

STARTER KIT

FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS





HIGHEST PRAISE APOSTOLIC CHURCH
SMALL GROUPS

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WELCOME TO YOUR SMALL GROUP

Each Small Group is designed and equipped to fulfill the purpose that God has given each one of us as believers: to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

The **VISION** of HPAC is to be a distinctly apostolic, multicultural, and multigenerational church that passionately loves God and loves people.

We fulfill this vision through our **PURPOSE**, which has four key components:

1. **Connect** – by attending our Sunday Celebration Services
2. **Grow** – by attending a weekly Small Groups
3. **Serve** – by joining the Dream Team
4. **Share** – by inviting others to Connect, Grow, and Serve.

Small Groups is deeply woven into the fabric of our **PURPOSE** by helping us focus on Growth and Sharing with others. This is the DNA of our church.

We believe life change happens in the context of relationships. Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Small Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to our church members. We do not want to be just a friendly church – we want to have friends at church. Today's generation of church-goers will open up to the Gospel more readily, when there is a foundation of friendship. That is our goal with Small Groups.

LEADING a Small Group will help you grow in your relationship with Christ.

LEADING a Small Group will help you grow in your relationships with others.

LEADING a Small Group will help you to help *others* grow in their relationship with Christ.

Highest Praise is a church of Small Groups – not a church with Small Groups. In other words, Small Groups is not just another ministry in the church. It makes up who we are as a church. Most everything we do as a church, flows through Small Groups.

To be a Small Group Leader, you do not have to be perfect or the most qualified – you just have to be **committed**. Committed to love God. Committed to love people.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Becoming a Small Group Leader can be intimidating, especially if it is your first time leading a group. Our goal is to help you and support you in this role and give you the tools you need to be a successful Small Group Leader.

As a church, we believe in you.

We **BELIEVE** that your **PASSION** and **LOVE** for others will make an impact on people's lives.

We **BELIEVE** that you will **THRIVE** in this role and that you will **GROW** in your leadership.

We **BELIEVE** that you will make a **DIFFERENCE** in someone's **LIFE**, that will last for eternity.

We **BELIEVE** that you are **CALLED** to **SERVE OTHERS**.

We are excited to have someone like you on our Small Group Leadership Team to work together with us to introduce others to Christ and to spread His love.

We are here for you as you move forward and grow in your leadership. We are committed to equip you, encourage you, and empower you to be used by God to your fullest capacity.

Congratulations on committing to fulfill your purpose in Christ! We are here to be part of your journey. This is just the beginning.

- HIGHEST PRAISE APOSTOLIC CHURCH



How To Use The Small Groups STARTERKIT

SMALL GROUP ESSENTIALS

This section is designed to give you an overview of the Small Groups format that we practice at HPAC. In this section you will receive essential information about the structure of our groups and how your role is vital to the success of Small Groups.

MEETING ELEMENTS

Use this section as a checklist for preparing to begin your Small Group meetings. When you begin hosting, or facilitating, your Small Group this section can be used as a guide to help you remember every aspect of running a successful meeting.

SESSION FORMAT

This is the heart of your Small Group meeting. While every Small Group is different, following the Lesson Guide will help you have insightful instruction and engaging conversations at every meeting. The Lesson Guide serves as a *guide only*. Meaning, the goal of each leader should be to learn to facilitate a lesson with their own rhythm and style in order to make a genuine, effective delivery. It is important to have liberty and apply fresh ideas to your group.

WHAT'S NEXT?

This section provides you with follow-up resources that will help you continue to grow and move forward in your leadership of a Small Group.





SMALL GROUP
ESSENTIALS

- WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAD -

1. Objectives
2. Model
3. Group Structure
4. Cycles
5. Spiritual Preparation
6. Friends Day
7. Leadership Structure
8. Multiply Your Leadership
9. Empowering Others to Lead
10. Successful Leaders



OBJECTIVES

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

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” – Acts 5:42 (NIV)

By following this model, Small Groups exist to facilitate three primary objectives: 1) Evangelism; 2) Building Community; 3) Multiplication.



