SMALL GROUP LEADER ORIENTATION HANDBOOK
# Contents

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INTRODUCTION
EPHESIANS 2:11–22

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

1. Biblical community is **essential**.

2. Biblical community is anchored to the **gospel**.

3. Biblical community flows from our **commitment** to Christ.

   *For more on biblical community, check out Appendix 2: Vision for Biblical Community*
BELONGING TO A SMALL GROUP

WHAT IS A SMALL GROUP?
A Small Group is a gathering of believers who intentionally come together to engage with God’s Word, grow in godliness, and magnify Christ in the context of authentic biblical community.

SMALL GROUP SNAPSHOT:
- Approximately 8-18 people
- Meets at least twice per month
- College Park Church and congregation specific

SMALL GROUP LEADER PROCESS
If a person hasn’t already, he or she must join the church in covenant membership before leading a Small Group. For more information about church membership at College Park Church visit www.yourchurch.com/membership.

1. Fill out Small Group Leader Application (www.yourchurch.com/smallgroups)
2. Attend Small Group Leader Orientation
3. Meet with North Indy, Fishers, or Castleton staff for Small Group Leader interview
4. Once approved, recruit Small Group members through personal relationships at College Park and by letting the staff know you’d like your group listed on the Small Group Finder. (http://www.yourchurch.com/smallgroupfinder/)

QUALIFICATIONS
A Small Group leader is a mature believer able to help others in their discipleship.

CHARACTER QUALIFICATIONS

1: Growing intimacy and devotion to God (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

2: Humility (1 Corinthians 4:9-13).


Commitment to unity in the local church (Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Peter 5:5) unity in the local church.

COMPETENCY QUALIFICATIONS

1. The ability to encourage belonging by leading a community.
2. Facilitate discussion to help others grow in God’s Word and mature in their faith.
3. Then encourage others to multiply into the world and make disciples.

BELONGING TO THE CHURCH: SMALL GROUPS AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

HOW DO SMALL GROUPS RELATE TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Small Groups are a key way for our church to:

1. Live out our church covenant.
2. Shepherd our people.
3. Be a part of discipleship.

- You do not need to be a member to be in a Small Group, but membership precedes Small Groups in our connection process for newcomers.
- Small Groups provide a context for the life together that is described in College Park Church’s member covenant.
- Encourage non-members in your group to become members.
SMALL GROUPS AND OUR SHEPHERDING STRUCTURE

The Elders use our Small Groups as a key way to shepherd the flock of God placed under their care.

NORTH INDY SHEPHERDING STRUCTURE

Role of the Coach:

- A discipleship-minded relationship (make connection at least once a month).
- A connection to the shepherding structures of College Park Church.

- Support the Elder in shepherding
- Be a resource for the Small Group leaders.

CASTLETON/FISHERS SHEPHERDING STRUCTURE
THE THREE ESSENTIALS
ESSENTIAL 1: CHRIST-CENTERED FOCUS ON THE WORD
INTRODUCTION TO THE SMALL GROUP ESSENTIALS

Our Small Group essentials were created to guide groups and protect them from becoming gatherings that do not reflect the biblical community we are trying to foster at College Park. The three essentials are:

- Christ-Centered Focus on the Word
- Intentionally Invasive
- Living Life Together

These three essentials function as guardrails that keep Small Group gatherings focused on their designed purpose. While there are many advantages to gathering in Small Groups, there are also dangers if we lose sight of the reasons why we gather together.

WHY DO WE STUDY THE WORD?

The Word of God is True. (Psalm 119:14,42, James 1:17, Titus 1:2).
The Word of God is sufficient to do the work of God in the people of God (2 Peter 1:3-11, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12-13).
The Word of God is necessary (Deut. 8:3, Romans 10:14-17)
The Word of God is clear (Deut. 30:11-14, Matt. 28:20, Romans 1:20, 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 John 5:3)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16).

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).


You can think too highly of your interpretations of Scripture, but you cannot think too highly of Scripture’s interpretation of itself. You can exaggerate your authority in handling the Scriptures, but you cannot exaggerate the Scriptures’ authority to handle you. You can use the word of God to come to wrong conclusions, but you cannot find any wrong conclusions in the word of God. -Kevin DeYoung, Taking God at His Word (41-42)
HOW DO WE STUDY THE WORD?
POSSIBLE METHOD OF STUDY: COMA METHOD

CONTEXT
• What kind of genre is this passage? (Letter, narrative, poem, proverb, apocalyptic, etc.)
• Who is it written to? What circumstances or passages surround the text that might help us understand the purpose of the text?

OBSERVATION
• What words or phrases stick out to you? Is anything repeated or emphasized?
• What do you think are the main points of the passage?
• Is there anything surprising in this text?

MEANING
• What does this passage teach us about God?
• How does this passage relate to Jesus?
• What does this passage teach us about ourselves?
• Do any other Scripture texts come to mind when reading this passage?

APPLICATION
• How does the passage challenge or confirm my thinking?
• How does this passage challenge the way I live?
• What sin might this passage reveal in my heart?

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1 Taken from David Helm, One to One Bible Reading
## Key Logical and Grammatical Markers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logical and Grammatical Function</th>
<th>Identifiable Key Words</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Ground or Foundational statement</td>
<td>Because, for, since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An inference, which builds off a previous thought, ground, or foundation as an implication:</td>
<td>Therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A contrary statement, or distinctive statement showing difference, a positive and negative contrast, etc.: But, However, Nevertheless, On the one hand</td>
<td>Not, but, however</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Connection between thoughts</td>
<td>and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose or Result Statements</td>
<td>So, in order that, that</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statements of Manner</td>
<td>In this way, parenthetical phrases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situational and hypothetical statements</td>
<td>If/ then</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>As, just as, like</td>
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</table>
ACTIVITY: LEADING A GROUP THROUGH THE BIBLE

Instructions: You are preparing for your Small Group and this is the passage that you will be discussing this evening. First, look through the passage and identify the possible main points of the text. Then come up with 2-3 questions that might lead your group to understand the meaning of the text, and then 2-3 questions that help your group to apply the text.

PASSAGE 1: 1 PETER 1:1-9

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1. Scripture Understanding Questions for your Small Group

2. Scripture Application Questions for your Small Group
PASSAGE 2: PSALM 19

1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.
3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.
4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,
5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.
11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.
12 Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.
13 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

1. Scripture Understanding Questions for your Small Group

2. Scripture Application Questions for your Small Group
ESSENTIAL 2: INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE
WHY SHOULD WE BE INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE?

Biblical community will not happen unless people know God and are known by others. Therefore, Small Groups should be a place where Christians are able to be safely known.

We want our leaders to ask the hard questions that serve to draw a person's inner thoughts into the light, yet this should be done in a loving way. While this intentionality is particularly helpful when addressing sin, being intentionally invasive affects more than just this one area. Heart-level questions expose who, what and how we are worshiping.

CLARIFYING INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE

INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE IS NOT

- Natural for people.
- Probing only for secret sin struggles.
- Simply asking heart-level questions.
- Only done in regular Small Group gatherings.

INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE IS

- Knowing and Remembering the basic facts about someone's life and family.
- Cultivating a culture of knowing in your Small Group.
- Modeling what is looks like to be transparent.
- Being wise with when and how you press into the details of someone's life.
- Seeking to bear the burdens of those in your Small Group.
- Praying for the Lord to open people's hearts and open doors for opportunities.

HEART-LEVEL CONVERSATION

Bob: “Hey Aaron, good to see you!”
Aaron: “Good to see you as well”
Bob: “Are you planning on going anywhere this summer for vacation?”
Aaron. “Yeah, we are headed to see my wife's family in Michigan.”
Bob: “Oh that’s great! Do you enjoy spending time with her family?”
Aaron. “Eh, it’s okay. It’s what we always do.”

From Aaron’s final response you could follow the affections to see:

- What do they love?
- What do they fear?
- What motivates them?
- Where do they find comfort?

**HEART LEVEL QUESTIONS**

- What is your greatest daily motivation in life? Why do you do what you do?
- What would you say are the things you’re most passionate about?
- What are the goals of your closest relationships?
- Where do you find comfort when you are worried or stressed?
- When have you struggled with bitterness and jealousy?
- What are your spiritual goals for your life?
- How do you spend your time? What are your daily priorities? What things do you invest time in every day?

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2 Adapted from *Side-by-Side* by Ed Welch (pg. 82).
## LEVELS OF CARE

| LEVEL 1 | ISSUES // “Everyday” struggles (i.e. shame & guilt, fear, anger, sorrow, job loss, financial need).  
WHO // An **every-believer** ministry; godly friend, mentor, disciple.  
SETTING // Informal; meet as needed.  
PROCESS // Care comes primarily through existing relationships. Informal invitations made by friends who notice issues in a friend’s life. |
|---|---|
| LEVEL 2 | ISSUES // Habitual struggles (i.e. individual habitual sins, marriage issues, parenting/family issues, conflict, medical illness).  
WHO // **Small Group leaders**, family leader, mature close believer; staff, coach, soul care team consulted.  
SETTING // Informal; initiate some intentional regular meetings for a short period of time (4-8 weeks).  
PROCESS // Care comes informally; meet as needed for a short period of time. |
| LEVEL 3 | ISSUES // Debilitating/destructive struggles (i.e. drunkenness, sexual immorality, debilitating depression and anxiety and other life dominating sins).  
WHO // **Coaches, the soul care team**, elders, and pastoral staff.  
SETTING // Formal counseling.  
PROCESS // Care comes primarily through the formal soul care application process. Prefer to have a godly friend, mentor or Small Group leader participate in the counseling process. |
| LEVEL 4 | ISSUES // Adultery, divorce, sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide threat, criminal offense, church discipline cases. Tragic life-dominating sins that often come through accusation or confession.  
WHO // **Elders, and the pastoral staff**, soul care team, other necessary individual.  
SETTING // Formal crisis counseling; some cases may merit referrals to other ministries, resident programs or stress centers.  
PROCESS // In addition to level three, other referrals and recommendations may be made that require additional formal applications etc. |
ACTIVITY: INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE CASE STUDIES

CASE #1 “JACK AND ERICA”

You’ve been a Small Group leader for a year, and there is a couple (Jack and Erica) that have become recently inconsistent since they joined your group in August. He works as a tax lawyer downtown, and she is finishing up her rotations at the hospital as she works through her nursing program. They are both members. They had a lot of enthusiasm when they first joined and both were very active participants. And anytime they were not able to come, they would email or text to let you know if their work schedules would allow them to attend.

But recently, they had not been letting you know they would not be coming. For a while, you figured they are just in a busy season of life, until recently, they showed up for the beginning of the new sermon series, and they weren’t nearly as engaged as they usually are. You noticed that they offered up a very vague prayer request about the busyness of life during prayer time. Jack seemed to look at his watch often throughout the night and was short with Erica at one point. When you let them know about the upcoming service project the group was going to do together that weekend, Erica seemed excited about the project, while Jack looked annoyed and upset that Erica would want to participate. As the night closes, you see both Erica and Jack bolt for the door; giving the group a half-hearted goodbye.

Questions to Consider:
• What might you do to press into Jack and Erica’s marriage?
• What questions might give a better understanding of where they are spiritually?
• If they never come back to Small Group what is your responsibility towards them?
• How might you shepherd the other members of your Small Group in this situation?

CASE #2 “CHARLOTTE”

You and your spouse have been part of a Small Group for almost two years. After year one, the leader moved away, and as the apprentice you stepped up to lead the group. The transition to hosting Small Group has been smooth and all the Small Group members seem to be growing and are committed to the group. One young single woman, Charlotte, who has been part of the group since you joined 2 years ago, seems to finally be opening up! She has always been consistent in coming, but she almost never said more than a few words each night. On the nights when guys and girls split up to be more intentional, your wife tells you that she seems to be learning each week, yet, the only personal insights she shares are about her job.

Recently, she has begun to add more to the discussion, and her prayer requests are becoming more personal. One night, your wife tells you she learned that Charlotte, has been dating a guy in the area for almost two years. Charlotte said that he grew up in a Christian home, but she said he is currently in a season of “searching,” and is not currently active at a church. You recall that all the times you’ve seen her at Sunday service, you’ve never seen him with her. You are thrilled that she has begun to open up, and you don’t want to press too much too fast, but you are concerned about this relationship.

Questions to Consider:
• What might you do to press into Charlotte’s relationship, while still being gentle?
• What questions need to be answered before you give Charlotte relationship advice?
• What is your responsibility to get to know Charlotte’s boyfriend? If they were to get engaged, what is your responsibility towards their relationship?
• How might you shepherd the other members of your Small Group in this situation?

**CASE #3 “KAREN”**

You’re a Small Group leader whose group has been together for a long time, but you recently added a new member, Karen, who is new to College Park. Karen is a woman in her fifties who just moved to Indianapolis to be near her mother, after her father passed away last year. Karen was not shy at her first Small Group discussion, but you could tell by some of her comments that she is not as familiar with the Bible.

During prayer time, it was clear that Karen still struggled with her father’s death. Karen often began to cry when talking about her dad, and she often would ask the group that God would give her a sign to assure her that her father was with Him in heaven. After a couple meetings, you can tell your group is a little unsure of how to respond to some of the things Karen is sharing. You even notice some couples begin to look annoyed when Karen shows up for Small Group.

**Questions to Consider:**
• What might you do to shepherd Karen during this time?
• What questions would ask Karen to better understand her situation?
• How might you involve/shepherd the other members of your Small Group in this situation?
ESSENTIAL 3: LIVING LIFE TOGETHER
SMALL GROUP EVENT VS. SMALL GROUP COMMUNITY
SMALL GROUP EVENT MENTALITY

“The Small Group is an event that happens either weekly or bi-weekly.”

Diagnostic Questions:
- How was the discussion?
- Did I learn anything?
- How were the snacks?
- Was it awkward?
- Does the leader seem like he knows what he’s talking about?

The event mentality focuses on the content of the discussion.

The event mentality hinders discipleship-relationships within the group.

