

Leading a Community Group

in the home or at the church campus



Vision Statement: *"To see communities where people are encouraged and equipped to lead Jesus-centered, missionally-engaged, and relationally-healthy lives."*

Mission Statement: *"To guide people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ, developed through love, service and community."*

God's vision and mission from Genesis all the way to Revelation is that He has purposed in His sovereign love to rescue and bring a sinful world of His fallen creation to a redeemed world of His new creation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. How has God planned to accomplish this in our day and age? It is through the mission of the church, a people empowered by the Holy Spirit and in the authority of Jesus living **Jesus-centered, missionally-engaged, and relationally-healthy lives.**

We want to be a people who are individually and collectively living this way so that we bring kingdom values to whoever we meet and wherever we go. Community Groups are the vehicle of discipleship at FAC.

What is a Community Group that meets at a home or at the church campus?

A **Community Group** that meets at home or at the church campus is defined as: a group of people **led** by qualified trained leader(s), **meeting regularly**, incorporating **Scripture** in their life together, **reproducing** new Community Groups, and **growing** together through love, service, and community to be:

- **Jesus-Centered:** to be **Jesus-centered** means that Jesus is the way to salvation and the focus in all areas of life to be in a right relationship with God.
 - **This means Community Groups move upward toward God through Jesus to be Jesus-centered.** To follow Jesus and love Him more is the central focus of the Group. All study and activity should deepen this relationship with Him.
 - *A leader always asks: "How do we deepen our love for Jesus and follow Him in all areas of our life?"*

- **Relationally Healthy:** to be **relationally healthy** means to be applying Biblical principles and Christ's example to the way we relate to ourselves and others in order to be in a right relationship with others.
 - **This means that Community Groups move inward toward one another to be relationally healthy.** To love one another and practice the "one another's" is the inward focus of the group so that we demonstrate love to all of those who are around us.
 - *A leader always asks: "How can we practice the 'one another's' in our group so that the relationships with one another and in our life get healthier?"*

- **Missionally Engaged:** to be **missionally-engaged** means to be bringing Jesus to the least, the lost, and those around us every day, as this is the posture of a follower of Jesus.
 - **This means Community Groups move outward toward non-followers of Jesus to be missionally-engaged.** Serving together regularly as a group to the needs in our local neighborhoods and with our regional partnerships is the outward focus of the group.
 - *A leader always asks: "How can we serve together to the needs of our neighborhoods, workplaces or schools?" "Who is your one (unsaved or unchurched) that you are praying to come to Christ and how can you invest in them?"*

What are the Expectations of a Community Group Leader(s)?

1. **Committing** to 1 full year of leading their Community Group.
2. **Being/becoming a Fully-Engaged at FAC** – Connect, Serve, Give, Invite
3. **Embracing the following FAC Core Values:**
 - Jesus-centered
 - Missionally engaged
 - Relationally healthy
 - Transformed life
4. **Fostering mobilized** small groups where each member is growing to become fully-engaged:
 - **Connect** in a Community Group and Weekend Service
 - **Serve** one another inside the church and outside the church (regional partnership and where people live, work, study, and play)
 - **Give** to support the ministry of FAC
 - **Invite** the unchurch around us to FAC
5. **Attending** Leader Training throughout the year **AND** always **bringing** someone from their group along with them to these trainings.
6. **Responding** to emails within 24 hours from people interested in joining your group (if your group is not FULL).
7. **Updating** your roster on the HUB to keep it current.

Types of Community Groups at FAC:

- **Community Groups for Adults** (Mixed-gender)
 - *Leader:* led by a man or a married couple
- **Community Groups for Men**
 - *Leader:* led by a man
- **Community Groups for Women**
 - *Leader:* led by a woman

Should I start a group that is similar in age or season of life or a group that is diverse?

- To fully reflect the New Testament church and what a new heavens and earth would look like, diversity is encouraged! And it benefits and stretches everyone in a healthy way. You don't have to try to make your group diverse. Just be open to all and know that it is in line with God's heart.

We potentially could have a lot of small children in our group. What can we do?

- A couple of options to consider:
 1. Incorporate the kids in your group! Do a devotional together and serve together. It makes for a more well-rounded community!
 2. Use the Sunday evening Kid Blast at FAC as an opportunity for your children to learn and be in fellowship with other kids. Kid Blast starts in September-May from 6pm-8pm.
 3. Hire a babysitter. This of course carries a financial cost, but it will totally be worth it for yourself and for you as a couple, if you're married.

What do I do next?

