

# **Small Group Ministry Camelback Bible Church**



## **Leadership Manual**

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# Philosophy



# CBC Vision Statement



## Our PURPOSE is to be . . .

### **God-glorifying**

(pursuing an all-consuming delight in God's supreme reign over creation)

### **Cross-centered**

(proclaiming the death of Christ as the sole remedy for the sin and brokenness of humanity)

### **Life-transforming**

(praying for the help of the Spirit to become more and more like Christ)

## Our CALLING is to . . .

### **Serve in our world as Christ served in his**

(ministering sacrificially to fellow human beings at their point of deepest need)

## Our MISSION is to . . .

### **Draw In**

(expanding God's family by laboring for the spiritual rebirth of unbelievers)

### **Build Up**

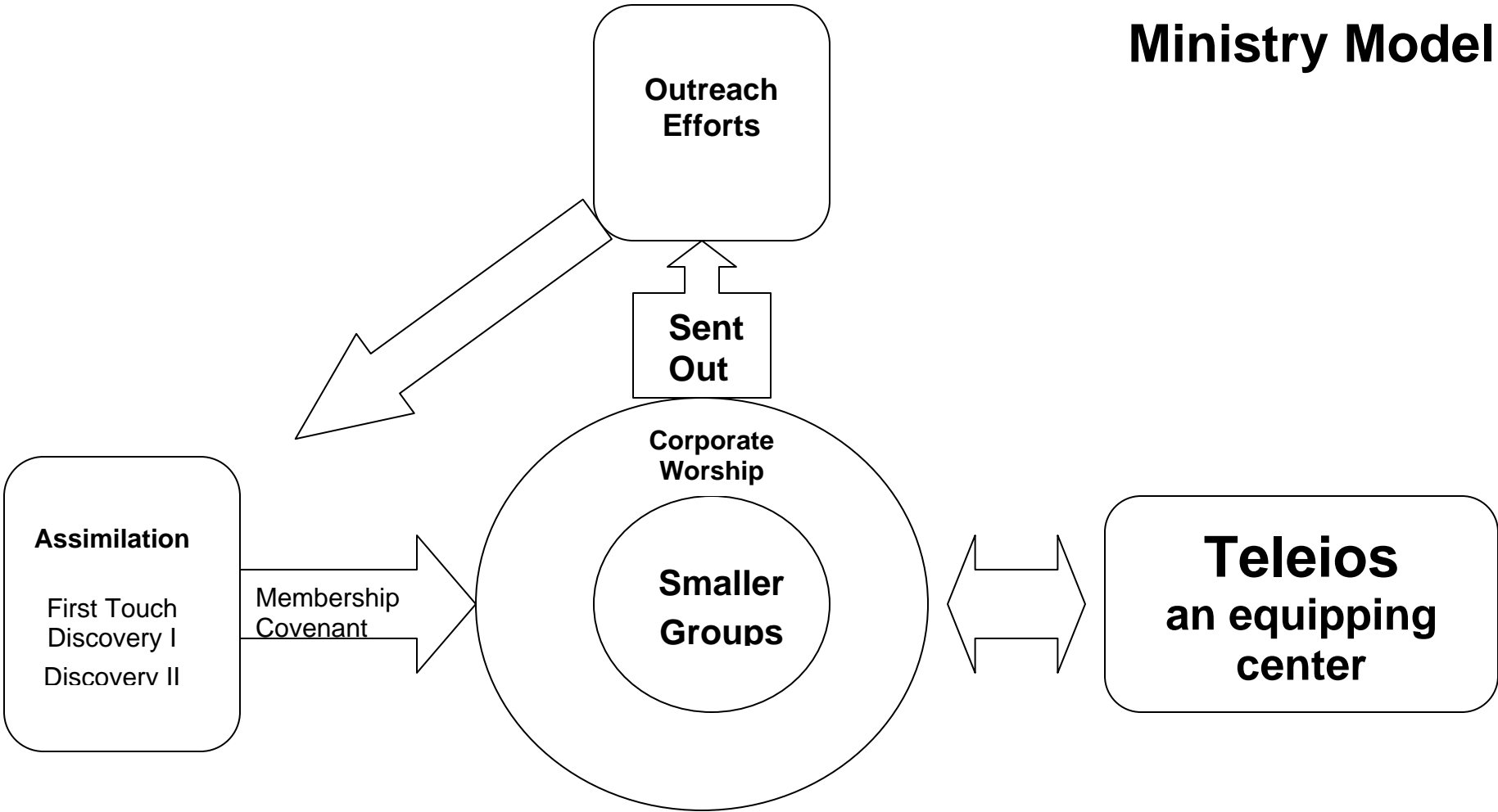
(grounding God's family in obedience to his word and a life of following Jesus)

### **Send Out**

(preparing God's family to be witnesses of his kingdom wherever they are called in this world)

The Word of God, the Bible, gives a central place to the themes above. *See especially:* Isaiah 6:1-3; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Romans 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:18; Philippians 2:1-11; Mark 10:35-45; John 13:34-35; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 28-23-31; Ephesians 4:11-15; John 17:13-18.

# Ministry Model



**Serving in our world as Christ served in His**

## Vision Statement for the Small Group Ministry

To provide a context in which men and women can be shepherded toward Christ-likeness (discipleship), by growing in God's word (learning together), investing in God's people (living together), and engaging in God's work (laboring together).

Breaking this down...

*To provide a context in which men and women...*

We want this ministry to be open to all and are eager to connect every member and attender of CBC with a small group.

*...can be shepherded...*

Small groups will help the leadership of the church (through the leaders of small groups) better fulfill their calling to nurture, protect, and lead God's flock.

*...toward Christ-likeness...*

The mission of the church is disciple-making. Therefore, the mission of a small group is disciple-making. This means laboring to move every person into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and helping them to live like Jesus in obedience to His word.

*...by growing in God's word...*

While not an intensive Bible study, the relationships, encouragement, and service in a small group should be anchored firmly to the Word of God. Apart from the word, one cannot grow to be like Christ, cannot encourage others to do the same, and cannot hope to reach others with His life. We recognize that in many cases, there are other venues in which small group members are under God's Word. Therefore, while playing a central role, Bible study should not take up the bulk of a small group's time.

*...investing in God's people...*

Small groups are relational. There's no getting around that. In fact, that's the genius of the medium. A smaller number of individuals makes it easier for us to love, support, comfort, encourage, and in some cases, admonish one another as God desires. Good discussion and fervent prayer are key to this arrangement.

*...and engaging in God's work.*

Not only is the small group an excellent medium to study God's word and develop relationships, but it also provides believers with a perfect context in which to go out and minister. Small groups are ministry teams! Service within and outside the church gives small group members a chance to apply what they've learned and grow closer as they labor side-by-side.

## Why Small Groups?

Jesus had a public ministry to the masses, but He also had a private ministry to the few. In His 'small group' he taught His learners, corrected their misunderstanding, encouraged accountability (who is the greatest), modeled and equipped them for service, raised up future church leaders, taught them about prayer, even was involved with member care (Peter's mother-in-law).

In Acts 2 when the Spirit came upon the people, something amazing happened. They became a community, they became a family, they became one. They not only realized they needed to be together, but they wanted to be together.

According to verse 46 one of the vital ways they expressed their oneness was "day by day they continued with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house." They not only got together in the local temple as a large group, but they also got together in smaller groups – in homes.

At CBC we believe in our temple time – in our corporate worship time. We believe in gathering together for the proclamation of the Word, for robust expressions of prayer and praise, for the celebrating of the ordinances. We want everybody in our body to make that a priority.

But we don't believe it is enough. We believe it must be combined with a small group experience. We believe that we all need a smaller, more intimate, more family-like context to grow, and we believe the small group offers that.

As our leaders have thought about small groups we have become convinced in their importance.

- ◆ We believe it is in small groups where member care will be handled.
- ◆ We believe it is in small groups where future leaders and elders will be raised up.
- ◆ We believe it is in small groups where our people will be encouraged to not only hear the Word but apply it.
- ◆ We believe small groups offer the best context for accountability for living purely and for fulfilling our membership covenant.
- ◆ We believe small groups is where our people will be encouraged and led to serve – to use their God-given gifts for mutual edification and outreach.
- ◆ We believe small groups is the context where much prayer for one another and for our fulfillment of God's agenda in the world will take place.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." As a church we are hopefully that our small group ministry will be perhaps one of the more significant ways we live out our obedience to this exhortation.

# Types of Small Groups

## **Small Groups**

Central to our ministry model is our small group ministry. Our assimilation process intentionally directs our members to participate in a small group where it is hoped they will be encouraged to live out the covenant of membership. It is believed that these gatherings provide a perfect opportunity to become better acquainted with our loving church family and to become active ministers. At CBC, we offer two types of small groups as outlined below.

## ***Home Groups***

Located throughout The Valley and meeting at least bi-weekly in homes of our members, these groups are fellowships akin to the dynamic 'house-churches' of first-century Christians. We eagerly seek to shepherd each other by studying God's word, by ministering to each other's needs and by supporting one another, through prayer and encouragement, in reaching out to the lost in our communities.

## ***Fellowship Groups***

Meeting primarily on Sunday mornings at both hours and also on Sunday evenings, each group is designed to welcome you into the life of CBC. Most are larger than Home Groups and all provide strong biblical teaching and opportunities for fellowship, prayer and reaching out.



# Confessional Statement

## Camelback Bible Church

### **(1) The Tri-une God**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal and good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

### **(2) Revelation**

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know it truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

### **(3) Creation of Humanity**

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, and in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God declared to be very good, serving as God's caretakers in the cultivation of creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women enjoy equal access to

God by faith in Christ Jesus and both are called to move beyond self-indulgence to an active self-giving engagement with family, church and civic life. In marriage, husbands and wives enter into a one-flesh union which serves ultimately as a type of the relationship between Christ and his church, and establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations. In God's wise purposes, husbands and wives are not simply interchangeable: they complement each other in mutually enriching ways, such that when each fulfills his or her own God-given role the glory of God's own image is reflected in their marriage.

