

SMALL GROUPS

LEADER TRAINING

AGENDA

Session One:

- Vision of Small Groups at Praise
- Small Group Ministry Organization
- Small Group Coaches' Role
- Small Group Leaders' Role
- How we do Small Groups
- The Art of Leading a Small Group

Session Two:

- Dealing with Tough Stuff
- Role Playing Scenarios

SESSION ONE

OUR VISION FOR SMALL GROUPS

The Vision for Small Groups ministry:

For everyone at Praise Church to be committed to a small group of people to help them Love God, Love People, and Make a Difference.

The Mission for Small Groups Ministry:

To provide a place where people can become more like Jesus (discipleship) through relationships.

Praise Church is a church of Small Groups rather than a church *with* Small Groups.

DISCIPLESHIP

LOVE GOD

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples" John 8:31

LOVE PEOPLE

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34-35

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.... By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. John 15:5 & 8

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

RELATIONSHIPS

*And they **devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and **distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need**. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47*

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

The leadership structure is in place to cast vision, give direction for the ministry, and walk alongside you as you lead your group. These relationships should help you lead well and provide you with a safe place to go when you need assistance with your group.

Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

Senior Pastor – Sets the vision to complete the mission of the Lord for our congregation

Small Groups Pastor – Implements vision and organization for Small Groups

Small Group Coach – Experienced Small Group leader encourages and offers advice to a few, individual Small Group leaders; each coach usually coaches 5 Small Group leaders

Small Group Leader – Creates an irresistible environment to love and encourage 10-16 Small Group members in their walk with Christ

Co-Leader – Assists you, the leader, in group activities, communication, and creating an irresistible environment; the goal is for a co-leader to grow to lead their own group

SMALL GROUP COACHES ROLE

Small Group Coaches are champions of Small Groups. Coaches are experienced leaders who love seeing people grow in Christ and flourish in serving. Specifically, we ask three things of coaches:

Connect: with you as fellow Christ followers.

Protect: you through prayer, understanding, and advice.

Grow: Share practical “how-to’s” and information on leading your group with love and joy. Your coach is a valuable resource available to you. They love helping where there is an opportunity.

SMALL GROUP LEADER’S ROLE

Small Group Leaders make Small Groups happen. Leaders exemplify Praise Church Core Values (Love God, Love People, Make a Difference) in a variety of ways. Using their gifts, Small Group Leaders provide an irresistible environment where others can become more like Jesus (discipleship) through relationships with others seeking to do the same. Small Group Leaders also develop and equip other group members to one day lead their own small group. Specifically, we ask four things of leaders:

Abide: *John 15: 4-5*

As a Small Group Leader, staying personally connected to the vine is your first priority. It is only through your connection with Jesus that you will be able to bear fruit as a Small Group Leader.

Meet: *Hebrews 10:24, Acts 2: 42-47*

As a Small Group Leader, one of your most important roles is to provide opportunities and encourage your group to meet often and consistently. Each meeting should consist of Fellowship, Study, Prayer, and Meeting Needs. We will share more on this later.

Serve: *Galatians 5:13-14, Romans 12:3-8, Matthew 22:39*

As a Small Group Leader, there are three areas of service to focus on. The first is serving your Small Group and providing opportunities for them to serve

each other. See the multitude of “one another” commandments from scripture below.

The second is leading those in your group to serve the church. The easiest way for them to start serving is by joining a Go Team.

The third area of service is outside of the church also known as outreach. As a Small Group Leader your role is coordinating with your group to participate in things like Praise Church Serve Days and Sunday Before Christmas.

Build: *Matthew 28: 19-20*

As a Small Group Leader, you get to create disciples who create disciples. Essentially you get to raise up Small Group Leaders who then go out and raise up Small Group Leaders. We call this Hero Making. There is no timeline for this process and many steps in between but is a key goal for every Small Group Leader. We will share more on this later.

HOW WE DO SMALL GROUPS

Our Approach to Small Groups

Small Groups have a single vision but not a single implementation. Most groups meet in person but some meet online. We have men’s groups, women’s groups, groups for older people, and groups for younger people. There are groups for parents, groups for couples, and some groups are mixed bags. Some groups meet early in the morning, and some meet in the evening. Some groups meet on weekends and others on weekdays. The point is to find people you can do life with and that fit with your flow of life, whatever that looks like, and build a group around that.

Assembling Your Group

Relationships are key to successful Small Groups. Who are people you already do life with? It may be appropriate to bring Christ into that group to grow together as followers of Jesus.

