

Playbook

Group Leaders

—

Thank you.

I want to thank you for taking the time to consider being a group leader! I know when I was asked to lead a small group for the first time I felt underqualified and uncertain if I was fully ready for the task. If you are reading this and thinking the same thoughts I was, you are in the perfect spot! A small group doesn't need a leader who has it all figured out. They don't need a leader who has the perfect marriage, house, kids, pets, and cookware. They don't need a leader with a seminary degree. Your small group needs a leader willing to say, "I'm messed up too; let's figure this thing out together."

God created us to gather in small groups to grow together, it is an essential part of our spiritual walk. Without small groups gathering all across our city, the church would only be functioning half-way. There are things that can only happen in groups that can't happen any other way. That's by God's design. You can't grow spiritually unless you're connected relationally. God created us for community. And God calls people just like us, messes and all, to simply be obedient in following Him as we help others do the same.

We hope the content below, the future trainings, and the support and care we provide will make you feel ready to take this challenge on. So take a deep breath...you are right where God wants you. We are all in this together. Please know all of your fellow small group leaders are cheering you on. Let's go change the world one small group at a time!

Believing in you!

Pastor Erik Zaborowski

Family & Discipleship Pastor

C3 Church

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What are Groups?

The Win

To provide an environment where people have the opportunity to **connect relationally** and **grow spiritually**.

Types of Groups

COMMUNITY GROUPS - Meet in homes or online on a consistent basis a season at a time. Highly relational and more conversational.

SHORT TERM GROUPS - Meet in homes or at the church weekly for 6-10 weeks over a specific study. Less Relational. More informational. These are a great way to start a group for the first time.

Seasons of Groups

Our groups operate on a seasonal rhythm where we have natural times to start new groups and chances for groups to end.

- Season 1 - January - April
- Season 2 - May - August
- Season 3 - September - December

What is My Job as a Group Leader?

The Win

I help people feel **known** and **grown**.

Scorecard

- **Character** - Lead yourself as you lead others in this season.
- **Consistent** - Be consistent in having a group, communicating, and connecting with your group.
- **Challenge** - Help your group take next steps to grow spiritually
- **Care** - Be a first responder to basic needs

Specific Responsibilities

Before Group

- Follow up with new group members
- Text your group a reminder that group is that week.
- Pray for your group
- Review and prepare for your study
- Prepare your home if you are hosting
- Make sure childcare is set
- Set up study space and test any media
- Set out snacks and drinks

During Group

- Take the first 15-30 minutes to connect with your group over coffee or snacks.
- Help facilitate your group as you guide them through your study
- End your group by taking prayer requests and praying.

After Group

- Take attendance
- Help clean up the host home if needed
- Follow up with any prayer requests or needs

What Should Happen at My Group?

Connect Together

Before you hop into your study we want you to take time to connect with your group members. This is especially important if your group does not meet weekly. There is a lot to catch up on and spiritual growth can't happen if your group isn't connecting relationally.

Tips: Always have some type of snacks and drinks available to talk over. Come prepared with questions to catch up on everyone's weeks (i.e. how did that work presentation go that you talked about last time?). Start off with an icebreaker question to get everyone talking and sharing.

Grow Together

Every group should have some time of spiritual growth. This depends on where your group is at in their faith journey but it's up to you to help guide them to growth. For most groups this will come in the form of our weekly sermon discussion guides or a video based curriculum. Every group should end by talking about how they will apply the study to their lives. It's one thing to learn, but another thing to live it out. We are here to help move our group to what's next in their faith.

Tips: Start off your group with the Circle Up study at myC3church.com/circleup

Pray Together

Take time to pray for those action steps and any prayer requests. This can be the most vulnerable time during your group so give enough time for people to share what struggles they may be facing.

Tips: Have an administrative person in your group keep track of these prayer requests and send them out in a group text or facebook group so your group can continue to pray for them throughout the week.

What Should My Group Study?

Our groups operate as a “Free Market” model. We give the parameters and options but we leave it up to each group to decide what they do. With many ages and stages of groups, we believe this is the best model to allow groups to connect and grow.