The event mentality prevents life together outside of the gathering.

SMALL GROUP COMMUNITY MENTALITY

“The Small Group is a community that gathers regularly outside Sunday morning worship services.”

Diagnostic Questions:
- How were the people doing?
- Are we growing together?
- Are people participating together throughout the week?
- Are meetings taking place outside of the Small Group gathering?

The community mentality focuses on the members of the discussion.

The community mentality encourages discipleship-relationships within the group.

The community mentality cultivates life together outside of the gathering.

SMALL GROUP LIFE

As you think about different ways to live life together as a Small Group, think through these different “spaces” as opportunities for your Small Group to engage in varying levels of relational intimacy with other members.
Having this perspective allows:

1. A **holistic** view of Small Group life.
2. A **strategic** use of life’s spaces to cultivate living life together.

**FIGURE 1: SPACES OF SMALL GROUP LIFE**

- **Corporate Worship** – Space to come together to sit under the singing, praying, reading, and preaching of the Word together as a group.

- **Social Gathering** – Space to hang out as a group, engage in activities that cultivate friendships, and also engage in excellent outreach opportunities.

- **Small Group Gathering** – Space to engage together as a group in prayer and understanding/application of the Word.

- **Men/Women Gathering** – Space to engage as men/women in more intimate prayer and confession of sin for the pursuit of holiness.

- **1-1 Discipleship** – Space to engage with individuals at a deeper level to disciple them to maturity in Christ.
**RHYTHMS OF SMALL GROUP LIFE**

Perhaps the best and easiest way to live life together as a Small Group is to look at the different spaces above and think through rhythms of life that incorporate these different spaces.

**FIGURE 2: NON-LIVING LIFE TOGETHER SMALL GROUP RHYTHM**

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### FIGURE 3: LIVING LIFE TOGETHER SMALL GROUP RHYTHM

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### FIGURE 4: SMALL GROUP LEADER SCHEDULE

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*Green* = Corporate Small Group Meeting  
*Purple* = Leader-specific meeting
MULTIPLICATION
SMALL GROUP MULTIPLICATION

THE VISION FOR SMALL GROUP MULTIPLICATION

We believe that Small Groups should be for a season, and not for a lifetime. Our hope is that Small Groups would look to multiply every 1–2 years.

THREE REASONS FOR SMALL GROUP MULTIPLICATION

2. Small Group multiplication provides the opportunity for different people to use their gifts.
3. Small Group multiplication allows for others to experience community.

HOW SHOULD YOU MULTIPLY?

1. Spread the vision for multiplication at the very beginning, and remind your people of it often.
2. Identify an apprentice leader early on.
3. Make a plan to multiply and work towards it.
MULTIPLICATION THROUGH EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP

HOW DO SMALL GROUPS MULTIPLY THROUGH EVANGELISM?

While the Small Group gathering exists primarily for believers, Small Groups should still look to multiply the gospel through evangelism.

There are a number of different ways that Small Groups can engage in evangelism.

- **Equipping and training** group members to apply the Scripture to the lives of non-believers.
- Regularly encouraging group members to be engaged in evangelism and keeping one another accountable.
- **Praying** for non-believers in your Small Group gathering.
- Planning **events** to participate in evangelism as a Small Group.

HOW DO SMALL GROUPS MULTIPLY THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP?

It is not an exaggeration to say that Small Groups exist primarily for **discipleship**. Small Groups are a way in which we follow Jesus together.

**FOSTERING DISCIPLESHIP WITHIN THE SMALL GROUP**

As a leader you cannot disciple everyone in your Small Group, but you can foster discipleship within your group.

1. Ground your group in **the three essentials** of Small Groups. The three essentials are useful in disciple-making:
   - Our disciple-making should have a *Christ-centered, focus on the Word* for both the content and the means for discipleship.
   - As we seek to follow Jesus, we need to push the Word into every aspect of our lives, which means being *intentionally invasive*.
   - By *living life together*, we provide opportunities for relational discipleship as we learn to follow Jesus in the rhythms of life.
2. Encourage peer-to-peer discipleship, and leader-to-member.

3. Encourage group members to be engaged in discipleship, and connect members to one another.

Recognizing the Small Group gathering as necessary but insufficient, should encourage multiplication through both evangelism and discipleship with your group members.
PRACTICAL
THOUGHTS
THE SMALL GROUP GATHERING

PREPPING

To Become a Small Group Leader
1. Become a Member of College Park Church
2. Attend the full Small Group Leader Orientation
3. Complete the online Small Group Leader Application
4. Complete the Small Group Leader Interview with Bob Martin/Gary Meeks

To Fully Launch a New Small Group
1. Complete all the steps of becoming a Small Group Leader
2. Make decisions regarding your group
   1) How many times per month will you meet?
      a. Every other week
      b. Every week
   2) What nights will you meet?
   3) Where will you meet (one location or moving locations)?
   4) What time will you meet and end each meeting?
   5) How will you do childcare, if applicable?
      a. One Small Group adult watches children each meeting
      b. Each family provides own childcare in their home
      c. Hire a childcare worker for pay
   6) What will your Small Group meeting look like?
      a. Prayer
      b. Content (sermon guides or something else biblical)
      c. Food
      d. Fellowship
      e. Other intentional elements
   7) Who is already in your group?
   8) Will you need to have Karess Faull put your group on the Small Group Finder?
   9) Have at least 8 adults to begin meeting?
   10) Decide first meeting date
   11) Will you have everyone do a Small Group Covenant?
3. The above information (found in 1-4, and 7-8) will need to be emailed to Karess Faull (kfaull@yourchurch.com) so she can record it in the database, and open your group on the SG Finder if necessary.
4. Gary Meeks will assign you a Small Group Coach and communicate that to you, along with contact information emailed to you and your Coach
5. You are now free to meet as a Small Group and connect with your Small Group Coach
Schedule

SCHEDULE: SMALL GROUP A (SUNDAYS, 4:30–6:30PM)

1. Every other Sunday (with once per month gender-specific meeting)
2. Snacks, hangout, conversation, etc. (30 min)
   a. If there’s any announcements that need to be made, we make them right before the discussion.
3. Sermon/book discussion (45–60 minutes)
   a. Read the passage. Use sermon application guide as well as other questions that the leader comes up with.
4. Prayer (30–45 minutes)
   a. Sometimes we do this as a large group with couples sharing followed immediately by prayer.
   b. Sometimes we do this gender-specific.
5. Notes:
   a. We also sing on occasion (once every three meetings or so).
   b. Every few months we’ll do a vision and assessment night where we discuss how we are doing following our vision and where we need to grow as a group.
   c. We have had everyone share their testimony 5–7 minutes for the group to hear.

