



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

Purpose of Groups

Groups are one way we fulfill the CCC Mission:

Making disciples of Jesus for Kingdom Impact.

Disciple making happens best in community. All through scripture, we see examples of God using people to disciple other people. Jesus disciplined the Twelve. Barnabas disciplined Paul. Paul disciplined Timothy. In each case, one person invested their life into another person (or a small group of people) to help them grow in their faith, follow Jesus, and become more like Jesus.

Groups are ongoing, regularly scheduled gatherings that focus on deepening relationships with God while building relationships with others. Groups meet together on a regular basis to study God's Word, grapple with life's difficulties, pray with and for each other, serve those in need, and celebrate good things in life together!

Every Group has a *leader* who gives guidance and direction to the group. Many groups also have co-leaders/co-facilitators who work alongside the leader. We call them *disciple-makers* because they help ensure other group members follow and become like Jesus.

Groups Live Out the CCC DNA

We are all for Jesus. Jesus saves us from our past, heals our broken places, remakes us to be like him and is coming back as our king.

We are empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit within us enables us to live life beyond belief – lives filled with joy, purpose and power. We live in a supernatural reality that includes, yet transcends the physical universe.

We encounter the Father daily. God the Father speaks to us through the Bible and we commune with him through prayer.

We do life together. Community is our middle name. Every one of every generation is wanted, needed and known. And there's always room for one more.

We are contributors, not consumers. We do not attend church, we ARE the Church and we exist for the world.

We bring the best news ever to the least reached people. It is our privilege to take the gospel around the world. We focus on the hardest places in the world where the odds are stacked against us.

We are outrageously generous. We are most like God when we are generous. It's all God's anyway. We give away time, resources, and the love of Jesus.

We are on mission. Every person matters to God, so every person matters to us. God invites every one of us to join him in his great mission to reach 'one more'—one more co-worker, neighbor, family, and friend. Impact accelerates through partnerships in the city and across the world.



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

Groups Grow Disciples

*A Disciple is someone who is **following** and **becoming like** Jesus.*

...What does it mean to “Follow and Become like Jesus”?

To follow and become like Jesus, we BELIEVE what he said, we DO what he did and OBEY what he taught, and we DISPLAY the fruits of the Spirit as we WALK in relationship with him.

...What do we mean by “discipleship”?

Discipleship is an intentional, relational, and reproducible journey with Jesus Christ. Our decisions in partnership with the Holy Spirit lead us to maturity so that we become more like Jesus in both attitude and actions. Discipleship does not happen by accident ...it is a lifelong commitment of wholehearted surrender to God as we learn from Jesus, listen to the Holy Spirit, and walk alongside others as they learn how to follow Jesus.¹ Our capacity to grow as disciples of Jesus is dependent on our willingness to abide in him.

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

...Why Discipleship Matters

All followers of Jesus are called to make disciples.

Mature disciple makers join God where he is already at work and invite others to take their best next step toward Jesus. We cannot “make” someone else follow Jesus. Instead, we create environments and provide resources that help people along their pathway. We make the most of our opportunities and trust God to open the doors. The Holy Spirit empowers followers to grow closer to Jesus, and each individual must be a willing and active participant.¹

Sometimes those who claim to follow Jesus are not yet in relationships where he or she walks alongside a younger, less mature disciple. Discipleship is not just about being disciplined by an older, more seasoned believer, but about passing it along to another person. Everyone can help someone take their best next step toward Jesus.

Disciples need different “best next steps” on the discipleship pathway.

Followers of Jesus do not mature at the same rate or in the same way; people are at various stages of faith.² We see evidence of these stages in stories like Jesus’ parable of the talents as well as Paul’s description of “worldly” Christians who are not ready for solid food.³ Just as humans go through predictable stages of physical and social development, disciples of Jesus go through various stages of faith throughout their lives.

¹ 1 Cor 3:6-9, Matt 13:1-23, Col 4:2-6

² See your staff coach for a “Discipleship Matters” brochure with a summary of the stages of faith.