EVANGELISM – We believe that the most effective way to share the Gospel is through the development of friendships. Small Groups is the way for this to happen. Therefore, the main objective of Small Groups is to bring new people into our community in order to help them receive salvation. Additionally, we are not interested in only making believers, but making disciples.

BUILDING COMMUNITY – While gathering for corporate worship on Sundays is essential, it is difficult to form meaningful relationships in a crowd. Small Groups provides the environment where meaningful relationships are developed. By focusing on developing meaningful relationships with each other, and those whom we invite, we will build a strong church community.

MULTIPLICATION – At Highest Praise we believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time. In order to facilitate continued growth, every Small Group should produce new Small Groups. This multiplication will enable evangelism and the building of community to continue.



MODEL

We recognize the need to have various types of Small Groups, with different focuses, based upon age groups and spiritual needs. In order to meet these varying needs, we have adapted a **HYBRID MODEL**.

The **HYBRID MODEL** consists of two categories of groups: 1) **CORE** Groups; 2) **INTEREST** Groups:

1. **CORE Groups** - These groups are bible study, curriculum-based groups that are specially designed to reach the needs of the demographics of that specific group. Our Core Groups include:
 - **JUNIORS** – This group is designed for kids between the ages of 10 to 13 years of age and is led by our Juniors Directors.
 - **ONE MOP YOUTH** – These groups are designed for youth between the ages of 14-25 that meet in various homes/locations throughout the week.
 - **LADIES GROUPS** – These groups are designed for adult ladies who are looking for a place to connect spiritually with other ladies. Topics of discussion in this group center around practical and spiritual topics that women deal with regularly.
 - **MEN GROUPS** – These groups are designed for adult men who are looking for a place to connect spiritually with other men. Topics of discussion in this group center around practical and spiritual topics that men deal with regularly.
 - **FOCUS GROUPS** – Focus Core Groups, are small groups designed for anyone to attend. Make meaningful connections with others, as you gather in homes during the week for bible-based lessons and discussions. We will also make Kids Small Groups available to groups with 3 or more children.



2. INTEREST Groups - These groups are less of a bible study and instead are centered more around interest-based topics. The topic can vary based upon the desire of the Small Group Leader, or the group that is formed. In order to form an **INTEREST Group**, you must understand and agree to the following:

- **TOPICS** – All of the groups’ topics and interests will be reviewed for approval before the launch of the cycle.
- **SPIRITUAL COMPONENT** – This is what differentiates your Small Group from any other social club. Whether it is through activities or discussions always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you or talking about a verse you read that week.
- **MULTIPLICATION** – Although these groups are interest-based, it is still important to recognize that these groups have the goal of multiplication. The goal is not for the *actual topic of interest* to be multiplied into a second group; instead, the goal is for someone from the group to start their own interest-based group in the next cycle.

The goal with using the **HYBRID MODEL** is that we have created an opportunity for everyone at HPAC to be connected to a Small Group.



GROUP STRUCTURE

WHAT A SMALL GROUP LOOKS LIKE

Your Life is Your Small Group

We recognize that each individual group will have a unique bond amongst members and that each leader has their own style. Whether you're leading a CORE Group, or you're leading an interest-based group, every group should have a few core structural elements. Maintaining structure helps us ensure that we are actively meeting our goals.

CORE GROUPS

Groups will meet on a weekly basis at the host's home, or designated location, to be taught a short lesson and engage in group discussions. Each meeting should be made up of the following:

1. **Icebreaker** – Have someone in the group prepare a fun, short icebreaker to get the group motivated to receive the Word.
2. **Teaching/Lesson** – The Small Group Leader will teach a lesson from the designated lesson plan for the week. This is meant to be interactive with a focus on God's Word.
3. **Discussion** – After each lesson, members are encouraged to engage in group discussion about the lesson. These discussions should be positive and encouraging.
4. **Prayer** - Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.
5. **Fellowship** – At the conclusion of the session, have a time of fellowship with snacks and refreshments for the group members.