#### **(4) The Fall**

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, perverted that image by falling into sin through Satan's temptation and in so doing forfeited his original blessedness. As a result, all humans are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their beings (i.e., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death – apart from God's own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; and the only way forward is to receive the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue and restore us to himself.

#### **(5) The Plan of God**

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them, that he justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them – all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

#### **(6) The Gospel**

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is centered on the cross and resurrection of Christ: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central. This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (in order to reconcile us to God Christ died for our sins), historical (if the saving events did not actually happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these

saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

### **(7) The Redemption of Christ**

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God's sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human can ever boast before him. Christ Jesus has become our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

### **(8) The Justification of Sinners**

We believe that Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the penalty due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on our behalf. Inasmuch as he was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in our stead, and both freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

### **(9) The Power of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ and is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, baptizing them into union with the Lord Jesus, such that

they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the agency of the Holy Spirit, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like service.

## **(10) The Kingdom of God**

We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the anticipation of their glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as though they were ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of people rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

## **(11) God's New People**

We believe that God's new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifested in local churches of which Christ is the only head; thus each 'local church' is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, since he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, her love of God, and her members' love of one another and of the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world where its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

## **(12) Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is an outward symbol of the inner reality of entrance into the new covenant community, the latter a symbol of ongoing covenant renewal and a means spiritual nurture and growth. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.

## **(13) The Restoration of All Things**

We believe in the personal, glorious and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust – the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the merits and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

Adapted from the Gospel Coalition – [www.thegospelcoalition.com](http://www.thegospelcoalition.com)

# Covenant of Membership at Camelback Bible Church

*I covenant in the presence of God and in fellowship with this church family, and in dependence on the empowering grace of the Holy Spirit, to **serve in my world as Christ served in his...***

To work energetically for the **drawing in** of all people, regardless of race, age, class or gender, in the hope that more and more people – including my family and friends, my colleagues and neighbors – might discover the inestimable blessing of becoming children of God, truly saved and duly baptized, repentant towards their Creator, submissive to Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives and active participants in the kingdom work of God through the local church;

To strive for the **building up** of the local church in love, meeting together regularly on Sunday mornings and in small groups, encouraging one another in the careful study of God's Word, seeking to be transformed by its lofty truths into a holy people who are growing in grace and knowledge, emptying themselves of time, talents, gifts and resources, putting the interests of others ahead of their own, sharing one another's joys and sorrows, abounding in prayer, good deeds and financial offerings, presenting each other complete in Christ;

To promote the **sending out** of each member of the church family, including myself, as ambassadors of Christ to whatever strategic place the Lord has called us, always extending ourselves for the advance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in our neighborhoods and at our jobs, in our schools and in the marketplace, so that we are a church in the world and for the world, emissaries of God urging people by our words and deeds to forsake a life of sin and be reconciled to their Maker through Jesus Christ.

## ***Our Prayer***

May we at Camelback Bible Church know the supreme joy of living solely to the glory of God. May we promote the reign of Jesus Christ over every area of life – beginning with this church family and moving outward to our community and ultimately to the farthest reaches of the earth. May we be sustained by the expectation that God will use us to reap a harvest of eternal salvation greater than anything we could ask or think. To him be the glory! Amen.



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Signed

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Printed Name

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Date

# Personnel



# Small Group Facilitator Duties

**Definition:** Small Group Facilitators (SGF) are responsible for overseeing and coordinating training for 2-4 Small Group Leaders (SGL's). Trainers are accountable to Elders or Pastors as designated by CBC Leadership.

## Duties to CBC Church Leadership

- Be accountable to the CBC Church Leadership for activities within the small groups
- Attend all general trainings for small group leaders put on by CBC Leadership
- As requested, report to CBC leadership the status and needs of small groups and their leaders.
- Develop and suggest new ways to train and develop SGL's
- Confer with CBC Church Leadership on pertinent member care issues

## Duties to Small Group Leaders (SGL's)

- Meet with SGL's as a group once per month for training and support
- Seek to develop character, knowledge and skills in the SGL's
- Meet with SGL's individually (or as group) at least every other month for the purpose of leadership development
- Visit each Small Group two times per year to assess group strength
- Meet afterwards (after visits) with small group leaders to give feedback
- Pray for SGL's under your care
- Assist in planning multiplication of groups whose attendance reaches 12
- Assist SGL's in identifying and training apprentices
- Provide biblical counsel and assistance as necessary

## Duties to Small Group Members

- Seek to know each group member
- Be available to meet with member if situation becomes acute or needs referral
- Seek to assess how well group members have fulfilled the membership covenant

# Small Group Leader Duties

**Definition:** Leads and shepherds a small group and the individual members within the small group

## **General duties as a Small Group Leader:**

- Meet and maintain qualifications for Small Group leadership
- Model the Christian Life (consistent, obedient walk, prayer, lifestyle)
- Commit to learning and becoming more effective as a SGL
- Facilitate and encourage “heart change” in self and group members
- Encourage and monitor outreach activities of group members
- Facilitate and encourage life-to-life ministry among and between group members
- Create an atmosphere of trust, sharing and ministry
- Know the CBC Affirmation of Faith and membership qualifications

## **Duties to Small Group Facilitator (SGF):**

- Attend monthly Small Group Leader Training Meetings (1x per month)
- Attend individual meetings with Facilitator (as needed)
- Work with Facilitator to develop leadership skills and qualities and to determine needs and strategies for the small group.
- Devote time to learning curriculums and leadership skills

## **Duties to the Small Group Members**

- Pray weekly for each member in the group
- Lead 2-4 meetings per month
- Conduct well organized meetings including the main components
- Meet with members individually as needed with a minimum of one time per quarter.
- Watch for newly emerging potential apprentices, train new apprentices
- Assist in locating resources to help with acute situations.

## **CBC Church Leadership Duties**

**Definition:** CBC Church Leadership is responsible for training and supervising 3-5 Small Group Facilitators (SGF).

### **Duties to Small Group Facilitators:**

- Meet with SGF's as a group as needed for training and support
- Seek to develop the Leadership qualities and skills in the Facilitators
- Hold SGF's accountable for facilitation of their assigned SGL's
- Pray for Facilitators

### **Duties to Small Group Leaders:**

- Seek to know each SGL under the coordination of the SGF
- Be available to meet with SGL if needs arise

### **Duties to Small Group Members:**

- Make a visit to small groups as needed to view activities
- Be available to intervene in acute situations

## Structure of Accountability

Our small group ministry has various levels of leadership providing accountability for this vital ministry.

**Elders** - our elders are ultimately responsible to the Lord, the Chief Shepherd, for their oversight and care of the small group ministry. They provide direct oversight of the facilitators offering direction, counsel and encouragement. Elders are encouraged to function as facilitators whenever practicable.

**Facilitators** - our facilitators provide support for 3-5 small group leaders. They are responsible to the elders in fulfilling this role. Facilitators are encouraged to meet with small group leaders as well as to visit the small group in order become acquainted with the group participants.

**Small Group Leader** – our small group leaders provide leadership, direction and care for up to 16 group participants. Small group leaders are responsible to their facilitator. They are also encouraged to shepherd and provide accountability for group members between meetings.

## Training Opportunities

**Basic Training** – a couple of times a year small group “basic training” is available for those interested in leading a small group including those identified as apprentices. The basic training course is required for all who would lead a group.

**Ongoing Training** – monthly or bi-monthly meetings are planned to provide vision, instruction, encouragement / care, and accountability for small group leaders. The training is designed to encourage unity of purpose and practice among leaders so that each group is engaged in equipping their members for participation in the church’s mission. All small group leaders are asked to make a commitment to these important training times.

**Informal Training** – small group leaders meeting periodically with their facilitator and often other small group leaders for encouragement and accountability, and to glean counsel for effectively shepherding their group.

**Website Resources** – as web resources become available (including the e-newsletter), small group leaders are encouraged to investigate and utilize them as appropriate.

**Conferences / Books** – Small group leaders are encouraged to utilize conferences and books that are suggested by their facilitators and the small group ministry team.

## Apprentice Leaders

Every group is encouraged to identify and recruit an apprentice leader. This is important so that new leaders will always be available for new groups that will be forming all the time, or for your group if it grows and needs to divide in order to better care for the membership. As you seek God's direction concerning your apprentice, consider the following:

### ***Choosing an apprentice***

Choose someone who:

- Obviously loves the Lord and who has a maturing relationship with Him. It is best to look for those who would meet the qualifications of a deacon as outlined in 1 Timothy 3
- Evidences at least the gifts of shepherding and teaching (administration is helpful as well)
- Has a teachable spirit
- Has shown faithfulness to their commitment to the group and its members
- Is willing to devote the necessary time to learning the role of small group leader and to carefully fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the group leader

### ***Working with the apprentice***

- Design a plan that would enable your apprentice to experience every aspect of small group leadership. Give your apprentice the opportunity to teach, lead the prayer time, develop and implement a group service project, provide hospitality, counsel group members through an issue, encourage personal ministry in their workplaces and neighborhoods,...
- Evaluate each experience you offer the apprentice. Talk about what went well; what needs improvement. Continually direct the apprentice to the counsel of the Word of God, and toward a Christ-centered ministry.
- Consider studying a book like *Why Small Groups?* with your apprentice.
- Meet in between sessions with your apprentice for prayer, to discuss the health of the group and its members, for support and accountability.
- As your apprentice progresses provide direction and encouragement regarding the starting of a new group. When the new group starts continue to offer encouragement as you are able.

## Releasing Giftedness within your Group

*1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it."*

If we are to understand a small group biblically, we need to see every member of the group as a gifted minister. The small group leader and a possible apprentice should not be the only laborers in the group. In fact, if a group gets the sense that their leaders are the only ones "working" and everyone else comes only to receive – such an environment does not promote health.