Weekly Sermon Series Guide - Many of our Small Groups choose to take advantage of a Weekly Study Guide we post each week to assist them in making these messages personal and practical. To download Study Guides go to **myc3church.com/media**

Right Now Media Study – Our recommended curriculum can be found on Right Now Media. You can gain access to this resource at mygroups.com. We have handpicked studies in the C3 Church channel. These studies provide video content along with group guides. **(note: some guides must be purchased)**

Devotional Based – Find a Bible Plan on the Bible app and go through that with your group. These are great for groups that meet based on interests or are looking for more accountability. Use the following questions as a guide: 1. What was the high and low of your week? 2. What did God speak to you about? 3. What did God challenge you to do? 4. What can we keep you in prayer for?

Starter Curriculum

As your group starts, we have a great start series called Circle Up that will help your group understand the importance of your group when it comes to connecting relationally and growing spiritually. It has great group activities that will lead to your group in opening up and connecting. You can find this at **myc3church.com/circleup**

How Do I Get People Into My Group?

Personally Invite People to Your Group

Even though you will likely receive several emails of interest about your group through the online directory, the best way to build a group has always been through personal invitation. Pray and ask God to show you people to invite!

Tips: When talking to people to join your group, make sure to communicate: the frequency of your group, times, study, and childcare.

Immediately Contact the People Who Signed Up for Your Group On-line

When someone requests to join your group on our online directory, they automatically receive an email notice indicating the name of the group they requested to join, along with the leader's contact information. The leader also immediately receives a similar email notice informing they have a new group member requesting to join their group, listing their contact info as well.

Your call matters! Please respond to your new group member(s) within 24 hours. Let them know you received their information, and are excited that they have joined your group. Remember it is possible that many of the people joining your group have NEVER been in a group before, and do not know what to expect. Your initial contact can do much to reduce any apprehensions. Ask if they have any questions you can answer, and be sure they have directions to your first meeting location.

What Do I Do For Childcare?

Parents Hire their Own Babysitter.

This is the easiest one with the best ratio of caregiver to child. Of course, this is also the most expensive option, so it can be a barrier to joining a group for some parents.

Include the Children.

When kids are in the mix, the discussion may have to slow down to accommodate their input (and their interruptions). You may also need to take more time to explain a Bible passage or principle. You'll know it's worth the effort when you see growth in the next generation!

Rotate Kid Duty.

Each meeting, two adults can be on kid duty, watching the children in another area or room of the house. This should always be done in pairs so that adults have company and to provide added protection for the children. This allows the group to enjoy some kid-free time without having to pay a babysitter

Have Older Kids in the Group Help with the Younger Kids

This one is a bit riskier. But if there are some responsible preteens or teenagers, they may be able to watch over the younger kids. You might consider paying them a small amount each week, too.

Recommended rate and ratio for childcare:

\$7-\$12 an hour

1 adult to every 10 children over two years (1:10)

1 adult to every 5 children under two years (1:5)

Please also discuss what your childcare provider is comfortable with, some can handle more than others. This is especially important to clarify with high school students/teenagers.

Tip: Tell parents in group to bring \$5 per child a week to help balance costs or have parents rotate who covers childcare that night. Pay childcare provider either the money offered by parents OR \$15 an hour. Whichever sum is higher.

Go to **myc3church.com/groupleaders** to find our list of church approved childcare workers.

What Should Happen on the First Night?

Pray.

Don't miss this step! Ask God to bless the meeting and to help everyone show up to the group.

Prepare the Environment.

Arrange the furniture so that everyone has a seat and can see one another. Set the thermostat a little cooler than normal so that everyone is comfortable. Make sure you have good lighting so that people can read their Bibles and study materials and also see each other. Remove any pets from the rooms you are using.

Meet People at the Door

Greet them personally and make them feel welcome. Most of us struggle to remember names...

TIP: Give everyone a name tag to take the pressure off. Everyone prefers to be called by their name rather than "pal," "dude," or "sport."

