

Leading a small group or “mini-church”

These groups are an experiment to discover how the words and example of Jesus impact our lives and those around us. Our objective is to help one another walk as Jesus did (*1John 2.6; Matthew 28.19-20; John 13.15*). Our desire is to see **200 groups** in **Savannah** helping individuals become like Jesus and starting other local fellowships. Right now there are _____ groups. Consider the guidelines below for starting a group in your area.

Starting a Group

The goal is not to start a successful group or have a healthy community, but to make committed disciples of Jesus who will multiply into every nation and every generation to come. Do not try to grow your group larger and larger with a “big shot” at the top, but rather to continue to divide and multiply like an amoeba and train many workers for the kingdom of God (*Matthew 23.8-10; Matthew 9.37-38*). Focus on individuals. Every follower of Jesus is a laborer and will participate in the mission of Jesus (*Matthew 4.19; Matthew 28.19-20*). We recommend dividing your group and appointing new leadership every time it grows to 8 to 12 consistent members. The steps below are suggested guidelines for starting a new group.

Ask God to show you areas of your life that you are **withholding** from him and areas of **disobedience** (or delayed obedience). *Genesis 22.16-18; John 15.1-10*

Pray persistently about your area and the audience that you are reaching out to—more than you have ever prayed before! Pray for a partner and a “worthy man.” *Matthew 10.11; Luke 10.1*

Start laboring and recruiting. Consider Jesus’ model and the instructions he gave when he sent his disciples out. *Matthew 4.17,23; Matthew 10; Luke 10*

Start a group with those you have recruited and reached. Even one or two spiritually hungry people are enough to start a group. Treat this as the “church” God has entrusted to you. *Matthew 18.20* “Where 2 or 3 are gathered in [Jesus’] name...”

Focus on application and keep it brief. Spend the first 15 minutes of each meeting sharing experiences in outreach and who each person shared scripture with since the last meeting. Talk about how God has been revealing himself to each person in their personal time with Him. As the discussion progresses, keep it focused on the scriptures that are being read and on real life application.

Discussion tips. Keep it basic and brief. Do not teach the group but allow them to discover the main principles of each scripture for themselves.

Start training leaders right away. Look for those who are quick to obey Jesus’ commands. Teach and model for them what you have learned about making disciples and recruiting people into God’s kingdom. Make these zealous disciples the leaders of the next group. *Matthew 4.18-22*

Keep it small. Once your group grows to 8-12 people designate another leader and split the group.

Meet in neutral places if possible (like apartments, coffee shops, etc.) If a group totally stagnates and will not take initiative to follow Jesus’ commands or reach out to those around them after many weeks, then leave them to continue meeting on their own. Start a new group at a different location. If there is a committed disciple in the stagnate group, take him with you.

Continue to recruit and multiply...always

Meet with the leaders of each group as they multiply and begin to disciple them intentionally adhering as closely as you know how to the principles of Jesus’ life and how he invested in his own disciples. As the group grows you may need to pull these leaders together into a laborers training group for deeper fellowship, study of the scriptures, and practical ministry training.

Set the pace. Model for your group the kind of zealous lifestyle that they should be pursuing. *1Corinthians 11.1*

Suggested Format for Group Meetings

PRAY

REVIEW

- Who did you share last week's passage with? Who did you read the Bible with or share scripture with?
- How have you experienced God since last we met? How have you been applying what God is teaching you?
- Review scripture together: one verse that each person memorized since the last meeting

READ SCRIPTURE

- Have someone read the passage of scripture to be discussed
- Have a second person read the same passage
- Have someone summarize the passage in their own words. Ask the group to fill in any details that were left out.

ASK QUESTIONS. Do not *teach* the main truth of the passage to the group. Ask questions until they *discover* it. Here are some questions to help facilitate discovery.

- Did anything in this passage capture your attention?
- What did you like about this passage?
- Did anything bother you? Why?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What does this passage tell us about Man?
- What does this passage tell us about following Jesus?

SUMMARIZE. Have everyone summarize on a piece of paper the main point of the passage in their own words

COMMIT TO APPLY AND SHARE

- Ask ***"How should this change our lives?"*** Also encourage people to share how it has already changed their life.
- Have everyone develop an "I will..." statement about how they will obey God in this area of their lives and write it on the same sheet of paper with their summary. Help them move from a general statement such as "I will love God" to a specific statement, "I will love God by..."
- Also ask everyone one ***"Who do you know that you can share this passage with?"*** and have them write that person's name on the paper.

END WITH PRAYER