Instead small group leaders should, as soon as is practicable, employ the gifts of each member. Some may have gifts of hospitality. These should be called on to host the group. Some may have gifts of administration, or teaching, or musical gifts, encouragement, or outreach. Whatever the gift there will be a place of ministry within the group if that group is functioning as a body as it is called to be.

To encourage this process it may be helpful to study the biblical passages on giftedness (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4). Taking a simple gift assessment may be helpful as well. As new people come into the group, you might encourage their taking the Discovery III class to learn about God's design on their life. The end goal, however, is to give away the ministry. No small group leader should be a one-person team. God has not designed the body that way, nor should the small group operate that way.

Encouraging group members to "take this group and own it" will promote the health of the group, but will also promote the spiritual development of the group member. We were made to release our gifts for the common good. When leaders promote this, they are exercising good shepherding.

# Policies & Procedures



## Finding Small Groups at CBC

There are two ways people may pursue participation in small groups.

Method #1: Read through the Small Group Guide and select a group that is best suited to you and currently open to new members. (This can also be done online at [cbcaz.com](http://cbcaz.com).) As you look for a group consider especially day and time of meeting, location of the group, and the group description. Prior to attending, call or email the contact person to confirm the next meeting and schedule your visit. If you wish, please feel free to visit several groups before deciding on a group.

Method #2: Fill out a small group information card (available as an insert in the Small Group Guide, as well as at the Welcome Center or in the Church Office) and turn it in to the church office. The small group administrator will contact you and help you find a group that fits your profile.

## Starting a New Small Group

**Step 1** Talk with the Executive Pastor or Small Group Administrator. Make your desire known that you'd like to start a small group. If approved attend the Small Group Basic Training class when offered. If the class is not offered for some time, you may be asked to apprentice in another small group for a few months.

**Step 2** Prayer... This is the starting place for all ministries at CBC. Pray that God would bless your efforts and lead you as you begin forming the group.

**Step 3** Identify and contact...

- Make a list of people you are interested in inviting to your Small Group.
- Contact them in person, by phone, or by letter and ask if they would consider being a part of your Small Group. The more personal the contact the more likely your invitation will be taken seriously.
- Gather initial feedback as to possible meeting times. Also, ask those who are interested if they know of anyone else who might be interested.

**Step 4** Set a beginning date and invite potential group members...

- Send a postcard or call those who expressed an interest in your initial contact.
- Make sure you are clear about time, date, and location. Printed directions and a phone number for yourself and/or the group location are helpful to include.
- Continue to pray for each person you have invited...

**Step 5** Prepare for the first meeting...

- Plan the agenda
- Gather any materials and/or resources you will need (i.e. curriculum options, group covenants, etc.)
- Take care of any details, etc.

**Step 6** Conduct initial meeting...

- Arrange the group in a circle if possible.
- Take some time for introductions and an icebreaker to loosen up the group and help them relax.
- Talk with the group about the purpose and core values for Small Groups and what you specifically hope to see happen in your group—including your plans for leadership development and the long range goal of multiplying.
- Go over the group covenant and address some of the specific logistical questions.
- End the meeting with an informal, relaxed time sharing dessert.

## Welcoming New Members

From the first time that a new small group meets, the idea of openness to newcomers should be fostered. This can be accomplished by maintaining an “open chair” at your group meetings. The open chair is symbolic of those who are not yet part of the group.

Each time you gather, take time to pray for future, “as-yet-unrevealed” occupants of the chair. Ask the Lord to guide newcomers to the group – and guide the group to those who may benefit from becoming a part of your fellowship. This will create a sense of expectancy and receptivity that is certain to create a welcoming atmosphere.

It might be helpful to discuss with group members “sources” of new members. Simply looking around during a worship service to see people sitting by themselves or the new people who are acknowledged as visitors may supply plenty of opportunity to reach out. Consider, as well, the widows in our congregation. They need a community that will care for them. Your small group might just be that community. Remember, at CBC, we want to be passionate not only for our own “being built up” in Christ, but also that others might be built up as well.

As people visit your group, either through your invitation or through another avenue, it is essential that they are warmly received. Regular members must leave the comfort of conversations with others they know, and reach out to these new members. Take visitors by the arm and introduce them to others. Do not let them be alone wondering what to do.

It is also helpful to coach your group members about discussion times. At times we who are comfortable with one another can be insensitive to newcomers. We assume that they understand the concepts of which we speak, and the language which we use. We must remember that the newcomer may be not even be a believer, or their life experience may be quite different than ours. For the sake of Christ’s body, we must exercise loving wisdom, as we seek to integrate these new folk into the life of our fellowship with Christ and one another.

## Group Multiplication

Small Groups at CBC should not be considered static or permanent fixtures! If a group has embraced the concept of the “open chair” (see section on welcoming new members) and if members are being equipping to be “sent out”, in time the group will be too large to remain as one.

It is suggested that group size is optimal at 6 -12 participants. The small size is conducive to promoting closeness and fostering openness not easily duplicated in larger gatherings. The smaller size also enables the group leader to truly shepherd the hearts of group members. As that ability diminishes as the group grows leaders should consider “multiplying” if your group reaches 15 or more members. Any group multiplication should be seen positively, as Christ has called us to be missional, not comfortable.

In preparation for group multiplication the following considerations may prove helpful:

- ◆ If you haven’t already, introduce your group to the concept of the “open chair”. Keep your group thinking about outreach. Pray regularly about those you might invite into your group.
  
- ◆ Be developing an apprentice (see section on developing Apprentice Leaders). If your group is going to grow and multiply, as a leader, you must prepare for that wonderful event. Plan now to transfer part of the group to a prepared leader. Encourage your apprentice to attend the Small Group Basic Training.
  
- ◆ As your group grows you may try to divide your group for some activities: prayer, times of discussion,... This will acclimate them to a core group that, in time, may branch off together as a new group.
  
- ◆ As the time for multiplication approaches, it is important to talk frequently with the group about the “when” and “how” of change. Consider the best time to divide. The end of a study or the beginning of a new year may be important matters to consider. Consider some sort of celebration with testimonies about how the Lord used the group to mark the transition to two groups.
  
- ◆ When the new groups have formed be sure to maintain contact with your apprentice. It is also helpful for the groups to gather periodically for joint fellowship meals or outreach projects.

# Updating Group Information

Periodically, small group leaders are asked to update their group information on the Small Group Biography form (below). Prompt updating is important so that accurate information can be reflected in our Small Group Guide which is used by newcomers to find a small group.

## Small Group Biography

### Leadership

1. Leader(s) (name, phone, email)
  - 
  -
2. Leader(s) in training (name, phone, email)
  - 
  -
3. Contact person, if other than leader (name, phone, email)
  -

### Location

1. Meeting location & address (if same place every week)
  -
2. Major crossroads
  -
3. General location (if meeting location changes from one meeting to the next)
  -

### Schedule

1. How often does your group meet
  -
2. What day(s)
  -
3. What time(s)
  -

4. Dinner, dessert, or snack with study

- 

5. Additional group activities (dinners, retreats, etc.)

- 

- 

- 

6. Is this an on going group (write, "on going") or is it short term with an ending date? (Write, "short term" and list the ending date.)

- 

***Book or topic group is studying***

1. Current

- 

2. Past

- 

***Ministry Outreach***

1. Current

- 

2. Past

- 

3. Frequency of outreach

- 

***History of Group***

1. When started

- 

2. Additional comments about group

- 

- 

-

**Group Information**

1. Number of attendees
  -
2. New attendees added to your group
  - 
  -
3. Current attendees names / ages / married / single
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -
4. Individuals that have left your group
  - 
  - 
  -
4. Desired age range, if any
  -
5. Childcare offered?
  -
6. Open to non-believers?
  -
7. Open to new members?
  -
8. Particular focus of group (i.e. new believer, men only, parenting, etc.)
  -
9. Provide a general description of your group that we might use on website or printed small group information.
  -

## Life Cycle of Small Groups

As previously stated, Small Groups should not be viewed as either static or permanent. Expect your group to go through various stages, periods of familiarity and closeness, which will likely affect group dynamics.

**Birth** (first 1-3 meetings) – A new group will go through a time of curiosity, discovery, excitement, and development of trust. It will undoubtedly need extra nurturing and encouragement during this phase. It is helpful in this stage to let group members tell their “faith story”.

**Childhood** (next 2-6 weeks) – As groups meet together and reality sets in, there may be some conflict and issues to work through. Issues of personality and expectations often surface. At this time it is helpful to construct a group covenant which lays out expectations. If some members leave, seek to direct them to a group that might be better suited to them.

**Teenage** (next 6 weeks) – At this stage members have made a commitment to the group. It can be helpful to find a role for each member where they can deploy their gift for the “common good”. It is important that you encourage members to seek and give support to one another, and not just from the leader. At this point it would be good prayerfully to select an apprentice for the group.

**Adult** (next 10+ meetings) – Personal growth and ministry to others peaks during this time period. Group members have gotten to know each other quite well and know what the needs are within the group. The Small Group is healthy, mature and functioning fully at this juncture and is best able to carry out the “One Another’s” found in Scripture. The leader must work to keep relationships deep and honest, as well as maintain the group’s outward focus.

**Birthing** (last 4 meetings) - Whether a group “multiplies,” re-forms, or closes, it should be seen as natural progression – not a negative outcome! Take time to celebrate what the Lord has done in and through the members of the group. Prepare and pray for new groups that are being birthed.

## Small Group Agenda / Schedule

The small group agenda should be determined by the purpose of small groups. Ultimately, our goal is to equip God's people to "serve in their world as Christ served in His". All we do should be directed toward that end. Elements that may be used by God's Spirit to promote such an end include: Bible study and discussion, prayer, outreach planning and sharing, worship, fellowship and accountability.

Groups at different stages of the small group life cycle (see section on life cycle) will have different needs and may need to emphasize different elements. A new group may need to focus more on fellowship initially. Mature groups may need to have more time to consider individual and group outreach, as well as group multiplication.