Serve Snacks and Refreshments.

Simple finger foods, snacks and drinks (especially coffee) helps everyone relax. Don't overthink it and don't overdo it - simple is good!

Circle Up within the First 15 Minutes

It's important to start on time or the initial meeting will feel awkward and poorly planned. If you wait for everyone to show up before you start, you may never start! Invite everyone to introduce themselves and use a fun icebreaker to help everyone relax.

End the Group Early

A good rule of thumb is to end 15 minutes before the official stop time and express gratitude to those who came. Remind them of the time, date, and location of your next meeting. Emphasize relationships and connections during this crucial time.

Close the Group in Prayer.

You may not have any prayer requests your first group so take time to pray generally for your new group.

How Do We Get Our Group to Connect?

Take time before the study.

Emphasize this time to connect and catch up on each other's weeks. Come prepared ready to connect and make connections between your group members.

Open up with an icebreaker

Before you can grow you need to connect. Utilize the icebreakers in your studies or find some icebreaker questions or games at **myC3church.com/groupleaders**. Emphasize icebreaker questions that lend towards people sharing about themselves. These should be light hearted and funny.

Plan a hangout night within the first few months.

Take a group night or an extra night to do something that everyone would enjoy. Some groups have done game nights, dinners, bon fires, etc...Don't plan this out yourself, ask your group what they would enjoy doing.

Serve together.

Utilize an outreach event (**myc3church.com/events**) to get your group making a difference. This is a huge way not only for your group to connect but also make a difference.

Get your group to keep showing up

- Go through the Circle Up Curriculum
- Remind them of what we are asking of them
- Start with an agreement - **myC3church.com/groupleaders**
- Remind them of group

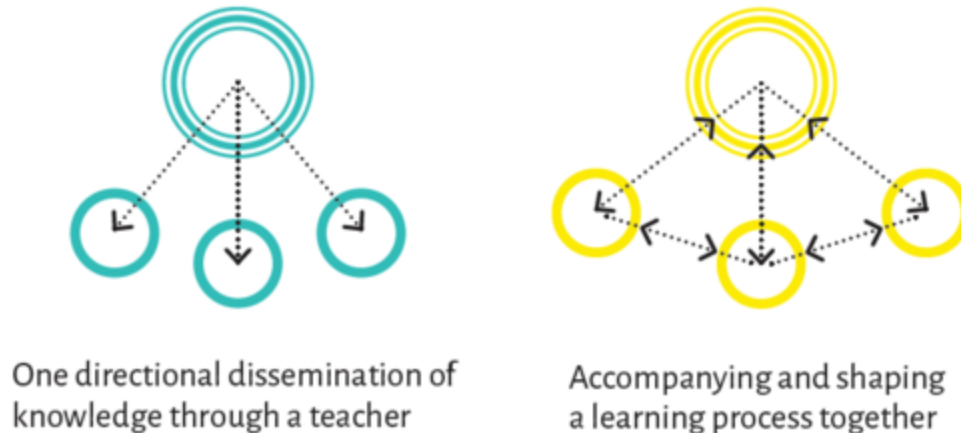
What not to do

- Talk Politics
- Demand Transparency
- Get too emotional
- Confess your biggest sin

How Do I Best Lead the Conversation?

Great leaders don't teach they facilitate. The difference is that facilitating isn't about transmitting information it's about inviting conversation. Great facilitators can make even the most difficult topics safe to discuss.

Teaching vs. facilitating



Tips for facilitating

1. **Encourage everyone to participate** Be prepared for difficult questions in conversation but limit your own opinions to allow others to speak. A good rule of thumb is that you should talk less than 20%.
2. **Steer the conversation without controlling it.** This can be a tricky balance. On one hand, don't be afraid of a response out of left-field by a group member. On the other hand, don't let one member monopolize the discussion. A good way to strike this balance is to look for group members who are quiet but seem like they might have something to say. Give them the floor by asking them what they're thinking.
3. **Be curious.** Listen to group members and ask clarifying questions in order to discover what's going on in their lives. Being a great facilitator is about setting the stage for conversation and guide the conversation as they find life changing answers.

