

Small Groups

Group leadership is ultimately about serving; its about using our influence to point people towards Jesus. Leaders have the privilege and responsibility of guiding others towards Jesus as we are growing closer to him in our own lives. Our goal as leaders should be able to say with confidence the words Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 11:1 where he told the church, *And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.*

5 Things Successful Small Group Leaders Know

1. I am not alone.

- A lot of nerves are overcome to lead a Small Group. We ask ourselves all kinds of questions before hosting a group... Will anyone come? Am I *really* qualified for this? What if my go-to casserole burns? We want you to know that our church is here to walk with you in this Next Step of your faith.

This is truly a partnership... If you need anything some leaders will have Team Leaders to assist if anything is needed. They are they to pray over you, etc - not principles.

2. I just need to be one step ahead.

- One of the greatest obstacles to becoming a new leader is not being qualified for leading other people. We assume since we are still learning to lead our own self that we aren't in a place to lead others. To be honest, we will always have room for growth. We just need to strive to become more like Christ and be willing to bring a few others along for the ride.
- We are about helping people take their next step in the Lord.
- One of our primary roles of SGs is to help people take that next step during their time in your group.
- As a group leader, we are to be a part of that step. Help the group members discover where they are spiritually and simply help them take that next step.
- Proverbs 27:23, "Know the condition of your flocks and give careful attention to your herds."

- For example... If someone doesn't know Christ as their savior, share Christ with them if you are comfy or invite them to church where they can hear a clear message of the gospel. OR baptism... Celebrate with them.
- So at our church it also applies to the discipleship process and Next Steps Class. See where they are at serving...
- What is the next step? Is it SERVING? Is it OUTREACH? Is it getting BAPTIZED? PRAYER?
- Help your group identify where they are and what their next step is... Then help them take that step.

3. I don't have to be BFFs with everyone.

- The chances are that you will not have the opportunity to connect with every group member on a deep level. You don't even need to attempt this. Your role is to facilitate opportunities for people in the group to connect with others. This will happen, most of the time, outside of a group setting. If you worry about giving equal attention and care, you will eventually feel like a failure.

There are some people in my group that get on my wife's last nerve sometimes... but she has to take me home anyway.

4. I don't have to know all of the answers.

- It's ok to not know the original greek for the scriptures you cover. If you feel it is important to have an answer for a particular question, it is always acceptable to say, "I don't know, but I promise to have the answer next week." People will respect your honesty more than an attempt to to appear as you know it all.

If a group member is going through a particular difficult season we ask that you remember this acronym. REMEMBER ESPN

E - ENCOURAGE

- Encourage people in crisis. Nothing surprises God so we can lead confidently in that. He desperately wants to be in the middle of our trials. Encourage people. Encourage them to know God is in that moment. He is in the life changing business.

S - SCRIPTURE (S) ESPN (S)

- We share God's word. The Bible tells us "God's word has power for its own fulfillment."
- Study God's word, memorize a few scriptures that have done you well so you can share them with others.
- God's word is living and powerful. It will guide people.

P - PRAY

- Point people to God.
- It takes the focus off of us and our earthly circumstances and puts the spotlight on God and His power.
- Don't be scared to ask for needs and even stop a group and pray if needed.

N - NEXT STEPS

- Very important principle.
- Make sure people engage. People have a tendency to isolate during crisis. Keep them engaged. The enemy doesn't want this... He loves isolation. We want to keep people surrounded and engaged. Think about that for a second... The pressure is not on you. We're not expected to have all the answers and the spiritual aspect of their life is in God's hand. So it's already a win!

So remember if someone is going through a tough time, remember ESPN.
Encourage, scripture, pray and next steps.

5. I should pray weekly for my group members.

- This is the foundation of a strong Small Group. Don't underestimate the power in praying for group members by name. This may be a new challenge for you, embrace it and know that leaders and groups are strengthened most by prayer.
- This is the foundation of ministry.
- The church has a culture of prayer. And adopting this same principle as a small group leader will do you well.
- Prayer covers, protects, and enlightens
- We ask that you pray daily for your small group. We understand the commitment this is but It will bear good fruit in your life and in your group, as well.
- Bringing God into everything you do as a leader paves the way for a great SG experience.
- The most dynamic groups have a praying leader.
- Say you were to lead 2 groups. One on Monday and one on Wednesday and you pray over one and not the other... I guarantee the one you pray over will be more successful. The Bible tells us that the "prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." So let's commit to prayer in our groups. Ask for prayer requests etc. It's the most important thing you will do as a leader.

FYI

For Access to *all things* Small Groups visit yourchurchwebsite.com

(Hover over *Get Connected* and Click *Small Groups*)

- Access to the SG Directory
- Access to Login, Facility Request Forms, other SG Leader Forms
- Access to Leaders, Contact the Team, Learn More
- **NEW*** Access Small Group Leadership Development Series.
This will be available for ongoing training, leadership tips, etc.

How To Start and Lead Your Group

- Decide on a study, your favorite activity, or service project and register your group.
- If you would like to use the church facility on Monday or Wednesday Nights, fill out a facilities request form.
- INVITE, INVITE, INVITE! What is the comfortable number to fill your home? Invite your friends, neighbors, and coworkers until that number is met. Connect Night will typically add a couple to your group as well.
- Attend Connect Night. It is designed to mirror a typical Small Group at the church so, it will give you a comfortable setting to lead your first or fiftieth gathering with your new group. It is also designed to help prospects feel comfortable meeting you for the first time.
- *Be Interested, Not Interesting.* Ask Questions.

Know Your Group !!!

- Build Your Roster, Check Your Attendance [via Leader Login]

Exodus 4:2-4 says, Then the Lord asked him, *What is that in your hand? A Shepherd staff*, Moses replied. *Throw it down on the ground*, the Lord told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back. Then the Lord told him, *Reach out and grab its tail*. So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand.

Staff represented everything of who he was... wealth, job, status, etc. God was asking Moses who are you? What talent or gifts do you have? What is your trade?

He didn't want Moses to identify as himself... but of God.

So, what do you have in your hand today? For some of you its a passion for yourself to grow in the word/ devotion time. For some its a particular activity you love and want to include other people with you at times.

We look around this world and spend five minutes on Facebook or watching the news and see division. Moses took what he had and united an entire nation of people.