The schedule below provides "one" way a group may wish to order their time for a 90-120 minute session. Each group is free to determine its own agenda and make adjustment as would best suit the shepherding needs of the group.

**Fellowship and Refreshments** 15 – 20 minutes

(This time may be devoted to informal discussion, meeting new members, ice breakers, ...)

**Worship** 5 – 10 minutes

(This time may be devoted to singing and praising God.)

**Bible Study / Discussion** 30 – 40 minutes

(This time may be devoted to an interactive, discussion focused study of the truths of Scripture.)

**Outreach sharing and planning** 25 – 30 minutes

(This time may be devoted to sharing and planning individual outreach opportunities, holding members accountable in areas where they have requested it, as well as planning the group outreach event.)

**Prayer and accountability** 15 – 20 minutes

(This time may be devoted to prayer for the outreach plans and personal needs of the group.)

## Developing a Small Group Covenant

**WHAT** is it? It is an agreement that spells out the plans for the group.

**WHY** have it? It clarifies expectations and puts everyone “on the same page.”

**WHO** writes it? The leader should come with a framework, but ALL members should take part in the effort. Everyone should provide input and take part in the negotiating of the covenant.

**WHEN** should it be written? When the group is forming – after the initial few meetings when the group is birthed.

**WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT** a covenant? Lack of communicating and/or agreeing on expectations can lead to disappointment and frustration.

**WHAT HAPPENS WITH** a covenant? It is easier to avoid those disappointments and frustrations if people have a clear idea what to expect of themselves and others.

### SOME ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER:

*Meeting Frequency*

*Meeting Length*

*Attendance*

*Preparation*

*Participation*

*Prayer*

*Confidentiality*

*Honesty*

*Respect*

*Care and Encouragement*

*Children*

*Social Gatherings of Group or Sub-Group*

# Questions for Group Covenant

## 1. Attendance

- Why is faithful attendance important?
- What do we expect about attendance?
- When will we plan not to attend?
- What is our responsibility if we do have to miss a meeting?
- What is an acceptable reason to miss?

## 2. Preparation

- What is entailed in adequate preparation?
  - Prayer?
  - Study?
  - Review before the session?
  - Outreach project completed?

## 3. Participation

- What kind of participation is needed?
  - Commitment to be active in every discussion?
  - Commitment to help others (perhaps quieter ones) to get involved?

## 4. Prayer

- How frequently will we pray?
- Will we pray for one another during the week?
- How much time during each session will we pray? When will that be?
- How will we share requests?
- How shall we review prayer results?

## 5. Confidentiality

- What are our guidelines about confidentiality?
- Why is confidentiality important?
- When, if ever, is it OK to share beyond the group?

## 6. Openness and Honesty

- How open do we want to be with one another?
- How open should we be with one another?
- Are there times we should be selectively open?

## **7. Respect**

- How do we show respect for one another?
- How do we handle disagreements in a respectful manner?

## **8. Care and Encouragement**

- What commitment will we make to each other in times of need?
- How will we let each other know of our needs?
- To what extent shall we share struggles?
- How do we increase our ability to share with and encourage one another?

## **9. Meeting Length**

- What is our plan for meeting?
- How long will we meet?
- What will we do and how long is each segment?

## **10. Children**

- What will be our practice regarding children?
- What will we do when our children join us?
- Who will do what on those evenings?
- Will we eat with the children or dine separately?

## **11. Ministry**

- What is our expectation about using our gifts within our group?
- How will we encourage one another in the area of personal outreach?
- What is our commitment to outreach as a group?
  - Who will lead us in this?
  - How often?

## Sample Covenant

Members of our group will attend all meetings unless an emergency arises.

Each week group members will read the Bible verses to be discussed at the Bible study.

Everyone in the group will participate in the group discussion.

We will spend about fifteen minutes at the start of each meeting in group prayer. The leaders will record the group prayer requests and then lead the prayer.

Everyone will continue to bring these things to God in their personal prayers throughout the week.

Group members promise to maintain confidentiality about everything that is said in the group.

We will all try to be as open and honest as we can in all group meetings.

We will respect each other by listening carefully to everyone's comments and we will not be judgmental.

We want to be a loving group and will work hard to show love to each other both during meetings and outside of meetings.

The Bible study will be each Sunday at 6:00 pm.

We will start taking prayer requests at 6:00 sharp.

At 6:15 we will begin the Bible study portion of our group meeting.

At 7:15 we will begin to wrap-up and will dismiss no later than 7:30 pm.

We will include our children over ten years old in the group Bible study. The children will be expected to participate fully. Those ten and younger will play in another room in our host home with one of the parents in our group watching them. The responsibility to watch the children will rotate among all the parents week to week.

## Childcare Options for Small Groups

Childcare is an important and sometimes difficult area for Small Groups. Here are a few possible options and ideas on how to approach the childcare issue...

1. Participation model... Children attend the Small Group and participate with the group throughout the evening.
2. Individual sitters... Group members leave their children at home with their own sitter. Everyone in the group with children finds and hires their own sitters. Some groups that chose this option also plan a quarterly family time where all the family meets together around a meal and a time of study and prayer.
3. Rotating childcare responsibilities... All the children come with their parents to the Small Group. Parents rotate the responsibility of watching the children in a different room of the house at each meeting.
4. Group sitter (same location)... All the children come with their parents to the Small Group and a sitter watches them in another room while the group is in session
5. Group sitter (different location)... All the children are dropped off at one of the group member's homes (preferable near to the meeting location) where a sitter watches them during the group time.
6. Alternating weeks between spouses. The women of the group get together the first and third week of the month while the children stay at home and have special time with dad. The men get together the second and the fourth week of the month while the children stay at home and have special time with mom. Periodically or possibly on months when there is a fifth week on small group night the entire group comes together.

If the option chosen includes having the children together, some guidelines for behavior are helpful. Parents should talk about and establish these guidelines with one another beforehand. Then parents should review these guidelines with their children before the meeting. The sitter may also review them at the beginning of each Small Group evening.

# Principles of Ministry



## How to Handle the Word of God

Since an important part of each Small Group is the study of Scripture, it is important to address the issue of biblical interpretation. Often Christians disagree on what the Bible teaches. Well meaning Christians equally committed to Scripture at times stand on opposite ends of the spectrum on issues. There are bound to be times of disagreement on biblical interpretation.

First of all, we must realize that there are some things that are non-negotiable. For Camelback Bible Church, these are listed in our confessional statement. These are bottom line issues related to a basic understanding of our faith. We will hold firm to these beliefs. Other issues, while important, are not as crucial and leave room for a difference of opinion. The following statement may serve as a guideline in these matters:

***“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberality; in all things, charity”***

Discussing doctrinal issues is vital for there is no orthopraxy (right living) without orthodoxy (right thinking), but the desire is to achieve discussions and dialogue that remain open and healthy rather than argumentative. It is also desirable to encourage the personal application of God’s word over “head knowledge.” The leader must watch for this danger and encourage group members to look for practical applications in the midst of discussing issues.

Consider the following principles of interpretation as you study God’s Word and lead your group in the study of the Word. Consult the book, [A Layman’s Guide to Interpreting the Bible](#), by Walter A. Henrichsen, Nav Press, 1981 for further explanation of each of the principles.

### ***General Principles***

1. Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.
2. The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture.
3. Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures.
4. Interpret personal experiences in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.
5. Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command.
6. The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not increase our knowledge.
7. Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.

8. Church history is important but not decisive in the interpretation of Scripture.
9. The promises of God throughout the Bible are available to the Holy Spirit for the believers of every generation.

### ***Grammatical Principles***

10. Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken literally.
11. Interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author.
12. Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context.
13. Interpret a passage in harmony with its context.
14. When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement may be considered figurative.
15. When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement may be considered figurative.
16. The principal parts and figures of the parable represent certain realities. Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing conclusions.
17. Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual, literal and historical sense, unless the context or manner in which they are fulfilled clearly indicates they have a symbolic meaning. Their fulfillment may be in installments, each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow.

### ***Historical Principles***

18. Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can be understood only in the light of biblical history.
19. Though God's revelation in the Scriptures is progressive, both Old and New Testaments are essential parts of this revelation and form a unit.
20. Historical facts or events become symbols of spiritual truths only if Scriptures so designate them.

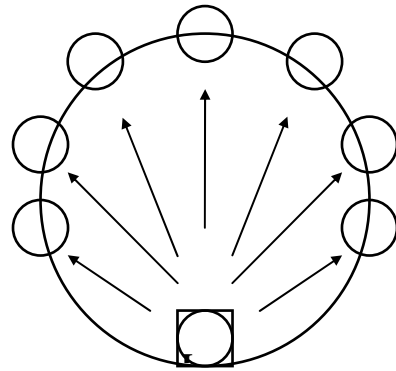
### ***Theological Principles***

21. You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically.
22. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures say about it.
23. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves into a higher unity.
24. A teaching merely implied in Scripture may be considered biblical when the comparison of related passages supports it.

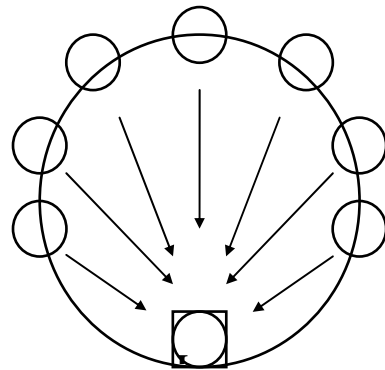
## Leading Discussions

One of the main jobs of the Small Group leader is to facilitate discussion. There are times when the facilitator might do more talking to explain something in the material, but then they must transition to open discussion. Leaders must create an open atmosphere that invites participation of group members and values their input. The following diagrams show two negative examples of Small Group dynamics to avoid and one positive example of Small Group dynamics we are trying to foster.

