer to people. Speak with life!
  - Don't be monotone. Use voice inflections. Know when to pause for effect!

*Your passion will produce passion in others. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. Colossians 3:23*

- **It is normal to be nervous – teach in faith.**
  - People fear public speaking more than insects, flying in airplanes, sickness or loneliness.
  - Pick out the friendliest face in the crowd and speak to them initially. Then begin making eye contact with others.
  - Nervousness actually activates the adrenaline supply and makes your eyes shine. It also activates your brain.
- **Speak with authority.**
  - You only have as much authority as you are under.
  - You are speaking under the authority of God.

*Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath. He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Mark 1:21-22*

- **Be prepared.**
  - Preparation makes you confident, and prayer empowers you. Both take time and cannot be rushed.
- **Be personable.**
  - Be transparent. Be honest. Share your failures, and your successes.
  - Your own testimony about the subject matter is the best way to personally connect.
  - Mention people's names during the message.
  - People must open their souls before they will open their spirit.
- **Receive constructive criticism.**
  - Record your teaching and listen.
  - Discovering your weakness is the first step to correcting them.

## sample meeting plans

*We should make plans – counting on God to direct us.  
Proverbs 16:9*

The key idea with having a structured meeting plan is to be respectful of others' time...especially if children are part of your group equation. Set a time and stick to it. However, with everything, flexibility is key. Recommended group time: 90 minutes minimum to 120 minutes maximum

### **SAMPLE PLAN #1**

1. Arrival/Social Time/Munchies (30 minutes)
2. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)
3. Group Discussion (30 minutes)
4. Application (15 minutes)
5. Group Prayer/Praise Time (20 minutes)
6. Group Communication and Planning/Cleanup (15 minutes)

### **SAMPLE PLAN #2**

1. Arrival/Social Time (15 minutes)
2. Group Prayer/Praise Time (20 minutes)
3. Food/Munchies (15 minutes)
4. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)
5. Group Discussion (30 minutes)
6. Application (15 minutes)
7. Group Communication and Planning/Cleanup (15 minutes)

## sample meeting plans (continued)...

### SAMPLE PLAN #3

1. Arrival/Social Time (15 minutes)
2. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)
3. Group Discussion (30 minutes)
4. Application (15 minutes)
5. Group Prayer/Praise Time (20 minutes)
6. Snacks/Group Communication and Planning/Cleanup (30 minutes)

**With any meeting plan your group implements, each member should leave the meeting with a specific action that they can do to apply the truth that was discussed to their life.**

## dealing with difficult situations...

*So put away all falsehood and "tell your neighbor the truth" because we belong to each other. And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil. If you are a thief, stop stealing. Begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:25-32*

### types of different personalities

- Social** – This person is very talkative and wants to control the conversation and discussion. They are usually the life of the party, but hinder the group from its purpose for meeting.
- Intellectual** – This person wants to over analyze ever thought and scripture. Knowledge is more important than application or relationship.
- Prideful** – This person displays a very godly front to others and has a "holier-than-thou" attitude.
- Counselor** – This person treats group members as a client, trying to describe and solve their problems.

### types of different personalities (continued)

- **Counselee** – This person views the meeting as a time for group therapy. They always want to talk about themselves and share their deep emotional hurts.
- **Gossip / Negative** – This person wants to talk about other people or always has something negative to say in response to others.
- **Philosopher** – Has a passion for deeper doctrine and “heavy” issues. Wants to debate theological issues.
- **Preacher** – This person is not the official leader of the group, but they always want to take control of the meeting and strongly admonish group members about the study.

### dealing with difficult people

- Deal with the situation as soon as possible; waiting may cause more problems.
- Accept the person, and make certain they know they have your acceptance (even if you don't agree with what they are saying or doing).
- Find the right time to approach the person. Correcting them during a group meeting rarely works (but in an extreme situation, this may be necessary).
- Find something about the person to affirm (they attend regularly, are cheerful, etc.).
- Stay positive and avoid condemning words or behavior. Even bad situations can be approached positively.
- Be honest, specific, and straightforward -in a tactful manner - about what attitudes or behaviors are causing difficulties.
- Ask for change. Help the person determine what they must do to think or behave in a more acceptable manner.
- Be patient. Allow the person time to correct their attitudes and behavior.
- Affirm their positive response and efforts to make the necessary adjustments.
- Consider asking the individual to leave the group if he or she refuses to cooperate. This is a last resort move after every other alternative is exhausted.

## **dealing with difficult situations**

Situations arise that no one plans on: Leader needs to move because of job, meeting time conflicts with other things, and so on. When dealing with these situations remember:

- Praise the Lord. Thank Him for the opportunity to depend on Him. Every situation has a purpose in God's overall plan.
- Stay calm.
- Pray about it. Make sure you are praying about the situation from the very beginning.
- Ask God for wisdom in dealing with the matter.
- Talk it over as a group. The best solutions are usually ones that come from the whole group deliberating on the issue.
- Be willing to try something different. It may be necessary to implement a different action, change directions, or find an alternative route.
- Seek out wise counsel from church staff.

## **after the meeting/into the future**

*Test everything. Hold on to the good. 1 Thessalonians 5:21*



## **follow-up and evaluation...**

Relationship is key to a strong Small Group. The group leader can help encourage and model relationship by keeping in close contact with group members. Here are some things to remember:

- Mail a thank you note to all visitors who attend your Small Group.
- Phone members who are absent to see if they are all right and to let them know they were missed.
- Periodically contact members via email, phone, or mail to encourage them and thank them for their faithfulness and participation.
- Invite members to your house for dinner or dessert.
- Do stuff outside of Small Group with the members.

## **why evaluate?**

Evaluation is a powerful tool to help establish and build a Small Group. Through evaluation the Small Group leader is able to get information that allows him or her to make decisions that support and enhance the group. Some reason to evaluate:

- Evaluation is a Biblical example and principle. All through scripture words such as, judge, test and examine are used in conjunction with our physical and spiritual lives.
- Evaluation promotes the group's purpose. Honest evaluation helps gauge the progress of the group in reaching its goals. Without evaluation it will be hard to notice if the group has deviated from its original purpose.
- Evaluation keeps leaders accountable. Periodic evaluation keeps leader accountable to the group and its purpose.
- Evaluation helps create and motivate change. Evaluation helps to see the place that the group is falling short and gives the opportunity for change.
- Evaluation helps bring out the best in the group.

## **what to evaluate?**

- Details of the group – day and time the group meets, place where the group meets, etc.
- Format of the group – how the time was used, effectiveness of study and prayer time, etc.
- Leadership of the group – leadership style, was leadership shared, etc.
- Relationships within the group – how well do people communicate and relate, etc.

## **when to evaluate?**

- Every 4 – 6 months.
- At the end of a Small Group.
- When things don't seem on track for the Small Group.

## **how to evaluate?**

Evaluation can be performed informally or formally.

- Informal evaluation – Set aside a group meeting for discussion of evaluation questions.
- Formal evaluation – Have group members fill out an evaluation form that was prepared in advance by the facilitator. Also, contact the Spiritual Formation Team for an evaluation form.

## **multiplying a group...**

Great things happen in Small Groups. Once our groups become too large they lose the effectiveness of the Small Group. Small Groups promote closeness, interaction, and accountability. Multiplying a group can be one of the most exciting events in the Christian life. It can also be a scary and painful experience.

When a group grows to 10 – 20 members, many discipleship functions of the Small Group begin to break down. Here are the steps you can take when multiplying a group.

### **Step #1 – Discover**

- **Get on the same page** – Attend leadership training to discover the purpose, plan and vision for Southeast Groups. Make sure everyone knows and agrees to pursue the core values.
- **Cast vision** – Present the dream and hope of multiplication up front. Casting this kind of vision will help your group stay focused on reaching out.
- **Be on the lookout** – Look for prospective facilitators in your group. Affirm and encourage their potential.

### **Step #2 – Develop**

- **Seek God's help** – Ask God's help for your group to mature to a point where they are excited to multiply and reach out to others.
- **Be intentional** – Invite all members of your group to take a turn facilitating so they might start a new group in the future. This will allow everyone to share responsibilities so that the group maximizes its health.
- **Pray and talk about it** – Make multiplication a regular part of Small Group conversations and prayers.

## **multiplying a group (continued)...**

### **Step #3 – Deploy**

- **Select New Roles** – Work with the Spiritual Formation Team to determine who will facilitate and then decide who will join them and who will stay in the current group.
- **Celebration Party!** – Have a big party with everyone involved and celebrate the start of a new group. Spend time that evening praying and encouraging the new group.
- **Start the new group.....**

**There are three key ideas of multiplication.**

- **Discover the excitement of MULTIPLICATION.**
- **Develop the MATURITY and DESIRE to reach out.**
- **Deploy a NEW group!**

## **common fears of multiplication...**

- How will I be able to leave my Christian friends?
- What if the next group isn't as close as this one?
- What if the next group doesn't share the same vision?
- What if I can't depend on my next group the same that I can this one?