SCHEDULE: SMALL GROUP B (THURSDAYS, 6:30–9:00PM)

1. 4-week rotation (Large Group, Large Group, Guys and Girls, Off)
2. Arrive, Snacks hangout (15-20 min)
3. Announcements/Small Group Vision Reminder (5min)
4. Opening Questions
   a. Evidence of God’s grace this week
   b. Icebreaker that leads to hearing more about their lives/interests
   c. Prayer Requests
5. Prayer (5min)
6. Sermon and/or Scripture Passage Discussion (1hr-1hr 15min)
7. Break up into guys and girls (30-45min)
   a. Always include: accountability, personal application and prayer
   b. Sometimes: book discussion, memory verse practice
8. Close Small Group with singing a hymn that flows from the passage
LEADING

QUESTIONS

How to ask Good Questions: OARS

1. Ask OPEN-ENDED questions.
2. Affirm some aspect of a person’s response to the question.
3. Reflect the responses to the rest of the group.
4. Summarize the discussion with a conclusion leading to a biblical response.

Reasons Questions Fail
If you ask a question and are met with silence, that usually means one of these things about the question:

• TOO DEEP.
  o It might be a good question that takes people some time to process and respond to. Rephrase the question if you can, giving people time to think and maybe helping some members know what you’re asking.

• TOO EASY.
  o If it’s too obvious, people will either think you’re tricking them or you’re asking the question rhetorically. Just answer the question yourself and move on.

• TOO VAGUE.
  o It may be that people don’t know what you’re asking. Rephrase the question with greater clarity, and maybe guide people toward what kind of answer you want.

• TOO PERSONAL.
  o Your group members may not be ready to answer a really personal question in a big group. Save the question for a smaller breakout time if need be.

• TOO HOPELESS.
  o It may just be a bad question. Either make it into a good one or scrap it and move on.

PRAYER IN SMALL GROUPS

For more ideas see Appendix 3: Connecting the Word and Prayer

• Model that prayer is something you actually do.
• Include prayer in your Small Group covenant.
• At least, pray at the beginning of your meeting, and at the end of your meeting.
• Consider a variety of prayer forms.
• Consider a variety of prayer topics.
• Teach through your prayers.
• Confess sin and repent of sin in your prayers.
• Encourage your Small Group to attend the monthly Worship-Based Prayer Night together.
• Keep track of your group’s prayer requests and answered prayers.
• Be responsive to prayer requests emailed to your group.
• Pray for your Small Group throughout the week.

For more ideas, check out *Praying the Bible* by Donald Whitney and *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller.

**WRAPPING UP**

1. **SUMMARIZE** the content of the discussion.
2. **AFFIRM** key moments, or insights from the night.
3. **PROPOSE** possible applications and next steps individually and as a group.
4. **PRAY** together in response to what God has done.
APPENDICES
**APPENDIX 1: SMALL GROUP LEADER HUB**

For resources regarding Small Groups and Small Group leading go to the Small Group Leader hub at [www.yourchurch.com/sglhub](http://www.yourchurch.com/sglhub).
APPENDIX 2: SMALL GROUP COVENANT

Below are two examples of a Small Group covenant: (1) a long-form and (2) a short-form.

Long-form

As we enter our first year as a College Park Small Group, we agree to abide by the following covenant to assist us in achieving our mission and guide us in our mutual commitment to one another as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

Our mission as a Small Group is that of College Park Church, which is to ignite a passion to follow Jesus. As in the early church, God has raised up leadership at College Park to accomplish our mission of making disciples and building the local body of believers through a process of teaching, worship, fellowship, evangelism, and compassion, and we will endeavor to continue the process and follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in equipping us for our work in ministry (Eph. 4:1-16).

As a Small Group within the body of believers, we will encourage one another to gather each Sunday at College Park for fellowship and worship of our Lord Jesus, to hear the preached Word of God, and to pray that the Holy Spirit will move each of us to know Christ better and to live Spirit-filled lives in the world to the glory of God.

As a Small Group, we will gather together regularly as a home-based group to continue the process of making disciples and building up the body of believers by…

1. Applying God’s word to our everyday lives (Teaching)
2. Building community with love and devotion to one another (Fellowship)
3. Praying for and encouraging one another in our walk with the Lord (Prayer)
4. Sharing our faith, reaching out to the lost, and serving others (Outreach)

As we pursue our mission, we also agree to pursue the following group goals [these are sample goals]:

- Be open and honest with one another.
- Speak the truth in love and share our true feelings.
- Admit our weaknesses and confess our sins to one another.
- Lovingly forgive one another and gently hold one another accountable.
- Respect our differences and be courteous and kind to one another.
- Have fun together as a group.
- Engage in outreach activities.

As we endeavor to become more like Christ and live Spirit-filled lives, it is our desire as His disciples to …

- Live exemplary Christ-centered lives
- Feed daily upon the Word of God
- Pray for one another
- Hold to the teaching of Jesus
- Bear Spiritual fruit
- Encourage one another
- Actively share our faith
- Serve God in everything we do

As a Small Group…

- We will gather together ____________________________ (how often) and meet for ________ months.
- Our leaders will be ____________________________________________.
  If they cannot attend a particular week, a substitute leader will be delegated.
- Child care will be handled by ____________________________________________.
• Refreshments will be handled by
____________________________________ ______________________

We will also abide by the following disciplines:

a. Attendance: We will make every effort to attend all group meetings and arrive on time. If unable to attend, we will contact our leader before the meeting.

b. Participation: Each of us will come prepared for active participation in discussing the application of God’s Word.

c. Focus: We agree to discuss the application of the Word from our Bibles and to use the pastor’s messages as a springboard for our discussion.

d. Confidentiality: Generally, all matters shared within the group will remain confidential. Some rare circumstances may follow Matthew 18 principles, and legal obligations on a need-to-know basis.

e. Self-Assessment: During the term of this covenant, we will periodically review our progress and make appropriate adjustments.

In full acceptance of this covenant, I, ____________________________________________, recognize my commitment to God and the members of this group, and will keep this document as a reminder of the voluntary covenant I have entered into on this date: ________________________________________.

Short-form

**OUR SMALL GROUP WILL:**

1. Meet every week on Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. and end at about 9:30 p.m.
2. Be hospitable to any visitors to our group.
3. Grow spiritually by studying God’s Word as a community.
4. Use the inductive method as a means to study God’s Word and not as an end in itself.
5. Study God’s Word for life application rather than just to increase head knowledge.
6. Pray with one another during every Small Group meeting.
7. Serve together, inside or outside of College Park Church.
8. Do fun activities together!

**I WILL:**

• Make Small Group meetings a priority, and if I am running late or unable to attend, I will let someone who will be attending know.
• Be prepared and ready to participate in the discussion of that week’s Scripture passage.
• Keep confidential the personal information shared at Small Group, except when necessary to share Biblically, or legally.
• Create a safe place for each member to share with no judgments attached.
• Be transparent and accountable to the group concerning my spiritual growth.
• Take ownership of my responsibility of being faithful, accountable, and teachable.
• Pray regularly for my fellow Small Group members.
• Pray regularly for the pastors, elders, missionaries, and strategic partners of College Park Church.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________________________
APPENDIX 3: MEMBER COVENANT

MEMBER COVENANT

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public confession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully endeavor to keep the spirit of this covenant as one body in Christ.