INTEREST GROUPS

Groups will meet on a weekly basis at the location(s) of the group activity, such as homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops, or other unique locations. No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of four things:

1. **Casual Fellowship** - Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.
2. **Activity or Discussion** – This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like frisbee or outreach or a discussion about a book or Sunday message.
3. **Prayer** - Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.
4. **Spiritual Component** – This is what differentiates your Small Group from your neighborhood supper club. Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

Small Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics



CYCLES

CYCLES are the scheduled time periods throughout the year that we facilitate Small Groups. We understand that being a Small Group leader is a big commitment and that it requires dedication, effort, and sacrifice. We are following the **SIXTWO** method for our **CYCLES**.

Using the **SIXTWO** method, cycles will last for a duration of **SIX** weeks. At the conclusion of the cycle, there will be a **TWO**-week break, before the next cycle begins.

2026 CYCLE DATES

WINTER SEMESTER

- Winter Cycle 1: January 18th, 2026 to February 28th, 2026
- Winter Break 1: March 1st, 2026 to March 14th, 2026

SPRING SEMESTER

- Spring Cycle 1: March 15th, 2026 to April 25th, 2026
- Spring Break 1: April 26th, 2026 to May 9th, 2026
- Spring Cycle 2: May 10th, 2026 to June 20th, 2026

SUMMER BREAK & CONNECT NIGHTS

- Summer Break: June 21st, 2026 to August 15th, 2026
 - *Youth & Juniors Small Groups Continue*
 - *Church Summer Connect Nights*

FALL SEMESTER

- Fall Cycle 1: August 16th, 2026 to September 26th, 2026
- Fall Break 1: September 27th, 2026 to October 10th, 2026
- Fall Cycle 2: October 11th, 2026 to November 21st, 2026



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

We must recognize that the work of winning the lost is greatly opposed by Satanic and demonic powers of darkness. Simply, we are engaging in spiritual warfare. Therefore, we believe that each cycle we must couple our efforts of evangelism with spiritual preparation.

This time of spiritual preparation is for the purpose of fighting against the strongholds that have our unsaved friends and family members bound.

CORPORATE PRAYER & FASTING – Each week, we invite all Small Group Leaders and Small Group Assistants to join us in corporate prayer on Tuesday mornings at 6am. We ask that each leader fast once per week, during each cycle, for their small group.

We encourage every leader to use the guides to prayer and fasting found within the *STARTER KIT*.

2026 Prayer Weeks

- January 5th, 2026 - January 11th, 2026
- March 30th, 2026 - April 2nd, 2026
- May 4th, 2026 - May 7th, 2026
- September 28th, 2026 - October 1st, 2026



FRIENDS DAY

FRIENDS DAY is a church-wide celebration event that focuses on getting our unsaved friends connected to our Small Groups and introduces them to our church. No matter what type of group you're leading, the goal for every group is to **bring friends to Friends Day**.

As a Small Group Leader, you are expected to make plans to attend Friends Day and to encourage your group members to invite their friends to church!

Collectively, we will work together to spiritually prepare for Friends Day by praying and fasting together, identifying and writing down our friends' names, and inviting them to attend.

2026 FRIENDS DAYS:

- Sunday, April 5th, 2026
- Friendsgiving Small Groups: November 16th - November 20th



LAUNCH FAIRS

At the beginning of each cycle, we will work collectively to promote Small Groups within the church community and encourage our church to be engaged in the coming cycle. We will facilitate this promotion through *Semester Launch Fairs* and *Promotion Sundays*:

SEMESTER LAUNCH FAIRS will be held at the beginning of each semester (Winter and Fall) on a designated Sunday. The service will be planned with the intention of focusing on mission of Small Groups. At the conclusion of the service, we will have an outdoor promotions fair with tables and booths that showcases our different small groups. The goal of the fair is to get as many people signed up for a small group as possible and introduce small group leaders.