How Do I Help My Group Grow Spiritually?

What is Spiritual Growth?

Spiritual growth is simply taking the next step. Any step forward is progress and that is worth celebrating?

What Next Steps Can I Help People Take?

Although not fully encompassing, we have three areas in which someone can take next steps: By Knowing God's Love, Growing in God's love, and Showing God's love.

Wherever someone is at in their faith journey, you can help them take a next step in one of these areas.

	Baby	Teen	Adult
Know	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Place to Belong.2. Salvation3. Baptism	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regularly attend church2. Devotional Plans	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listen & Read additional spiritual content (podcasts, books, etc...)
Grow	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be part of a group.2. Learn spiritual disciplines	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Daily disciplines & learn to apply scripture to life2. Become apprentice to a group leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lead a group.2. Daily application of Scripture
Show	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Serve those in need.2. Discover their giftings.3. Discover their story	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Share their story2. Serve on a team3. Give for the first time.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continuously serve, share, and give.

How Do I Care for My Group?

When it comes to care for your group, you are not responsible for fixing people. To best give you a framework in what you can do, follow the acronym E.S.P.N.

Ear - Take time to listen before you share.

Scripture - Share scriptures that may help them see an eternal perspective in their situation.

Pray - Keep them in prayer but also pray for them specifically.

Next Steps - Help them discover what next steps they can take in their situation. Remember, they are responsible for their own spiritual growth, you are there to create the environment for it to happen.

When you take the lead in care and Care team support

- Less than urgent surgeries
- Financial struggles
- Normal physical, emotional, spiritual struggles
- Birth of newborns (hospital visit, meal trains)
- Normal wrestling with sin issues
- Any other general care need when your group is able to absorb

When the Care Team takes the lead and you support

Serious Events

Confessing an affair, going through a divorce, spousal or child abuse, ignored mental disorders/episodes, any form of real addiction, major surgeries

Crisis Events

Anything that may have serious legal ramifications: the death or dying of a group member or someone in their immediate family, or anything else that demands the immediate response of a professional in that field.

How to refer for care

If a group member falls into the serious/crisis events or you need help, you can reach out to our team directly with the information below.

myC3church.com/care | erik@myc3church.com | **440.488.3220**

How Do I Build up More Leaders?

Identify Essential Characteristics:

- **Character:** Loves God, good reputation with others; trustworthy, authentic, faithful
- **Chemistry:** Loves people, attracts others, emotionally and relationally safe
- **Competence:** Shepherding heart; basic bible knowledge

Dialogue with Prospective Leader:

- Explore spiritual gifts and passion for ministry
- Discuss their calendar and ability to commit
- Invite them to pray about apprenticing with you or launching their own group

APPRENTICING MODEL

Step 1 – I do, you watch, we talk

The goal of this step is intentional awareness. Here are a few things to keep in mind about this step:

- You must debrief after group and evaluate how things went.
- It's really helpful to workout a game plan and what your goal for group is before your session. This gives you something to come back to in your debrief.
- Stay at this step until they show awareness of what you're going for.

Step 2 – I do, you help, we talk

The goal of this step is developing trust by executing a specific role consistently.

- Give them one area of group to execute, i.e., developing the plan for this week, coordinating an event, facilitating the discussion, communications with the group during the week.
- Don't let them run wild. Let them weigh in on what they'll execute, but you still make sure it "works".
- This step is about building trust with you and showing that they can execute the roles of a leader.
- Stay at this step until they prove they can consistently execute what they say they will execute.

Step 3 – We do, we talk

This step is arm in arm. You officially have a co-leader at this point, so lean on them.

- Formalize this by inviting your apprentice into the process.
- Let your group know your apprentice is co-leading with you.
- Clearly define who is going to do what.

- Don't micromanage. Give them the opportunity to fail and utilize your debrief to provide feedback.
- Stay at this step until they would lead group 80% as well as you would.

