

# SMALL GROUPS

Vision & Strategy

## Why Small Groups Exist:

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19*

At Christ Fellowship, Small Groups exist to:

*“Make fully devoted followers of Christ.”*

The goal in our Small Groups is that each Small Group member moves closer to being fully devoted to Christ.

## Why Small Groups Are Important:

Small Groups are the Primary Pathway of discipleship at our church. They are the front lines for pastoral care, where people are encouraging one another towards full devotion to Christ.

## Why Small Group Leaders Are Important:

Our Small Group Leaders help their group members mature in their faith, foster environments where genuine friendships form, and get them to think missionally. In essence Small Group Leaders are to guide their group members towards being fully devoted followers of Christ. This makes the role of the Small Group Leader very important in the life of Christ Fellowship.

## Small Group Core Values

In the book of Acts, we read the story of the first Christians living a new way of life among a new community of Christians (Acts 2:42-47). We see them doing the following three things: They were devoted to God’s Word, to the fellowship with other believers, and to living missionally focused lives. We believe that if our Small Groups are doing these three things, they will be healthy, prosperous, and productive God glorifying groups.

### Devoted to God's Word

- *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.. (verse 42)*
  - o We see that the early church was fully devoted to Christ and His Word. Therefore, we ask our Small Groups to study God's Word, have Christ centered discussions, and encourage each other towards full devotion to Christ in all areas of life.
- *Key Questions You Can Ask as a Small Group Leader*
  - o What have you been studying from God's Word?
  - o What specifically has God been teaching you from Scripture?
  - o How have you been applying what you have learned?

### Devoted to Fellowship

- *They devoted themselves... to the fellowship. (verse 42)*
  - o We see the early church not only being fully devoted to God's Word, but also to constant and authentic fellowship with each other. Therefore, we want our Small Group members to form genuine friendships with each other so that they can do life together.
- *Key Questions You Can Ask as a Small Group Leader:*
  - o How are your friendships with other believers?
  - o How do you serve and care for other members in your group?

### Devoted to the Mission

- *...and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (verse 47)*
  - o We see the early church being fully devoted to the Mission of Christ by serving the community, sharing the Gospel with the lost, and developing future leaders to carry out the mission. Therefore we ask our Small Groups to be missionally minded and "Reach Beyond" the walls of the church so that we may serve our immediate community and the under-resourced and hurting throughout Miami-Dade County. We also ask our Small Groups to develop future leaders who can in turn impact other people.
- *Key Questions You Can Ask as a Small Group Leader:*
  - o Who is someone that you recently shared the Gospel with?
  - o How are you serving and reaching out to our city?
  - o Name a few people that you have not shared the gospel with.

**Core Discipline**  
**of Small Group Leaders:**

A Small Groups is a place where discipleship, growth and mission can happen, and it all starts with the leader. Everything falls and rises on leadership. In line with Small Groups core values, here are some disciplines that we believe every leader should strive to possess.

1. **Devoted to GOD'S WORD**
  - a. Surrendered to Christ in every area of life.
  - b. Reads the Word regularly
  - c. Prayerfully dependent
  - d. Actively gives
  - e. Articulates the Gospel clearly
  - f. Teaches the Word accurately
  - g. Applies the Gospel to life
  - h. Confesses and repents of sin
  - i. Believes God's promises
  
2. **Devoted to FELLOWSHIP**
  - a. Identifies needs in others
  - b. Asks good inquiring questions
  - c. Listens to others stories
  - d. Follows up
  - e. Models transparency in their own life (sin, struggles, joys)
  - f. Encourages others in their spiritual walk
  - g. Lovingly confronts sin in others
  
3. **Devoted to the MISSION**
  - a. Shares the Gospel with others
  - b. Builds relationships with non-Christian
  - c. Serves the community regularly
  - d. Tells stories of non-Christian relationships
  - e. Supports global missions through awareness, prayer, giving or going

### The Roles of our Small Group Team:

- The Small Groups Director:
  - Serves the coaches.
  - Provides care, guidance, and encouragement to the coaches.
  - Casts vision.
  
- The Small Groups Coach:
  - Serves the leaders.
  - Provides care, guidance, and encouragement to the leaders.
  - Casts vision.
  
- The Small Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert Name Here)
  - Models servant Leadership.
  - Provides care, guidance, and encouragement to the group members.
  - Fosters an environment where spiritual growth and genuine friendships among group members takes place.
  - Empowers group members to live missionally focused lives.
  - Ensures that group is devoted to CF's Core Values.