CYCLE PROMOTION SUNDAYS will be held before the second cycle of each semester. This will be a smaller version of the Launch Fair with one decorated booth that will encourage people to recommit to a small group for that cycle.

2026 Launch & Promotion Dates

- Sunday, January 18th, 2026 (Launch Sunday)
- Sunday, March 15th, 2026 (Promotion Sunday)
- Sunday, May 10th, 2026 (Promotion Sunday)
- Sunday, August 16th, 2026 (Launch Sunday)
- Sunday, October 11th, 2026 (Promotion Sunday)



SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Spiritual Retreats at Highest Praise Apostolic Church are designed to be more than a class—they are a one-day retreat experience where individuals can encounter God in a life-changing way. These retreats create a sacred space for guests and church members alike to pause from the busyness of life and focus on understanding the powerful message of salvation. Through teaching, worship, and reflection, participants learn the biblical foundation of repentance, baptism in Jesus' Name, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Each session is intentional, offering both spiritual insight and personal connection, so that every person leaves not only informed but inspired to take their next step in faith.

Throughout the day, trained ministers and teachers from Highest Praise Apostolic Church lead participants through Scripture-based lessons that unpack the plan of salvation and the significance of water baptism. Testimonies, Q&A sessions, and moments of guided prayer help answer questions and address doubts, ensuring that everyone understands the commitment and joy that comes with giving one's life to Christ. The workshop atmosphere is warm, inviting, and deeply spiritual—encouraging guests to open their hearts to God's presence and guidance.

The ultimate purpose of these Spiritual Retreats is spiritual transformation and preparation for Baptism Sunday. By the end of the retreat, attendees have not only gained a clear understanding of baptism's meaning but have also experienced a personal encounter with God that readies their hearts for this sacred step. Whether someone is exploring faith for the first time or seeking renewal in their walk with God, the Baptism Workshop serves as a beautiful bridge between learning about salvation and experiencing it firsthand.

2026 Spiritual Retreat Days

- Saturday, April 11th, 2026
- Saturday, November 14th, 2026



BAPTISM SUNDAYS

Baptism Sundays will be planned throughout the year as part of our evangelistic growth goals and efforts to bring new souls into the church. The focus of the service should be centered around salvation and the importance of Baptism.

The goal has two purposes – 1) to prepare to the candidates who are going to be baptized for baptism; 2) to teach and evangelize their guests/family members who will be present to witness the baptism.

Baptism Sundays will include the following elements:

- Baptism T-shirts / Church merch
- Small Group Promotions
- Evangelism-focused worship and preaching
- Guest follow-up cards/method
- Post-service celebration Potluck for new members and their families

2026 Baptism Sundays

- Sunday, April 19th, 2026
- Sunday, November 22nd, 2026



LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE ---

Small Groups is structured in a tiered hierarchy of leadership in order to maintain accountability and ensure that each group is meeting the goals. The leadership structure is there as a support to each small group. The following are the roles and hierarchical structure.

PASTOR – Ultimately, everything from the vision to the implementation of Small Groups flows through the Pastor, as he is the one who has been given the highest level of responsibility and accountability by God to lead the local church.

SMALL GROUP DIRECTORS – The Small Group Directors are directly responsible to oversee the Small Groups ministry at HPAC. They report directly to the Pastor. Their role functions as both administrative oversight and spiritual accountability.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS – Small Group Leaders are the direct leaders of one individual Small Group. They are responsible to lead and maintain their Small Group on a weekly basis, for the duration of the cycle. This person reports directly to their Hub Leader. This person must ensure that the weekly operation of their group is maintained, and that they are meeting the three objectives of the Small Group. They are also responsible to identify and train up Small Group Assistants to multiply their group.

SMALL GROUP ASSISTANTS – Small Group Assistants are the assigned assistants to a single Small Group for the duration of one cycle. They report directly to the Small Group Leader. The Small Group Assistant also shares the passion for the Small Group and will help the Small Group strive to meet the three objectives. The goal of every SGA is to multiply the group and eventually lead their own group!

