



NEW VISION

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE



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WHY GROUPS AT NEW VISION?

Small Groups are one of the most effective ways for us to live out the mission of New Vision individually and collectively as we are called to guide people into lives of gospel transformation.

Small Groups are to be one of the most effective places for us to live out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Furthermore, along with centering our lives around God's Word, groups create opportunities for personal accountability and building lifelong friendships as we grow in our relationship with Christ. It's the single best way for people to give and receive ministry and to feel "connected" to their church.

GROUP STRATEGY

We believe that groups support the church's overall discipleship process. Therefore, in any group someone is experiencing a path to growth that goes beyond the worship experience.

WE FOLLOW A 3 STEP DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS.

- » **CONNECT:** Small groups exist to build Relationships. (Acts 2:44-45)
- » **SERVE:** Small groups exist to use our gifts & grow. (Acts 2:44-45)
- » **GO:** Small groups exist to love others as we share the gospel & multiply. (Matthew 22:39-40)

WHAT DO SMALL GROUPS DO?

We have measures that help us to know how our life is to look in following the Lord. The same is true for our small groups as we seek to demonstrate these measures as a collective group.

- » **We make connections:** Who is far from God but close to me? (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Colossians 4:2-6; Matthew 28:18-20)
- » **We reinforce discipleship:** When am I turning the pages? (2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:41-48; 19:7-14)
- » **We value prayer:** Where is prayer leading me? (Matthew 7:7-11; Philippians 4:5-7; Psalm 73:23-26)
- » **We share in ministry:** Who are my refrigerator friends? (Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 10:24-25)
- » **We find ways to serve:** Is my yes on the table? (Luke 9:23-25; John 12:25-26; Isaiah 6:1-8)
- » **We live to invest:** How am I leveraging earthly resources for eternal transformation? (Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; 1 Corinthians 12)

WHAT DO SMALL GROUPS LOOK LIKE?

Small Groups are a place for:

- » Biblical community not a place for disunity
- » Gospel conversations not a place for gossip
- » Spiritual growth not a place for stumbling blocks (alcohol or things that can cause failure)
- » Transparency not a place for distrust

WHAT ARE THE FIVE COMMITMENTS OF EVERY SMALL GROUP LEADER?

- » Have a personal, growing relationship with Jesus
- » Recognize the Bible as the source of authority in our lives
- » Be a member of New Vision
- » Walk alongside others that recognize their own need for community
- » Seek to connect with people that desire to grow as well

HOW DO WE PROVIDE ON-GOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT?

- » **Zoom Meetings:** We provide meetings for group leaders on Zoom.
- » **Video Training:** We provide various avenues for engagement including Right Now Media
- » **On-Side Training:** We provide opportunities four times a year
- » **Mentorship:** One of the best ways that you can learn by watching group leaders and learning from them.

YOUR ROLE AS A SMALL GROUP LEADER:

The primary role of a Small Group Leader is to help group members move one step forward in their walk with God (Proverbs 27:23).

Remember: People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take.

HERE ARE SOME NEXT STEPS YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE TAKE:

- » Profess Christ
- » Start attending worship services
- » Start reading the Bible regularly
- » Start praying regularly
- » Get baptized
- » Begin to serve on a ministry team
- » Start giving or tithing
- » Go on a mission trip
- » Start a new group

When people take next steps in their walk with Christ, we can know that we are making an eternal impact in body of Christ.

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP LEADER:

- » Pray daily for the members of your group.
- » Enlist a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
- » Connect with group members outside of weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face.
- » Have fun through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.

HOW TO FACILITATE A SMALL GROUP?

BE PREPARED TO PREPARE

- » **1. PERSONALLY:**
 - » Make sure that you've spent time thinking and praying about what you'll be discussing.
 - » Spend time in prayer for the people you'll be leading.
- » **2. AS A LEADER:**
 - » Be very familiar with the lesson.
 - » Think through important questions and transitions ahead of time.
 - » Don't depend on your notes, but use them to stay on track.
 - » If you need to look at your notes do it before the next question so you can make eye contact when asking the questions.

THE DISCUSSION TO DISCUSS

- » **1. TRY TO AVOID ASKING YES/NO QUESTIONS.**
- » **2. LEAD A DISCUSSION — DON'T PREACH.**
 - » Allow them to discover the truth for themselves, guiding them as necessary.
 - » When a person has a question, give other people the opportunity to answer it before you jump in with a theological response but be prepared to clarify their responses.