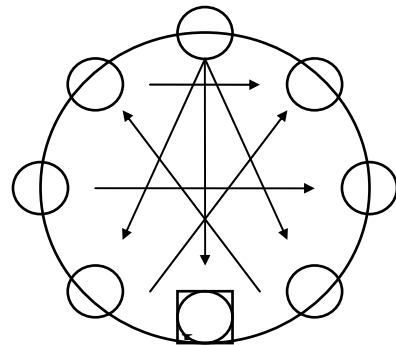
**Not This:**  
Leader doing all the  
talking



**Not This:**  
Group responding only  
to the leader



**But This:**  
Group interacting and  
the  
leader guiding  
discussion



## Leading Discussions *(continued)*

The following are suggestions to help lead discussions and foster healthy group dynamics...

1. Arrange the group in a circle if possible, so that everyone can see each other. If someone separates him/herself from the group, encourage them to join in. ("Make some room so John can squeeze in here." etc.)
2. Let the group know that you don't have all the answers. If a question is asked to which you do not know the answer, tell the person you don't know. Offer to do some research (or ask a member to research the question) and come back the next time with a response for that person.
3. Let the group know that it's okay to interrupt you at any time if they have a question and that there is no such thing as a dumb question.
4. Ask for input and feedback to what you have shared.
5. When responses or questions are directed only to you, direct it back to the group. ("Let me hear what some of the rest of you think about that first. Anyone care to respond? Betty, what would you say?")
6. Try to include everyone. Ask a more reserved person what they think about the topic you are discussing. Let them know they don't have to share if they don't want to. ("Let's hear from someone who hasn't had the chance to share yet... Linda, how about you?" etc.)
7. Ask "open-ended" questions as opposed to "yes or no" questions. Not, "Did you like the Bible passage for this week?" but, "What did you like about the Bible passage for this week? or What did you get out of it?" Open-ended questions tend to promote discussion.
8. Ask for clarification or dig deeper into an answer to make it come alive. ("Does that work in a different situation too?" or "That's a good answer, but how easy is it to really do that?" or "Do any of the rest of you find that hard to do?" or "How does that work in everyday life?" etc.)
9. Allow tangents, but refocus if necessary. The group may wander off from the material, but the discussion may be what's on the heart of the group at that time. If the tangent is trivial, refocus the group back to the material. ("Well, let's get back to our material... what do you think...")

10. Acknowledge everyone who participates. (a nod, eye contact, or verbal encouragement, etc.)
11. Refer back to a point that someone else made. (“That’s similar to what Jane said a little while ago about letting God have control...” etc.)
12. Use summary statements to clarify discussion. (“So, what I hear you saying is...” etc.)
13. Ask questions in a conversational tone. Do not simply read them out of a book, or say, “What did you put for question number five?” Rephrase the question to ask the same thing in a different way.

## **Guarding Discussions**

While leaders are not to dominate discussions, that does not mean they are to back out of them. Appropriate input at appropriate times can help the discussion stay on track, add depth to the discussion, or tie the discussion back in to the lesson for that evening.

There are also times when it is the leader’s responsibility to guard the discussion—stepping in to stop inappropriate sharing. Below are a few situations to watch for...

1. Don’t allow people to confess anyone’s faults but their own. Gossiping or griping about another person is not appropriate.
2. Don’t allow doctrinal discussion to become divisive or argumentative. Healthy discussion, even disagreement, regarding the tenets of the faith is to be encouraged, but must always be attended with charity.
3. Don’t entertain negative attitudes toward the church. The Small Group leader is expected to support CBC’s confessional statement, its philosophy of ministry, and its leadership. Encourage anyone with a specific concern to bring it to the leadership team. Concerns for the church can be talked about by the Small Group in a healthy, positive way that encourages ownership. (“Is there something we could do to help in this area?” etc.)
4. Don’t allow one person’s continual problem to be the focus of the group. There are bound to be persons in groups that require extra care. Some such people can be cared for and ministered to in the context of a Small Group, others may need help outside the group. Sound judgment is required here.

## Spiritual Leadership Basics

As a small group “leader” you are being asked to lead God’s people in a manner consonant with the Holy Spirit. You must not only lead, but lead in a way that is spiritual – God-directed, Christ-centered, Spirit empowered. The Apostle Paul was a tremendous example of such leadership. From his encounter with the Ephesians elders recorded in Acts 20 many vital leadership principles can be seen.

**Acts 20:17-35 (ESV)** *Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. 35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”*

*Principle 1 – We lead by living as examples. Paul practiced what he preached. He could tell the Ephesians elders to remember how he lived (vs. 18). He could even say, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). As leaders our lives ought to reflect the glorious gospel that we proclaim.*

*Principle 2* – We lead by serving. Paul said he “served the Lord with all humility and with tears,…” (vs. 19). His life was characterized by “laying down his life” even as Christ had come “not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). So, as leaders, we lead by becoming servant of all.

*Principle 3* – We lead by persevering. No one said leadership would be easily. Paul experienced “conflicts without” (vs. 19, 23) and “conflicts within” (vs. 29-30), but he continued to minister faithfully to the end. Leadership is not for the faint-hearted.

*Principle 4* – We lead by our teaching. Paul was faithful to teach both in public forums as well as from house to house (vs. 20). He was faithful to tell his auditors whatever would be profitable to them, even if he suspected it might be hard for them to accept (vs. 20, 27). He continually called them to “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs. 21). As leaders we constant communication is a priority.

*Principle 5* – We lead by following the Holy Spirit. Paul said he was “constrained by the Spirit” (vs. 22). As he followed he did not always know what lie ahead, but he was nonetheless responsive to the Spirit, always listening to its direction (vs. 23). A leader is only worthy of following to the extent that he has learned to follow the Spirit.

*Principle 6* – We lead by being missional. Paul said “I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (vs. 24). Paul’s life showed that he lived to fulfill the calling given to him by the Lord, that of giving witness to the glorious gospel of Christ. Leaders must have a sense of calling and be propelled by it at all times.

*Principle 7* – We lead by protecting the flock. Paul called the elders to pay careful attention (vs. 28) and to beware of those who would come among the flock and do them harm with their false teaching (vs. 29-30). Leaders must be aware of the errant and deceitful teaching of their age, and seek to protect their people from its harmful effects.

*Principle 8* – We lead by being committed to the word. Even as Paul commended the Ephesians elders to God and the “word of His grace” (vs. 32), so leaders must be students of the Word, always commending others of its indispensable value.

*Principle 9* – We lead by working hard. Paul, could as an apostle, have received his support from those to whom he served, but he chose to work day and night, so as to ministry to his own needs (vs. 34-35). He speaks as well of admonishing the people night and day. Serving others in gospel ministry always demands a great labor.

*Principle 10* – We lead by loving. Love is giving away what the Lord has given to us. Paul exemplified this, even as he reminded his auditors that the Lord Himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (vs. 35). Leaders who put this in practice will find that in giving they will in the end enrich many while as the same time enriching their own souls.

# Principles of Group Dynamics

## 1. Challenging People

Somewhere along the way most groups run into one or more of the following challenging personalities... The small group leader's challenge will be to love these people, at times confronting them, helping them to make a more productive contribution to the group. Most confrontation is best done in private unless as group leader you believe confronting the issue as a group will be more profitable.

Annie Aggressor—insults, criticizes, and hurts others with their quick tongue

Roger Rabbit Chaser—consistently focuses on stories or issues irrelevant to the topic at hand

Reggie Recognition Seeker—tends to focus primarily on his own achievements or successes

Donna Dominator—monopolizes group interaction. Tries to control discussions

Suzie Special Interest Pleader—tends to focus on personal pet peeves or interests

Nora Negativist—quick to point out the “down side” of any issue or topic.

Quinn Quibbler—focuses on details... turns minor issues into major ones... can be legalistic

Paul Practical Joker—uses humor in a distractive way... (defense mechanism or attention getting)

Tina Talker—never stops talking

Gary Gossiper—shares inappropriate information about others

Aaron Advise Giver—jumps to simple solutions and pat answers instead of listening

Sally Slacker – does not take the small group seriously, failing to prepare lessons, attend regularly or in a timely manner

# Principles of Group Dynamics *(continued)*

## 2. The Four G's of Conflict Resolution

(For further study read The Peacemaker by Ken Sande)

Conflict is not necessarily bad or destructive. Even when conflict is caused by sin and causes a great deal of stress, God can use it for good (see Rom. 8:28-29). As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, conflict actually provides three significant opportunities. By God's grace, you can use conflict to:

- Glorify God (by trusting, obeying, and imitating him)
- Serve other people (by helping to bear their burdens or by confronting them in love)
- Grow to be like Christ (by confessing sin and turning from attitudes that promote conflict).

These concepts are totally overlooked in most conflicts because people naturally focus on escaping from the situation or overcoming their opponent. Therefore, it is wise to periodically step back from a conflict and ask yourself whether you are doing all that you can to take advantage of these special opportunities.

### 1st G: Glorify God

When the Apostle Paul urged the Corinthians to live "to the glory of God," he was not talking about one hour on Sunday morning. He wanted them to show God honor and bring him praise in day-to-day life, especially by the way that they resolved personal conflicts (see 1 Cor. 10:31).

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"How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?"

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As mentioned above, you can glorify God in the midst of conflict by trusting him, obeying him, and imitating him (see Prov. 3:4-6; John 14:15; Eph. 5:1). One of the best ways to keep these concerns uppermost in your mind is to regularly ask yourself this focusing question: "How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?"

### 2nd G: Get the log out of your own eye

One of the most challenging principles of peacemaking is set forth in Matthew 7:5, where Jesus says, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

There are generally two kinds of "logs" you need to look for when dealing with conflict. First, you need to ask whether you have had a critical, negative, or overly sensitive attitude that has led to unnecessary conflict. One of the best ways to do this is to spend some time meditating on Philippians 4:2-9, which describes the kind of attitude Christians should have even when they are involved in a conflict.

The second kind of log you must deal with is actual sinful words and actions. Because you are often blind to your own sins, you may need an honest friend or advisor who will help you to take an objective look at yourself and face up to your contribution to a conflict.

When you identify ways that you have wronged another person, it is important to admit your wrongs honestly and thoroughly. One way to do this is to use the Seven A's of Confession.