SMALL GROUP HOSTS – Hosts offer their home as a physical meeting space for the duration of the cycle. A host is responsible to prepare the home and make it available at the same time each week to host the Small Group meeting.



MULTIPLY YOUR LEADERSHIP ---

As time goes by, your group will grow and progress *“to grow numerically and multiply.”*

With this growth, you will notice there are people you cannot imagine your group without. There will, however, come a time when you need to ask yourself these questions:

- *What if they started their own Small Group?*
- *How many more people could be reached if they multiplied your Group?*
- *How many more people could they impact and make a difference with?*

The more leaders that we prepare, the more people we can impact and reach! Having an assistant for the Small Group creates a platform to connect with and reach more people. It is also an opportunity for you to hone your leadership development skills.

The ultimate goal is that the Small Group Assistant becomes a Small Group Leader.

One of the methods we will use to train and develop new leaders is by implementing the **HPAC Leadership Academy!**

HPAC Leadership Academy is a new leadership development training course designed to train, equip, and launch new leaders into an effective leadership ministry!

All new leaders in the church will be required to attend and graduate from the Leadership Academy in order to serve as Small Group Leader, or Ministry Leader.



EMPOWER OTHERS TO LEAD ---

Ask for Help

Empower different people within your group to be responsible for different tasks. You may be great at teaching a lesson, but weak in organization skills. Allow others to fill in where you have known weaknesses. Giving people different opportunities (doing the icebreaker, saying a prayer, etc.) is the only way to discover and strengthen new talents and gifts in others.

Allow Someone Else to Lead

It is extremely important to take a step back once in a while and let others step up to the challenge of leading – especially your SGA. Allow them to take over and lead the lesson. This will help build their confidence and prepare them one day lead their own group.

Set a Goal to Multiply

Identify someone who would make a great leader and give them opportunities to grow under your leadership and guidance. Speak to them about their potential and set a goal with them to start their own Small Group. Empowering new leaders will give everyone an opportunity to use their gifts and will fulfill our goal of multiplication.



SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

YOUR ROLE

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.”

- *EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT*

The primary role of a Small Group Leader is to help each person in their group move one step in their walk with God.

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some next steps you can help people take:

1. Start attending Sunday services.
2. Start reading the Bible daily.
3. Start praying daily.
4. Be baptized in Jesus Name.
5. Complete First Steps & Advance Classes.
6. Join the Dream Team.
7. Begin tithing.
8. Invite a friend to church and Small Group.

HOW DO I MEASURE IF MY MEMBERS ARE MOVING TO THEIR NEXT STEP?

If you want to see people grow, you have to get to know them in order to discover what areas in their life need spiritual growth. Once you have identified an area that needs growth, encourage that person to take the next step. For example, if you know they just got baptized, ask them, “have you taken Advance classes yet?”. Or, if you see a pattern of them not attending Sunday services, encourage their attendance. Once you see they have taken the next step, celebrate that win! This is what discipleship looks like.



HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP LEADER

We get it – being responsible to lead other people spiritually can be very intimidating. Just remember, you are not alone, and you have been called to lead. God will equip you with everything you need to be a successful leader! Here are some good practices for Small Group leaders, to help you:

1. Pray daily for your small group members.
2. Connect with group members outside of the weekly meetings and encourage them to connect with each other.
3. Be approachable by making yourself available to people and creating an open, friendly environment.
4. Invite group members to attend church services and events with you by announcing them at each small group.
5. Listen to, pray for, and encourage your members with anything that they may be going through.
6. Organize special meals and visitations following major life changes including the loss of loved ones, new babies, hospitalizations, etc.
7. Be intentional about developing deep relationships with your group members.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

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

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

- 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

How to pray for your group:

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



- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

When you feel like you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember ESPN:

- E: Encourage
- S: Share Scripture
- P: Pray
- N: Next Steps

BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

One of the main reasons people decide to join a Small Group, is to build relationships with other people – for community. As a leader, it is your responsibility to facilitate these relationships and create a safe space for people to develop healthy relationships. Here's a few things you can do to build healthy relationships:

- 1. Meet Outside Your Home.**

Apart from being a leader, you are committed to being a friend. Meet for coffee or dinner to show your commitment.