### Leadership Development:

- We train and develop our leaders through different methods such as:
  - Monthly Coach & Leader meetings
    - Focused on discipline, encouraging, guiding, and caring for the leader.
  
  - Small Group Leader Meetings
    - Focused on equipping the leaders with practical and essential tools for the development of discipleship and the multiplication of Small Groups.

### 3 Keys to Launching a Small Group

- Pray, Pray, Pray: This may seem like the cliché churchy thing to state, but studies show that the differentiating factor between groups that succeed and those that don't are not necessarily the personality of the leader, the location, time, or any typically expected factors. Rather the most successful groups are those whose leaders spend much time praying for the group and the people who God will be entrusting them with. Be sure that you ask the Lord to show you whom to invite and that the Lord opens their hearts and draws them to your group.
- Invite People to Your Group: It's not surprising that a key part to launching a Small Group is actually having people there! And no, God does not send the Small Group stork to drop a couple of new Small Group members for you. You need to look for them! So as you pray, invite people from church, friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers. We know this can seem a little challenging, but you will be surprised at how God starts opening the hearts of the people. Remember, they won't come to your Small Group until you invite them. So start inviting!
- Set a Launch Date and Stick with It: Once you have prayed and invited people to your Small Group, set a launch date and stay faithful to it. If a start date is not solidified, the group launch will be dragged on and will never get off the ground. Whether it's 10 people, or just you and two other people, make sure you start and watch the Lord add people during the upcoming weeks

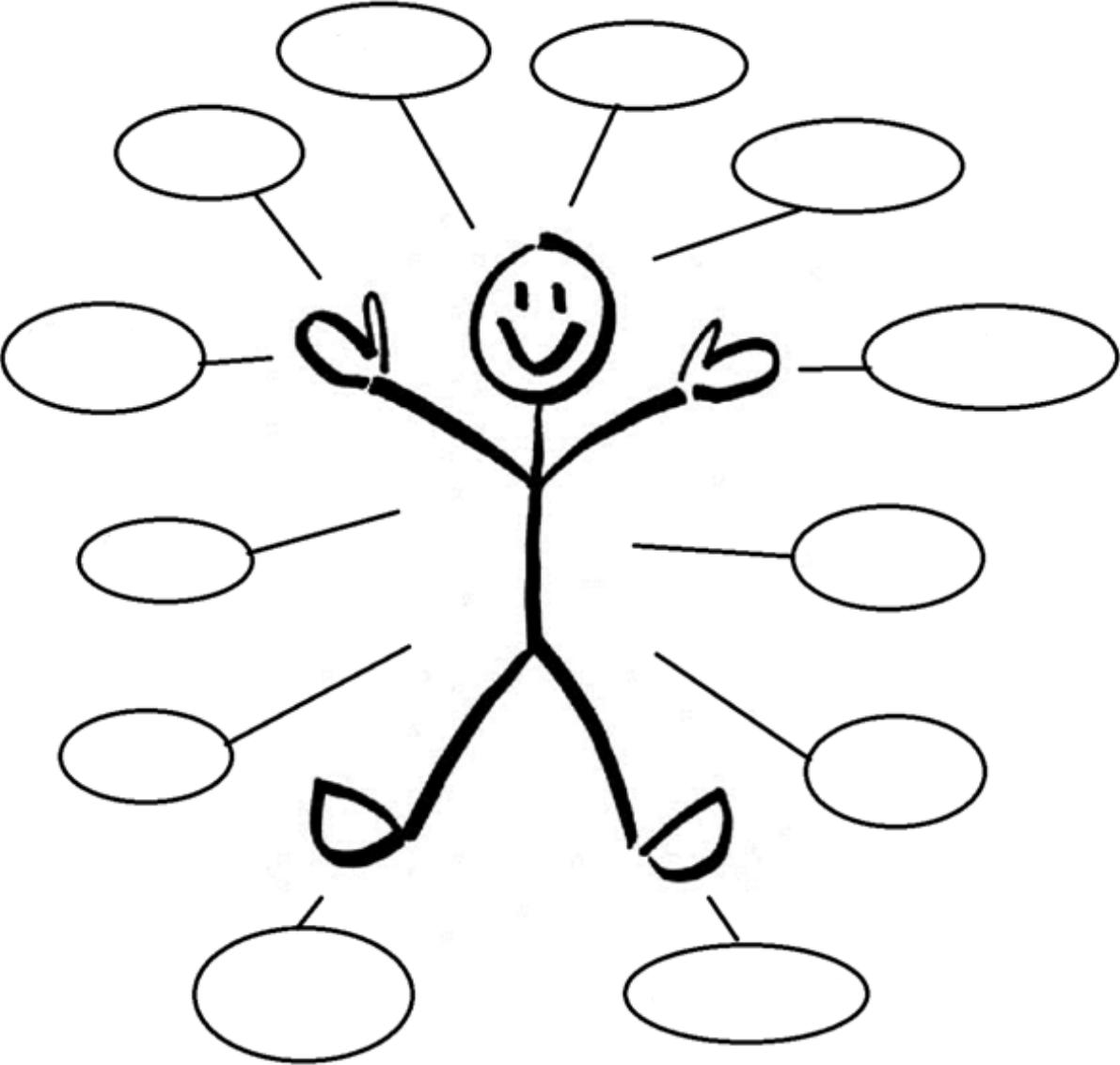
#### What Small Groups Are:

- Small Groups are NOT:
  - Social clubs
  - Counseling sessions
  - Classroom environments (Teacher-Pupil)
- Small Groups ARE:
  - Predictable environments where Small Group members experience:
    - Spiritual Growth
    - Authentic Community with other believers
    - Missional activity

### 3 Keys to a Successful Small Group

- **A Welcoming and Transparent Environment:** There is nothing worse than being in a Small Group where people are not warm and welcoming. Be sure that everyone in your Small Group makes new guests feel welcome and accepted. We also want our people to be open and transparent. If you group members never share what's really going on inside, they will never really grow spiritually. As a leader, it is important that you set the pace by being open and transparent. Remember, when there is openness and transparency, stronger relationships will develop.
  - o "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." James 5:16
- **Follow up, Follow up, and more Follow Up:** A huge part of your responsibility as a leader is to be sure you follow up with your Small Group members. Here are 3 primary ways you should be following up with your group members:
  1. **First time Guest:** When a person visits your group for the first time, make sure you call or text them thanking them for visiting your Small Group
  2. **Reminder Text:** The day of your Small Group, your members should get a reminder text or call, reminding them about Small Groups
  3. **Missing Person:** If you have not seen someone in a couple of weeks, it is also important that you give them a call to check up on them and let them know they are missed.
- **Have Fun Gatherings Outside Your Small Group:** As a Small Group Leader, one of your goals is to make sure the people in your Small Group are growing closer together. One of the things that really helps the development of friendships between your group members is hanging out with each other outside of your normal Small Group. Going out to dinner together, having a BBQ at someone's home, or doing a fun activity together really goes a long way in developing friendships. Think about it, the better friends they become, the more open they will be when they come together for Small Group.

Who is in my circle of influence?



Who needs to hear the gospel?





## FAQ's about Small Groups

### **1. What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?**

- o That will happen! Here is your response. "I appreciate that question(s) and I don't know the answer to that, but I will do my best to find out this week and get back with you at our next Small Group meeting." Follow up with personal research; call your Small Group Director or Small Group Pastor to get advice. You may not have the answers at that time, but you do have other resources available to help.

### **2. What if one individual wants to dominate our Small Group discussion time?**

- o R.O.E.! Rules Of Engagement. When starting a Small Group, or when a new member joins your group, give clear discussion guidelines. Here are two that come to mind:
  1. What is said in Small Group stays in Small Group. (Confidentiality)  
- Whether it is a prayer request or a discussion statement.
  2. In open group discussion, please express your thoughts within 2-3 minutes so all can participate. If you feel a person dominates the discussion time then you, as the leader, must react to the situation positively. Find a place in the conversation as soon as possible and say, "I appreciate your thoughts regarding this matter, I would like to go to another thought concerning..." then engage others in the conversation.

### **3. How do I ask others to pray out loud in our group?**

Start with yourself. Ease into the public prayer arena carefully. Remember there are two things a person fears the most in coming to Small Group: reading in front of others and public praying. If you do ask someone to pray or read in front of others, please talk to them before your group time to be sure it is all right. As your group matures, this will not be as much of an issue as it is for a new group.

## FAQ's about Small Groups(Continued)

### **4. How much time do I need to devote as a Small Group leader?**

Here are some things that everyone in the group should do, especially the leader:

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1. Contact others in your group for prayer and encouragement
2. Preview the materials you are presenting if leading the study or discussion.

The average small group meeting takes about an hour and a half with an additional hour for preparation, phone calls, emails, etc. You are not limited to these amounts, give as the Lord leads you.

Keep in mind that you may need to meet one-on-one with some of your group members who are struggling or are in need.

### **5. Where and when can I get Small Group Curriculum?**

The Small Group DVD and materials are available at the beginning of each series. Contact your Small Group Director to find out when the next curriculum is available.

### **6. How do I sign up for a Reach Beyond?**

Planning a Reach Beyond is easy! Your Small Group can serve your community in any way your group feels led to. You can sign up for a Reach Beyond online by following these steps:

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1. Visit [cfmiami.org/reachbeyonds](http://cfmiami.org/reachbeyonds)
2. Select from the list of available Reach Beyonds from your campus.
3. Fill out the form at the bottom of the page and click "Submit"

### **7. What is an Apprentice?**

- o An Apprentice is someone in your Small Group that you see leadership potential in. It does not mean that they are ready to lead right now, but that you see potential in them for the future.
- o Every Small Group Leader should identify at least one person in their group.
- o After an Apprentice is identified, notify your Small Group Director and let them know that you will be investing in that person to lead a group one day.

**8. How can I encourage my Small Group to get involved at Christ Fellowship?**

- Encourage everyone to Test Drive a ministry.
- Invite some to serve with you if you are part of another ministry.
- Apprentice two people to lead a Small Group
- Pray for our Pastors in your Small Group

**9. Who should I invite to my Small Group?**

**Family and Friends**

There are people who you are close to who need spiritual community in their lives. Some might be looking for a place to discuss the Bible, or they might take interest in our Small Group studies. Make a list of who you think might be interested, and invite them to your Small Group!

**Neighbors**

Inviting your neighbors to a Small Group can be a great way to fill your Small Group. Walk outside of your house, or apartment, and make it a point to know the names of those who live across from you or next to you. Invite them to your Small Group as a way to reach them for Christ!

**Your Church Family**

There are many people at Christ Fellowship who need to be connected to a Small Group. Here are a few opportunities that you can use at church to invite people to your Small Group:

- People you sit next to in the service.
- People you serve alongside with in a ministry
- People you meet when you drop off your kids at the CF Kids booth.
- People who stand in line for coffee before and after services.

## Typical Small Group Meeting

Estimated Time: Between an hour and a half to 2 hours.

### **Pre-group time:**

- Communication
  - Email, text, or call members the day before meeting.
  - Keep communications short and sweet.
  - Review icebreaker (if needed).
- Small Group Lesson
  - Preview lesson & discussion questions.
  - Pray for your group and group time.
- Room Readiness
  - Clean & presentable
  - Good atmosphere
  - Smells good
  - TV on with DVD lesson ready
  - Prepare food (optional, but recommended).

### **Group Time:**

- God's Word
  - Watch lesson and have Christ centered discussions.
  - Not all questions have to be answered to finish the lesson
  - Relax and enjoy your group
- Fellowship and Prayer
  - Ask everyone to share how their week went and what they need prayer for.
  - Spend some time praying for each other.
  - Plan a fun gathering that the group can do outside of your regular Small Group time.
  - Include other in bringing food next week.
- Mission
  - Make sure to plan and complete a Reach Beyond project at least once during the series.
  - Encourage people to share Christ with others throughout the week.

### **Post-Group Time:**

- Follow up with those that might have missed the meeting,

# Small Group Leader Covenant

After praying and seeking God's direction, I choose to commit to the following:

- Grow in my faith as I seek to love Christ, love others, and help lead others to Christ.
- To adhere to the Christ Fellowship Doctrinal Statement
- Actively invite people to my Small Group and Christ Fellowship.
- Attend The Rally & Small Group Leader Meetings.
- Encourage people in my Small Group to serve in a ministry.
- Agree to meet regularly and keep an open line of communication with my Small Group Coach.
- To make choices and live a lifestyle that are both Godly and “above reproach” knowing my life represents my Lord, my family, and my Church.
- Develop an Apprentice in your Small Group to be a future leader.
- Uphold unity within the Small Group and Christ Fellowship.
- Know and understand the four connecting points of Christ Fellowship: Connect to God (weekend services), Connect to Others (Small Groups), Connect to Ministry and Connect to the World (Reach Beyonds)
- Pray for my Church Staff and Small Group members.

Sign Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_