BASIC DO'S OF FACILITATING

- » Create a positive environment
- » Stay on topic
- » Stay on time
- » Encourage participation

BASIC DON'TS OF FACILITATING

- » **DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE**
Let the people in your group sit for a moment and think. Silence isn't always a bad thing.
- » **DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU MUST KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS**
We are human, and it's good for the people in your group to see that you are limited. You are, but most people don't think so.
- » **DON'T READ QUESTIONS WORD-FOR-WORD OFF THE DISCUSSION GUIDE**
Understand the questions and be prepared to ask them in your own terms. Feel free to generate your own questions during your preparation and even on the spot
- » **DON'T TALK MORE THAN THE PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP**
Ask questions to generate discussion. Ask people to explain their answers and go into more depth. Allow multiple students to respond even if the first person gets the "right answer".
- » **DON'T BE AFRAID IF PEOPLE HAVE QUESTIONS**
Encourage them to deal with the material on their own terms. Create a climate where people feel the freedom to ask questions.

WHO CAN COME TO A SMALL GROUP?

ANYONE! DO WHAT YOU CAN TO RECRUIT/INVITE GROUP MEMBERS.

Examples:

- » Social Media
- » Personal Invitations

Remember that we want your small group to be a light wherever it is placed. If you are in a neighborhood, at work, or at the ballfield, make an impact wherever you are!

HOW DO WE HANDLE CHILDCARE NEEDS IN OUR GROUP?

Work together as a group to find what options best suit your needs. **A few options to consider:**

- » **OPTION 1:** Have the group meet in the living room/ dining room and the children meet in a separate room. This keeps the kids close by, but also provides some privacy for those in the group during discussions.
- » **OPTION 2:** Select a home that is in a central location for those in the group, and pool finances to hire a babysitter to stay with the children. At the end of the night, the parents are free to go pick their kids up at the agreed upon time.
- » **OPTION 3:** The church offers child care reimbursement. Simply fill out our online form at **NewVisionLife.com/Forms**.

If you find an option that works for your group that is not listed above, go for it! The key is communication. As long as everyone feels comfortable and can agree, the group can be successful.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I ENCOUNTER THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF PERSONALITIES IN MY GROUP?

DOMINATORS

DEFINITION: They have an answer for every question and every answer seems to go on forever. Dominators are usually very knowledgeable and kind-hearted. They just don't always have the social skills needed to help you keep things on track. Some dominators are able to talk for a long time. You need to have the courage to help the dominator wrap things up. One of the best methods is to simply finish the dominator's thoughts for him or her then quickly allow someone else to speak.

- » **WHAT A SMALL GROUP LEADER CAN DO:** The secret to dealing with dominators is to remember that the group is usually desperate for the facilitator to do something. You should begin by working to draw others out. Look for a quick breath, no matter how short, to jump in and allow others to contribute. Dominators aren't the enemy. In fact, dominators will bring profound points to the conversation. Turn dominators into allies by talking to them after the get-together. Compliment the dominator's quick thinking and openness, explain the goals for drawing everyone into the discussion, and ask the dominator to help draw out everyone during future discussions.

HIDERS

DEFINITION: are easy to ignore because they never bother the other group members. In fact, they seem to be quite good at being ignored and missed. Hiders work best with facilitators who are very direct and very gentle at the same time.

- » **WHAT A SMALL GROUP LEADER CAN DO:** Try to understand their silence but build relationships with Hiders so that they can keep understanding that the group is a safe place. They have had prior experiences with groups or people where they have been burnt for transparency. Keep seeking to build trust with the person and group by how you discuss things after the group time meets.

PROBLEM SOLVERS

DEFINITION: have a tough time seeing others in pain or confusion. With great intentions, the problem solver tries to fix other group members, often offering pat answers and solutions. Remind your group that each friend is in the process of discovery and needs time to work out his or her questions.

