for All Adults
for Men
for Women

LEADER ORIENTATION
Welcome to Groups Leader Orientation!

We often say that we’re not a church with small groups, but a church of small groups. Those words aren’t just a clever slogan. They’re the most important thing we do because we want to help people connect to God, God’s people, and God’s work. We believe this happens best in small groups that grow spiritually, connect relationally, and serve missionally.

Leader Orientation is designed to help prepare you to lead your small group, whether it’s a Group for men, for women, or for all adults. We want to equip you to be a source of encouragement and hospitality for your group members. We hope this orientation provides some helpful tools as you begin leading a group, and helps you move forward in your own faith journey.

Keep in mind that the Leader Orientation isn’t exhaustive. We’ve tried to keep it simple by including the information that is most helpful as you begin leading. There will be other training opportunities for you to grow in leadership and it will be important to stay connected with your Coach to learn more (more on that later!).

Finally, we recommend that you use the space provided to take notes and record ideas for leading your small group.

Indeed, life is better connected.

Thank you for partnering with us to help people connect to God, God’s people and God’s work by creating Jesus-centered small groups led by intentional leaders that encourage members to GROW spiritually, CONNECT relationally, and SERVE missionally!
MISSION & STRATEGY
To *help people connect to God, God’s people and God’s work* by creating **Jesus-centered small groups** led by **intentional leaders** that encourage members to **GROW spiritually, CONNECT relationally, and SERVE missionally**.

FOCUS

INTENTIONAL LEADER

GROUP LEADER BASICS

**Role:** to follow Jesus and help others follow Jesus
- To personally follow Jesus by **growing** spiritually, **connecting** relationally, and **serving** missionally.
- To help members in their group to follow Jesus by **growing** spiritually, **connecting** relationally, and **serving** missionally.
- To create a predictable small group environment by executing the **Leader Essentials** below.
Qualifications
1. Have a personal growing relationship with Jesus Christ
2. Recognize the Bible as the authority for their lives.
3. Able to explain the gospel clearly.
4. Have been in a small group before.
5. Have the time, emotional capacity, spiritual maturity and moral discernment to lead a group.

LEADER ESSENTIALS
These are 8 Leader Essentials that every group leader should focus on and be growing in.

1. Stay Connected Regularly & Deeply with Jesus
   In John 15, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to instruct his followers to “abide.” When we stay connected to Jesus in this way, we welcome God’s work in us and through us. Any discussions in the Bible or curriculum should lead us to intimacy with Jesus.

2. Cultivate Relationships
   By encouraging and facilitating connections outside of regular group meetings, you demonstrate the priority of relationships.

3. Promote Participation
   Make sure to keep the mission of the group before them: to Grow spiritually, Connect relationally, and Serve missionally. And make sure they know the expectation for being in the group is to: Show up, Join in, and Be real. Sharing participation creates broader ownership of the group (i.e. facilitating the study, hosting the meeting, preparing the snacks, leading prayer time, planning socials, guiding the curriculum choice discussion, HUB connections, etc.).

4. Serve Together
   Serving those outside of the group is a great way for people to grow, to demonstrate the love of Christ to the community, and strengthen the relationships within the group.

5. Celebrate Change
   If we truly value the life change God brings about in people, it is important that we take the time to celebrate it in our groups. Any step toward Jesus is a step to celebrate.
6. **Provide Care**
   With a church our size, care is readily available through groups and it carries out the biblical call to be the “priesthood of saints.”

7. **Replace Yourself**
   By passing on knowledge, skills, and opportunities, you are preparing others for future leadership while sharpening your own. Choose an Apprentice (i.e. Assistant Leader)

8. **End Well**
   As all groups have a natural life cycle, leaders must work with their group members to craft a picture of a strong finish.

