

SMALL GROUP LEADER HANDBOOK

VERSION 1.0 (2011)



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Important 'Housekeeping' Notes:

- 1. Please keep the staff informed as to what you are teaching, what the make up of your group is and any major changes to your group; as this will help us to better connect people to small groups. Many of our groups simply 'CC' Craig and/or Susan in on the group's emails.**
- 2. We have a lot of good curriculum at the church that you are welcome to borrow.**
- 3. If your group plans to meet on campus we need you to first fill out a room request form at the front office.**
- 4. Stay updated with what is going on in the church and in other small groups by reading the monthly Small Groups Newsletter and/or visiting our small groups page on the website.**



Vision:

Thriving small groups are vital to our goal of making disciples at Wildwood; since much of our discipleship occurs in these groups. Thus, we desire to see every member at Wildwood participating in a small group and every small group lead by ordinary people with extraordinary passion for making disciples of Jesus Christ. Small groups shepherded well can be one of the most powerful catalysts towards seeing Wildwood become the church we hope and pray she will be one day. Healthy small groups have the potential to be our main vehicle for discipleship, community, and outreach at Wildwood.

What is a Wildwood small group?

A small gathering of people who meet regularly in homes, on our campus, or in public places to grow together in Christ-likeness. These groups prevent us from getting lost in the crowd. This is where you can get to know God and can be known by others. Small groups are where you can connect with others and grow together; where you can laugh, learn, discuss, and be missed when you are gone. Small groups can be a place of valuable community, where living life together, through the ups and downs, is normative. This is a group of people that you can serve shoulder to shoulder with and who will team up with you to share the gospel with others.

Who should be in a small group and why?

All members of Wildwood Church should be in a small group! These groups empower us to connect and serve, and where most of our discipleship takes place. Thus, to remain disconnected from a small group is to deprive oneself from our most intentional efforts towards growth and meaningful relationships. Also, being unconnected to others deprives the church of your gifts, passions and ideas.



Goals:

1. To see all Wildwood small groups embrace and embody the four distinctives: Connect, Grow, Serve & Go.
2. To connect every small group leader with an Elder or seasoned shepherd for prayer, support, wise council and mentoring.
3. To have every member of Wildwood Church connected with a small group.
4. To create an effective form of communication through our small group leaders and having them champion Wildwood's goals, visions, and church-wide efforts to those in their small groups.
5. To see every person in a Wildwood small group growing in Christ and being proactively disciplined.

Wildwood's Small Group Framework:



Four Distinctive's of Wildwood Small Groups:
Connect, Grow, Serve, & Go.

1. Connect: Connect with God and others through meaningful healthy relationships. (Acts 2:42) (Hebrews 10:24–25)
2. Grow: Grow in your understanding of Scripture and in applying it to your life. (1 Thessalonians 5:11) (Colossians 3:16) (2 Timothy 3:16)
3. Serve: Serve in the church (Mark 10:45) (John 13: 12–15)
4. Go: Go as a team into your community; your workplace, recreation areas, neighborhoods etc. and help others come to know God, as they see you living out your faith, serving the community, sacrificially loving others, communicating the gospel in word and deed etc. (John 17:18) (Matthew 28:19) (Matthew 5: 14–16) (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Note: These are four distinctive's we would like to see every Wildwood Small Group intentionally moving towards. However, we understand that this is a process and we have room for those groups who do not embody these distinctive's yet, as long as they are open to them and willing to move towards them at their own pace.