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and love; to promote its fruitfulness and spirituality; to attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and doctrines; to submit to its discipline and the authority of its officers; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, to the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotion to the Lord; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our family and neighbors; to walk carefully in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to abstain from all activities, habits, and lifestyles that dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the gospel witness; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior, and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord’s return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

We moreover purpose that when we leave this church we will as soon as possible unite with another church of like faith where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.
APPENDIX 4: SMALL GROUP LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION

Small Group Leaders serve a vital role to the Small Group ministry at College Park and in the overall success of our mission as a church. Below is a summary of the “roles” that a Small Group Leader fulfills as they successfully lead a group. That is followed by the practical expectations we have for Small Group Leaders.

Roles that a Small Group Leader Fulfills

1. FOLLOWER
   The Small Group Leader is first a follower of Jesus. Their life should be marked by a growing walk with the Lord: growth that is marked by intimacy with Him through the Word, prayer, repentance, worship, service, and other spiritual disciplines. A spiritual leader is first led by Jesus. We cannot give what we do not first possess.

   Because of the significance of this shepherding role, we desire for men aspiring to be Small Group Leaders to emulate the qualifications of elders and deacons found in 1 Timothy 3: 1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 (although the Small Group Leader does not possess these precise offices), and we desire for female Small Group Leaders to also emulate as many of these same qualities as are applicable.

2. LEADER
   The Small Group Leader is not just a facilitator; they lead their group to truth, processing each person’s response and leading those in the group to a deeper knowledge of God’s Word and His will. They need to know how to field difficult questions and bring the group to a place of understanding and moving ahead in their walks with Jesus while seeking God for the answers.

3. VISIONARY
   The Small Group Leader should continue to align the group with our 3 Small Group Essentials. And the Small Group Leader should also be thinking about how each member of the group would fulfill their next steps in College Park’s churchwide strategy for each person to “Belong, Grow, Multiply.” The leader should know how to leverage the ministries and resources of College Park Church to help each Small Group member find their next step.

4. COUNSELOR
   Every believer in the group has needs and needs to hear the Word of God applied to various situations they deal with in life, including the hard ones. The Small Group Leader is one who is experienced and passionate about bringing the Word of God to bear upon the life situations of those in the group (and employs others to do the same for one another).

   The Small Group Leader also seeks to continue growing in using the Word of God to help others and even seeks training to further sharpen these skills (including classes and trainings offered through College Park Church).

   Although these opportunities will look different for Leaders as they relate to different Small Group members with different needs, we consider involvement with the soul care of Small Group members essential to the role of a Small Group Leader. The Small Group Leader is a part of the “levels of care”

3 Small Group Essentials: Christ-Centered Focus on the Word, Intentionally Invasive, Living Life Together
that College Park Church offers in counseling church attendees/members, and we expect Small Group Leaders to participate in helping their Small Group members and directing them to further levels of care when needed.

5. **SHEPHERD**
   Although it is the church’s Elders that have the biblical office of “shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:1-4), the Small Group Leader is involved under their authority to do life-on-life “shepherding” for those in their group. This is accomplished by knowing those in the group and leading, feeding, and protecting them with God’s Word. This shepherding involves using the Word to help them live faithfully as well as coming alongside members for support, accountability, and discipleship. This shepherding should be marked by gentleness and compassion for God’s sheep.

6. **INTERCESSOR**
   The Small Group Leader prays for their members: publicly in the group, privately in their own prayer life, and face-to-face with each person as appropriate. They know the needs of those in the group and bring those before the Lord.

7. **DELEGATOR**
   The Small Group Leader cannot do everything. When it comes to planning events, meals, get-togethers and various other elements of Small Group life, the Leader should involve others. Although the final responsibility for the group rests on the Leader, a good Leader knows how to incorporate the talents, gifts, and resources of Small Group members.

8. **UNDER A COACH**
   A Leader’s regular contact with their Coach enables effective and well-supported shepherding for the whole group. The Coach offers both relationship (aimed at discipleship) and support (including resources, counsel, prayer, and accountability). A Coach’s help and encouragement is essential to success as a Small Group Leader, and involvement in this relationship is a necessary part of the role.

9. **TRAINEE**
   Small Group Leaders should prioritize and attend the regular Small Group Leader Equip training events that occur usually twice per year. These events include:
   - Helpful guidance on how to lead (through live teaching, case studies, interaction)
   - The opportunity to ask questions and interact with staff and other Leaders
   - A chance to hear new vision/direction on high-level church issues and initiatives
   - The opportunity to meet with your Coach
   - A refreshing evening of dinner with other Leaders

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4 **Levels of Care at College Park Church:** The following is a summary of how we seek to offer biblical counseling to those in various situations at College Park Church:

1) **LEVEL ONE:** Every believer informally helping others (or meeting as needed) who have “everyday” struggles (i.e. shame, anger, job loss, benevolence).

2) **LEVEL TWO:** Small Group Leaders (as well as mature close believers, Coach, soul care team consulted) informally helping (or with some intentional regular meetings over a short period of time, 4-8 weeks) those who have “habitual” struggles (i.e. individual habitual sins, marriage issues, parenting/family issues, conflict, medical illness).

3) **LEVEL THREE:** Coaches, soul care team, Elder, or pastoral staff (with Small Group Leader involved as appropriate) formally helping (i.e. apply for soul care, formal meeting times) those with “debilitating/destructive” struggles (i.e. drunkenness, sexual immorality, debilitating depression and anxiety, other life dominating sins).

4) **LEVEL FOUR:** Elder, pastoral staff, soul care team, other necessary individual offering formal crisis counseling (possibility may need to refer depending on need) for those who have significant crisis issues (e.g. adultery, divorce, sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide threat, criminal offense, church discipline cases, tragic life-dominating sins that often come through accusation or confession).
10. **SERVANT**
   The Small Group Leader serves the members in their Small Group in a variety of ways (preparing for meeting times, listening, helping with other’s needs, etc.). Servant leaders are marked by humility, flexibility, and healthy submission to the leadership of College Park Church.

**Practical Expectations for Small Group Leaders**

As our Small Group Leaders build into our Small Group members, there are 6 components that are necessary for success in this role:

1. **GATHER AS A SMALL GROUP**: We expect College Park Church Small Groups to meet at least 2 times per month. This is a time to discuss God’s Word with an emphasis on applying it to the lives of those in the Small Group. This discussion time is usually accompanied by a time of prayer.

2. **MEET WITH COACH**: Small Group Leaders need to make time to meet regularly with their Coach. We think that Coach-Leader meetings should be happening on a monthly basis (at a minimum).

3. **PARTICIPATE IN TRAININGS**: Our Small Group Leaders should prioritize and attend:
   - Our initial Small Group Leader Orientation (which is required to lead a Small Group)
   - Our Small Group Leader Equip training events. These events (usually 2 times per year) are prime opportunities to connect/meet with other leaders (and your Coach) and receiving ongoing training and input.

4. **SOUL CARE & DISCIPLING**: Small Group Leaders should be individually involved in the lives of their Small Group members, helping address the situations in their lives with the truth of God’s Word. Whether these conversations are more proactive and growth-oriented (general discipling) or reactive and focused on addressing sin and/or suffering (biblical counseling)—these opportunities are important for helping those in the group.

