



COMMUNITY GROUP

— LEADER GUIDE —

PURPOSE

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE DESIGNED TO CULTIVATE AUTHENTIC **FELLOWSHIP** LEADING TO GENUINE **FAITH**

And they devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**.

Acts 2:42

FELLOWSHIP = HELPING PEOPLE BELONG

Spiritual growth doesn't happen in isolation. Community groups are places where people are known and cared for through meaningful friendships so they can grow in Christ through relational discipleship.

FAITH = HELPING PEOPLE KNOW AND FOLLOW JESUS

Our mission is to help people know and follow Jesus. Community groups help to form us into committed disciples who profess Jesus as Lord and Savior and live a life that increasingly reflects the character and ways of Jesus.

FOUR ASPECTS OF A COMMUNITY GROUP

- 1 Community & Care**
Form meaningful friendships where you are genuinely known, cared for, and encouraged spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
- 2 Spiritual Health & Growth**
Grow in spiritual maturity through cultivating habits such as Scripture meditation & application, prayer, fellowship, and obedience.
- 3 Discipleship & Ownership**
Learn how to be a disciple-maker where you live, learn, work, and play and take personal ownership in helping people know and follow Jesus.
- 4 Mission & Outreach**
Serve the Big "K" Kingdom together through hospitality, service, and prayer.

LEADING YOUR GROUP

ESTABLISH A MEETING RHYTHM

It helps people know what to expect when you have a regular meeting rhythm. It doesn't mean you can't change things up every now and then, but it generally helps people relax and feel more comfortable when they know what to expect. Here are two examples of how your group meeting might go:

Option 1

Fellowship (20-30 min)
Extended Prayer Time (15-20 minutes)
Bible Study Discussion (45-60 min)

Option 2

Fellowship (20-30 min)
Bible Study Discussion (45-60 min)
Extended Prayer Time (15-20 min)

FACILITATE DON'T LECTURE

As the group leader, your job is to facilitate the discussion and encourage people to have a productive conversation. Your role is not to give a sermon or lecture your group, but to promote participation in the conversation through asking questions, giving direction when needed, and keeping the conversation within appropriate bounds.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE

On average, it takes ~7 seconds for someone to process their answer to a question, but it only takes ~3 seconds of silence to make people feel uncomfortable. Don't be the first person to answer the question. If the silence goes on for more than 10 seconds, ask if you need to clarify the question. Overall, allow your group the time to process and think before responding.

LEADING YOUR GROUP

ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

When someone gives a vague answer of a “yes/no” but doesn’t expand, gentle encourage them to go deeper. You might ask, “can you explain your thought a little more?” or “what do you mean by that?” This will help people grow in articulating their thoughts and actively contributing to the conversation.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION ON TOPIC

It can be easy to go down rabbit holes during the discussion time, but it’s good to know what is healthy and productive and what needs to be saved for another time. Usually, when people start getting too theological or too personal, you can steer the conversation back to appropriate territory by saying something like, “that’s a great thought, but let’s talk about it more after group” or “it sounds like God is doing a lot in your life, I would love to talk to you more about after group.”

DON’T SHY AWAY FROM DIFFICULT TOPICS

The Bible addresses many challenging topics and community groups are a place where we can explore our questions, thoughts, and experiences with other believers. We want to talk through hard topics when the Bible addresses them, especially if it is relevant to the lives of your members. But we always want to do this in a respectful way, allowing for grace and patience.

CHALLENGE YOUR GROUP IN APPLICATION

We don’t want what is talked about during your group meeting to remain theoretical or just a conversation; we want our people to actively practice the truths you discuss in order to be further transformed by the Spirit. Follow up on the things you challenge your group to apply to keep each other accountable and encourage continued obedience and faithfulness to God.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

GET TO KNOW EACH INDIVIDUAL

As the leader, you should know everyone in your group. This will take time, especially if you're starting a new group. Make an intentional effort to have a meaningful conversation with each person in your group within the first month of meeting. This could be before or after the group meeting, at church on Sunday, over the phone, over coffee or lunch, etc.

DO LIFE TOGETHER, NOT JUST GROUP

Most friendships will develop outside of the actual group meeting time. Even with busy lives, it's beneficial to prioritize spending social time with your group a few times a semester. Here are some ideas to consider:

Eat meals together	Christmas party	Moody Gardens
Game nights	Visit Museums	Clay Cups
Beach day	Visit the Zoo	Go to a concert
Bowling	Seabrook Waffle Co.	Book club
Laser tag	Kemah Boardwalk	Picnic in the park
Mini golf	Host a movie night	Play Sand Volleyball
Tin Cups	Host a hobby night	Visit the State Park
Friendsgiving	Go to a park	Play mahjong
Play pickleball	Schlitterbahn	Attend Coastal events together

PRIORITIZE PRAYER

spend time listening to prayer requests and praying for each other during every meeting. Follow up on prayer requests from previous weeks to hear how things are going and what God is doing in everyone's lives. For more information about prayer in groups, visit "[Group Leader FAQ](#)" on the Community Group Leader Resource Page.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

MODEL VULNERABILITY AND HONESTY

As the leader, you will likely have to be the first to become more vulnerable and open up to your group. This models transparency and allows others to feel more comfortable opening up about the real things they are dealing with in their life.

DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE GROUP

Delegating roles is a way to build investment in the group from your members. The group roles can be found on the website under “[Community Group Leader Resources](#)” on the Community Groups page.

LEVERAGE YOUR SUNDAYS

Encourage your group to sit with each other and even serve together on Sunday mornings! You can view the Sunday morning volunteer opportunities on the website under “[Volunteer at Coastal](#).” Some groups even like going to lunch or having a potluck on Sunday afternoons.

SERVE TOGETHER

Participating in service projects within our community is a great way to form a stronger bond with your group members. Visit the “[Group Leader FAQs](#)” on the Community Group Leader Resource page for a list of service opportunities with organizations in our community.

CELEBRATE TOGETHER

Celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, new job opportunities, children’s accomplishments, etc. This is a way to care and support each other through life’s milestones! It can be as simple as a card or sweet treat at the group meeting or as fun as a party or special social event.