- Fill out the application at www.myfac.org/leaderapp

We, as human beings created in the image of God, have an upward call to God to love Him and love others in this world. In Jesus, through the gospel and by sending the Holy Spirit, we can love God and love others as we were created to do. Thus, Community Groups are created to help one another grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and follow the upward call to love God and love others well. Within our Community Groups, we want everyone to be **Jesus-centered**. How can your group move upward toward God through Jesus to be Jesus-centered? Below are ideas on how individuals in your group can do this in their own time, or even together as a group.

Moving to be JESUS-CENTERED

GROUP ideas:

- **Pray together as a group**
- **Split up into separate rooms for guys and a separate room for girls and pray**
- **Read the Bible Project together**
 - *Silence and Solitude* – go for a walk in the woods or in a quiet area of the house and pray with God.

INDIVIDUAL ideas:

- **Creating Space for God**
 - *Silence and Solitude* – go for a walk in the woods or in a quiet area of the house and pray with God.
 - *Fasting from Food or Media* – take a break from food or social media, tv and the like. Spend time in prayer that you would normally spend in those times.
 - *Sleep and Rest* – sometimes sleep and rest is what we need! We are a physical and spiritual being.
 - *Create Margin in Your Schedule* – Take a look at your schedule and carve out time to be with God.
- **Spending Time with God**
 - *Read the Bible* – develop a schedule to read parts of the Bible and meditate on a passage.
 - *Memorize parts of the Bible*
 - *Study a portion of Bible* – plan a study on a specific book in the Bible.
 - *Read a devotional that supports the Bible* – sometimes we need the wise words of an author that helps us understand how we can devote ourselves to God.
 - *Prayer journal* – spend time writing out prayers to God.
 - *Memorize and pray the Lord's Prayer.*
- **Re-Training Your Total Being for God**
 - *Memorize Mark 12:29-31* and repeat it throughout the day – this helps us to focus on loving God and loving others.
 - *Take a rest from any work for a day* – taking a rest from work reminds us that we are not always in control and to rest in God.
 - *Serve someone today* – serving puts us in the position as Jesus did in serving us.

- *Show hospitality* – have someone over for coffee or dinner. Being hospitable puts us in the position of the hospitality that Jesus shows us.
- *Play or Create* – is there a sport, or hobby that you like to do? Engaging in this creativity or activity puts us in the position of gratitude to our Creator who created this good world.
- *Give financially or resources* – is there someone in need? When we give, we put ourselves in the position that God did in giving us salvation through Jesus.

Community Groups moving INWARD toward one another to be RELATIONALLY HEALTHY



Community Groups are created to help one another grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Within our Community Groups, this is developed through love, service, and community, the very things that were important in Jesus' ministry within the Gospels. How can your group move inward toward one another with love, service and community? Below are ideas on how to include this in your group, and with many of these ideas, kids can do it with you!

Moving to be RELATIONALLY HEALTHY

"Authentically and sacrificially loving God, one another, while encouraging one another with steps toward Jesus."

IDEAS:

- **Your Story** – Take turns sharing your story of where you are in your relationship with Jesus.
- **Communion** – Have communion together to focus on the forgiveness and hope we have in Jesus.
- **Spiritual Disciplines** – Spend time in prayer together by praying a psalm or sing songs of worship together if someone is musically gifted in that area.
- **Celebrate steps toward Jesus:** Get an empty jar, and some stones. Share how you have taken a step toward Jesus and write your name on that stone and place it in the jar. At the end of the year, you will have a jar filled reminder of steps taken toward Jesus!

"Serving one another."

IDEAS:

- **Make a Meal** – Did someone have a baby or is sick? A meal can go a long way!
- **Spiritual Gifts** – Does everyone know their spiritual gift? Find out ways you can use your gift to serve one another in the group.
- **Hospital Visit** – Is someone from your group in the hospital? Plan a visit!

"Meeting regularly, in a circle, responding to God's Word, practicing the "one another's" (knowing one another's stories, carrying one another's burdens, praying with one another, admonishing one another, forgiving one another, encouraging one another)"

IDEAS:

- **Schedule Out Your Meetings** – Schedule out your meeting times for the whole year (September – May). It's good to know in advance your meeting times so it's on the calendar.
- **Reading Scripture** – Pick a book in the Bible to read together as a group. Watch a Bible Project video on it and take turns reading and asking questions about what you read.
- **Study the "one another's"** – take time to study the "one another" passages to see how you can practice this together as a group.
- **Pray together** – We don't have to fix one another, but we can lift one another up to the Lord through prayer! Pray together as a group or even separate into small groups (i.e. men with men, or women with women).

