

all about **small groups**

why **small groups**?

Small groups are a great tool to help others grow. They give students opportunities to invite friends to a neutral place and introduce them to Jesus Christ. Today's students need a safe place where they can connect with each other and with God. College is time when students, for the first time, are free to think on their own, to question their belief systems, to develop their own identity and to develop personal convictions.

Small groups are a biblical method. This is clearly seen in the book of Acts - the record of the growth and expansion of the early Church.

Acts 2:42-47 And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,

they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 20:20 ...how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

benefits of a **small group**

1. It is a place where non-Christian students can ask questions about the Bible, God, and spiritual truth.

2. New people are easily brought in. A chair or space is always left empty so that there is always room for one more.

3. The group can be coed or divided into men's and women's groups.

4. It provides a context where witnessing and prayer for the lost is encouraged.

5. Friendships will be developed as people grapple with issues together and have social activities.

6. New leaders within the group can surface and be developed.

7. Biblical truth and principles can be taught and brought to life.

8. Spiritual growth will occur as younger believers are mixed with mature believers. One-to-one follow-up and discipling times can be arranged.

small group

how to start a small group

ideas on starting a small group

1. We try to apply 2 Timothy 2:2 in our ministries. “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” One of the applications from this verse is the principle of raising up a replacement. We always encourage those who minister to others to have an apprentice to whom they are passing on their vision, heart and skills.

2. Every group needs a leader and an apprentice. Qualities to look for are: he/she is committed to put into practice what they will learn; faithfulness; consistent spiritual growth; a teachable spirit. Let your apprentice lead the group from time to time.

3. Get together with your apprentice and one or two from the group, to meet one-to-one for special training in the basics.

4. Personally invite people to come to the meeting. Recruit those whom you feel would be most receptive. Decide beforehand the purpose of the group. Is it for the purposes of evangelism or discipling?. That will determine who you recruit and what you do.

5. Encourage each person to pray for and look for two others they can recruit to be part of the group.

6. Keep the atmosphere friendly and informal. Be creative. Find a comfortable place where you can meet. Use the same place every time so that no one will forget where you are meeting this week.

7. Choose a consistent time to meet. The same time, same day, same place will help your members be consistent.

8. Always leave an empty chair so that there is always room for one more. Welcome new people into the group. Make them feel as much a part as they want to. Remember, don't put new members in an embarrassing situation.

9. Always pray and prepare for leading the meeting. Don't do things off the cuff. Jesus always “did things well”.

10. When the group grows to a consistent 10-15 people it is time to begin a new group. Let your apprentice lead one group while you lead the other. When your group divides, your apprentice and you need to find another apprentice.

mistakes to avoid small group

twelve mistakes to avoid in organizing a small group

- 1. Staring without a plan of where you want the group to go. Is it evangelistic or is it discipling in focus? Remember, your small group is a means to an end, not just an end.**
- 2. Talking too much. You are heading for trouble if you or your apprentice does all of the talking when you meet as a group.**
- 3. Being too stiff and formal.**
- 4. Not leaving a space for a new person to walk in - no empty chair communicates its a closed group.**
- 5. Not having an atmosphere of openness and acceptance - embarrassing those who give wrong answers.**
- 6. Focusing on the group and on goals rather than on relationships. Ministry is relationship.**
- 7. Failing as a group to engage with non-Christian students.**
- 8. A leader with no apprentice.**
- 9. A leader who does not set the pace for the rest of the group.**
- 10. Failing to pray for the group before and during the meetings.**
- 11. Depending on your own strength rather than leaving the results to God.**
- 12. Inadequate preparation for leading the meetings.**