Wildwood's Three Parts:

1. Church-wide Body: Wildwood Church
2. Small Groups: The glue between individuals and the church as a whole.
3. Individuals: Each Wildwood member

How do these three parts of Wildwood work together?: Wildwood operates as one church in these three forms and each is equally important. Small group leaders need to understand this framework and your small group fits into the structure of the church. For instance, when it comes to small groups:

On a Church-wide basis, we have a direction we hope all small groups and individuals will be moving towards and laboring for. The church is largely made up

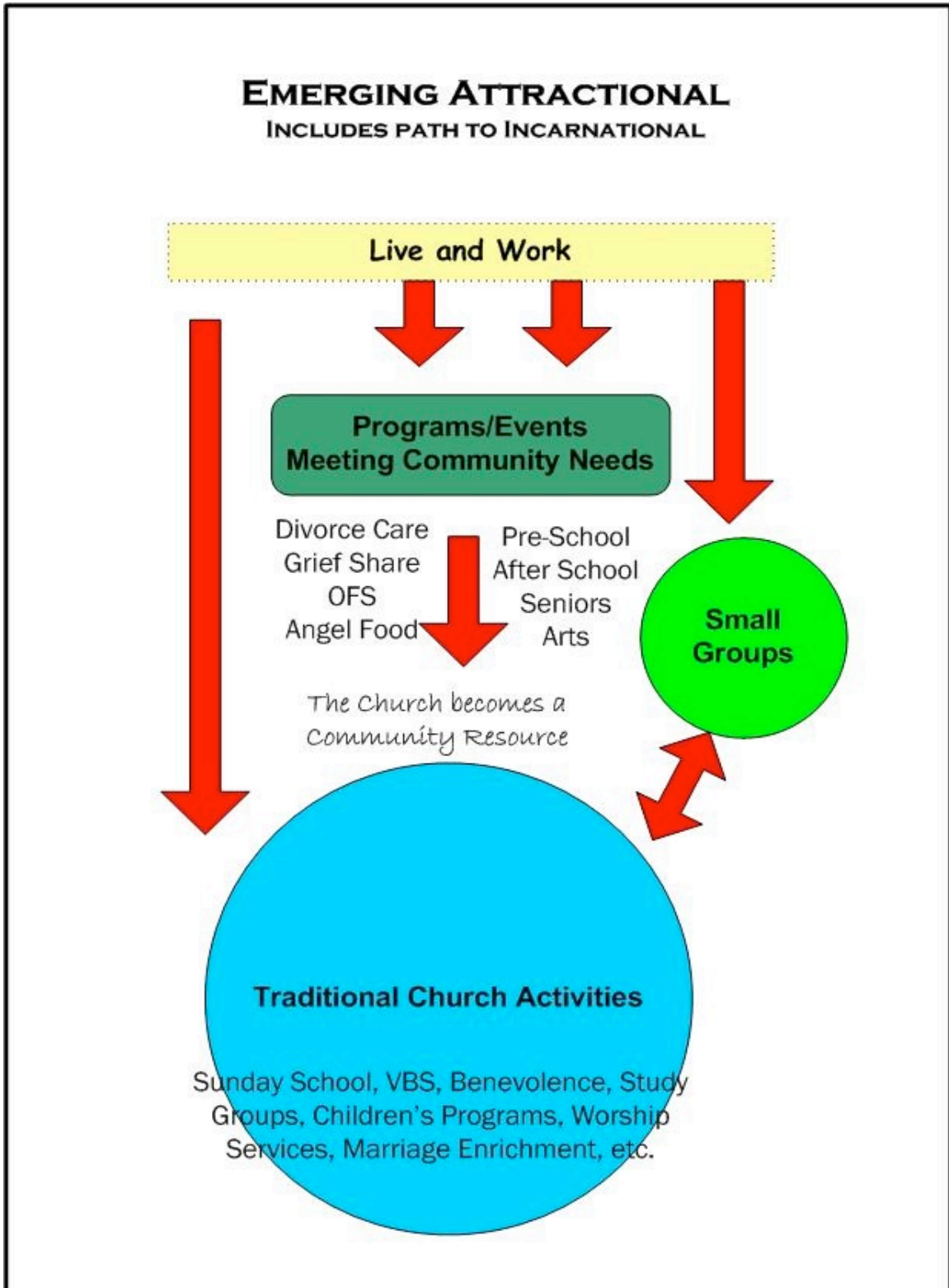
of small groups, and we will be stronger together than if we isolate our groups from one another. Church-wide efforts will grow more successful the more small groups join together to champion them.