- 2. Text and Call People Regularly.**

Show interest in people's lives by constantly including them in yours. This is the easiest way to build relationships with people in your group.

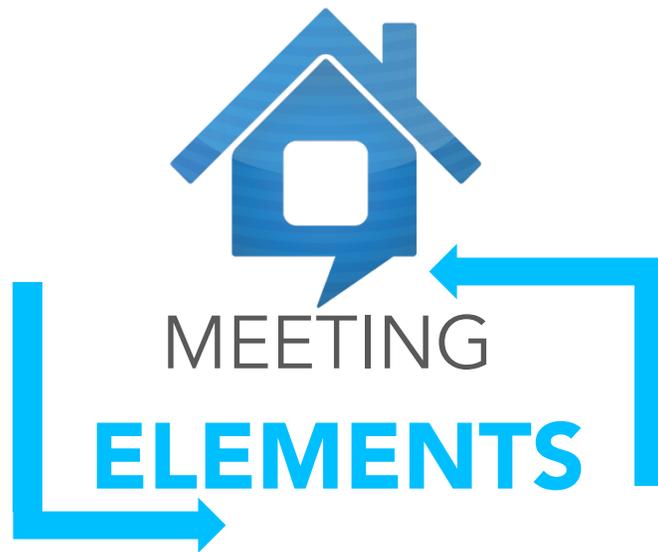
- 3. Celebrate Life Events.**

Remember and celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, promotions, births, marriages, etc. Share these special moments with the group and celebrate as a group.

- 4. Have Fun Together.**

Take advantage of meeting times to also plan something fun. Organize a dinner, bowling, or some type of family outing to show the group that spending time together is about having fun together.





- EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL MEETING -

1. Last Minute Meeting Checklist
2. Creating the Right Atmosphere
3. Creating Good Group Dynamics
4. Leading a Great Lesson
5. The Power of Prayer





YOUR FIRST

SMALL GROUP MEETING

YOU AGREED TO LEAD A SMALL GROUP.

YOU HAVE READ AND LEARNED ALL OF THE SMALL GROUP ESSENTIALS.

YOU HAVE A GROUP OF FRIENDS THAT YOU INVITED OVER.

IT'S TIME TO LEAD YOUR FIRST SMALL GROUP.

YOU CAN DO IT!



LAST MINUTE

MEETING CHECKLIST

BEFORE PEOPLE ARRIVE:

- Send everyone a reminder with the address and time where your Cell Group is meeting.
- Have the host make sure their home is organized and ready.
- Make sure someone is prepared to bring a few snacks to the meeting.
- Help the host arrange seating where people will be able to see and hear each other.
- Play soft music in the background until the lesson begins.
- Pray that God will work through everyone participating and bless those in your group.



CREATING THE RIGHT *ATMOSPHERE*

As leaders, people may not notice all of the effort or work you put into the Small Group meeting. Nothing from the meeting may even be remembered, *except* how the felt during the meeting. It is the atmosphere that can help someone decide whether or not they will continue attending or if they will ever come back.

Statistically, people have decided within 6 minutes, whether they will return to a church, or small group meeting, again.

Every detail matters. These are just a few factors that allow people to feel welcome, invited, and cared for in your group.

TIPS ON CREATING THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE

- 1. Have a pleasant aroma in the environment.**

Remember the first thing that we greet people when they arrive, besides you, is the smell. You want your meeting place to smell nice and be inviting. Brew coffee, light a candle, or spray a nice aerosol to make guests feel comfortable.

- 2. Clean up a little.**

Take some time before friends arrive to pick up anything loose that is lying around. Clearing clutter will go a long way in making your meeting place more inviting.

- 3. Provide enough seating.**

Having enough seats and setting them up beforehand shows friends that you had a seat prepared for them. This will help them feel valued and cared for.