The most important aspect of getting the log out of your own eye is to go beyond the confession of wrong behavior and face up to the root cause of that behavior. The Bible teaches that conflict comes from the desires that battle in your heart (James 4:1-3; Matt. 15:18-19). Some of these desires are obviously sinful, such as wanting to conceal the truth, bend others to your will, or have revenge. In many situations, however, conflict is fueled by good desires that you have elevated to sinful demands, such as a craving to be understood, loved, respected, or vindicated.

Any time you become excessively preoccupied with something, even a good thing, and seek to find happiness, security or fulfillment in it rather than in God, you are guilty of idolatry. Idolatry inevitably leads to conflict with God ("You shall have no other gods before me"). It also causes conflict with other people. As James writes, when we want something but don't get it, we kill and covet, quarrel and fight (James 4:1-4).

There are three basic steps you can take to overcome the idolatry that fuels conflict. First, you should ask God to help you see where you have been guilty of wrong worship, that is, where you are focusing your love, attention, and energy on something other than God. Second, you should specifically identify and renounce each of the desires contributing to the conflict. Third, you should deliberately pursue right worship, that is, to fix your heart and mind on God and to seek joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction in him alone.

As God guides and empowers these efforts, you can find freedom from the idols that fuel conflict and be motivated to make choices that will please and honor Christ. This change in heart will usually speed a resolution to a present problem, and at the same time improve your ability to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

### **3rd G: Gently Restore**

Another key principle of peacemaking involves an effort to help others understand how they have contributed to a conflict. When Christians think about talking to someone else about a conflict, one of the first verses that comes to mind is Matthew 18:15: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." If this verse is read in isolation, it seems to teach that we must always use direct confrontation to force others to admit they have sinned. If the verse is read in context, however, we see that Jesus had something much more flexible and beneficial in mind than simply standing toe to toe with others and describing their sins.

Just before this passage, we find Jesus' wonderful metaphor of a loving shepherd who goes to look for a wandering sheep and then rejoices when it is found (Matt. 18:12–14). Thus, Matthew 18:15 is introduced with a theme of restoration, not condemnation. Jesus repeats this theme just after telling us to "go and show him his fault" by adding, "If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." And then he hits the restoration theme a third time in verses 21–35, where he uses the parable of the unmerciful servant to remind us to be as merciful and forgiving to others as God is to us (Matt. 18:21–35).

Jesus is clearly calling for something much more loving and redemptive than simply confronting others with a list of their wrongs. Similarly, Galatians 6:1 gives us solid counsel on our what our attitude and purpose ought to be when we go to our brother. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently." Our attitude should be one of gentleness rather than anger, and our purpose should be to restore rather than condemn.

Yet even before you go to talk with someone, remember that it is appropriate to overlook minor offenses (see Prov. 19:11). As a general rule, an offense should be overlooked if you can answer "no" to all of the following questions:

- Is the offense seriously dishonoring God?
- Has it permanently damaged a relationship?
- Is it seriously hurting other people? and
- Is it seriously hurting the offender himself?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, an offense is too serious to overlook, in which case God commands you to go and talk with the offender privately and lovingly about the situation. As you do so, remember to:

- Pray for humility and wisdom
- Plan your words carefully (think of how you would want to be confronted)
- Anticipate likely reactions and plan appropriate responses (rehearsals can be very helpful)
- Choose the right time and place (talk in person whenever possible)
- Assume the best about the other person until you have facts to prove otherwise (Prov. 11:27)
- Listen carefully (Prov. 18:13)

- Speak only to build others up (Eph. 4:29)
- Ask for feedback from the other person
- Recognize your limits (only God can change people; see Rom. 12:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26)

If an initial conversation does not resolve a conflict, do not give up. Review what was said and done, and look for ways to make a better approach during a follow up conversation. It may also be wise to ask a spiritually mature friend for advice on how to approach the other person more effectively. Then try again with even stronger prayer support.

If repeated, careful attempts at a private discussion are not fruitful, and if the matter is still too serious to overlook, you should ask one or two other people to meet with you and your opponent and help you to resolve your differences through mediation, arbitration, or accountability (see Matt. 18:16-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; for more guidance on getting such help, click [Get Help With Conflict](#).)

#### **4th G: Go and be reconciled**

One of the most unique features of biblical peacemaking is the pursuit of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Even though Christians have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others. To cover up our disobedience we often use the shallow statement, "I forgive her—I just don't want to have anything to do with her again." Just think, however, how you would feel if God said to you, "I forgive you; I just don't want to have anything to do with you again"?

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Even though Christians have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others.

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Praise God that he never says this! Instead, he forgives you totally and opens the way for genuine reconciliation. He calls you to forgive others in exactly the same way: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Col. 3:12-14; see also 1 Cor. 13:5; Psalm 103:12; Isa. 43:25). One way to imitate God's forgiveness is to make the [Four Promises of Forgiveness](#) when you forgive someone.

Remember that forgiveness is a spiritual process that you cannot fully accomplish on your own. Therefore, as you seek to forgive others, continually ask God for grace to enable you to imitate his wonderful forgiveness toward you.

\* This article is taken from the Peacemaker website at: [www.peacemaker.net](http://www.peacemaker.net)

## Principles of Group Dynamics *(continued)*

### 3. Biblical Principles on Conflict

There are a number of Scriptural principles to use when dealing with conflict.

- **Speak the truth in love** (Ephesians 4:15, 25)
- **Mirror rather than try to change people's feelings** (Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 12:26)
- **Seek to edify and be gracious** (Ephesians 4:29-32)
- **Express real emotions, but do not sin** (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- **Settle private disputes privately** (Matthew 18:15-17)
- **Do not keep a record of wrongs** (1 Corinthians 13:5)
- **Think before you speak** (Proverbs 15:23, 28)
- **Do not return insult for insult** (1 Peter 3:8-9)
- **Check your motives for conflict** (James 4:1-2; Proverbs 13:10)
- **Pursue peace and edification in relationships** (Romans 14:19)
- **Avoid needless quarrels** (Proverbs 20:3; 2 Timothy 2:24)
- **Remember group members' needs as well as your own** (Philippians 2:4)

### 4. The Meeting Climate

Logistics are important in creating an atmosphere that will be comfortable and foster intimacy.

- ◆ If possible, have everyone sit in a circle and on the same level.
- ◆ Eliminate any foreseeable distractions such as radio, television, and telephones should be turned off. Participant's cell phones should also be off. Exceptions may include parents that need to be available to babysitters, Doctors on-call, etc.
- ◆ Try to have the room temperature agreeable to most...not hot or cold enough to be a distraction.
- ◆ Good lighting is important so that people are able to read during the study portion of the meeting.
- ◆ If refreshments are served, it is wise to keep them simple. Doing so will make it easy for all to take a turn in providing them.
- ◆ Determine if children:
  - will be present for meetings
  - will be cared for in another area of the host home
  - will be cared for off site

# Commitment to Peacemaking and Reconciliation

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God (Matt. 5:9).*

Our church is committed to building a “culture of peace” that reflects God’s peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that bitterness, unforgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate for the people whom God has reconciled to himself through the sacrifice of his only Son (John 13:34-35; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14).

Therefore, we look to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit for guidance on how we can respond to conflict in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and preserve our witness for Christ. As God gives us his wisdom and grace, we are committed to actively teaching and encouraging one another to live out the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation:

## ***Personal Peacemaking***

- Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).
- We will try to get the “logs” out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29). If we have a problem with others, we will talk *to* them, not *about* them.
- We will make “charitable judgments” toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will go promptly to seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
- When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as he has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).
- When we discuss or negotiate substantive issues, we will look out for others’ interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

# Property (Resources)



## The "One Anothers" of Scripture

Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)

Love one another (John 13:34)

Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)

Honor one another (Romans 12:10)

Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)

Stop passing judgment on one another (Romans 14:13)

Accept one another (Romans 15:7)

Instruct one another (Romans 15:14)

Greet one another (Romans 16:16)

Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)

Carry each other's burden (Galatians 6:2)

Be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)

Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21)

In humility consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)

Teach one another (Colossians 3:16)

Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)

Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)

Do not slander one another (James 4:11)

Do not grumble against one another (James 5:9)

Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16)

Pray for one another (James 5:16)

Clothe yourself with humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)

## Ice Breakers

**Who Am I?**—Make up stickers (enough for everyone in your group) with the names of famous people or characters. They can be real, historical, cartoons, Muppets... whatever. They should be ones that would be familiar to most of the people in the group. Have people pair up, pick out a sticker without showing their partner, and put it on their partner's back. The object then is for everyone to figure out who they are. Initially they can ask two questions of another person, such as, "Am I alive today?" or "Am I on TV?" After a while allow them to ask more questions. If people are still struggling to figure it out, tell the others they can start giving clues. This activity is a good one to get people who may not know each other that well to mix and talk with each other.

**Things In Common**—Have the group pair up (if there is an odd number of people in the room, the game leader can sit out). Give each pair a small piece of paper and a pencil. Give them three to five minutes to list as many things as possible that they have in common... things like, they were born in the same month, or they both live on streets that begin with 'P,' or they both wear size 8 shoe... the more interesting or odd, the better. Tell them when there is 30 seconds left. When time is up, have them count the number of things in common. Then start with one group and have them share their lists. Have the group vote thumbs up or thumbs down on questionable items. Continue to allow all groups to share. If you are pressed for time, ask each group just to share the most interesting one or two things they discovered they had in common. If you would like, have a prize for the winners.

**Psychiatrist**—Send one person (who has no clue what this activity is about) to leave the room and wait somewhere where they cannot hear the rest of the group. Then inform the rest of the group that they have a problem... each one of them thinks they are the person to their left. Give them a few minutes to find out as much as they can about the person to their left (where they were born, what they like to do, where they work, etc.). Then bring the other person back in the room and tell them they are a psychiatrist and need to find out what the group's problem is by asking questions of the individuals in the group. You may need to help them get started with some suggestions for questions, like... "Joe, what do you like to do?" or, "Where were you born?" You may want to encourage them to ask the same question to others in the group. If the group member doesn't know the answer to the question or the answer would give it away too easily, they can just answer, "I don't know." After a while you can help the psychiatrist with more clues or more direct answers if needed.