Our deepest fellowship and most intentional efforts of discipleship happen through our small groups in a way that can not happen when we are gathered as one church. And each small group is made up of individuals, who can not be in small groups every hour of every day.

So in the time apart from our groups, each individual is called to live out the gospel in our daily lives, wherever the Lord places us. Each individual should be shepherded, and sanctified through our corporate worship together and our intentional discipleship through our small groups. Ideally speaking, the three parts should work together and support one another as one.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Make sure to teach the most basic goal of making disciples: to equip them with the gospel and to teach them how to live the gospel in their own lives. Can those under your care articulate the gospel well? Is the gospel having an impact on their lives? Are they sharing the gospel with other people in their lives? You can have great fellowship, fun get-togethers, wonderfully attended gatherings but if they miss the gospel, they have missed it all.

Wildwood's structure and Philosophy of Ministry Chart



Starting your small group off on the right foot:

- Your small group will begin developing habits early on regardless if you plan for it or not, so make sure those habits being formed aid the process of shepherding rather than fight against it.
- Shepherding: The small group leader/shepherd sets the pace at the beginning. Strive to be more than a facilitator or host. Strive to be a disciple maker; a shepherd to the group.

5 healthy habits to form early on: Care, Safety, Authenticity, Growth, Service.

- Care: Unconditional Compassion, concern and love are rare in this world but must be abundant in Christian small groups. Our source of this care is found in our Savior. The small group shepherd needs to be gripped by Jesus. (John 13:34)
- Safety: People need a safe place to grow; where they are loved, and where confidentiality exists. Ensure safety is established from the outset because it empowers people to be honest and confess shortcomings. (James 5:16)
- Authenticity: People often need care and safety before they will be real with one another. The shepherd might need to take the risk of being vulnerable first to foster authenticity.
- Growth: Growth (Sanctification) is the goal and will of God. (1 Thess. 4:3a) Shepherds, be clear that your small group has a goal of growth and that two essentials for growth in small groups are healthy doses of grace and truth. (John 1:14-17)

Grace + Truth + Time = Growth

- Service: Serving one another and our neighbors are distinguishing marks of Christianity but run against the selfish tendencies of humanity. Reaching out to one another and to our neighbors with the gospel in meaningful ways is one of the most powerful forces for expanding the Kingdom of God; both in our lives and in our communities. (Gal. 5:13,14)
- Note: First Impressions: Many new-comers will decide if they are coming back based on the first meeting.

5 practical ways to start off healthy: Hospitality, vision casting, sharing stories, setting ground rules, and encouragement.

- Hospitality: Especially important in the first meeting. Food, seating, temperature, smell, appearance, background music, etc. The goal is to be warm and welcoming.
- Vision Casting: Let people know what the goals and the purpose of the group are upfront. This is an opportunity to lay tracks for your group to run on.
- Sharing Stories: Tell your story early on and set the stage for the whole group to do likewise. It is critical that relationships are built early on lest the group remain shallow and guarded. These can be good ice breakers as well.
- Setting Ground Rules: Starting and ending time, attendance, call when you can't come, participation, confidentiality, leaving well, agreeing as a group to have feedback and/or assessment at a period of time etc.
- Encouragement: Create a culture of encouragement. Proactively point out growth in others especially if they don't see it. Encouragement is to people as water is to plants. (1 Thess. 5:11)

Examples of Small Groups Purpose Statements (Purpose drives agenda) -

Note: You may want to create it with your group or start a group based around the purpose. They could be specific, especially if it is an affinity group or more general but either way, they should be Christ-centered and repeated often. When the group has a self-evaluation/assessment it is important to return to the purpose statement and the goals to see how the group is doing.

A. The primary goal for this small group meeting is to develop a Christian community where Jesus Christ is experienced in his presence and power.