   We encourage and recommend for our Small Group Leaders to go through our Soul Care Growing or Discipleship training series. Additionally, our team has resources to help with guiding Small Group members through discipleship or counseling situations.

5. **COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF**: Small Group Leaders need to keep healthy communication with our Small Group ministry staff. This includes responding to personal correspondence (e.g. about those interested in joining the Small Group, etc.) and initiatives (e.g. Small Group Roster Update, etc.). This also involves being aware of updates and resources through our regular eNews emails and the Small Group Leader Hub (our resource library for Leaders).

6. **MULTIPLYING & TRANSITIONING**: We desire for all of our Small Group Leaders to be open to multiplying their Small Group into two or more Small Groups at some point by raising up an Apprentice Small Group Leader that assists in the duties of leadership for a season then breaks off from the original group to start a new one. We also want Small Group Leaders to recognize that our anticipated life cycle for a Small Group is 1-2 years. A Small Group Leader is welcome to evaluate when to transition out of leadership at any point, but we expect that they have made some effort at raising up a new leader for their group if they will be stepping down.
APPENDIX 5: SMALL GROUP COACH JOB DESCRIPTION

College Park Church Small Group Coach Job Description

Small Group Coaches serve a vital role in the Small Group ministry at College Park and in the overall success of our mission as a church. The role of Small Group Coach exists to be on the front line of leading, caring for, and shepherding our Small Group Leaders:

• **LEAD SMALL GROUP LEADERS:** Coaches walk beside our Small Group Leaders as they deal with the myriad issues that exist within their group, and they help to ensure that the Small Group Leader is helping the group flourish within the guardrails of our 3 Small Group Essentials.⁵

• **CONNECTION TO CHURCH:** Coaches are key lay leaders who help keep our Small Groups linked with the life and functions of the greater church at College Park.

• **WORKING WITH ELDERS:** Coaches are just below the Elders when it comes to shepherding the flock at College Park.⁶

Below is a list of the key elements involved in Coaching, followed by our practical expectations for Coaches at College Park Church.

Elements of Coaching

The Coach role is based upon RELATIONSHIP BUILDING and PROVIDING SUPPORT for our Small Group Leaders:

1. **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

We want all of our Small Group Leaders to know and be known by a high-level leader at College Park. This is why having a discipleship-minded relationship is the most essential focus of the Coach’s role.

When issues arise, when tragedy strikes, or when the church needs to step in and help, our Small Group Leaders need to know who to trust and how to navigate the issues and needs at hand. Our Coaches should be building deep relationships with and caring for our Leaders as these Leaders care for and shepherd the men and women in their groups.

This Coach-Leader relationship should involve a few key dynamics:

• **MODELING:** Maintaining and modeling a strong personal walk with the Lord so that the Coach can give out what God is pouring into them.

• **PURSUING:** Intentionally pursuing a deep relationship with the Leader.

• **CARING:** Compassionately caring for genuine needs in the Leader’s life.

• **DISCIPLING:** Seeking growth opportunities for the Leader in their walk with Christ and in their character.

As this relationship grows and develops, the Coach will have the platform to speak into the Leader’s life and to encourage, shepherd and to be an advocate for the Leader.

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⁵ **3 Small Group Essentials:** Christ-Centered Focus on the Word, Intentionally Invasive, Living Life Together

⁶ Because of the significance of this shepherding role, we desire for men aspiring to the Coach position to emulate the qualifications of elders and deacons found in 1 Timothy 3: 1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. We also desire for female Coaches to seek to ascribe to as many of these qualities as possible and are applicable. One of the best training grounds for leadership development is in Small Group leadership, and some of our best Elders have come from being Coaches and then transitioning into this office of the church.
2. **PROVIDING SUPPORT**

Our Small Group Leaders encounter all kinds of challenges and opportunities as they shepherd their groups. The Coach is a main lifeline for them to shepherd those in their group, navigating the four dynamics of shepherding:

- **Knowing** those in the group
- **Leading** them
- **Feeding** them the truth of God’s Word
- **Protecting** them from false teaching and other threats

Coaches offer Small Group Leaders a number of facets of support: personal support to keep enduring, tactical support to navigate the questions and issues that arise, and spiritual support such as prayer coverage as they lead their Small Group.

There are usually **4 main lines of support** your Small Group Leader will need:

1) **RESOURCES**: Resourcing Leaders when making decisions regarding study materials and resources. Staff members are ready to assist on this as needed.

2) **COUNSELING**: Helping Leaders find the right people to come alongside them when counseling issues arise (including ones that are beyond a Coach’s ability), in line with our “levels of care” as a church.

3) **PRAYER**: Prayer support for personal and group needs.

4) **ACCOUNTABILITY**: Accountability and oversight regarding the responsibilities of the Small Group Leader: including helping them stay aligned with the 3 Small Group Essentials and the core values of College Park Church.

Support may come in a variety of ways in various seasons of ministry, but it is rooted and anchored to the relationship that our Coaches build with their Leaders. Because we can’t anticipate every need, issue, or crisis that will arise in a particular Small Group, the support of a Coach is vital to the Leader’s ability to respond well. Coaches are also the key liaison between our Pastors/Elders and the Small Group Leaders. They are the first step of assistance for Small Group Leaders.

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7 **Levels of Care at College Park Church**: The following is a summary of how we seek to offer biblical counseling to those in various situations at College Park Church:

5) **LEVEL ONE**: Every believer informally helping others (or meeting as needed) who have “everyday” struggles (i.e. shame, anger, job loss, benevolence).

6) **LEVEL TWO**: Small Group Leaders (as well as mature close believers, Coach, soul care team consulted) informally helping (or with some intentional regular meetings over a short period of time, 4-8 weeks) those who have “habitual” struggles (i.e. individual habitual sins, marriage issues, parenting/family issues, conflict, medical illness).

7) **LEVEL THREE**: Coaches, soul care team, Elder, or pastoral staff (with Small Group Leader involved as appropriate) formally helping (i.e. apply for soul care, formal meeting times) those with “debilitating/destructive” struggles (i.e. drunkenness, sexual immorality, debilitating depression and anxiety, other life dominating sins).

8) **LEVEL FOUR**: Elder, pastoral staff, soul care team, other necessary individual offering formal crisis counseling (possibility may need to refer depending on need) for those who have significant crisis issues (e.g. adultery, divorce, sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide threat, criminal offense, church discipline cases, tragic life-dominating sins that often come through accusation or confession).
Practical Expectations for Coaches

As our Coaches build into our Small Group Leaders, there are 5 components necessary for success in this role:

1. **TIME MEETING WITH SMALL GROUP LEADER:** Coaches need to make time to meet regularly with each of their Small Group Leaders. Relationships, particularly those focused on discipleship, need to happen often, intentionally, and with preparation. We think that Coach-Leader meetings should be happening on a monthly basis (at a minimum). We also recommend staying connected through the month via texts, emails, and/or phone calls.