Community Groups moving OUTWARD toward others to be MISSIONALLY-ENGAGED



We are called by Jesus to “love our neighbors.” This not only means our literal neighbors, but everyone in our lives where we live, work, play, and study. Loving our neighbors, serving our neighbors, and inviting our neighbors to experience the community within your Community Group creates a bridge that can support when a door opens to talk about Jesus. Loving our neighbors also includes serving those who are marginalized. A Community Group that serves can have an impact on those who are on the outskirts of our neighborhoods and society. Below are ideas on how to include this in your group, and with many of these ideas, kids can do it with you!

After you have served, let us know how it went! Please give your feedback by filling out this form at www.myfac.org/myserve

Moving to be more MISSIONALLY ENGAGED

Start here first! To reach friends who are non-followers of Jesus: WHO’S YOUR ONE?

The Goal: Simply, to be friendly and show love. You are not expected to convert them to Jesus! Let God’s Spirit direct you if or when that opportunity comes.

The following below is something that you can work together on as a Community Group.

Follow these directions:

- Have each person think of 1 unsaved friend. Write them down on a piece of paper and commit to pray for their salvation.
- Go around the room and share with your group the 1 unsaved friends that you wrote down.
- Decide as a group which unsaved friend you would all like to pursue with either one of the following 3 things:
 - **Is there a need? Then fill it.** (Ex. Yardwork is difficult for a single mom).
 - **Is there a hurt? Then heal it.** (Ex. A neighbor’s spouse passed away and you make meals for the neighbor for a week)
 - **Is there a common interest? Then do it.** (Ex. A friend likes board games, so you get together for a game night!)
- Start planning the details together as a group and just focus on 1 or 2 unsaved people at a time. Let them see your love that you have as a group and the love Jesus has for them!

Ways to Serve Together In the church: -----

IDEAS:

- **Lead a Community Group** – Our long-term goal is to saturate our neighborhoods with a Community Group in every area. Be a part of this movement! A group of you from your existing Community Group can start a new Community Group!
- **Serve during the Weekend Experience** – It takes all hands-on-deck to create a welcoming environment as we gather to worship God together! See below for some ways to help together as a group.
 - Greeters
 - Ushers
 - Children’s ministry workers
- **Children’s Ministry worker** – Come out and help in the next generation!
 - Volunteer together during a Weekend Service
 - Volunteer together during KidBlast (Sunday evening)
- **Youth Ministry worker** – Volunteer together and help in the next generation!

Ways to Serve Together Outside the church: -----

LOCALLY

“How can we LOCALLY love, serve, and invite into community those around us in our neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and places of recreation?”

IDEAS:

- **New Neighbor’s Welcome** – Did a new family move to the neighborhood? Send a welcome card, that you are part of FAC, and to feel free to contact you if they have any questions!
- **New Baby Welcome** – Did a new family welcome in a newborn in your neighborhood? Have everyone pitch in some cash to buy something special for the family and deliver it to them.
- **Thank You to Schools** – Send a card signed from your Community Group thanking the teachers and school staff for their investment in the kids.
- **Welcome Back the Military** – Did someone return home from active duty? Prepare a gift basket that says “Welcome Back and thank you for your service!”
- **Yard Clean-Up** – Does someone need help with their yard? Time to pitch in!
- **Helping the Elderly** – Are there elderly in your neighborhood that could use some encouragement? Think of a way to serve a need of theirs or just arrange a visit to say hello!
- **Support the Team** – if you have a child or grandchild on a sports team, find out how your group can serve the team.
- **Support our Military** – Does someone have a neighbor serving in active duty? Find out a way to give encouragement or service for the family.
- **Porch Night** - Invite neighbors to your porch to sit, hang out, eat, while music plays in the background. Perfect for spring, fall or summer day!
- **Backyard Barbecue** - Invite neighbors to grill together. Have a contest and judges to vote on the best grilled meat (or veggie meat if that’s your thing!)
- **Have a pets get together in your neighborhood**
- **Sit on the front porch and invite kids over play in the front yard**
- **Pass out baked goods (fresh bread, cookies, brownies, etc.)**
- **Invite neighbors over for dinner**
- **Do a food drive or coat drive in winter and get neighbors involved**

- **Have a game night (yard games outside, or board games inside)**
- **Art swap night** – bring out what you're tired of and trade with neighbors
- **Grow a garden and give out extra produce to neighbors**
- **Have an Easter egg hunt** on your block and invite neighbors use their front yards
- **Start a weekly open meal night in your home**
- **Host a sports game watching party**
- **Host a coffee and dessert night**
- **Organize and host a ladies artistic creation night**
- **Organize a tasting tour on your street** (everyone sets up food and table on front porch)
- **Host a movie night and discussion afterwards**
- **Start a walking/running group in the neighborhood**
- **Start hosting a play date weekly for other stay at home parents**
- **Have a front yard ice cream party in the summer**

REGIONALLY

“How can we REGIONALLY love, serve, and have people experience our community with our regional partnerships?” See www.myfac.org/missions for more info and who to contact.