³ Matt 25, Luke 19, 1 Cor 2:11-3:3



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

Because followers of Jesus start at different points along the pathway, those who walk alongside (“disciple makers”) need to help other followers learn to listen to God, assess their current stage of faith, and find their best next step. Each intersection needs a **person** (disciple maker) to walk alongside, and a **process** (identifiable content / next steps) to follow. Discipleship happens best when **intentional leaders** create **relational environments** where the **Holy Spirit works** in and through peoples’ lives as they mature and become more like Jesus.

CCC Discipleship Pathway:

As you lead your Group, you will discover that members are at various points of maturity on their discipleship pathway. Here are some of the ways you can encourage them to take their best “next step.” *Please review the Discipleship Matters brochure for more information.*

Group Leader Essentials

Groups nurture discipleship through four primary essentials (these will be fleshed out with more detail in upcoming trainings)

- *We help people **LOVE** like Jesus through connection in relationships.*
- *We help people **LEARN** from Jesus with formation through Study, the Spirit, Suffering, and Sharing in Community.*
- *We help people **LIVE** like Jesus through formation in the Word, Worship, Prayer, and Sacrificial Service.*
- *We help people **LEAD** with Jesus through a deeper life for greater mission impact.*

Vision of Adult Ministries at CCC

We invite all group leaders to join us in fulfilling this vision:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Adult Ministries team helps people follow and become like Jesus by:

- ***creating relational environments** with loving community, so that adults move toward wholeness and life change.*
- ***walking intentionally alongside adults** as they take their best next step toward Jesus on the discipleship pathway.*
- ***mentoring leaders who multiply** their efforts through other disciple-makers who join God’s redemptive mission.*
- ***following reproducible processes** that clarify expectations, maximize results, and celebrate stories of transformation.*



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

Before your group begins

Groups meeting in person

- **Frequency** - Decide how often your group will meet.
 - Many groups will meet every week, and we believe this is ideal for relationship development and consistent commitment. Weekly meetings are strongly encouraged.
 - If the host or discussion leaders are concerned about a weekly commitment, consider sharing responsibilities with others. Alternate who hosts or prepares the discussion questions.
 - If your group decides to meet only every-other week, please do your best to schedule consistent meetings (i.e., 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, etc.)
- **Location** - Prepare a welcoming environment.
 - The house style, size, and even cleanliness is less important than the heart of the host. Do they want to welcome people in?
 - Decide if you will rotate hosting responsibilities. If it is not in the same location each week, the weekly communication links are especially important.
 - Select someone to greet/welcome at the door each week and connect new people with another member.
 - Consider logistics of seating (space for added folding chairs, conducive to conversation, minimize outside noise, etc.)
- **Childcare** – How will you arrange for childcare?
 - Consider potential attendees – How can you best meet their needs?
 - Consider safety – Does the host have “child-safe” space? Are the caregivers properly vetted and screened?
 - Consider distractions - Is the space located to minimize noise and interruptions?
 - Consider the costs – Who will pay for childcare if we offer it (financial)? Who will miss joining this group if we don't offer childcare (relational)?
 - Consider Deeper Family Groups – they meet on Wednesday nights at CCC and include children's programming for ages 0-12.
- **Participants** – Who will you invite?
 - Who do you know at CCC who's not currently in a group?
 - Who do you know in your neighborhood who needs friendship and connection?
 - Who do you know at work that's started asking spiritual questions?
 - Who do you see at the gym, the grocery, your club meetings, etc., who may be ready for a relational connection?



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

Groups meeting online

As you launch a group online, these best practices provide for a good online experience, and help you understand what a typical group meeting might look like.

How Groups Interact:

Home Base: Conversation portals that allow community interaction at any time (Facebook Group, text thread or [WhatsApp](#) or [GroupMe](#))

Meeting Space: Conversations that happen at a specific time with members of a group ([Teams](#), [Zoom](#) or [Google Hangouts](#))

HOME BASE

Conversation and community portals allow community interaction at any time.