- » **WHAT A SMALL GROUP LEADER CAN DO:** If a problem solver gives a pat answer that's received as judgmental or insensitive by a group member, don't panic. Quickly respond by showing empathy for the person with the problem or question. You might say, "I'm sorry you're going through that. Keep sharing and struggling forward. We'll do our best to support you along the way." If a problem solver doesn't seem to catch your hints and redirection, talk to him or her after a get-together. Tell the problem solver that you appreciate his or her wisdom. Then remind the problem solver that you want everyone to have the freedom to talk, discover, and even struggle through things.

GOALS OF THE FIRST MEETING

HERE ARE SOME GOALS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR FIRST GROUP MEETING.

- » Meet new members or rekindle relationships
- » Clarify your groups direction and expectations
- » Briefly discuss the study topic
- » Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FIRST MEETING:

- » Snacks and dessert plans (use the snack ideas card)
- » Name tags (for the first few meetings)
- » Contact your group in advance
 - » When contacting....
 - » Welcome them to the group
 - » Let them know you are looking forward to meeting them
 - » Inform them of the location and time of your meeting

GOALS OF THE FIRST MEETING

THREE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF YOUR EVENING

1

Welcome, mingle and talk while you eat.

Leadership tip – Studies show that the first 7 seconds a person spends in a room can make or break their experience.

2

Think through the timing of your discussion group.

Leadership tip – Respect your group's time. Give a 5 minute warning when your group will start and end. Make sure to end on time.

3

Know that your “dessert” conversations are just as important as your meeting discussions.

Leadership tip – Never underestimate the significance of the time after the social gathering time. It is key to connect and find out more about your people.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

- » 10 minutes in fellowship
- » 10 minutes in announcements and prayer requests
- » Spend 30 minutes in Biblical discussion (use an icebreaker idea)
- » 10 minutes in prayer
- » Use the remainder of your time for fellowship and discussion

ICE BREAKER IDEAS

M&MS GAME

Pass a bag of M&Ms around and tell everyone to take a few. Then, before they eat them, ask them to share something for every M&M. You have a copy of this game in your new host small group box!

BEST/WORST

Have each person share their best and worst moments from the previous week. This icebreaker is an easy one to use at first and gives you good feedback concerning their life at the moment. Some veteran groups do this several times a year... the answers become more honest as you go.

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Have each person make three statements about themselves: two true statements and one lie. For example, "I've never broken a bone. I have 5 sisters. I was born in Yugoslavia." The group tries to guess which statement is the lie.

DESERTED ISLAND

Ask, "You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. You are told you may take three things you want, apart from the essentials. What would you take and why?"

SNACK IDEAS

POPCORN BAR - Everyone brings a different premade/ gourmet flavored popcorn. You can add M&Ms, nuts, gummies, marshmallows, or anything else that might be great with popcorn including a cold soda!

ICE CREAM SUNDAE BAR - The host or another group member can provide ice cream and everyone else bring a topping.

APPETIZER NIGHT - This is an easy one! Everyone brings their favorite appetizer (enough to feed the group).

TRAIL MIX BAR - Everyone brings a trail mix ingredient, the host provides the bowls or Ziploc baggies, and everyone makes their own trail mix.

CHIP & DIP BAR - Simple, right? A few members bring chips, some bring dips, and some bring soda-done!

CONNECT IDEAS

- » Offer everyone a sense of belonging
- » Greet members as they walk in the door
- » Make eye contact with your members
- » Before group begin conversations and make small talk
- » Offer appropriate refreshments and drinks
- » Make everyone feel accepted and respected
- » Begin group with prayer
- » Welcome everyone's participation
- » Start and end on time

DISCIPLESHIP IDEAS

- » Get into God's Word together
- » Encourage and demonstrate transparency
- » Build relationships
- » Share your story
- » Listen to other's stories
- » Ask questions
- » Pray together and pray for one another

PRAYER IDEAS

ONE SENTENCE PRAYER - Everyone goes around and shares a prayer that's only one or two sentences.

SPOUSES PRAYER - In a couples group, have spouses pray for each other, or wives pray together and husbands pray together.

PRAISE PRAYER - Each group member says something about what God has done for them that day/week.

TOPICAL PRAYER - Pray for the church, a country, a family in need, specific events or any area for which your group has a passion.

INDEX PRAYER - To cut down on the time your group spends talking about prayer requests, give everyone or each couple a 3 X 5 index card to write down prayer requests for the week & have them exchange cards with another member of the group.