**Group Games**—There are a number of fun games (you can buy at stores like Target or Wal-mart) that are great group games. Taboo is a word game where a person describes a word in order to try to get their team to say it. The trick is there are a number of other words they cannot use to describe the main word. Guesstures is a quick charades type game where a person acts out things for their team to guess. Pictionary is a drawing game where teammates guess what is being drawn. Other similar games are also out on the market. If the group is fairly evenly mixed, you could play the men against the women. Otherwise, get creative and mix up the group.

**Getting to Know You**—Have everyone in the group fill out a paper with these questions on it: What is your favorite food, animal, TV show, hobby, color, place you've been on vacation, etc. Make sure names are on the papers and have them handed in to the leader. The leader then reads each paper to the entire group. The group members jot down who they think each paper belongs to. Once all have completed guessing, the leader reveals who's who. The one who guessed the most right wins.

**Show and Tell**—Have group members bring something for show and tell that has some spiritual significance to them... (perhaps a necklace or bracelet which reminds them to think about Christ, or an object that represents a significant decision or time of spiritual growth, or a Bible or book given to them by a Christian friend, etc.). Have them share their object and its significance.

**Statistical Treasure Hunt**—Make a list of things for people to find out about each other... such as how many miles they travel to church, how many phones they have in their house, how many bones they have broken, etc. Divide into groups of four to six people. Add the responses of each group member for each question (if all four people have two phones in their house, they put down eight for that item). Add up responses from all the questions and see which team came up with the highest total.

**Questions in a Hat**—Make a list of questions. Cut them into individual questions and put them in a hat. Pass the hat and have people pick out a question. They can answer it or give it to another person in the group. Another way to do it is pass out a sheet with all the questions and pick corresponding numbers out of the hat. You could also have the option of referring that question to another group member. Give people the opportunity to pass if they truly do not want to address their question. (See "The Question Sheet")

**Two Truths/One Lie**—Have group members write down three things on a piece of paper (two things that are true about them and one thing that is a lie). Tell them not to make it obvious. Then read each person's paper having people guess which item was the lie.

**Timeline**—Have group members draw a timeline of their life, recounting five major life events. Have each person share his or her timeline.

**Three key material possessions**—Explain to the group that they have just discovered a major fire in their home. Assuming that they have been able to get their family out safely, what three material possessions would they take with them from their burning home? Have them explain what and why...

## The Question Sheet

1. What is your favorite movie and why?
2. If money were no problem and you could choose one place to travel for a week, where would you go? Why?
3. Who is your number one advisor in life and why?
4. One of my biggest pet peeves is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. People might be surprised to find out that I \_\_\_\_\_.
6. You have three wishes. What do you wish for?
7. If you suddenly lost your eyesight, what would be the thing you missed seeing the most?
8. What is the most daring thing you've ever done? What made it so daring?
9. My favorite way to waste time is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. You have one minute to speak to the entire nation on national television. What one or two key things would you like to tell them?
11. What is the story behind the longest time you've gone without sleep?
12. Who is the most famous person you've known or met? How did it happen?
13. What is or was an interesting date for you?
14. If you could do one miracle (other than make the whole world Christian) What would you do? Why?
15. What do you miss about childhood?
16. What is the biggest lie you ever told?
17. If given a choice, how would you choose to die? **Not** want to die?
18. What is your biggest fear about death?
19. If you could go to college right now, what would you study?
20. What is the worst storm or disaster you've been in? What was it like?
21. Describe the most boring day/event/period you can remember.
22. What day of your life would you most like to relive? Why?
23. What is the smallest space you've lived in? What was it like?
24. I was/would have been/should be voted "most likely to \_\_\_ in high school.
25. Just for the fun/thrill of it, before I die I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_.
26. My top two career choices would be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
27. As a time traveler I would most like to visit \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
28. What has been one of the greatest adventures you have been on?
29. If you could invent a gadget to make life easier, what would it be?
30. Next year looks better to me because \_\_\_\_\_.
31. Next year may be a problem because \_\_\_\_\_.
32. In what way are you most like your mom?
33. In what way are you most like your dad?
34. I wish before I got married someone had told me \_\_\_\_\_.
35. What is something you've always wanted to do but haven't been able to?
36. What types of situations make you nervous?
37. What is/was something special about your grandparents?

38. What does your name mean? Why were you named that?
39. What is one of the most memorable dreams you've ever had?
40. If you were going to leave the world one piece of advice before you died, what would it be?
41. If you were to describe yourself as a flavor, what would your flavor be?
42. What was the best gift you ever received as a child?
43. If you could raise one person from the dead, who would it be? Why?
44. Who is the most interesting person you have ever met?
45. What is the nicest thing anybody has ever said about you?
46. What is one thing you would like your obituary to say about you? Why?
47. What is your favorite city? Why?
48. Where do you go or what do you do when life gets too heavy for you?
49. Which do you value most—sight or speech? Why?
50. What is your fondest memory of a picnic? Why was it so special?
51. What is the best news you've heard this week? The worst news?
52. What is one of the worst things your brother or sister did to you as a child?
53. If your house were on fire, what three items would you try to save? (the people are already safe)
54. What was your first job? What do you remember most about it?
55. Who was the best boss you ever had? What made them so good?
56. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? What did your parents want you to be?
57. Who was your hero when growing up? How did you try to imitate him or her?
58. Tell the group what's been happening in your life lately using the following categories... something old, something new, something happy, something blue.
59. If you could someday have a worldwide reputation for something, what would it be?
60. What is one of your biggest fears about the future?
61. Using a fruit or vegetable, how would you describe your life this week? (juicy melon, dried fig, etc.)
62. What do you like best about children?
63. Describe a grade school teacher that made a big impression on you (good or bad).
64. You have been given one hour with the president. What would you ask him? Tell him?
65. Break your life into three equal segments. What is the most significant event from each period?
66. What is something that you have from your childhood that you would never give up?
67. The most useless thing in my house is \_\_\_\_\_. Why is it still there?
68. The thing in my wallet that tells most about who I am is \_\_\_\_\_.
69. When you were a child, what was your favorite time of day? Day of the week? Time of year?
70. In general, people worry too much about \_\_\_\_\_.
71. In what area do you want to be taken more seriously?

## Accountability Questions

Here is one set of nearly two dozen questions which John Wesley gave to members of his discipleship groups more than 200 years ago. The questions may have their origin in the spiritual accountability group started by Wesley when he was a student at Oxford -- a group that detractors called "The Holy Club."

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, word, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not like other people?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?
23. What sins have I committed since the last meeting?
24. What temptations did I face but not give in to?
25. How was I delivered from those temptations? Where else did God give me help or victory to live as a Christian?
26. What have I thought or done which I was unsure as to whether it was sinful or not, or where I have been unclear as to God's will?

### **Questions from George Whitefield's group**

1. Are you sure you are a Christian? Are you sure God's Spirit lives in you? Is the Spirit shedding broad God's love in your heart? How clear is your witness? Are you enjoying it? Why or why not?
2. What Scriptures is God using in your life?
3. In what ways is God helping you overcome sinful habits? In what ways are you becoming aware of your sins and faults? How are you increasing in your understanding of them?
4. In what ways are you growing in love towards other people?
5. Which fruit of the Spirit are you growing in and which are you most lacking?
6. Are there certain promises and assurances in the Bible which are particularly precious to you right now?
7. Are you becoming aware of certain situations which are dangerous to you and create temptations?
8. Can you recognize the first motions of sin in the heart: pride, lust, carelessness, bitterness, envy, self-indulgence?

### **Questions to press issues home to the heart during small group time**

(taken from Bethlehem Baptist Church Shepherd's Training Manual)

1. How would what we are talking about affect you personally?
2. Have you ever struggled with this issue personally?
3. We are often abstract when discussing Scripture: how does this affect life daily?
4. How has God been working in your life lately?
5. Are there things you have been convicted about? How did the conviction come about? What steps have you taken to deal with those things?
6. What have you heard in the sermons recently that has been particularly convicting or comforting?
7. On what areas of obedience have you been working?
8. Where have you recently experienced God's kindness and love in your life?

## Small Group Curriculum Resources

**Topic:** Foundations

**Level:** Beginning

**Title:** Fundamentals of the Faith

**Author:** n/a

**Publisher:** Grace Community Church

**Description:** A basic introduction to some of the most foundational Christian beliefs, produced by the church of which John MacArthur is pastor.

**Length:** 13 lessons; 93 pages

**Series:** n/a

**Topic:** Foundations

**Level:** Beginning

**Title:** Growing Strong in God's Family

**Author:** Navigators

**Publisher:** NavPress

**Description:** (from the publisher) "This book is designed to help you build a strong foundation for your Christian life through enriching Bible study, Scripture memory, and group interaction. With its biblical and practical approach to discipleship, this workbook will yield long-term, life-changing results." Two additional titles in this series: *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family* (2) and *Bearing Fruit in God's Family* (3).

**Length:** 10 lessons; 160 pages

**Series:** The New 2:7 Series

**Topic:** Foundations

**Level:** Beginning

**Title:** Becoming a Disciple

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** (from the introduction) "This booklet is designed to take you through a simple process of examining the Bible for yourself, and carefully thinking through what it means to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is also designed to bring you to a point of commitment, of fully embracing the faith—the teachings of Jesus Christ."

**Length:** 6 sessions; 62 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:1, B:4

**Topic:** Christ

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Christ: Basic Christianity

**Author:** John Stott

**Publisher:** IVP

**Description:** (from publisher) “God himself is seeking you. Through his Son, Jesus Christ, God offers you his love. How can you know God's love? How can you trust Jesus? Six studies based on John Stott's *Basic Christianity* explore the life and character of this man who altered history forever. Discover him here for the first time; or meet him again in a new and deeper way.”