Step 4 – You do, I help, we talk

By this step, approach your co-leader as the group leader and you are their mentor. This is the final step in replacing yourself and launching a new group.

- Talk with your group about the importance of launching new groups.
- Give people a few weeks to mull over the idea and pray about it.
- Every week your co-leader should get more responsibility until they are essentially the leader.
- Debriefs should address any group dynamics, issues the group is facing, and passing on the vision for apprenticeship and launching new groups.

Step 5 – They do, someone else watches, they talk

It's important to pass the baton of training up new leaders and launching new groups as you finish your apprenticeship.

- Launch a new group.
- Treat this like it's an expectation for group leaders. One day they will do what you just did.
- Encourage them to run a season or a year as a group before they find a co-leader.

How Do I Use Planning Center Groups?

Planning Center Groups is an online application that will help you manage your members, plan events, take attendance, and share resources. If you have been made a leader of a group, this article will go over the main functions of the software and help you get started with your group!

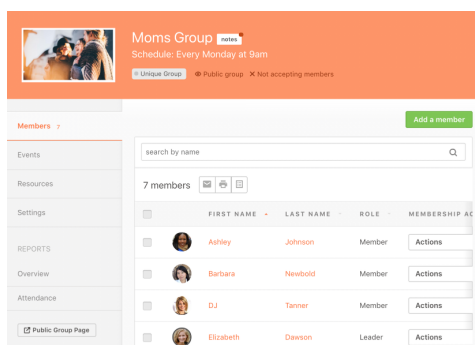
How to Login

The first time you go to log in to Groups, you might need to create a password. On the [login page](https://groups.planningcenteronline.com), <https://groups.planningcenteronline.com>, select the *Need a password?* link below the email and password fields.

Enter the email address your administrator used to set up your profile, then a verification code will be sent to that email address. After entering the code, you will be able to create a password and then log in.

Manage Members

The first page you see when you select your group is a list of all your members. There are some quick actions you can take on this page, such as emailing members, removing them from your group, or printing a list of members. You will also have the option to [add new members](#) from this page if your administrator has given you the permission to do so.



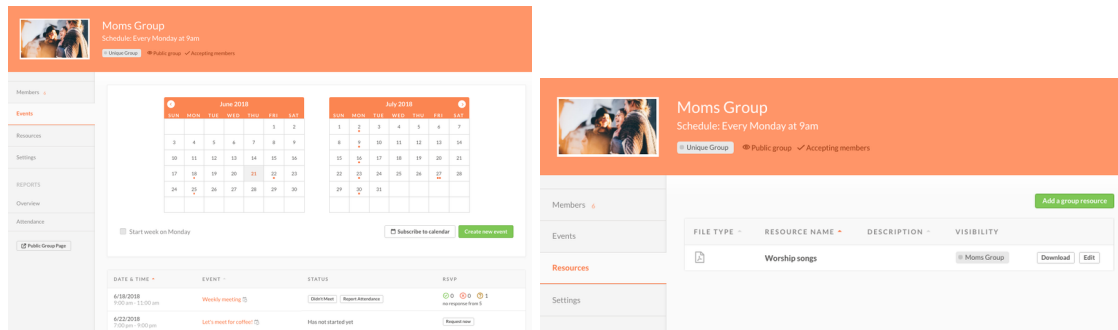
When someone requests to join your group, you will receive an email notification. You can either respond via the link in that email or respond from Groups. All requests will be displayed on top of your list of members.

Events

*****You must set up events in order to receive take attendance**

The Events tab shows you a calendar of upcoming events for your group, along with some quick actions you can take on each event.