## **appendix**



## additional resources...

### Small Group Resources - Websites

- Serendipity House – <http://www.serendipityhouse.com/>
- NavPress - <http://www.navpress.com/>
- Willow Creek Association - <http://www.willowcreek.com/>
- Touch Ministries - <http://www.touchusa.org/>
- SmallGroups.com - <http://smallgroups.com/>
- Saddleback – <http://www.saddleback.com/>

### Small Group Resources – Books

- 201 Great Questions - Jerry D. Jones. Navpress
- 201 Great Questions to Help You Simplify Your Life - Jerry D. Jones. Navpress
- 201 Great Questions for Parents And Children - Jerry D. Jones. Navpress
- 201 Great Questions for Married Couples - Jerry D. Jones. Navpress
- How to Ask Great Questions - Karen Lee-Thorp. Navpress
- The Navigator Bible Studies Handbook - The Navigators. Navpress
- 101 Great Ideas to Create a Caring Group - Thom Corrigan. Navpress
- Discipleship Journal's 101 Best Small-Group Ideas - Navpress
- How To Lead Small Groups - Neal F. McBride. Navpress
- Leading Bible Discussions - J. Nyquist And J Kuhatschek. Intervarsity Press
- Real Small Groups Don't Just Happen - Neal F. McBride. Navpress
- Starting (& Ending) A Small Group - Dan Williams. Intervarsity Press

### Bible Study Tools - Websites

- Bible Gateway - <http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible>
- CrossWalk.com - <http://bible1.crosswalk.com/>
- Blue Letter Bible - <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- Search Gods Word - <http://www.searchgodsword.org/>
- Bible.com – <http://www.bible.com/>

## questions to know others...

### General

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- Where are you originally from?
- What are some of your interests?
- Do you enjoy sports? Which ones?
- Do you belong to any organizations?
- What do you do for a living?
- What is your favorite food?
- What is your favorite book?
- What is your favorite movie?
- What type of music do you listen to?
- What was the last book you read?

### More Specific

- What is one of your favorite childhood memories?
- What do you think is the key ingredient to a happy family?
- What are some of your goals for your life?
- What to you is the most important thing in life?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- What do you feel are your greatest strengths / weaknesses?
- What do you see yourself doing in 5 years from now?
- What do you want people to remember most about you?
- If you could have one wish right now what would it be?
- Would you mind sharing your testimony with me?
- Do you know what your spiritual gifts are?
- What do you see is the hardest thing in living the Christian life?
- To you, what is the most important characteristic in a friendship?
- Describe the best day of your life.
- If you were going to write a book about your life what would the title be?
- When is the last time you cried and why?
- If you could live in somebody's shoes for a day who would you pick and why?
- Tell me about one person who has influenced your life and how?
- How would you feel if God called you to go overseas?
- What do you feel is your primary love language?

## **developing levels of friendships...**

### **Acquaintances:**

- Be alert to each new person around you
- Smile lots!
- Remember their names
- Use their names often
- Ask appropriate questions
- Be a good listener with hear and body language
- See each meeting as a Divine appointment
- Seek them out and help them meet others

### **Casual Friendships:**

- Discover their strengths
- Discover their hopes and dreams in life
- Ask appropriate questions that are more specific
- Be compassionate if they share a problem or concern
- Be transparent about yourself when appropriate
- Show trustworthiness as a friend
- Pray for them and their needs

### **Close Friendships:**

- Believe in them and show it
- Discover their specific goals in life
- Hold them accountable in achieving their goals
- Be lovingly confrontive
- Creatively get involved and help them achieve their goals
- Encourage them, especially with the Scripture

### **Intimate Friendships:**

- Learn to comfort them when that are in the 'valley'
- Discern roots of character and character flaws
- Be teachable yourself
- Love them enough to help them see areas in need of improvement
- Pray lots!
- Use Scripture to find solutions to problems
- Be committed to faithfulness, loyalty, and availability

## possible lesson topics...

Having a hard time decided what to cover in your Small Group? Here is a list of topics that apply to most believers:

<p><b>Walking with God</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing God</li> <li>• Daily Quiet Times</li> <li>• Prayer</li> <li>• Obedience / Lordship</li> <li>• Praise / Worship</li> <li>• Knowing the Will of God</li> <li>• Claiming Promises</li> <li>• Reading the Word</li> <li>• Studying the Word</li> <li>• Memorizing the Word</li> <li>• Meditating on the Word</li> <li>• Applying God's Word</li> <li>• Doctrine               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Jesus Christ</li> <li>◦ Holy Spirit</li> <li>◦ Trinity</li> <li>◦ Salvation</li> <li>◦ Baptism</li> <li>◦ Lord's Supper</li> <li>◦ Satan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit of the Spirit               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Love</li> <li>◦ Joy</li> <li>◦ Peace</li> <li>◦ Patience</li> <li>◦ Kindness</li> <li>◦ Goodness</li> <li>◦ Faithfulness</li> <li>◦ Gentleness</li> <li>◦ Self-Control</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Being a Servant</li> <li>• Thankfulness</li> <li>• Holiness</li> <li>• Godliness</li> <li>• Forgiveness</li> <li>• Faith</li> <li>• Living by Grace</li> <li>• Controlling the Tongue</li> <li>• Humility</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ministry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Testimony</li> <li>• Witnessing</li> <li>• Christian Fellowship</li> <li>• Giving</li> <li>• Spiritual Warfare</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Great Commission / Spiritual Multiplication</li> <li>• World Vision / Missions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masculinity</li> <li>• Femininity</li> <li>• Male / Female Roles</li> <li>• Sexuality</li> <li>• Dating / Courtship</li> <li>• Marriage</li> <li>• Family / Children</li> <li>• The Church</li> <li>• Friendships</li> <li>• Conversation Skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Life Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time Management</li> <li>• Money Management</li> <li>• Physical Health</li> <li>• Emotional Health</li> <li>• Career / Work</li> <li>• Goal Setting</li> <li>• Spiritual Gifts</li> <li>• Personality</li> <li>• Passions</li> <li>• Failure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Struggles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lust of the Flesh</li> <li>• Lust of the Eyes</li> <li>• Pride of Life</li> <li>• Love of Money</li> <li>• Abuse of Power</li> <li>• Counseling Issues</li> <li>• Suffering / Trials</li> <li>• Low Self-Image</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Dealing with Conflict</li> </ul>

## Small Group Evaluation

Please answer the following questions about your Small Group experience. By completing the questionnaire you will help improve the Small Group program.

Your name:

Group Leader:

Date:

1. As I see it, the purpose and goal of our group was:

2. We achieved our goals:

- completely
- almost completely
- somewhat
- we blew it

3. In my opinion:

Yes  No  Our group members have become good friends.

Yes  No  We have sufficient Bible study and discussion time.

Yes  No  There is meaningful prayer time in our meeting.

Yes  No  Our group has activities outside our meeting time.

Yes  No  We frequently invite others to our group.

Yes  No  We have worked on a ministry project together.

4. I found the approach to the meetings:

- very helpful  irrelevant to my life  boring
- intellectually stimulating  life-changing  so-so
- new to me  challenging  other:

5. The most valuable thing about my Small Group experience has been:

6. If I were to suggest one thing the group might change, it would be:
  
7. My Small Group experience has influenced my relationship with Jesus Christ in these areas:
  
8. Would you recommend your Small Group to a friend? Why or why not?

## **Small Group Evaluation**

(Please use back of sheet if more room is needed)

### **Past and Current:**

1. What two things have you liked most about Small Group and would not change?
2. What two things have you liked least about Small Group? How would you change them?
3. What has ministered to you most through Small Group? Was it a lesson we covered, time spent in prayer, fellowship with others, a truth God revealed to you or something else?

**Future:** (What would the "Ideal" Small Group look like? Don't be confined by how it is currently.)

1. What would you like the focus and direction of Small Group to be: deeper Bible study, more group and individual prayer, more fellowship or something else? Why?
2. How do you feel about the night, time and frequency of Small Group?
3. How do you feel about the snacks and refreshments for Small Group?
4. How do you feel about the current format of Small Group (prayer, lesson, fellowship)? What could we change to improve the format?
5. What type of Bible studies would you like to do in Small Group: topical studies, going through books of the Bible, Bible study books (like Experiencing God) or something else? Why?
6. What topics, issues or books would you like to see covered or not covered?

**Additional Comments or Questions?**