PRAYERS BY EMAIL - Requests are written down during the groups meeting and one person is designated to email them out to the group.

MINISTRY IDEAS

CHOOSE ONE IDEA A WEEK.

- » A Phone Call » An Email
- » A Text Message » A Card

Here are a few ideas to help you care for your small group members! The best way to care, is a simple phone call. When you choose to send a card, keep in mind the church has cards & will cover postage, just drop the cards off in the main office to be mailed.

In all the options above, you can discuss prayer requests, congratulate them on a birthday, anniversary, or simply to say hi and strengthen your connection.

It's also suggested to have a simple plan to provide care for members during their time of crisis. Have a way to communicate with all group members, this could be as easy as a group text, so that meals, childcare, and/or support can be organized quickly.

SERVICE IDEAS

We encourage every small group at to build community with one another by serving locally as a group.

HOW CAN YOUR SMALL GROUP BECOME MOBILIZED TO SERVE?

- » Enlist a “Serve Champion” that can bring ideas and opportunities to the group.
- » Connect to our website: **NewVisionLife.com/Missions**. Local, national, and international opportunities are available with contacts for your group.
- » Listen for Mission Partner Serving opportunities. During the year we have focused times where the church comes together to make an impact in our community. There are many service opportunities provided on this day that your group can participate in.
- » Build community. We are never more like Christ than when we seek to be His hands and feet. We also grow the closest together in community when we serve with a united heart. As you lead your small group to be on mission for Christ, let it be a time when relationships grow as well.

INVEST IDEAS

We encourage every small group to find a way that they can invest in others. This can be not only in how we serve but also how we give of our resources to be used for the glory of God.

- » Find a ministry during the holidays that you can give towards as a group.
- » Find a family that you can help in your neighborhood.
- » Ask the church about benevolence needs.
- » Have a kit of basic items that you can give out to the homeless you encounter.
- » Spend time with your families in fellowship.

LEADER CURRICULUM RESOURCES

1. Visit NewVisionLife.com/GroupResources & scroll to the “Find Your Next Study” section for a list of approved resources available through our curriculum library.
2. **Right Now Media Access** - To request access to the online video curriculum, please send an email request to Curriculum@NewVisionLife.com. You will receive an email invitation with a link allowing you to set up your user login. Please be sure to check your spam folder for the email if you haven't received it within 24-48 hrs.
3. **Sermon Series Leader Guides** - Here's how to print your leader guide. Go to NewVisionLife.com/Leaders > scroll to your sermon date > click on it to print. Leader guides are usually on the website and available to print after 6pm on Thursdays.
4. **Email Curriculum@NewVisionLife.com** - For available DVD studies.

SMALL GROUP HOST FAQ'S

1. **What do I do when I need help?** Email SmallGroups@NewVisionLife.com.
2. **How often should my small group meet?** Weekly.
3. **How long should the group meeting last?** A typical group meeting is 1 ½ to 2 hours. Remember it is important that the group end at the agreed time, and that enough time is left in the group meeting for sharing and prayer.
4. **How do I turn in attendance for my group?** You will receive an email each week, asking you to report attendance for your group. This is very important; attendance numbers are used to verify member care. If you do not receive the weekly email please email Attendance@NewVisionLife.com.
5. **What if someone needs counseling in a life issue?** Our Care Ministry is a great way to begin to assess, work through, and resolve issues in our lives that keep us from the abundant life God has planned for us. **Please email CareMinistry@NewVisionLife.com for further assistance.**

ATTENDANCE QUICK GUIDE

We ask all groups to submit their attendance each time your group meets.

TO SUBMIT YOUR ATTENDANCE:

- » You will receive a text with a link to record attendance
- » Click the link
- » Select Either “Record Attendance” or “Did Not Meet”
- » If you select “Did Not Meet”, just exit the application
- » If you select “Record Attendance”, put a check in the box next to those who were in attendance for that meeting, then exit the application
- » *Note: Attendance is recorded in real time by checking the box next to the attendee’s name. There is no “Save” or “Submit” button to click*

If you need to add or remove someone from your group, please email David.Sieber@newvisionlife.com.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

The “One Verse Evangelism” card is a simple, straight forward way to share your faith any time, any place, with anyone, using only one verse.

<https://youtu.be/9rCB-DBgOmo>



