

SMALL GROUPS LEADER GUIDE

NORTHMINSTER CHURCH



WHY SMALL GROUPS EXIST

Small Groups have one, simple purpose—to **bring people together**.

We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the full life He intends for us.

We believe life change happens in the context of **Relationships**.

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Small Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

CONFIDENCE AS A SMALL GROUP LEADER

If you only do what you feel comfortable doing, you don't need God. [God's best is often found outside your comfort zone.](#) When you serve God and people by leading a Small Group, He will equip you and give you the strength and wisdom to lead well.

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

When you feel like you don't have the time, remember [God has created you for this](#), and His timing is perfect.

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done

ECCLESIASTES 11:4

When you feel unqualified, remember [God has equipped you.](#)

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6

SMALL GROUPS OFFER PEOPLE:

A PLACE TO CONNECT

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Small Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22

A PLACE TO PROTECT

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Small Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 JOHN 3:16

A PLACE TO GROW

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Small Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

PROVERBS 27:17

NORTHMINSTER SMALL GROUPS MODEL

We believe our church must grow [larger](#) and [smaller](#) at the same time

We grow large to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus

We gather in Small Groups to build community and care for people.

Northminster is a church [of](#) Small Groups, not a church [with](#) Small Groups

We base our Small Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 5:42

SEASONAL MODEL

Our seasonal model creates a rhythm for our church, determining when certain key events occur when reoccurring events pause or resume, and when seasonal design themes change

During Flex Months some reoccurring events pause.

Groups meet weekly during each Season, with breaks in between.

A majority of Groups meet at Northminster on Sunday morning, but Groups also meet in a variety of places like homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops, and office buildings.

New groups start every Season making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.



SEASON 1 – SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER | DECEMBER FLEX

SEASON 2 – JANUARY – MARCH | APRIL FLEX

SEASON 3 – MAY – JULY | AUGUST FLEX

MEETING MAKEUP



Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.



Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.



This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like Frisbee or outreach or a discussion about a book or Sunday message.



This is what differentiates your Small Group from your neighborhood supper club. Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

SMALL GROUPS ARE NOT A PLACE FOR

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

POLITICS

BUSINESS

UNAPPROVED MATERIALS OR SPEAKERS

OFFERINGS

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP LEADER:

- [Pray daily](#) for the members of your group.
- Partner with a [co-leader](#) to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
- [Connect](#) with group members between weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face.
- [Encourage group members](#) to connect with each other throughout the week as well.
- Have [fun](#) through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
- [Respect](#) people's time by beginning and ending your group on time.
- [Invite](#) group members to attend church services and events with you like Northminster Kids! Activities or outreach opportunities.
- [Rally](#) the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

**Prayer is a foundation of our church,
and it is important for your Small Group.**

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

HOW TO CREATE GOOD GROUP DYNAMICS

Set expectations.

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

Keep discussion positive.

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your coach to help you respond well.

Keep the conversation relevant to everyone.

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

Respect boundaries.

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Small Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

LEADER SUPPORT

As a Small Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community. We have pastors, staff, and the Small Groups Team who are all working alongside you to invest in great Small Groups at Northminster.

Your Coach

As a Small Group Leader, you have a Coach paired with you to help as you need support throughout the semester.

Your Coach's number one priority is to pray for you daily.

Reach out to your Coach if you have a need, prayer request, or concern.

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

- **Confidentiality:** What is said in this group stays in this group; nothing said or done in the group is ever discussed outside the group without the permission of those involved.
- **Passing:** You don't have to share anything you don't want to share; just say, "I pass."
- **Self Focus:** We are here to help work on ourselves, not others; we use "I" statements. We share our own experiences, insights, and feelings.
- **Respect Others:** We do not advise, analyze, or "fix" others; each of us is free to find out our own answers.
- **Let God Work:** We do not preach to members of this group, showing consideration to those who may not share our particular beliefs.
- **Allow Feelings:** All feelings are OK; we avoid minimizing hurt, explaining away feelings, or ignoring them in ourselves and others.
- **Limit Sharing:** We are considerate of the needs of all to share; we limit our sharing time.
- **Listen:** We avoid side conversations and cross-talk and give each person who shares our undivided attention without offering unsolicited advice.
- **Stay on Subject:** We avoid discussions and debates about controversial topics and outside issues.
- **Cell Phones:** Please remember to turn your cell phone to SILENT at the beginning of the session.