

# Small Group Handbook 2017–2018





# Small Group Core Values

## **COMMUNITY**

God is relational, so He created us to live in relationship with Him and each other.

Authentic community involves sharing life together and connecting on many levels with others in our group. Healing best occurs within the context of community and relationships. It's vital to see ourselves through the eyes of others, share our stories, and ultimately find freedom from the secrets and lies that enslave our souls.

## **BIBLE STUDY**

Gain a deeper knowledge of God's Word

Interactive: God gave the Bible as our instruction manual for life. We need to deepen our understanding of God's Word. People learn and remember more as they wrestle with truth and learn from others. Bible discovery and group interaction enhance growth!

Sermon-Based: In effort to focus our study efforts and to "master" sections and themes of scripture, our small groups are normally tied to the Sunday morning sermons, which provides opportunity to take a passage of scripture and study it individually, discuss it with others and then experience it being taught from the pulpit.

## **EXPERIENTIAL GROWTH**

Beyond solely reading, studying, and dissecting the Bible, being a disciple of Christ involves reunifying knowledge with experience. We do this by taking questions to God, opening a dialog with our hearts, and utilizing other ways to listen to God speak (other people, nature, circumstances). Experiential growth is always grounded in the Bible as God's primary revelation and our ultimate truth-source.

## **POWER OF GOD**

Processes and strategies will be ineffective unless we invite and embrace the presence and power of God. In order to experience community and growth, Jesus needs to be the centerpiece of our group experiences and the Holy Spirit must be at work.

## **MUTUAL MINISTRY**

Each member of the group is looking for ways to minister to the other members of the group, helping to meet each other's needs. This care will take many forms, such as praying, listening, meeting needs, encouraging and even challenging one another as needed.

## **MULTIPLICATION**

All groups should also be prayerfully considering a way to extend the ministry of their Small Group through Multiplication. Multiplication means eventually forming two or more groups so that others who are not yet in Small Groups can continue to find places to connect with a Small Group.

## **SHEPHERDING**

Small groups are the main channel for shepherding within our church. An elder is partnered with each of the small group leaders who together work to shepherd the people in the group and its "extended family."

# Covenant Commitments

## **I Will Prioritize**

While we are in this group, we will give the group meetings priority in our schedules and will also arrive on time.

## **I Will Participate**

Everyone is encouraged to participate and no one dominates.

## **I Will Show Respect**

Everyone is given the right to his or her own opinions, and all questions are encouraged and respected.

## **I Will Maintain Confidentiality**

Anything that is said in our meetings is never repeated outside the meeting without permission.

## **I Will Show Care and Support**

Permission is given to call upon each other at any time, especially in times of crisis. The group will provide care for every member.

## **I Will Be Accountable**

We agree to let the members of our group hold us accountable to commitments we make in whatever loving ways we decide upon. Unsolicited advice giving is not permitted.

## **I Will Fill the Empty Chair**

Our group will work together to fill the empty chair—either someone in the church who is not in a small group or an unchurched person or couple.

## **I Will Be Mission-Minded**

We agree as a group to reach out and invite others to join us and to work toward multiplication of our group to form new groups.

## **I Will Minister**

We will encourage one another to serve God within the church and also to get outside the walls of the church to serve in a way that impacts the world around us.

## **I Will Attend with Completed Homework**

Joining a small group requires a commitment to attend each week and to do the homework ahead of time. Most weeks, the homework will require about thirty minutes to adequately prepare for the group study and discussion. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts and other special events — but not much more! This commitment is the key to a healthy group. If I am unable to come to a meeting, I will contact the small group leader to let him know.

# Covenant Details

This covenant is reviewed and signed at the beginning of each quarter by all groups. Groups that are continuing, still review the covenant during the first meeting of each quarter.

This covenant will help us discuss and clarify our goals, expectations, and commitments as a group. Since healthy groups thrive on trust and participation, a clear covenant is an important starting point toward a successful group experience.