B. The primary goal for this small group is to connect people to Jesus Christ and together we'll serve our church, our community and the world.

C. The primary goal for this small group is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

D. The primary goal of this small group is to create a welcoming community where people can come to investigate Jesus Christ no matter where they are on their spiritual journey.

- Are small groups in the Bible?

Small Groups are not a foreign idea to the Scriptures. Early Christians met in the Temple, in synagogues and in each others HOMES (in small groups.) Acts 2:46, 5:42, 12:12, 20:20; Romans 16:5, Philemon 1:2

- Begin with the end in mind:

What are your goals, purpose, and life span of the group?

What is your main goal? What are some attainable goals to get there?

What does it mean to make disciples of Jesus Christ in your group?

At what point should your group multiply or end?

- Assessment:

It is good to check in with the group and see how your group is reaching your goals and purpose, lest you get stuck in a rut or continue down the wrong path unchecked. This is also an opportunity to recast vision.

Common Pitfalls for Small Groups:

(Paraphrased Cautions from Growth Groups by Colin Marshall)

There are many popular buzzwords regarding small groups these days. Three of them are, 'community', 'experience' and 'mission'. Many groups that embody these words are deemed successful. However, there are dangers to be avoided here .

1. Community: Community alone is not the end goal of Christianity or of small groups.

“(Small groups are) ...not so much thought of as a way of seeking God as much as a way of seeking Christian friends. The vertical axis is not emphasized as much as the horizontal axis.” –JI Packer

-The group needs to be centered around Christ over and above community. Groups preoccupied with community tend to become problem-centered, highly inward and overly focused on their own needs.

2. Experience: It is tempting to over-emphasize the importance of experiencing intimacy in a world where isolation is rampant even in the church. Groups overly focused on experience tend to value their experience above God or as God Himself.

“Experience is the god of this age.” -Colin Marshall

3. Mission: Most small groups meet with a mission in mind especially if they are an affinity group. However, if the mission is not Christ-centered then the focus of the group is primarily on the mission rather than Christ.

The Anti's of Small Groups:

Small groups tend to be reactionary and anti things in the church that are perceived as deficient or dysfunctional. We need to be careful not to swing the pendulum too far to the other side as small group leaders.

1. Anti-preaching: When the proclaiming of the Word of God is diminished due to an over-emphasis on group discussion or personal discovery.
2. Anti-the Minister: Small groups should not become an expression of mutiny, rejecting the authority of recognized, trained, Bible-teaching pastors. To the contrary, small groups should aid the pastors in their mission of making disciples.
3. The-Anti Church: When intimacy in small groups is prized above total congregational life, isolation and a lack of accountability occur.



10 Tips for healthy small groups (adapted from www.resurgence.com)

1. Know God

- Help one another cultivate a steady devotional and prayer life.
- Participate in gospel-centered accountability.

2. Know Your People

- Shepherd your small group. Don't just lead discussions or facilitate.
- Take notice when somebody disappears & make sure they are loved well.

3. Know Your Neighborhood

- Know the culture and relate to it well.
- Know your neighbors and invite them into your community.

4. Don't Go Alone

- Share leadership by developing apprentices who help with hospitality, teaching, coordinating service and outreach efforts, and prayer.
- Take the initiative to read our monthly small groups newsletter.
- Participate in training that Wildwood provides for small group leaders.
- Get to know your Elders and ask for their advice and prayer often.

5. Say Who You Are (And Who You Aren't) Weekly

- Graciously deconstruct what you are not, and cast vision for what a healthy Wildwood small group looks like.

6. Get Out of the Living Room

- Be on mission every month together as community.
- Celebrate life and good culture together.

7. Live Missionally

- Let gospel talk be ordinary talk, not obnoxious but genuine.

8. Eat, Laugh, Pray, and Serve Together

9. Share Your Stories with one another

10. Come to Serve (Not Just Be Served) on Sundays and in your groups.

- Serve with the strength God supplies (2 Peter 4:11) (John 17:18)

Active Listening:

James 1:19 *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger;

What is Active Listening?