2. **TIME MEETING WITH ELDER:** Just as we desire all of our Small Group Leaders to be supported by Coaches, we desire that our Coaches are poured into by a Pastor or Elder (or Elder’s wife for female Coaches) so that they are growing and able to invest in our Small Group Leaders. We desire our Coaches to meet every 4-5 weeks with their Pastor/Elder.

   Taken together, we anticipate that a Coach will be spending a total of approximately 4-5 hours a month in his/her meetings with Small Group Leaders and his/her Elder.

3. **FOCUS ON DISCIPLESHIP:** We want the Coach-Leader relationship to have a focus on discipleship. Although this may look different for different Coach-Leader relationships, this focus should play out in opportunities where the Coach and Leader are being pointed to God’s Word in order to grow spiritually and as leaders together. Our team has resources to help with guiding your Leader through this discipleship journey (including an assessment tool to help determine next steps or areas of growth for both Coaches and Leaders). This is a journey, and it happens over time.

4. **SOUL CARE:** Soul Care is the ministry of connecting God’s Word to issues of sin and suffering. And this effort is woven into the ministry that our Small Group Leaders carry out with their group members. Because of this, we believe that Coaches should be equipped and regularly taking opportunities to counsel Small Group Leaders with God’s Word for their growth, and we also believe that Coaches should be involved with the soul care of Small Group members when issues arise that need to be escalated beyond the Small Group Leader alone (see footnote on Levels of Care). We highly recommend each Coach going through our Soul Care Growing or Discipleship training series.

5. **PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING:** We desire that our Coaches be trained to the same level as our Small Group Leaders—and even beyond. Because of this, we want all of our Coaches to:
   - Participate in our initial Small Group Leader Orientation (required for becoming a Small Group Leader)
   - To prioritize and attend the Coach training events that happen throughout the year
   - To prioritize attending as often as possible our Small Group Leader training events. These events are prime opportunities to connect/meet with your Leader.

Our Small Group Coaches are leaders that we cherish and want to support well, and we are eager to see the Lord bring in more and more men and women into this role to help in leading men and women toward maturity as flourishing, multiplying, passionate followers of Jesus.

If you have any questions about this role, please contact Gary Meeks, 317.875.0282, garymeeks@yourchurch.com.
APPENDIX 6: PRAYER TIME IDEAS

You can use the following four-part structure for leading your group in prayer time.

“I’m Sorry”—Confession & Repentance
Confess any sins to God that he has brought to mind. (Are there any sins God has been convicting you of as we’ve studied the Scripture? Are there any “respectable” sins that you’ve become accustomed to or callous about? Are there any sins or patterns you feel you’ve become trapped in or enslaved by?) Ask for his mercy and forgiveness for committing those sins and for the sin in you that led to them, but also ask for help as you turn from them (repent).

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!” (Psalm 51:1-2)
See also Psalm 51:1-11; 32:1-5; 38:18; 2 Samuel 24:10; James 5:16; Isaiah 6:5

“Help”—Supplication or Prayer Requests for God’s Help
Ask God to give you eyes to see your sin for what it is. Ask God to give you the strength, wisdom, courage, and help as you fight sin. Pray for specific ways you need God’s power or promises you need God to fulfill in your life. Pray for heart change in your life or for those around you. Pray for the Spirit’s help to live in his power and not your own.

“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’” (Mark 9:24)
See also: Psalm 79:9; Ephesians 4:14-21; 6:18; Matthew 6:13; Colossians 1:9-11

“Thank you”—Thanksgiving & Praise
Thank God that through Christ and in Christ there is mercy, grace, and forgiveness of sins. Praise God that allows us and invites us to bring him our sin so we might have restored fellowship. Thank God that Jesus died to remove the penalty, power, stain, shame, and guilt for our past, present, and future sins.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits…He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.” (Psalm 103:1-2, 10-12)
See also: 1 John 1:9; Psalm 103; Colossians 1:13-14; Romans 10:23; Hebrews 8:1

Examples of Passages to Pray into

- Psalm 32, 34, 51, 100
- Matthew 6:9-13 or Luke 11:2-4
- Eph. 1:3-14; Eph. 1:16-23; 3:14-21
- Col. 1:9-14
- Phil. 1:9-11
20 Small Group Prayer Ideas

1. **Pair people into groups** and have them pray together, and then pray for each other that week.
2. **Lead a night of prayer** where you pray through a text, lists, or current needs.
3. **Split men and women** into groups for prayer.
4. **Ask someone in your group in advance** to lead prayer and give them a compelling vision for how important that time together is for the group.
5. Ask people to **focus their prayers** in light of what you talked about from the text.
6. **Pray for the gospel to go forth** through personal evangelism, local outreach, and global outreach. Pray for relationships people in your Small Group are building with unbelievers.
7. **Pray for a leader**, pastor, missionary, staff person, or elder at the church and let them know you were praying for them.
8. **Pray into the text you studied in light of a model** like ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) or PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield) or 4 R’s (Revere, Repent, Request, Rejoice).
9. **Include singing** as part of a prayer night or a prayer time.
10. Get a **Christian song, hymn, or written prayer** and have people pray it together.
11. **Include children** as part of the prayer time or have families pray together.
12. Sit together at a **Worship-based Prayer service**.
13. Ask people to keep a list of prayer requests shared and to **pray over them during the week**.
14. **Pray in light of current events**, news, national or local issues, holidays, or the church calendar.
15. **Pray for national or local leaders**, civic servants, local schools and their faculty, and others in positions of service or authority.
16. Ask another Small Group leader or two if your groups can **join together for a prayer night**.
17. **Pray similar to Acts 1:8** by praying for your community, then city, then country, and then the world.
18. **Pray over needs on the online prayer wall** (yourchurch.com/prayerwall).
19. Take a few moments at the outset of the night to **allow people to pray silently**. This is a group time to encourage prayers of confession or thanksgiving. Provide a verse or thought to frame the time.
20. **Pray through the church covenant or Small Group member covenant together**.
APPENDIX 7: ENTRANCE POINTS TO BEING INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE

1. **Everyday Entrance** | **GOAL:** To make use of everyday moments to engage someone spiritually. To express genuine interest in someone’s life and perhaps see if there is a way the Lord might use you to bless that person as you engage in spiritual conversation. This is used when you may not really know how things are going and don’t know specific questions to ask, but these open the door for deeper questions. *These questions have more of a ‘get to know you feel’ to them.*

   **Sample Questions:**

   - How is your prayer life going? What are you praying for these days?
   - Tell me what you are learning in the Word these days? What are you reading?
   - Is there anything you are struggling with that I can pray for?
   - Are there any Scriptures you are learning that you find helpful?
   - Are you encouraged in the Lord these days or discouraged?
   - How do you see the Lord growing you in Him these days?
   - What are some things you are trusting the Lord for lately?
   - What is your biggest struggle right now?

2. **Evidence Entrance** | **GOAL:** Employ this entrance when you have evidence that something is going wrong or you are aware of a situation where you should want to give input and provide wisdom, compassion and counsel. *These questions have more of a ‘coming alongside you’ feel.*

   **Sample Questions:**

   - You mentioned you had struggled with forgiving ______. Can you tell me how you are doing with that?
   - I know you have struggled in your prayer life in the last year. Did you ever isolate a reason for that? Can we talk further about remedying that and good next steps?
   - Do you still struggle with envy and jealousy the way you have in the past? What has been helpful to renew your mind and think more biblically about that?
Would you say you tend to repent quickly to the Lord or do you find yourself in self-pity a lot?