**START DATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **END DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**WEEKLY START TIME** \_\_\_\_\_ **WEEKLY END TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**LEADER** \_\_\_\_\_ **HOME PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **CELL** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOST** \_\_\_\_\_ **HOME PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **CELL** \_\_\_\_\_

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

We'll spend about \_\_\_\_\_ minutes singing (optional), \_\_\_\_\_ minutes discussing the study, \_\_\_\_\_ minutes praying and sharing, and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes chatting and snacking.

## REFRESHMENTS

I've signed up to bring snacks on these nights: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EXTRA GROUP EVENTS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SERVICE PROJECTS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

# Small Group Leader Job Description

## Summary

Lead a small group through loving care and devoted discipleship toward Christlikeness.

## Accountable To

Campus Pastor

## SHEPHERDING RESPONSIBILITIES

- Shepherd each member and their family by knowing the facts about them: names, ages, personal family interests, where they live, what they do, special needs.
- Shepherd each member and their family through the challenging seasons of life. This involves leading your group to care for one another by being involved in funerals, hospital visits, moves, and support during loss of employment, etc.
- Shepherd each member and their family by caring for their spiritual needs.
- Know their faith story.
- Know their burdens and prayer needs and shoulder those together.
- Identify best "next steps."
- Identify spiritual gifts and potential areas of service.
- Plug members into service for the Lord at Village and beyond.

## STUDY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Plan well for the small group study, discussion, and prayer time.
- Model and teach commitment to the Word of God, to the small group, to the preparation and application of the study, and to attendance and timeliness.
- Manage well the time spent during the study, drawing out one or two themes, but not all of the questions.
- Pray for your group as a whole and for the individuals who make up the group.
- Pray for and actively recruit future small group leaders and begin to apprentice them.
- Disciple members to increasingly live as followers of Christ.
- Partner with an elder to help shepherd your small group.
- Ensure administrative tasks are completed or delegated.

## SAFEGUARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Protect the atmosphere of the small group.
- Welcome new and regular members warmly each week.
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid gossiping and controversy.
- Practice zero tolerance for negative or complaining attitudes.
- Protect the truth of God's Word and the doctrine of the Church.
- Protect one another with unity and strong relationships within the small group.
- Protect members with Biblical counsel.
- Protect your walk with the Lord by maintaining a relationship of accountability and transparency with your Campus Pastor.
- Protect the quality of the small group mission to be the main vehicle for discipleship at Village.

**NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

# Small Group Apprentice Job Description

## **Accountable To**

Small Group Leader

## **PERSONAL MINISTRY**

Grow in your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ through fixing your mind on things of the Spirit and by seeing Jesus more clearly.

- Spend time in the Bible each day, pursuing personal growth and maturity.
- Have a consistent prayer life that focuses on praise, thanksgiving, personal needs, and the needs of believers, and of the lost.
- Spend time in spiritual fellowship with others for the purposes of mutual love, encouragement, and growth.
- Be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission by reaching out to the lost with the Gospel.

## **SMALL-GROUP MINISTRY**

To assist the Small Group Leader in all areas of group life, as appropriate. The Apprentice serves a unique role as a bridge between Group Members and the Group Leader, and the Apprentice's long-term goal should be to gain ministry experience in order to one day serve as a Small Group Leader.

- Pray for the members of your small group.
- Cultivate a teachable spirit and be open to both feedback and instruction from the Group Leader.
- Observe the Group Leader in different ministry situations.
- Coordinate the different aspects of group life as needed and helpful to the Group Leader.
- Under the supervision of the Group Leader, begin leading different parts of the group meeting. This could include leading the group prayer time and the study.
- Under the supervision of the Group Leader, contact and support Group Members outside of the weekly meeting.
- Attend all small group meetings and events as possible.
- Attend church-sponsored training sessions as required at Village Bible Church.

I have read and understand the goals and requirements of a Small Group Apprentice at Village Bible Church.

**NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

**DATE**



# Prayer Requests

DATE

REQUEST MADE BY

DETAILS

DATE ANSWERED,  
HOW ANSWERED



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