**Length:** 6 lessons; 59 pages

**Series:** Christian Basics Bible Studies

**Topic:** Christ

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** The Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

**Author:** The Navigators

**Publisher:** NavPress

**Description:** (from publisher) “As Christians, we're followers of Jesus Christ, but how much do we really know about our leader? This series of Bible studies covers the life of Christ—who He is, what He taught, things He did. It pulls together accounts of His life and ministry on earth from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and covers them in chronological order.” 4 titles in this series: *The Beginning* (1); *Challenging Tradition* (2); *The Messiah* (3); and *Following Jesus* (4).

**Length:** Varies by book

**Series:** Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

**Topic:** Salvation

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** This Great Salvation

**Author:** Mahaney, Boisvert

**Publisher:** Sovereign Grace

**Description:** (from publisher) “Are you more aware of your sin than of God's grace? Nothing conquers condemnation like the message of the Cross. New levels of grace and peace await you as *This Great Salvation* unfolds the wonder of Christ's finished work.”

**Length:** 6 lessons; 68 pages

**Series:** The Pursuit of Godliness

**Topic:** The Church

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Why Small Groups

**Author:** C.J. Mahaney (ed.)

**Publisher:** Sovereign Grace

**Description:** A solid introduction to the biblical foundations for fellowship in a small group. The book is written in an accessible and enjoyable style, and includes a variety of exercises, quotes, discussion questions, as well as recommended reading for further study.

**Length:** 6 chapters; 116 pages

**Series:** Pursuit of Godliness

**Topic:** The Church

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Catching the Vision

**Author:** Bryce Morgan

**Publisher:** Camelback Bible Church

**Description:** Provides an in-depth study of Camelback Bible's vision statement (*God-glorifying; Cross-centered; Life-transforming; Serving in our world as Christ served in His*) by exploring its biblical underpinnings and helping the participant apply these concepts to his or her life.

**Length:** 7 lessons; 68 pages

**Series:** n/a

**Topic:** The Church

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Belonging to a Family of Families

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** Introduces the local church as a family of families, challenging the participant to consider his or her own priorities in light of how this community functions and its overall purpose.

**Length:** 6 sessions, 62 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:1, B:2

**Topic:** The Church

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Participating in the Mission of the Church

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** Helps the participant identify Christ's plan for reaching the world through local churches and encourages the reader to consider how he or she can be involved in God's purposes for His people.

**Length:** 6 sessions; 62 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:1, B:3

**Topic:** Spiritual Disciplines

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Disciplines for Life

**Author:** Mahaney, Loftness

**Publisher:** Sovereign Grace

**Description:** Introduces the reader to the need for intimacy with God and some of the spiritual disciplines that help foster this and prepare us for His service. As with the other books from this series, written in an accessible and enjoyable style, and includes a variety of exercises, quotes, discussion questions, as well as recommended reading for further study.

**Length:** 8 lessons; 87 pages

**Series:** Pursuit of Godliness

**Topic:** Spiritual Disciplines

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Cultivating Habits of the Heart

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** Deals with disciplines of the Christian life for the individual, but moves on to challenge the participant in regard to their 'habits' in other areas such as family, church, and vocation.

**Length:** 6 sessions; 72 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:1, B:4

**Topic:** God's Nature

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Meeting God

**Author:** J.I. Packer

**Publisher:** IVP

**Description:** (from publisher) "His majesty will fill your thoughts. His love will soften your heart. His holiness will purify your life. When you meet God, you will be changed...J. I. Packer, author of the bestselling Christian classic, *Knowing God*, leads you through twelve key passages from the Old and New Testaments. These inductive Bible studies will engage your heart and mind. And enlarge your vision of the God you worship and serve. Features questions for starting group discussions and for personal reflection".

**Length:** 12 lessons; 77 pages

**Series:** LifeGuide Bible Study

**Topic:** Marriage / Family

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Enjoying Your Relationship

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** Focuses on God's design for the marriage relationship by confronting cultural ideas about relationships and challenging the reader to follow God's wisdom revealed in His word.

**Length:** 6 lessons; 68 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:2, B:1

**Topic:** Marriage / Family

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Passing on Your Beliefs

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** This booklet introduces the reader to the "first principles" of family life, especially the call to transmit our faith to our children through instruction, example, and as members of a community of faith.

**Length:** 6 lessons; 68 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:2, B:2

**Topic:** Marriage / Family

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Envisioning Fruitful Life Work

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD Internatioal

**Description:** Focuses on the role of work within family life by exploring the biblical concept of 'good works', a Christlike, Christ-inspired work ethic, and God's heart for each household.

**Length:** 6 lessons; 64 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:2, B:3

**Topic:** Marriage / Family

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Building for Future Generations

**Author:** Jeff Reed

**Publisher:** BILD International

**Description:** (from publisher) "This book is the fourth and final book of this series (Series 2, Book 4) which focuses on the first principles of the family life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. This series began with study of the first principles of marriage, then moved on to first principles of family life and of work, and now finishes with heritage issues, the most challenging of all." Built around the idea of investing in eternity in spite of the 'investment invitations' (literal and figurative) issued by the world.

**Length:** 6 lessons; 68 pages

**Series:** First Principles; S:2, B:4

**Topic:** The Christian Life

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** How Can I Change?

**Author:** Mahaney, Boisvert

**Publisher:** Sovereign Grace

**Description:** (from the foreword) "In a day when quick solutions to longstanding problems are too easily offered, we wish to recommend the old paths, having found them tried and true. There is no short course to Christian maturity. There is no crossless way to follow Christ, no instant secret to the Christian life. But like distance running, if the way of the cross is not easy, neither is it complicated." An introduction to practical sanctification.

**Length:** 7 lessons: 98 pages

**Series:** The Pursuit of Godliness

**Topic:** Book of the Bible

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Mac Arthus Bible Studies

**Author:** John Mac Arthus

**Publisher:** Word

**Description:** 10 titles currently available: 1 Samuel, Ruth & Esther, Daniel, Mark, John, Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1&2 Peter

**Length:** Varies by book

**Series:** Mac Arthus Bible Studies

**Topic:** Book of the Bible

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** John Stott Bible Studies

**Author:** John Stott

**Publisher:** IVP

**Description:** 8 titles currently available: The Beatitudes; Acts; Romans; Galatians; Ephesians; I & II Thessalonians; I Timothy & Titus; II Timothy.

**Length:** Varies by book

**Series:** John Stott Bible Studies

**Topic:** Book of the Bible

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Sermon on the Mount

**Author:** John Stott

**Publisher:** IVP

**Description:** (from publisher) "What does it mean to "seek first the kingdom of God" in our relationships, values, ambitions, finances and commitments? Jesus' answer to these questions amazed those who first heard the Sermon on the Mount. In this study guide, you'll dig deep into his startling and challenging message--the greatest sermon ever preached. This LifeGuide Bible Study features questions for starting group discussions and for meeting God in personal reflection."

**Length:** 12 lessons

**Series:** LifeGuide Bible Study

**Topic:** Counseling / Personal Ministry

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Helping Others Change

**Author:** Paul David Tripp

**Publisher:** Punch Press

**Description:** (from publisher) “This course provides a biblical, Christ-centered understanding of our calling as ambassadors of Christ in people’s lives. When I serve as Christ’s ambassador, I become useful to help others change and grow.”

**Length:** 12 lessons

**Series:** Transformation Series

**Topic:** The Gospel

**Level:** Beginning - Intermediate

**Title:** Gospel Christianity I: Gospel and Heart

**Author:** Tim Keller

**Publisher:** Redeemer Presbyterian Church

**Description:** (from publisher) “This is the first in a series of three ten-week studies designed as a stand-alone curriculum to be used by any group that wants to work through the discipleship core... Topics include: What is the Gospel?, What is wrong with us?, Why did Jesus die? and more.”

**Length:** 10 lessons

**Series:** Gospel Christianity

**Topic:** The Gospel

**Level:** Beginning - Intermediate

**Title:** Gospel Christianity II: Gospel and the World

**Author:** Tim Keller

**Publisher:** Redeemer Presbyterian Church

**Description:** (from publisher) “This is the second in a series of three ten-week studies designed as a stand-alone curriculum to be used by any group that wants to work through the discipleship core... Topics include: Community Building Practices: How do I relate to others? How do I relate to those who don’t believe?, How do I relate to money?, and Forgiveness: How do I relate to those who wrong me? and more.”

**Length:** 10 lessons

**Series:** Gospel Christianity

**Topic:** The Gospel

**Level:** Beginning - Intermediate

**Title:** Gospel Christianity III: Gospel and Community

**Author:** Tim Keller

**Publisher:** Redeemer Presbyterian Church

**Description:** (from publisher) “This is the third in a series of three ten-week studies designed as a stand-alone curriculum to be used by any group that wants to work through the discipleship core... Topics include: Gospel character, Love and Friendship, Self-control and Emotion, Patience and Suffering, Race and Embrace? and more.”

**Length:** 9 lessons

**Series:** Gospel Christianity

**Topic:** Evangelism

**Level:** Advanced

**Title:** Evangelism: Studies in the Book of Acts

**Author:** Tim Keller

**Publisher:** Redeemer Presbyterian Church

**Description:** (from publisher) “Teaching segments include: Preparing your life for evangelism; Presenting the Gospel, Persuading and Leading People to Faith, Strategies for Outreach.”

**Length:** 29 lessons

**Series:** n/a

**Topic:** Worldview

**Level:** Beginning - Intermediate

**Title:** The Truth Project (video series)

**Author:** Del Tackett

**Publisher:** Focus on the Family

**Description:** (from publisher) “The Truth Project is a DVD-based small group curriculum comprised of 12 one-hour lessons taught by Dr. Del Tackett. This home study is the starting point for looking at life from a biblical perspective. Each lesson discusses in great detail the relevance and importance of living the Christian worldview in daily life.”

**Length:** 12 lessons

**Series:** n/a