Classes and programs are easy to walk away from, but relationships are not. Connections with group members should go beyond your designated meeting times. As a leader, you will set the pace with this, but you don't have to do it alone. Be sure to invite the entire group into the process of building a loving connection. Utilize things like a Facebook Group, group text messaging, [GroupMe](#), [WhatsApp](#), etc.

BEST PRACTICES/ONLINE ETIQUETTE

- Recommend that your group members download the meeting software prior to meeting.
- Make sure your face has sufficient lighting. Lighting works best in front of your face, not behind. And make sure your face is centered in the video camera. We don't want to see only your forehead, only your neck, or miss you altogether. Position to eye level or slightly above.
- Select the quietest room/location you can find.
 - Turn off anything making noise in the background (TV, radio, appliances).
 - Put pets in a quiet location.
- Only use one device per household. When two devices are used in one location, it produces auditory feedback (annoying background noise).
- Mute your computer unless you're talking.
 - If everyone's microphones are turned on at the same time, the sound quality can be an issue and it can be hard to hear the person who is talking.
 - When muted, make sure to nod your head and listen well so people can recognize you are following them.
 - You will be muting and unmuting A LOT, so get used to it.
 - You'll get called out if you forget to unmute when you're talking, so don't be offended.



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

- The moderator might also mute you to facilitate a better experience, so don't take that personally.
- Be an assertive and welcoming moderator.
 - The moderator/host of the group will need to be welcoming and in charge. Make sure as the host that you jump on a few minutes early to welcome everyone.
 - Redirect the conversation or mute participants as necessary. This may feel rude but is necessary to manage a good online experience.
 - The moderator should talk 20% of time and listen 80% of time.
 - Create a plan for participants to indicate when they'd like to talk.
 - You may try raising a hand, answering in specific order, or another signal.
 - Since participants will often be muted, having a plan will help you know when to mute and unmute.
- Give your full attention during the call. Don't multitask.
 - When participants are not paying full attention, it can be a big distraction online just like an in-person group.
 - When talking, spend some time looking at the camera, not just the screen.
- Stay in touch afterwards.
 - Assign prayer partners to call each other after your group is over and pray with them. Or text each other in gender-specific text chats to share requests.
 - Leverage [GroupMe](#), [Facebook Groups](#), [WhatsApp](#), etc. as a place to stay connected and keep the conversation going throughout the week.

FORMAT/SCHEDULE

- Consider having a 20-minute practice session together or take the first half of your first online group getting everyone acquainted with how an online group will work.
- Review online etiquette/best practices (listed above) with group members during the first several meetings until people figure it out. Help people learn how to use the technology.
- If you are a new group, make sure to introduce yourself, share your name, and share how you got connected with Christ Community Church and the online group.

Typical Meeting (30–45 minutes)

- Connect (15-20 minutes)
 - Welcome people as they log in (people tend to arrive late online, too).
 - Begin ice breaker.
- Discuss (20 minutes)
 - Discuss sermon discussion questions, leaving plenty of time for application questions.
- Wrap Up (5 minutes)
- Ask for any prayer requests. Have one person wrap up in prayer.



