

Practical Advice

Number of people

By their very nature, small groups are dynamic and vary in size for a whole variety of reasons. However, generally, we aim for groups to have around 6 to 16 people. This is to ensure that there is a sustainable number on a week to week basis while at the same time providing a safe environment for people to share with each other.

Location

The majority of small groups meet in people's homes (whether the home of the small group leader or of a small group host). The reason for this is that:

- It is a safe place where people can relax in a warm and nonthreatening environment.
- It provides an intimate setting.
- It's a comfortable, friendly and informal environment, where it is easy to be hospitable.
- It's usually allows the development of a group of a workable size.

Aspects of a Healthy Small Group

1

Share the Vision

Help people know what the groups about and where you are heading!

2

Core Group

In starting small groups one thing we've found helpful is to think about is a 'core' group. The core group is a small number of people in the group who you invite to be committed to helping with the vision and logistics of the group.

3

Hospitality

Hospitality communicates love at a deep level and often puts people in a place where they can meet with God and share personally about their lives. Hospitality centers around making people feel welcome and at home from the moment they walk in the door. Think about the way you lay things out, lighting and having food and drinks to offer to people are good starting points (share the responsibility around). However the key thing is to be yourself and create a place that feels like home.

4

Time to Share Personally

People tend to replicate what is modeled to them. If, as a small group leader, you share personally and show vulnerability, it is likely that others will do the same. When people share about their lives deep connections and support follow.

5

Pray

Find time to pray for your group through the week. Offer prayer during an evening.

6

Group Building

There are many practical ways to build up the sense of community in a group, both within and outside the context of your regular small group meeting.

eg. Icebreakers, Socials, ways to bless the community (we can centrally fund ideas)!

Care within small groups

As a church we long to see members of our community being able to love God, themselves and others as modeled by Jesus. We seek to facilitate growth and healing through the work of the Holy Spirit as we come alongside those who are experiencing difficulty by bringing hope, comfort and encouragement.

They are the places where we can be known, know others and receive prayer and support as part of a loving community.

There are some particular life events where the support small groups provide is key. We would encourage leaders to think through how their groups care for each other in the following situations.

- Having a baby
- Bereavement
- Serious Illness
- Marriage or marriage difficulties

We would love to help with this!

To think about....

Worship

Bible Studies

Content

How to lead a prayer time

Ten Tips for Small Group Leaders

Be who you are

- Run a group you would like to go to.
- We are all unique. Our experiences and personalities are so different.
- Be real and not religious.
- Don't try to be someone you are not.

Jesus-Centred Lifestyle

- Always make this a top priority.
- If we let our relationship with Jesus die, so does the group!
- Serve those in your group.

It's God's group

- Let God have control.
- Allow yourself to be stretched.
- Leave your comfort zone.
- Operate in God's strength.
- Don't over plan!

Pray

- God has given you authority to minister to your group.
- Allow time and space.

Make People Feel at Home

- Think about room aesthetics
- Timings
- Grow in hospitality
- Let everyone contribute.

Be positive

- It's biblical, contagious, fulfilling and attractive.
- It's also a choice.

Variety (don't get in a rut)

Get Others Involved; Spread the Load

- Running the group.
- supporting others.
- Organising.
- Planning.
- Core.

Make most of support

- We are available to you.
- Leaders Meetings.
- Other Small Group Leaders.

Have fun

- Socialise regularly.
- Eat together.
- Play together.
- Take advantage of special events like birthdays, baby showers.