



Small Groups Ministry

Orientation

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

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WELCOME TO SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Jesus led the first small group ministry. It contained thirteen people; Jesus and the twelve men he asked to follow him. Jesus taught the disciples. He spent most of his time with the disciples not the crowds. Jesus did very little one on one teaching outside his circle of twelve men. Occasionally he taught large groups but most of his energy was spent equipping the disciples. Then the disciples changed the world by equipping others.

Jesus asked people to be in his small group. He did not post flyers on telephone poles or make announcements at synagogue. He didn't place an ad in the classified or create a web page where people could sign up. He walked up to people he knew would be good members of his small group and he asked them face to face to join him.

You are not being asked to create a group of disciples to follow you and your teachings. You are being equipped to carry out the model that Jesus started; asking a small group of people to come together and create better lives. Maybe even change the world.

PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Small groups are an extension of the local church. They are a way building and maintaining relationships through the people of the church. Small group ministry also creates a structure through which the church can build up fellowship and discipleship. Through this model, growth, mission, ministry and evangelism are increased.

TYPES OF SMALL GROUPS

Trinity supports two types of small groups

1. Fellowship Groups
 - ✓ These groups meet year round and become family and an extension of the church
 - ✓ Fellowship groups can find their identity by topic, age, hobby, or anything else that members share
 - ✓ This is the type of small group that Trinity encourages

2. Seasonal Groups
 - Seasonal groups meet for special occasions such as Advent, summer, or topic

THE BENEFITS OF SMALL GROUPS

Small groups have several benefits.

- Fellowship
- Increased discipleship
- Increased membership
- Mission
- Increased leadership

THE FIVE FOCUSES OF SMALL GROUPS¹

All small groups, regardless of topic, will have five main areas of focus:

- Fellowship
- Discipleship
- Ministry
- Evangelism
- Worship

¹ From *Small Groups with Purpose: How to Create Healthy Communities*.

These five Biblical purposes come from the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the great commandment (Matthew 22:37-40)

Fellowship

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19)

Fellowship is more than just coming together and enjoying each other's company. Fellowship is growing in your relationship to Christ together.

Discipleship

"Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mat 28:20)

By learning together, those involved in small groups grow in their knowledge of Scripture. But knowledge is not enough. Discipleship is growing in your relationship with God through Jesus Christ and sharing that with others outside your group.

Ministry

"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:19)

Every small group will support a ministry outside of itself that shares the same values as Trinity Presbyterian Church. Sponsor a Boy/Girl Scout group, participate in a soup kitchen, raise money for the youth mission trip, etc.

Evangelism

"Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19)

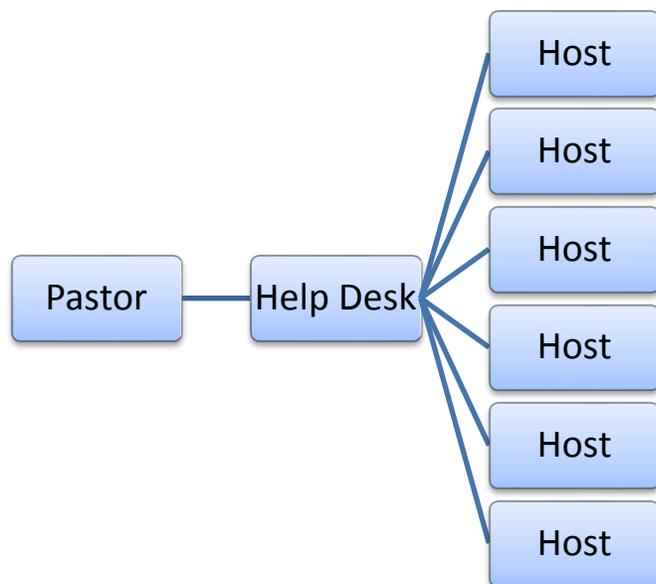
Each person who attends a small group is encouraged to share their experiences with others and invite people to join their group or even start a new one!

Worship

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37)

Ultimately our small groups honor God. God is the center of our relationships and the reason why we come together. Groups are encouraged to worship together at Trinity regularly.

Structure of Small Group Ministries



Pastor

- Equips the Help Desk to be a resource to the Hosts
- Provides training
- Provides resources
- Provides vision

Help Desk

- A resource of people who work with the pastor to equip and help hosts
- Acts as a coach
- Two year commitment
- Has hosted at least one year

Host

- Provides room and hospitality.
- Facilitates small group
- Does not necessarily "lead" a small group

ROLES OF SMALL GROUP MEMBERS

Pastor

The pastor's primary function in the Small Group Ministry is to be a resource; to train the Help Desk and equip and maintain it to be a resource to the Small Group Hosts.

The pastor will continually strive to equip the Small Group ministries of the church.

The pastor will offer orientation for the Help Desk as needed. Orientation for Hosts will be held as needed.

Help Desk

The Help Desk works with the pastor and each other to encourage and equip the hosts and small groups. They are in place to offer help to those who are hosts. People who work the Help Desk are like coaches. They can provide encouragement, ideas, and training for hosting or facilitating. People who work the Help Desk should have previously hosted so they can use their experience to help others.

Hosts

Hosts are not expected to be teachers or seminary students. A host is one who opens his/her home to a small group, provides snacks, and knows how to work a DVD player. People who have a heart for entertaining make great Hosts!

REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERSHIP IN SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Those involved in small groups in a leadership role are representative of Trinity Presbyterian Church and its ministries. They have made a public proclamation of their faith by becoming a member of Trinity and have been examined by the session.

RECOMMENDED SMALL GROUP SCHEDULE

<u>Month</u>	<u>Small Group</u>	<u>Orientation</u> (Provided as necessary)
Mid-January	Annual "Kick-Off"	
February	Regular meetings	
March	Regular meetings	
April	April "Kick Off"	
May	Regular Meetings	
June	Off	
July	Off	<i>This is a good time to do some socializing with your small groups!</i>
August	Off	
September	September "Kick-Off"	
October	Regular Meetings	
November	Regular Meetings	
December	Off	<i>Another opportunity to socialize</i>

HOW TO HOST A SMALL GROUP

Before the Group Arrives

Prepare for your group BEFORE they arrive at your house. Put away loose papers, vacuum the carpet, set out chairs. Your inviting people into your home and you want them to be comfortable. You also want them to focus on the conversation so remove any distractions; turn off the tv, turn down the stereo and have pets outside or in another room where they can't interfere or bother people with allergies.

Set the thermostat to a comfortable level. Extra bodies in your home will make it feel warmer so dropping the thermostat a degree or two may be all you need to do.

It's nice to have refreshments. Simple is good. You're not throwing a party; you're hosting a small group. Still people tend to be more social with something to eat and drink. Setting something out like a picture of lemonade or water with some cookies is perfect.

Most important, pray! Pray for each person attending by name. Ask God's Spirit to join you. Ask God to make everyone feel comfortable and loved. Ask God to encourage people to participate.

When the Group Arrives

Remember your title is host. Your job is to make people comfortable. Take their coat, offer them a drink. Show them where they can be seated. Ask them what they are looking forward to with the group.

During the Meeting

If you are watching a DVD together, ensure the sound level is appropriate. Look around the room to see if people are comfortable. You can gauge the temperature level if people look too hot or cold. Offer a blanket if someone is chilly or turn down the heat if everyone is warm.

During the discussion, avoid yes/no questions and ask questions that encourage conversation. For example don't ask, "Did you like the book?" Instead ask, "What did you like about the book?" If the answer is short say, "Tell me more."

Most Small Group Studies come with a facilitator's or leader's guide so you won't have to come up with questions on your own. Your guide will tell you what to say. If the group doesn't speak up right away, don't be afraid of silence. Eventually, someone will speak. If you as the host are the one who always breaks the silence, you'll take away people's opportunity to share. Be patient, it takes a while for people to open up... but they always do.

If there is engaging conversation, be mindful of the clock. People are busy. They have other appointments, kids with a sitter or they need to get up early for work. If you respect their time, they're more likely to come back.

At the End of the Meeting

Once the predetermined time to end the meeting has arrived, it's important to wrap up with prayer. Thank God for the people in the room and ask God to care and guide everyone as they continue their lives.

Feel free to continue any conversations that came up during your time together. But it's important to pray at the end of the meeting to establish that the meeting is officially over.

If someone doesn't want to leave you can say something like you have to get up early in the morning, you have someplace else to be or that it's late and you're getting tired. Sometimes people stay if they are struggling with something and need to talk. If you sense that say, "I would like to pray for you before you leave." This almost always works.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

What is Conflict?

Conflict occurs when opposing ideas come face to face. Sometimes these ideas can be in the shape of a life philosophy, how time can be used, interpretation of Scripture and more.

While conflict can be uncomfortable, not all conflict is bad. Most important, conflict should not be ignored. Doing so can tear away at the fabric of your group.

Conflict can be destructive or constructive.

Conflict is **destructive** when it:

- Interferes with important activities
- Challenges moral
- Ends productivity
- Hampers the goals or objectives of your group

Conflict is **constructive** when it:

- Encourages discussion
- Seeks resolution

- Does not seek to win
- Helps us understand another person's viewpoint

Communicating with Others

Communication is done with more than words. Body language, tone and delivery speak volumes.

Body Language:

Be aware of your body language and that of others. For example, notice if a person's arms are crossed or if they're leaning away from you.

Be careful of rolling your eyes and sighing when you disagree. You may not agree with what is being said but these behaviors communicate that not only do you disagree but that you think the other person's beliefs or feelings are inferior or invalid.

Model the behavior you want others to exhibit Lean forward when listening, make eye contact, keep an open stance.

Listening:

Like the saying goes, "God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason." Be sure to listen. Many times conflict will go away if people feel that they have simply been heard.

Listening shows respect for another person. It demonstrates that you care enough to take the time to hear what he/she has to say.

Types of Personalities

- Thinker
- Director
- Socializer
- Relator
- The Tank
- The Sniper
- Know-It-Alls

Tips for Communicating

Begin with the end in mind, what do you really want?

Identify where you are getting stuck in the conversation

Focus on your own behavior and attitude (What are you bringing to the conflict?)

Observe body language

Keep on the topic

Make the environment safe

-Apologize if necessary

-Seek a goal that benefits both people

Be aware of your own interpretation of what's happening (You could be wrong!)

Ask yourself why a reasonable, rational person would act this way?

CONGRATULATIONS!

You're ready to host a small group!

NOTES:

