

group
leader
guide



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Our Essence

A Small Group is a group of people who Connect, Grow, Serve, Pray and Give together.

Our Inspiration from Scripture:

"All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved."

- Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

Our Mission

Crossroads Fellowship exists to transform the Triangle and the world by empowering people to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our passion is to see God transform our community by living our lives in such a way that people in the Triangle say, "God must be Real, He must be Good, He must be Powerful, and He must Love me because nothing else explains the lives of the people at Crossroads Fellowship."

Our Wins

- CONNECT:** We win when we form genuine friendships.
- GROW:** We win when we help others fulfill their purpose.
- SERVE:** We win when we serve each other within our group.
- PRAY:** We win when we pray for each other.
- GIVE:** We win when we invest in the world around us.
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Our Culture

We think of our Small Group culture as the “soil” in which seeds of God’s love and grace will grow into mature trees that bear fruit into our world.

Our Small Group culture consists of three essential elements:

1. **Encourage** – breathe life into people
 - This is the #1 goal for groups.
 - Personal growth cannot occur without life-giving relationships.
 - Chances are, you can trace personal breakthroughs back to life-breathing relationships.
2. **Equip** – through scripture, application and prayer
 - This is the “growth” element of our groups.
 - It is the Word of God that breathes life and builds faith.
 - We partner with the Holy Spirit – we lead people to the Word, and the Holy Spirit shows people answers.
3. **Empower** – promote growth through demonstration and next steps
 - A healthy organism will produce growth.
 - Healthy leaders produce fruit and replicate themselves.
 - Empower people for their unique personal calling, not for our ministry agendas.
 - Participate in our Small Groups coaching system.

Our Structure – “Free Market” Small Groups

Our “Free Market” small group structure allows leaders to turn their existing relationships, gifts, interests, passions and hobbies into disciple-making small groups by incorporating life-giving activities that are interesting or enjoyable to the group leader, and ideally others as well.

Key Features of Free Market Small Groups:

- Leaders use their gifts with their passions
- Built on “felt needs” and common interests
- Meet weekly, bi-weekly or monthly
- Welcome new people into the group
- Leaders maintain a healthy relationship with their coach.

Our groups are as varied as we are. Group leaders use their gifts and passions to create a group that allows others to join with them in serving God. We have groups for all ages, interests, days, times and locations. We foster an environment that encourages our groups “do life” together with others.

As a leader, be innovative and creative! God has designed each person uniquely, and He can use that uniqueness as a catalyst for relationship building.

Our Goals

We believe in **TRANSFORMATION** over **INFORMATION**.

We think in terms of **NEXT STEPS**.

"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." - Ephesians 4:11-12

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works." - Hebrews 10:24

Our goal as leaders is to always help others **move one step** toward where God is calling them.

Think "Point A to Point B, not Z."

Examples of Next Steps:

- Salvation
- Water Baptism
- Daily Devotion and Prayer Time
- Regular Church Attendance
- Discover Your Unique Design
- Church Membership
- Serving on a Team
- Tithing
- Mentoring Others (Group Leader, Team Leader)
- Missions (local or international)
- Evangelism (5-step outreach)

Our Meetings

"For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them." - Matthew 18:20 (NLT)

Think of a recent small group meeting or class that you really enjoyed. What made it encouraging or helpful so that you looked forward to the next meeting? Aim to lead a small group you want to come back to.

Components of Successful Meetings:

CONNECTION examples:

- Eat together
- Meet at a coffee house/restaurant
- Hold a game night.

GROWTH examples:

- Do a book study together and discuss one chapter per meeting
- Engage in a DVD / online curriculum together
- Follow a weekly devotional together.

SERVING examples:

- Rotate host homes so that each member helps with this
- Ask group members to plan outings and activities
- Serve as group during SERVE WEEK.

PRAYER examples:

- Begin and end every meeting in prayer
- Share stories of answered prayers to encourage each other
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere and short.

GIVING examples:

- Serve as a group with one of Crossroads' Community Partners
- Serve as a group one weekend per quarter within our church
- Do a neighborhood food drive and bring the donations to church.

SUCCESS SECRET:

DON'T TRY TO DO EVERYTHING AT EVERY MEETING!

Some meetings may be very focused on growth and devotion, while some may be all fellowship. Keep a long-term focus on discipleship and ministry to the whole person.

How We Host

Where We Meet:

We encourage groups to meet outside of the church building. If your home doesn't feel appropriate, consider the following examples:

- Find a Host Home
- Local coffee shop/restaurant
- Library / office conference room

How We Prepare:

Is the “feel” of your meeting place welcoming? Think about:

Comfortable and Inviting

- Adequate seating, temperature and lighting
- Adequate parking
- Provide directions (not just an address)
- “Picked up” vs. “manicured.” Your home is a lived-in place.
- Inform guests if you have pets, and keep the pets in a separate room.
- If meeting in your home, have music playing in the background as people arrive.