The best method of assembling a group is to **invite** people with whom you already have relationships. Think of friends, coworkers, or associates with whom you are connected and would love to grow with in Christ. These groups tend to have quick relational equity. Another good practice is to encourage the people in your group to invite people they know to join your group.

The second best method of gathering your group is through an **introduction**. Hanging out at the Small Groups kiosk in the Major building is an excellent way to meet people and for both of you to see if your group would be a good fit. One of the best things you can do is to hang out at the Small Group Kiosk during semester launch parties.

The least best method of gathering your group is through the **website**. We will list your group on our Small Groups page at praisechurch.tv. Prospective members will be able to see your group meeting times and email you directly for additional information and directions to your location. Please begin the irresistible environment by responding to e-mails quickly.

Small Group Schedule

Small Groups follow the Praise Church schedule of spring and fall semesters.

The first begins in mid-January and ends in early May. Small Groups break for June and July and then pick up again in August. Small Groups wrap up for the year in November, the week before Thanksgiving.

This schedule is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged to ensure our leaders are finding rest.

THE ART OF LEADING A SMALL GROUP

There are logistics of leading a Small Group, and then there is the art of leading a Small Group. No Small Group will be exactly the same, just like no two people, churches, or families are exactly the same. While we want every group to connect around Jesus and the vision of Praise Church, the rest of it isn't black and white. You will develop your own "art," and below are some tools to help you develop your leadership style.

Before You Meet

Be Connected: John 15: 4-5

As a Small Group Leader, you have been placed in a position of leadership and influence. The most important thing you can do as a leader is to stay connected to the vine. Your connection will be evident in your group discussion and hopefully encourage others to do the same.

“Your highest calling is not to build your ministry (or small group), it is to passionately love and follow Jesus. The greatest gift you give those you lead is your own, authentic walk with God.” – Lance Witt

Be Consistent: Hebrews 10:24, Acts 2: 42-47

As a leader, you have the opportunity to provide consistency and spiritual discipline to those in your group. Commit to meeting every session, even if only one person can show up. *Use wisdom* It is not wise to meet one on one with a member of the opposite sex. Always have a third person present to protect you and them.

Have your group meeting be as consistent as Sunday morning services. If you can't be there, find a place for your group to meet and someone to lead in your absence (see Hero Making below). Consistency is key to a healthy small group. Imagine what would happen to Praise Church if we canceled service if Reg got sick or if half the church texted and said they weren't able to make it that morning?

Be Prepared: 1 Corinthians 11:1

Lead by example. Always prepare any materials or questions ahead of time. Also, if there is “homework” or reading to be done between meetings, be the example by always having it done.

When You Meet

Irresistible environment

This will vary from group to group, but take some time and think about how to make your environment inviting. Could be as simple as lighting some candles or as complex as cooking a meal. Find what works best for you and your group.

Fellowship

Build into your schedule a relaxed time to talk and develop relationships with one another. This typically works best at the beginning of your group meeting so that people have time to reacquaint with one another, separate themselves from whatever they were dealing with before they arrived, and be present for the discussion.

Study/Discussion

This will be the core of your time together. Discussions often focus on Bible study (New Testament, the Gospels, or a specific book like Romans), Biblical principles (“Guardrails” by Andy Stanley, “Love and Respect” by Emerson Emmerich, etc.), or stage of life topics from a biblical perspective (couples,

parenting, men, women). See the Leader Resources page for curriculum ideas.

Please note that there are a few topics of discussion that are best avoided. They include:

Business opportunities or endeavors / Political discussions / Controversial topics (...vegan diets are morally superior, masking/vaccinations...) / Fundraising.....

Our goal is to unite over Christ, so we avoid things that can divide. In short, let us follow Hebrews 12:14, "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy..."

We will walk through Small Group Leader Best Practices below and discuss tips to facilitate great discussion.

Share and Prayer

Provide opportunities for group members to share what Jesus is doing in their lives, a scripture, or what they have learned from their private study. This part is what differentiates a Small Group from a social club. It helps set an expectation of spiritual growth.

At the beginning and/or end of each meeting, take prayer requests and spend time praying for one another. This provides group members an opportunity to care for one another, find opportunities to meet needs (you or someone else in your group may be the answer to prayer), and remind each other to rely on God for all things.