Six months ago you mentioned you were really going to get after your devotional life. How's that going? What progress have you seen and what made the difference for you?

How are you handling the recent death in your family? What about God’s character is encouraging you these days?

What has been helpful as you have battled depression to renew your mind and renew your hope in the Gospel and God’s provision in your life?

3. Extreme Entrance | GOAL: Employ this when there is clear evidence that repentance and change needs to take place and especially when you see it currently is not happening. This is often seen as formal confrontation or intervention. *These questions have more of a ‘we need to address this in your life quickly’ feel.*

**Sample Questions:**

I have noticed that you seem to consistently put your husband down and welcome a negative reflection on him. Why is that?

Do you notice that you tend to talk about people’s sin a lot more than you do your own? Can we look at some Scriptures that have helped me deal with my own tongue?

You keep sharing how you fail and fail again in pornography. We need to step things up in terms of care, accountability and where your heart is with the Lord.

You have shared how things are very hard financially for you, but I keep hearing of purchases you have been making that, to me, at least, do not seem essential. Do you work with a budget and would you be interested in some biblical teaching on how to steward God’s money?

I would like to share with you that you keep sharing many prayer requests with us, but from your own admission, you spend very little time in prayer and hardly any in God’s Word. Do you think God is trying to corner you to make you see your need for Him more?
APPENDIX 8: SOUL CARE TREE DIAGRAM

WHAT IS YOUR CIRCUMSTANCE?

Stuck in traffic and late for an important meeting

Godly behavior

- Praying for others during the extra time
- Listening to a sermon or worshiping the Lord in song
- Being patient, and trusting that the Lord will continue to provide for your family even if my boss is angry

How did you respond/react?

- Anxiety/Worry
- Anger: Yelled ungodly words at the other drivers
- Impatience

Godly thoughts

- I hope everyone is okay, hope there is not an accident
- Thankful that I have healthy kids, and that I can help my wife get them ready for school
- How can I use the extra time the Lord has given me for God’s glory and my good?

What are/were you thinking?

- I wish didn’t have to get my kids ready for school
- If only I had my own company, I could make my own schedule and never be late.
- Why can’t people just drive like me?

Godly wants

- I want to glorify God with my thoughts, actions, and words even in this circumstance. (1Cor. 10:31)
- I want to be thankful in all circumstances (1Thess. 5:18)

What are/were you wanting?

- I wish I didn’t have all this responsibility
- I don’t want my boss to get mad at me
- I want an easier life. I want a different life.

WHAT are you worshiping?

Self, control, praise of man, life of ease, autonomy
APPENDIX 9: 7 DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS: KEEPING YOUR SMALL GROUP FOCUSED ON THE WORD

You can use the following seven questions to diagnose how your small group is doing in keeping focused on the word.

1. Is *Scripture* the regular diet of your Small Group gatherings and discipleship relationships?

2. When prayer requests are shared, are only physical or material requests? Do they reflect the prayers found in the Bible?

3. When you discuss the sermon in your Small Group, do you study the sermon *manuscript* or the *passage*?

4. When your discussion goes off into different rabbit trails are they still within the *boundaries* of the Scriptures, or are they purely conjecture that facilitates doubt and confusion?

5. When questions about a passage come up and no one is sure of the answer, do you seek an answer through further *study* or just let it go?

6. When trials, difficult circumstances, or questions come up in the lives of your Small Group members, are the Scriptures *consulted* and used as a means of encouragement or guidance?

7. Would a group member be at a *disadvantage* if they forgot to bring their Bibles regularly to Small Group gathering or discipleship relationship?
APPENDIX 10: LIFE MAPS

All of us have a story to tell … it’s the story of what God has done in your life. A Life Map, or a testimony, is one way to think about telling your story. It’s a great way to have group members share their personal histories and talk about how God has worked in their lives.

Life Map Components:

**History**
This is the story of your life. It includes biographical information, past life experiences, and significant moments of your life. It can’t include every detail of your life, but it should include current realities and how God has brought you to where you are today.

**High Times**
These can be the joyful, exciting times in life. It can be marked by marriages or births, blessings, opportunities, joy, celebrations, accomplishments, rewards, gifts, relationships and transformation.

**Hard Times**
These are difficult or challenging seasons or stages or life. These might be marked by loss, grief, sorrow, disappointment, depression, isolation, rejection, heartache, challenge, confusion, suffering or illness. These times are often seasons of growth and maturity followed by High times as well as seeing or experiencing the Hand of God in your life.

**Heroes**
These are the people that have significantly influenced your life. A hero might be a parent or grandparent, friend, mentor, teacher, coach, missionary or pastor. These people are the men and women who have lasting impact on your life and have shaped you in some specific way.

**Hand of God**
This is where God’s power and presence can clearly be seen in your life. It may show up, or be more visible, at various times in your life, or may be a consistent visible presence. This would include times where you are very aware of God’s protection, provision, presence, discipline, deliverance, or sanctifying work.

**Suggested Parameters for Life Maps**

**Appropriate Vulnerability**
Not every aspect of your life should be revealed or communicated when you share your Life Map. This is particularly true in a mixed group. Members should be encouraged and coached on how to share both vulnerably and appropriately.

**Brief but Thorough**
There should be a specific time frame established to share your Life Map. It’s necessary to give ample time for each person to share, but it’s necessary to limit that time frame as well. 20-25 minutes seems ample for sharing a Life Map with 5-10 minutes given for follow up questions by the group.

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8 This resource has been adapted from Campus Crusade.
Listen well
Life Maps are personal and revealing. Be sure the group is listening well, that interruptions or disruptions are limited, and that people feel safe when it comes time to sharing their Life Map.

Preparation
It's vital that each person prepares a visual map or outline in preparation for sharing with the group. It's too easy to ramble or get caught in frivolous details if there is not ample preparation for sharing your Life Map.

Allow Room for Diversity and Differences
Not everyone is an artist. Not everyone is a public speaker. Not everyone feels safe sharing the details of their life. The goal is not to force everyone into the same box but to give everyone the opportunity to share their life story with the group. Everyone’s approach will be a little different.

Confidentiality
It's important to protect each other when vulnerable and specific details of life are shared. It's important the group members know their stories will not be shared on Youtube or Facebook.

Building Blocks
As you share your stories with one another, it provides a great foundation upon which to grow alongside each other, to pray for one another, and to encourage each other in your journey with Christ.
APPENDIX 11: GLOBAL MISSIONS AND SMALL GROUPS

There are a number of ways for Small Groups to be involved in missions at College Park. Below are a handful of ideas that you could implement with your Small Group:

Host a missionary during our Meals with Missionaries in REACH.

Pick a missionary and pray for a new missionary as a group each week.

Pray through Operation World as a group.

Go on a Vision Trip with members of your Small Group or financially support members of your Small Group who go on a vision trip.