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

As your group begins to meet

1. Resources

- Key resources for CCC groups include Discussion Guides & Monthly Leader Emails.
 - Discussion guides are available at cccomaha.org/discussion. These normally follow the weekly sermon text/theme and are available online the Thursday before the Sunday of that sermon.
 - We also offer ongoing, short-season, **core curriculum** options that are available year-round. Your staff coach can also suggest other types of discussion guides if you are looking for a different type of resource. Many other guides exist at *Right Now Media*, free to all CCC friends.
 - Monthly Emails come from the adult ministry team with announcements and other pertinent information. Please reach out to your staff coach if you have questions or suggestions about the content, or about group needs.
- Some additional Group Leader resources
 - <https://groupleaders.org/>
"We believe spiritual growth is only possible when you are connected in relationship with other believers. Your leadership is essential in this equation. While you're not responsible for the growth of others, your leadership provides an environment where people are encouraged to pursue spiritual growth and healthy relationships. This site is designed to help you do that."
 - <https://open.life.church/categories/319-small-groups>
"We learn and grow in community, so we've compiled a set of Small Groups studies that help lead your attenders to become fully devoted followers of Christ."
- Some Ice Breaker Ideas
 - <https://youthgroupgames.com.au/top-ten-icebreaker-games/>
 - <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/icebreaker-ideas-for-small-groups>
 - <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/help-others-grow/leading-small-groups/small-group-icebreakers.html>

2. Sample Format

- **10-15 minutes:** Check in, make introductions, offer an icebreaker question, and share experiences from previous sessions or from Sunday's worship service.
- **35-50 minutes:** Readings and Discussion. May include Inductive Bible study questions, observations, interpretations, and application from that week's reading.
- **10-15 minutes:** Close with time of prayer.



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3. Group Vision Casting

Discuss expectations with your group and come up with a shared vision statement. What's important to you and your group as you grow and make disciples? What will make your group feel like family? Work together to come up with a list of values that everyone buys into.

Sample vision 1:

We will each actively participate in group life. As a disciple-making group, we will actively seek to raise up and send out those who God is preparing to be future leaders. We will prioritize group relationships, letting someone know in advance on the rare occasion we will not be there. We will practice trust and confidentiality in what we share with one another.

Sample vision 2:

We want to be people who love unconditionally, connect relationally, live intentionally, learn transformationally, and lead missionally.

Other Group Values to Consider:

- **Sharing Responsibilities**

When you get to know your group members, you'll discover that each person brings unique gifts and personalities to the group. Include as many different people as possible! Some will be great connectors, introducing new people to others. Some will be detail-oriented and love to remind people of upcoming topics and/or keep track of birthdays or family needs. Some will be good listeners and help draw others out in conversation. Some will be effective discussion leaders, able to navigate tangents and keep the discussions healthy. Some will enjoy reading scripture or praying aloud or writing down prayer requests to share with others. ***Sharing these responsibilities is a great way to help people sense pride and ownership in the group.***

- **Multiplication**

This shared ownership is a great way to equip and empower others to make disciples. Every Christian – not just “leaders” – are called to make disciples. When you make disciples who also make disciples, at some point you will have people ready to lead and/or host a new group. Anticipate this with your group from day one, and they will celebrate when someone launches a new group. Always have an empty chair; make space for new people to join by creating new groups each year. As you delegate leadership roles, think of how you are equipping the next group leader. ***Make group multiplication a part of your strategy.***



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

- **Commitment**

This is not a casual, come-if-you-feel-like-it group. Real friendships among people who “do life together” require time and energy. Part of how you achieve your vision is by inviting everyone to make group life a priority. Set the bar high! Making a commitment to the group includes regular attendance, consistent communication, and letting others know when you are traveling or unable to attend.

As you begin hosting and/or leading a group, know that your staff coach and the rest of the adult ministries team is here to help you with everything from logistics to curriculum, to prayer requests, to sticky situations. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Turn in the following information page to Deb Piercy in the Adult Ministries office.



GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION

Name _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Primary E-mail _____

What DAY will your group meet?

Sunday ___ Monday ___ Tuesday ___ Wednesday ___ Thursday ___ Friday ___ Saturday ___
If not weekly, how often/when? _____

What TIME will your group meet?

WHERE will your group meet? (*Full address with zip code, please*)

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Are there any co-leaders or co-hosts already committed to your group? If so, please list, and indicate if hosts (H), leaders (L), or both (B).

Name _____ H L B

E-mail _____

Cell Phone _____

Name _____ H L B

E-mail _____

Cell Phone _____

Is there any other information that may be helpful to us?

Talk with your coach about upcoming training sessions offered for new group leaders!