Small Group Leader Best Practices

Be Selfless

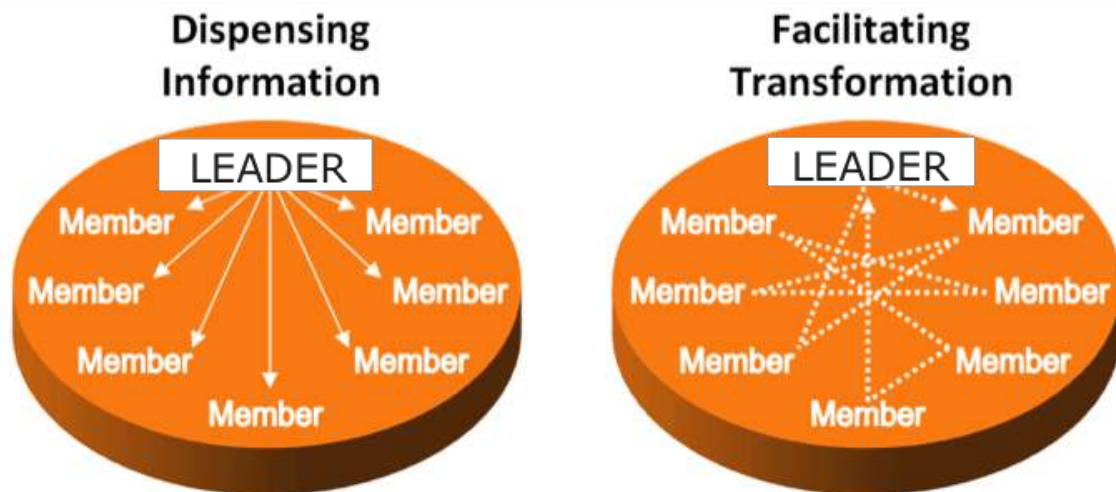
Serve by meeting one-on-one when you can with your group members. Accept that a marker of success is when your group members are meeting together with each other and perhaps without you. Be okay with letting others shine.

Curriculum

Deciding which study to do can feel a bit overwhelming. To help you with this process we have created a Leader Resources page on our website to streamline this process. See QR code in the appendix.

For all first-time groups, we recommend 40 Days of Purpose as your first study. See QR code for that study in the appendix.

Group Discussion Dynamics



Discussion thrives on interaction. To get that interaction, **ask GOOD questions** and you will **get GREAT conversation**.

Above are two diagrams of a group. The Image on the left is something like a college lecture, and the right is a great discussion with friends. Great conversations look like the diagram on the right! We advocate the **30/70 Rule**: We (leaders) want to speak no more than 30% of the time and the group should speak 70%.

How, What, and Why questions are best for stimulating discussion. Yes or No questions tend to shut down discussion.

When you ask a question, be patient. Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question. If silence doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else.

After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple "thanks" or "great answer." Then ask, "How about somebody else?"

The more you lead, the easier it will be. We believe in you, and we are thankful that you are taking on the opportunity to be a Small Group leader.

Next Steps

We believe that everyone in a Small Group has a next step in their faith journey. As the Small Group Leader, we ask that you encourage the people in your group to take that next step whatever it may be.

Examples of next steps include but are not limited to:

- Sharing in group
- Praying out loud
- Reading scripture out loud
- Leading the discussion
- Getting baptized
- Joining a Go Team (serve team)
- Spending time with God daily
- Memorizing scripture (you could do this as a group)
- Participating in serve day
- Leading their own group (see Hero Making)

Invite others to your Small Group

This is a way to live out the vision of Small Groups at Praise Church. Grow your group by continually seeking out people who are not currently in a Small Group to join yours. Sometimes people simply need to be asked to join before they take the next step.

Be knowledgeable about other Small Groups

Your group won't be the right fit for everyone. Familiarizing yourself with what other Small Group options are offered is a great way to equip yourself to help others find the right group to join. Remember we are all in this together.

Grow in Leadership

Become a student of leadership. Consume books, sermons, podcasts, and other resources on the art of leading well. Seek out a mentor.

HERO MAKING

Build: *Matthew 28: 19-20*

The Great Commission instructs us to make disciples. Those disciples are then commissioned to make disciples and so on and so on. At Praise Church, Small Group is our primary way of making disciples. One of our goals with small groups is to disciple people who disciple people. As a Small Group Leader, we are commissioning you to raise up new Small Group Leaders who will start new groups, disciple people, raise up new leaders, and send them out to do the same. We call this the Hero Making process. If we do this well as a church, not only will we have enough room for everyone who calls Praise Church home to be in a small group, but we will multiply our ability to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and help people to become more like him.

ICNU Conversation:

The initial step in the Hero Making process is to identify someone in your group that you believe has the potential to be a Small Group Leader. The key word is potential. Next, you would want to have an ICNU Conversation. This is a conversation where you would tell the person “I see this in you.” Then you would ask them if they would be willing to be your apprentice or step into a co-leader role. Once they agree, you can begin the Hero Making process.