IDEAS:

- **Mt. Holly School District** – Have those from your group help in the Kids Mentoring program.
- **Urban Promise** – Have your group help out in giving dignity and hope to youth and young adults in the Camden area.
- **New Covenant Ministries** – Have those from your group help serve families in need in the Camden area.
- **Feeding 5000** - Have your group help serve and feed the homeless.
- **Seeds of Hope** - Have your group serve those who have been incarcerated find work and housing, and serve those who are stuck in prostitution and drug addiction.

GLOBALLY

“How can we GLOBALLY love, serve, and have people experience our community with our regional partnerships?” See www.myfac.org/missions for more info.

IDEAS:

- **Commit to PRAY weekly** for the designated global Mission partnership fields of FAC given below.
- **FASA** – Have those from your group take a trip to serve kids through youth camps in Southern Africa.
- **Ukraine** – Have those from your group take a trip to serve at risk youth in L'viv & Kiev or the Internally Displaced People group in Kiev, Ukraine.
- **France** - Have those from your group take a trip to serve the international churches, Community Centers, and missionaries as they reach many people groups in the metropolitan cities of Paris, Toulouse & Bordeaux in France.
- **Israel/Palestine**- Have those from your group take a trip to serve with the Palestinian church of West Bank Jerusalem & Bethlehem.
- **Write notes of encouragement** to the missionaries of these partnerships or **send a CARE Package** to encourage the national workers who serve alongside them.

Community Groups – Getting Started

A worksheet to get started with your Community Group



Important Definitions

Language shapes culture, and we are after a culture of people who love Jesus and love one another well. So, here are some helpful definitions and language that you will hear often:

FAC Vision: To see communities where people are engaged and equipped to lead Jesus-centered, missionally engaged and relationally healthy lives.

FAC Mission: To guide people into a growing relationship with Jesus developed through love, service and community.

FAC Adult Ministry Strategy: To see Jesus-centered, missionally-engaged, and relationally healthy lives, we will guide people into a growing relationship with Jesus by encouraging the body of Christ to be fully-engaged to carry out our mission together at FAC. To be full engaged is to:

1. **Connect** together at our Weekend Service and in a small group.
2. **Serve** one-another inside/outside the church.
3. **Give** to support the mission at FAC.
4. **Invite** the unchurched and unsaved around us.

Determine Location & Schedule

1. **Dates:** We'll meet on _____.
2. **Time:** We'll meet from _____ to _____.
3. **Frequency:** We'll meet either (choose one)...
a) weekly b) bi-weekly c) 3 weeks on and 1 week off.
4. **Calendar:** We will begin meeting on this date (3rd weekend in Sept. starts the Fall Semester): _____ and we will end meeting on this date: _____
5. **Study:** We have chosen to study the following during this time:

Important Leader Documents before you begin:

- I have read the “Leading a Community Group” document and understand the expectations of a Leader.

For your first meeting:

- If you are meeting at home, prepare a snack for people to enjoy when they arrive.
- Welcome everyone and go over the expectations for the group (**show up, join in, and be real**), and the calendar schedule.
- Print out ahead of time pages 3-9 and share how your group will work together on moving toward being Jesus-Centered, Relationally Healthy, and Missionally-Engaged as they get to know each other.
- Share your story how you came to Christ and how everyone will get an opportunity to do so.
- Share what you will be studying in the coming weeks.
- Pray together to close your time together.

For subsequent meetings:

The following is a schedule you can use or adapt...

1. HANG OUT.

(About 15 minutes)

As people filter in, hang out and chat over some snacks.

2. GATHER TOGETHER & CATCH UP.

(About 15 minutes)

Gather everyone together to sit down in the room you will have your meeting. Take some time to talk about what’s going on in the lives of those in your group. Asking about things like work, the health of their kids, and how their weeks are going goes a long way in building community.

3. PRAY TO OPEN YOUR TIME TOGETHER

(About 1-2 minutes)

4. READ / DISCUSS.

(About 45 minutes)

Depending on what you’re studying/reading, you’ll have discussion questions and scenarios to think through and talk about. You’ll also spend time during this study getting to know one another. See online for recommended curriculum.

5. PRAY.

(About 10 minutes)

Keep it simple and real. Ask God to help you apply what you’ve learned during that session.