Food

- Keep food easily accessible
- Keep food duplicable and simple
- Keep food a “group thing” - everyone contributes

How We Do Child Care

Our small groups meet home-to-home (Acts 2:42) so child care is done at or near the host home but not on the church campus. I KNOW this is hard for parents of young ones to grasp but encourage them to give it a try.

Arrange child care in a separate room from where the adult discussion takes place in order to maintain focus during the study without distraction. Please be firm that children currently sick, or those with a fever within the previous 24 hours, cannot attend as other children may become ill.

If you need assistance in obtaining a child care worker, you may contact the church for a list of prescreened child care workers.

Here are some ways to handle child care in your small group:

- **Best Practice:** Have two group members sign up each week to do child care.
- **Another Option:** Have group members provide names of sitters they use.
- **The Contingency:** Have a “backup group member” signed up each week.
- **Final Option:** Have members get their own sitters at their own homes

Have each child bring their own age appropriate toys, books and videos with them. This eliminates the host home from having to try and gather age appropriate toys, etc. for a varied number of children. If each child takes care of his or her own activity needs, then all the children will get exactly what they need (and they can learn to share with one another).

With any of these options, you can include your children in applicable portions of your small group meeting time such as worship, story telling and prayer time if desired. Each group handles their child care situation as they feel led to do. There is no specific way to do this. Keep trying various approaches until you find the one that works best for your group.

How and What We Study

The purpose of the curriculum is to create productive and encouraging group discussions that bring revelation into the lives of the group members. Here are several ideas for selecting an appropriate devotion for your small group:

RightNow Media (www.rightnowmedia.org)

As an attendee of Crossroads Fellowship, you have unlimited streaming access to an online tool called *RightNow Media*, which contains thousands of online videos, including children's programs, leadership events and small group curriculums. This is a GREAT resource for Small Group Leaders, and all content available through the Crossroads Fellowship group has been pre-approved for small group curriculum. To access this content, ask your pastor for an invitation – then simply setup your account and begin surfing!

Crossroads Fellowship Suggested Studies

Our Small Groups ministry leaders maintain an updated list of pre-approved curriculum for small group leaders. Please always feel free to reach out for guidance on curriculum.

YouVersion Plans (www.bible.com)

This is a great online tool for Bible study and devotions. There are hundreds of daily and weekly devotions to choose from – all of which can be used for small group discussions.

Weekend Sermon Tools (www.crossroads.org)

Each weekend our Small Groups Ministry staff develops a group discussion guide based on the weekend message for you to download. This is a great way to begin your small group and dive deeper into the weekend messages.

How We Can Keep Small Groups Healthy

Here are a few suggestions to avoid in maintaining a life-breathing culture within your group.

AVOID:

- **Mixing business with small groups**

Avoid direct sales and “MLM” recruitment within your group. If people perceive ulterior motives or are placed in awkward situations by other group members, the group will die quickly.

- **Private ministry to the opposite sex**

NEVER allow yourself to be in a private setting alone with a member of the opposite sex. Placing yourself in these situations creates opportunity for potential attack against your personal character, integrity and reputation.

- **Matchmaking**

Small Groups are not dating networks. Sometimes in singles groups relationships can form naturally. But do not try to set people up with potential partners, and shut down this kind of activity as soon as you become aware of it.

- **Borrowing/Lending Money**

Nobody wants to be taken advantage of, and nobody wants to feel like they are indebted to another.

- **Receiving tithes and offerings**

If someone wants to give to the church, encourage them to participate during the weekend services, or give online.

- **Promoting other churches**

Our Small Group Ministry is led by Pastors and Ministers that are accountable to and devoted to the mission God has ordained for Crossroads Fellowship. By promoting a different church within your small group, leadership rifts can form that can cause significant pain in the lives of group members.

What We Do Between Meetings

As Small Group Leaders, we can sometimes be more effective during the “off time” than at the meetings. Remember the words of Theodore Roosevelt, “No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”

<div>We Pray for Our Group</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideally, we pray for each member by name, every day.• Seek to learn what each member is believing God for.	<div>We “Do Life Together”</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invest in relationships 1- on -1 .• Plan Fellowship Events.• Have fun together.
<div>We Communicate</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We keep our group looking toward what’s next - via weekly emails, texts, social media, etc.• We are the life-giving network of the church.• We commit early, invite and promote.	<div>We Seek and Provide Resources</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scriptures to study• Books for personal growth• Community and church resources.

What We Are NOT

As Small Group Leaders, we ARE NOT:

TEACHERS:

- We ARE facilitators
- We GUIDE discussions
- We let the HOLY SPIRIT bring transformation.

CONTROL FREAKS:

We delegate responsibilities and empower others within our groups to assist, including:

- Snack Oversight
- Childcare Coordination
- Host Rotations
- Prayer Request Follow-up
- Attendance Reporting
- Visitations and care
- Organizing serve projects

COUNSELORS:

- We encourage
- We offer scriptures to study
- We pray with people
- We give next steps.
- We partner with Crossroads' Care Ministries (crossroads.org/care-help).

Our Leadership Pathway

Small Group Leader Qualifications:

- Salvation
- Membership at Crossroads Fellowship (or in progress)
- Willing to Host / Find a Venue
- Willing to invite members and work to keep your group full.

Getting Started:

- Leadership Training
- Pastoral Approval
- Develop a 'Game Plan'
- Get 'The Box'
- Advertise online, social media, weekend bulletin (church assisted)
- Hold a Social (open house)
- 2-3 initial "icebreaker" meetings
- Begin a group devotion/curriculum
- Plan some fellowship activities
- Empower others to help the group Connect, Grow, Serve, Pray and Give together
- Participate in church wide small group events

Leadership Track:

- Group Member
- Group Leader
- Group Coach (helps mentor 3-5 group leaders)
- Group Director (helps mentor 3-5 group coaches)

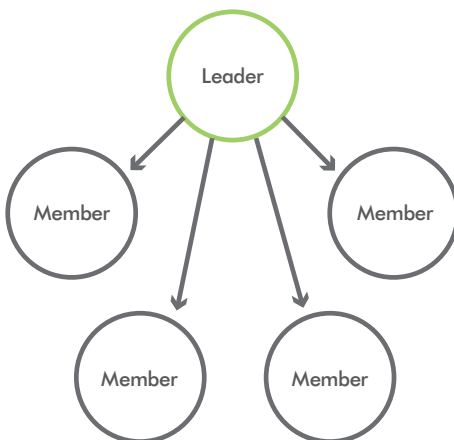
Our Leadership Model

Here at Crossroads, we embrace a small group leadership model that we have entitled, **Five Seats of Leadership**. In essence, this leadership model empowers group members to discover their purpose and lead in their strengths – all within the context of their small group. Consider this:

The Traditional Group/Bible Study Model:

The Leader

- organizes the group
- arranges group hosting
- selects the curriculum
- facilitates the discussions
- leads the group in prayer
- finds group serving opportunities
- serves the group by organizing meals, helping to move, etc.



The Results:

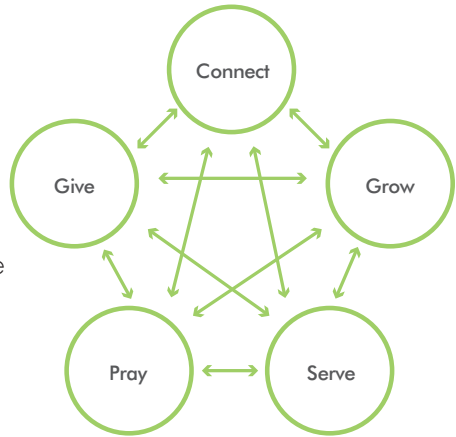
In the traditional model above, leaders are put at risk of "burning out," while the personal and spiritual growth of the group's members are restricted. Without a life-breathing, empowering culture, the group tends to remain closed, does not multiply, and sometimes fizzles out.

The “5 Seats of Leadership” Model:

In this model, there are actually five different co-leaders in each group:

- The Connector
- The Grower
- The Server
- The Prayer
- The Giver

Each co-leader, under the guidance of the Small Group Leader, serves the group with a specific purpose. Below are some possible roles for each of the co-leaders:



The Connector

- Hosts (or facilitates a host-home rotation)
- Fellowship events
- Organizes food

The Grower

- Curriculum selection
- Facilitates discussions

The Server

- Finds serving opportunities

The Prayer

- Leads group prayer
- Follows up on prayer requests

The Giver

- Arranges in-group benevolence (meals, moving help, visitations)
- Organizes special giving events (neighborhood food drives, Christmas shoe boxes)

These are just some examples of how these roles could evolve within a group. The importance of helping group members discover their strengths and grow in them overshadows the specific role of each co-leader.

The Benefits:

The Small Group Leader doesn't experience "burnout", which better enables him/her to invest in the group members. Additionally, each person in the group develops and grows in their unique purpose.

Ultimately, each group member grows in confidence and influence within their personal and professional spheres. And by doing so, each person begins to transform his/her community for Christ.

Why We Do This

*"When Joseph arrived in the morning, **he noticed** that they were feeling low. **So he asked** them, the two officials of Pharaoh who had been thrown into jail with him, "What's wrong? Why the long faces?"*

- Genesis 40:6-7 (MSG)

"My guess is that there was a time - perhaps when you were very young - when you had at least a fleeting notion of your own genius and were just waiting for some authority figure to come along and validate it for you. But none ever came."

- Gordan MacKenzie, Hallmark Executive (excerpt from: Mark Batterson's *In A Pit With A Lion On A Snowy Day*)



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crossroads.org/smallgroups