Step 1: I do, you watch, we talk.

Step 2: I do, you help, we talk.

Step 3: You do, I help, we talk.

Step 4: You do, I watch, we talk.

Step 5: You do, someone else watches.

Hero Making process is adapted from the Hero Maker Book by Dave Ferguson & Warren Bird.

SESSION TWO

ROLE PLAYING

SG Role Playing - OPTION 1

Jesus offers you His gift of a right relationship with God. **Romans 3:21-28**

Question #1 - What makes the simple phrase “But now” a game changer?
v.21 “But now...,” signaled a sudden change. What happened?

Question #2 - What would the world be like if God had made salvation humanly attainable? No human has the power to put things right again. God’s way is to move beyond repair; He provides a new birth. This new birth comes by faith, by throwing oneself solely on the grace and mercy of God.

Question #3 - How would you best explain God’s grace to someone?

SG Role Playing - OPTION 2

Question #1 - When is it appropriate to use the word love?

Love everyone unconditionally. **Matthew 5:43-48**

Question #2 - What are some practical ways to love those we don’t like?

Question #3 - When has prayer changed your attitude and actions toward someone difficult to love?

Question #4 - What do we risk when we embrace Jesus’ definition of love?

Question #5 - What are some opportunities we have to express unconditional love?

SG Role Playing - OPTION 3

Question #1 - What’s the wisest advice you’ve ever embraced or ignored?

Proverbs **2:1-6; 3:5-7**

- God wants to impart his wisdom to us, for us to seek His wisdom. How do we do that?

- Ask the right person (**Prov. 2:6**)
- Have the right attitude (**Prov. 2:2**)
- Use the right tools (**Prov. 2:3-4**)

Question #2 - Where in our culture do people look for wisdom?

Question #3 - How do we recognize wisdom?

Question #4 - How do you navigate the tension between trusting God's wisdom and trusting your own competence?

APPENDIX

RESOURCE LINKS

SG Resource Page



Pastoral Care Resource



Right Now Media



Purpose Driven Life



ONE ANOTHER COMMANDS

- “...Be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50)
- “...Wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)
- “...Love one another...” (John 13:34)
- “...Love one another...” (John 13:34)
- “...Love one another...” (John 13:35)
- “...Love one another...” (John 15:12)
- “...Love one another” (John 15:17)
- “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...” (Romans 12:10)
- “...Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
- “Live in harmony with one another...” (Romans 12:16)
- “...Love one another...” (Romans 13:8)

- "...Stop passing judgment on one another." (Romans 14:13)
- "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7)
- "...Instruct one another." (Romans 15:14)
- "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Romans 16:16)
- "...When you come together to eat, wait for each other." (I Cor. 11:33)
- "...Have equal concern for each other." (I Corinthians 12:25)
- "...Greet one another with a holy kiss." (I Corinthians 16:20)
- "Greet one another with a holy kiss." (II Corinthians 13:12)
- "...Serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)
- "If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other." (Galatians 5:15)
- "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." (Gal 5:26)
- "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2)
- "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)
- "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32)
- "...Forgiving each other..." (Ephesians 4:32)
- "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Ephesians 5:19)
- "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21)
- "...In humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)
- "Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:9)
- "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13)
- "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another." (Col 3:13)

- “Teach...[one another]” (Colossians 3:16) a
- “...Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
- “...Make your love increase and overflow for each other.” (I Thessalonians 3:12)
- “...Love each other.” (I Thessalonians 4:9)
- “...Encourage each other...” (I Thessalonians 4:18)
- “...Encourage each other...” I Thessalonians 5:11)
- “...Build each other up...” (I Thessalonians 5:11)
- “Encourage one another daily...” Hebrews 3:13)
- “...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24)
- “...Encourage one another.” (Hebrews 10:25)
- “...Do not slander one another.” (James 4:11)
- “Don’t grumble against each other...” (James 5:9)
- “Confess your sins to each other...” (James 5:16)
- “...Pray for each other.” (James 5:16)
- “...Love one another deeply, from the heart.” (I Peter 3:8)
- “...Live in harmony with one another...” (I Peter 3:8)
- “...Love each other deeply...” (I Peter 4:8)
- “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (I Peter 4:9)
- “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...” (I Pet 4:10)
- “...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...” (I Peter 5:5)
- “Greet one another with a kiss of love.” (I Peter 5:14)
- “...Love one another.” (I John 3:11)

- "...Love one another." (I John 3:23)
- "...Love one another." (I John 4:7)
- "...Love one another." (I John 4:11)
- "...Love one another." (I John 4:12)
- "...Love one another." (II John 5)