- 4. Eliminate distractions.**

Cell phones, noisy pets, or unnecessary background noise, can cause the environment to feel overwhelming. Eliminating small distractions helps create a focused atmosphere so group members can be engaged.



CREATING GOOD *GROUP DYNAMICS*

SET EXPECTATIONS

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

FOLLOW THE 70-30 RULE

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

KEEP DISCUSSION POSITIVE

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

KEEP THE CONVERSATION RELEVANT TO EVERYONE

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

RESPECT BOUNDARIES

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



LEADING A *GREAT LESSON*

EVERY SMALL GROUP LOOKS DIFFERENT.

No Small Group will be exactly the same. Each group should have its unique qualities and atmosphere, as long as it remains centered around the three purposes of small groups: 1. Evangelism; 2. Building Community; 3. Multiplication.

It is important for the leader to always bring the lesson, or activity, to life. Apply the principles of the lesson to those sitting in the room.

A FEW THINGS TO TRY:

Start with Something Casual

Break the ice (tension) with a game. Try to get the whole group to laugh or have some simple, basic conversations.

Use Visuals

Most people remember the best with visuals. Use videos, photos, memes, etc. to validate the lesson. This will help everyone make connections to the lesson, or activity, and remember what was discussed.

Ask Questions

Always ask questions that will help the group members reflect on how the lesson, or activity, impacted their lives. Questions allow them to feel heard and assists them in putting the lesson into practice.

Allow Room for Silence

Don't feel like your questions need to be answered right away. Allow the questions to sit. Give the members time to reflect on the questions and form a response.



Summarize

Trust in the Holy Spirit to guide your lesson in a way that you will speak to the specific needs and struggles of your Small Group. Use the opportunity to see to to speak life into the lives of those attending. Take time after the lesson, or activity, to summarize what was spoken about.

End with Purpose

As the leader, it is crucial that you give each meeting purpose. Each lesson, or activity, should be uplifting and encouraging. Members should always leave the meeting knowing the purpose of the lesson, or activity, and the meeting.



THE POWER OF **PRAYER**

Prayer is crucial for our relationship with God. It is an opportunity for God to hear us, respond to our needs, and for us to *grow in relationship* with Him.

Prayer is what makes the difference in our lives and provides us with the opportunity to witness God's hands at work in our lives. There is power in prayer and it should never be left out of a Small Group meeting.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRAY WITH AND FOR YOUR GROUP

Pray Out Loud

Praying aloud sets a guide for good prayer habits. It is important to challenge people to pray out loud in order to set an example and for others to gain confidence in their prayer life.

Pray for Needs

Take the meeting time as an opportunity to ask for specific prayer needs and pray for them as a group at the end of the lesson. This will invite members to open up and to also witness the power of prayer in action. Also take time to celebrate answered prayers with each other.

Prayer Partners

Have each member pray for one another during the meeting and throughout the week. Ask them to connect with one another during the week to share prayer needs.

Group Prayer Messages

Use email or text messages to share prayer requests with one another at any point during the week. Also use this method to celebrate answered prayers with each other.



SESSION FORMAT

CORE GROUPS

CORE Groups are curriculum-based groups designed to be a 1-hour meeting format.

ARRIVE EARLY

Arrive to the meeting place at least 30 minutes before. Make sure the meeting location is ready and that you are prepared to receive members and guests. Make this a laid back and fun time of small talk and fellowship.

WELCOME & PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Open with a general prayer and welcome everyone to the meeting. Acknowledge guests and go over the three goals: 1. Evangelism; 2. Building Community; 3. Multiplication. End this portion by celebrating the wins!

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Have someone in the group lead the icebreaker to get the group excited and ready for the lesson.

TEACHING (30 MINUTES)

During this time, teach the lesson that has been provided for this week's lesson plan. This time can be interactive, but you want the main focus to be on the teaching of the Word. **Do not exceed 30 minutes of teaching.**

DISCUSSION & INTERACTION (10 MINUTES)

At the conclusion of the lesson, give time to have open discussion with the group that reflects on what was just taught. The tone of this interaction should be positive and encouraging.



ANNOUNCEMENTS & FINAL PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Close out the meeting with any announcements that the group needs to know, including encouraging them to attend Sunday Celebration Service. Close with prayer requests from the group.

FELLOWSHIP (AT LEAST 30 MINUTES)

Once the session is closed, have a designated time of fellowship. This is when snacks and refreshments should be served. If you're the Small Group Leader, be sure to be the last one to leave the host location.

INTEREST GROUPS

INTEREST Groups are designed to be focused around the topic/interest in a 1-hour session.

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

Since there is not necessarily a lesson, you need to plan in advance and prepare an activity for your group's meeting time.

ARRIVE EARLY

Arrive to the meeting place at least 30 minutes before. Make sure the meeting location is ready and that you are prepared to receive members and guests. Make this a laid back and fun time of small talk and fellowship.

WELCOME & PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Open with a general prayer and welcome everyone to the meeting. Acknowledge guests and go over the three goals: 1. Evangelism; 2. Building Community; 3. Multiplication. End this portion by celebrating the wins!

ACTIVITY (30-45 MINUTES)

Depending on the activity, take anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes to lead the planned activity. This should be a time where everyone is engaged in the activity and conversation.



DISCUSSION & INTERACTION (10 MINUTES)

Before the conclusion of the activity, give time to have open discussion with the group that reflects on either the topic, or a spiritual element. This may happen naturally during the activity as well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & FINAL PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Close out the meeting with any announcements that the group needs to know, including encouraging them to attend Sunday Celebration Service. Close with prayer requests from the group.



WHAT'S NEXT?

You're almost ready to take the step of beginning to lead a Small Group! There's just a few more resources that you should be aware of to lead your group successfully.

CURRICULUM

For our CORE Groups, the Small Group Leader will not have to write any of their own lessons or prepare any additional curriculum, unless they request to. Curriculum will be provided along with a formatted Curriculum Guide which will provide you with the lesson materials for each week of the cycle.

MEET MONDAYS

In order to facilitate effective communication, momentum, and leadership development, it is vital that Small Group Leaders meet on a bi-weekly basis. Small Group leadership meetings – Meet Mondays – will be held every other Monday evening. Meet Mondays will include the following elements:

- **Prayer** – Prayer is essential to the power of God being manifested over our lives. As Small Group leaders we must pray together and over our Small Groups.
- **Leadership Training** – Leadership training courses will be taught by the Pastor, Small Groups Directors, and occasionally guest speakers. The topics will focus on church leadership disciplines and resources that every leader in the church should develop.
- **Breakout Sessions** – At the conclusion of each meeting, Small Group Leaders will meet with their HUB Leader to make preparations for the coming week, review the Weekly Reports, share announcements, and have collaborative discussions for continuous improvement.

Both Small Group Leaders and Small Group Assistants are required to attend Meet Mondays.



ATTENDANCE TRACKING

Each week Small Groups will be responsible to track the group attendance by updating the attendance through the Church Center App. Be sure to mark down the names of each person in the group (including children) and track their attendance weekly. If a new member, or guest, attends your group throughout the cycle, add them to the sheet.

COMMUNICATION

All group communication for Small Groups Leaders will be communicated through a designated group chat. Communication amongst the Small Group Leaders and Directors is essential. If you are having challenges with your group, or concerns that need to be addressed please reach out to your respective leader.

Specific things that should be communicated and requested in advance are:

- Vacations and days that you know you will be absent/needing coverage for teaching.
- Venue and host home changes.
- Variances in your scheduled meeting day.
- Other concerns that may arise with your group.

ONLINE RESOURCES

All resources including forms, lessons, and small group training materials, are available as digital resources on our website: www.hpachurch.com.



CONGRATULATIONS

YOU DID IT!

You are now ready to launch your
Small Group!

*"And then he told them, "Go into all the world and
preach the Good News to everyone."*

MARK 16:15 (NLT)