**THE POSTURE OF THE LEADER**

Great leaders adopt a posture of:
- Humility
- Teachability
- Hospitality
- Intentionality

Your group members don’t expect you to have all of the answers. They expect you to care about who they are and to want to help them grow.
LEADER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

We want Leaders to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BE (Posture)</th>
<th>DO (Skills)</th>
<th>KNOW (Theology/Groups)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serve well as you lead well.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lead people to follow Jesus.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Know it well enough to talk about it.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intentional.</td>
<td>2. Create a great group environment.</td>
<td>2. Scripture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teachable.</td>
<td>3. Encourage members to grow and engage.</td>
<td>3. Culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hospitable.</td>
<td>4. Implement the Leader Essentials.</td>
<td>4. Our strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Humble.</td>
<td>5. Keep connected with staff and support.</td>
<td>5. Group dynamics.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>6. Yourself (identity, personality, gifts).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Leader Development*

2 One-on-One Meetings *(attend two)*
A one-on-one meeting with your Pastor, Director, or Coach to address specific group issues and help you develop personally.

FOCUS: Personal Development

2 Leader Skills Seminars *(attend two)*
Leader Community gatherings are scheduled accordingly.

FOCUS: Skills Development

1 Leader Development Training *(attend one)*
A training track offered in January and July. You only need to attend one of these but you can attend both.

FOCUS: Leadership Development

*Leader’s for Men’s Groups, Women’s Groups, and Adult Groups may have slight changes in the plan.*
SMALL GROUPS

Our goal for small groups is to be an environment where people can follow Jesus by growing spiritually, connecting relationally and serving missionally. Here are few things to remember.

GROUPS ARE FUN & RELATIONAL

1. The time before sitting down in a group is important!
2. Plan fun things together.
3. Food is often a secret ingredient!

GROUPS CAN BE MESSY
THE THREE KINDS OF MESSES

Sin Mess
When people do something that doesn’t display love for God or others.

Relational Mess
When there are differences of personalities or perspectives in group.

Life Mess
When people’s lives blow up or something is out of their control because we live in a fallen world.

GROUPS ARE TRANSFORMATIONAL

1. Growing spiritually means focusing on the heart

We want people to grow spiritually, connect relationally and serve missionally (ministry, giving, & inviting) when following Jesus. These are great measurements, but some of our measurements with growing spiritually can be merely set on outer marks, such as: attends worship services, correct doctrine, serve in ministry, etc. These are all good things and important measurements, BUT it can’t be merely all that is evaluated in your life. You can all do these things yet remain miserable, hateful, and judgmental of others. To get to those things is a matter of the heart. The heart is what Jesus came to transform; to truly love God and love others.
2. **Use the catalysts that create space for spiritual growth**

![Diagram of HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS]

![Diagram of HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS]

3. **Facilitate discussion. Don’t teach.**

   If you lead the group discussion, here are three things you can do to guide your group through a dynamic and helpful conversation.

   - **ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE**
     Limit your own opinions and input in order to give the entire group space to speak. A good rule of thumb is that you should talk less than 20% of the time.

   - **STEER THE DISCUSSION WITHOUT CONTROLLING IT**
     Don’t be afraid of out-of-left-field input from a group member, but don’t let one member monopolize the discussion. Look for group members who are quiet but seem like they might have something to say. Give them the floor by asking them what they’re thinking.

   - **BE CURIOUS**
     Actively listen to group members and ask clarifying questions in order to discover what’s going on in their lives.
GROUPS HAVE A PLAN

You don’t need to micromanage everyone’s spiritual growth, but you do need to make a plan. This checklist will help you steer your group toward your destination.

TAKEOFF – FIRST 90 DAYS

Chart Your Course
- Create an environment where members can grow, connect, and serve
- Think about studies, resources, and experiences to help them take next steps (i.e. see online for curriculum suggestions)
- Cast vision that the long-term goal of the group is to multiply
- Schedule times to meet one-on-one with each group member or couple
- Keep in touch with your Coaches. Meet for their meetings when they schedule one

Align Expectations
- Remind group members to show up, join in, and be real
- Discuss with your group the small group covenant/agreement. Make any additions if necessary

Prioritize Relationships
- Groups that enjoy one another tend to grow
- Tell your stories, serve together, and have fun
- Share tasks with your group members:
  - Hosting meetings
  - Bringing snacks
  - Sending emails to group members
  - Planning socials
  - Planning service projects

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FLIGHT – MIDDLE MONTHS

Stay on Course
- Connect regularly and deeply with Jesus
- Remind your group that your goal is to grow personally and to eventually make space for others to join a group
- Continue to focus on relationships and celebrate growth in members. Any movement is movement to celebrate!