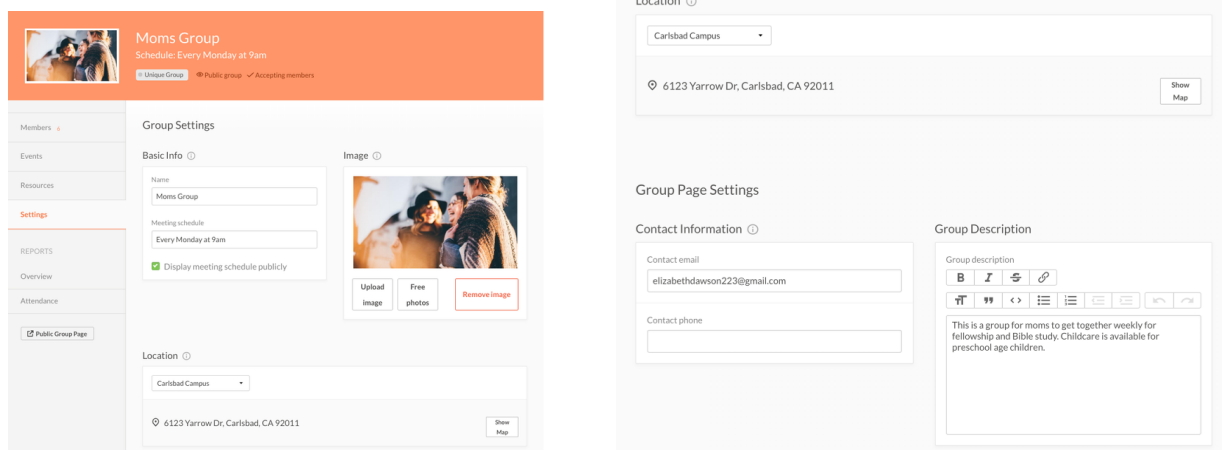
From the event list, you can quickly report [attendance](#) or cancel past events. You can request [RSVPs](#) from your members for upcoming events and quickly view the responses.



Once you select an event, you will see more details about that event, along with the option to edit the event.

SETTINGS

From the [Settings](#) tab, group leaders can modify group information such as name, description, and group image.

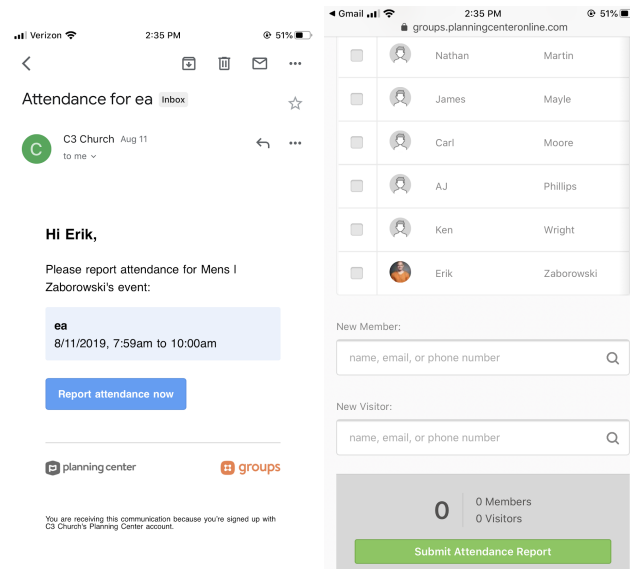


Leaders can also update the meeting location, contact information, and group description.

TAKING ATTENDANCE

Every time you have group you will be emailed a request to take attendance. You can also add new group members in this request.

There are currently two different types of reports. The Overview report will give you a bird's eye view of how your group is doing as a whole.



FAQ'S & Next Steps

How Will I be trained and supported?

- **Monthly Email** - You will receive a monthly email with updates, news, and a quick training video.
- **Facebook Group** - We have a facebook group for all group leaders where we post resources and communicate.
- **Coach** - Your coach will be walking with you as you lead a group. They will be there to connect with you, coach you, and care for you along the way.
- **Seasonal Groups Conference** - Three times a year (August, December, April) we gather together to celebrate what God has done, receive practical training to lead your group, and information on what's coming up
- **Group Website** - myc3groups.com for more additional resources and weekly guides

Where do I go for additional help?

- MyC3groups.com is the one stop shop for all studies, trainings, and resources. Email us at groups@myc3church.com
- Refer to the book - The Essential Guide for Small Groups. This will be given to you by your coach.