Avoid Routine
- Plan interruptions to the normal rhythm of meetings by organizing:
  - Socials
  - Retreats
  - Service Projects

Plan Your Landing Now
- Identify potential leaders and ask them to be an Apprentice
- Share responsibilities with potential future leaders such as:
  - Facilitating group discussions
  - Connecting one-on-one with group members
  - Helping select group studies
  - Attending leadership development opportunities

LANDING – LAST 90 DAYS

Talk About “IT”
- Not talking about multiplication sets you up for a bad experience. Keep having conversations about group multiplication
- Continue to focus on relationships, encouraging them, and having fun

Talk About “What’s Next?”
- Encourage and challenge one another to take next steps
- Help potential new leaders step into leadership

Celebrate Successes
- Point out growth when you see it and the celebrate it
- Take time to remember everything you shared with your time together

Notes
Groups Calendar

A generic time line of the annual Groups cycle of important events, recruitment, and training. The green gradient corresponds with the Spring semester and the orange gradient corresponds with the Fall semester. These are “trial periods” for people to see if the group is right for them. Leader Development and Group Intensives (short-term topical based groups) occur during the month of January and July. Most groups take a break during these months, in addition to parts of December as well as June and August.
NEXT STEPS

1. PLAN OUT YOUR GROUP MEETING

WHEN?

WHERE?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

2. FILL OUT THE LEADER APPLICATION

www.myfac.org/leaderapp

3. STAY CONNECTED ONLINE

Keep Your Roster Current on the HUB
Update participants on the HUB - Keep it current.

Respond to Emails Interested in Your Group
Email people back to those who email you requesting info about your group.

Keep Learning as a Leader
In addition to taking an active part in the 2-2-1 Leader Development Plan, check out www.groupleaders.org/leader-training
# SPIRITUAL GROWTH OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DO WE BELIEVE ABOUT IT?</th>
<th>HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT IT?</th>
<th>HOW DO WE DELIVER ON IT?</th>
<th>WHO’S RESPONSIBLE FOR IT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth is movement toward Jesus</td>
<td>The Goal</td>
<td>Entry Points</td>
<td>The Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a step and a process (Phil. 2:12-13)</td>
<td>To be a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 4:19, 28:18-20)</td>
<td>“Sticky” Opportunities for people to want more of church</td>
<td>Taking Steps to be relationally fully engaged (Acts 2:42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any step toward Jesus is growth</td>
<td>• Following Jesus</td>
<td>• Large or medium in size</td>
<td>• Connecting in a small group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s a journey with Jesus</td>
<td>• Being transformed by Jesus</td>
<td>• Wide “net” or “on ramp” for someone new or looking to get connected</td>
<td>• Reading the Bible personally and with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s personal with Jesus</td>
<td>• Making other followers of Jesus</td>
<td>• Serving opportunities</td>
<td>• Serving on a ministry team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s a promise by Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Giving to the church’s mission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Growth is of the Spirit | The Journey | Groups | The Individual |
| It is enabled by grace | Creating space for 5 Growth Catalysts | Connect, Serve, Grow | Taking Steps to be relationally fully engaged (Acts 2:42) |
| • We live by faith in the promises of the good news of the Kingdom of God. (John 14:6) | • Practicing Truth | • Connect relationally (Connecting to God’s people) | • Connecting in a small group. |
| • We set our minds on things of the Spirit who ultimately changes us (Rom. 8:5) | • Purposeful Relationships | • Serve missionally (Connecting to God’s work) | • Reading the Bible personally and with others. |
| | • Planned Disciplines | • Grow spiritually (Connecting to God) | • Serving on a ministry team. |
| | • Personal Ministry | | • Giving to the church’s mission. |
| | • Pivotal Circumstances | | • Inviting others into the church community to meet Jesus. |

| Growth is visible | The Evidence | Resources | The Leader |
| It is seen (John 15:5) | (Matthew 22:37-40) | Support for Groups | Keep the focus |
| • It is demonstrated by love for God. | • Loving God | • Support Groups & the Care Center | • On responding to God’s Word and transformation of the heart |
| • It is validated through love for others. | • Loving one another | • Marriage ministry | • On relationships and model transparency |
| | • Loving the least and the lost | • Leader development opportunities | • On serving together |
| | | • Spiritual growth opportunities | |