- Active Listening is being fully present in a conversation with someone else. It is a skill that needs practice, since God made our minds so powerful.
- Active Listening gives the other person a chance to express their feelings. It usually helps conversations move from the surface problem to the root issue.

Why do we struggle so much with active listening?

- We are fearfully and wonderfully made: Most peoples brains are able to pick up about 4 times more than what they are used for when listening to someone speak. That is why it is often hard to actively listen. We get distracted because our mind is constantly multitasking.
- Selfish natures: Many times it is because we are selfish people who just want to get our points across. We simply don't care enough about others to listen actively.

- Practical Ways to L.I.S.T.E.N

- Look: Keep eye contact
- Inquire: Ask open ended questions that help you make sure you hear their point of view correctly.
- Summarize: Paraphrase back to them what you think they are saying. Or if you can't; then say something like, "I really think you have important things to say, but I didn't get it all, can you say it again?"

- Take Notes: Sometimes jotting down a few things helps you remember and shows them you are listening.
- Encourage: Smile, nod your head, give verbal cues, lean towards them and even be silent to encourage them to go on.
- No Interrupting: Don't interrupt people unless you really need to for the sake of the group. How do you feel when you are interrupted?



Shepherding Small Groups:

Shepherding or pasturing God's flock is not the exclusive responsibility of paid clergy. In one sense, all believers are called to shepherd, or nurture, one another in Christ. A small group leader has the responsibility to shepherd those whom God has placed under their care. In short, shepherding is "guidance" and "nurture". Ideally, small group leaders will have some gifting and passion for shepherding people and making disciples.

What is Shepherding and what is involved:

1. Shepherding is the ability to tap Christians' ability and responsibility to shepherd one another.
2. Shepherding is the skill of knowing where people need to grow.
3. Shepherding is the work of connecting people with (not necessarily giving people) what they need to grow.
4. Shepherding is the gift of helping people find their gifts and helping them put their gifts into practice. (Helping people utilize their gifts also takes some of the load off of a leaders shoulders.)

5. Shepherding is visible caring through personal contact.
6. A shepherd should know the people under their care and the people (sheep) should be conscious that their shepherd knows them.
7. Acts 20:28–31: A shepherd shows love & care and seeks to be transparent enough so the people see how he/she feels, thinks, and lives. The shepherd shows care by a ministry of presence; being available for people under ones care.
8. Shepherds need to lead by example. Be a pace setter for those under your care. Lets shoot for one day being able to say with Paul, “ Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” Philippians 3:17
9. Shepherds lead people to Jesus not to themselves. Help them to learn how to fix their eyes on Christ, and to live for His Kingdom.



Stages of Discipleship:

Shepherds need to know how to identify what stage of discipleship individuals are at in their walk with God, and how to guide and nurture people in each stage.

Unborn Stage:

- Shepherds need to be sensitive to the possibility of an unborn person. This person could be an outright unbeliever or someone who thinks they are a Christian but does not understand or embrace the gospel. Do they believe that salvation is given by God’s grace alone, through Christ alone, and by faith alone?

Baby Stage: (being fed) 1 Corinthians 3:1–3

- Typically a new or very immature Christian.

- This person grows primarily because someone else is methodically feeding them.
- There are typically lots of spiritual highs, rapid growth spurts and elevated excitement in this stage.
- Also, the goal is to get them out of this stage with some urgency lest they get stuck in this stage or feel orphaned if the discipler is unable to pour into them for various reasons in the future.
- Teach them the basics; building a foundation of sound theology, spiritual formation and life application in their lives. Come alongside them and feed them; help them learn to walk on their own and to feed themselves.

Adulthood stage: (able to feed oneself)

- Often characterized by “cooling off” of feelings, lessons of perseverance, conflict, and dying to sin.
- Growth seems slow, like two steps forward and a step back. There is a lot of learning from experiences and failures. Faith is tested and lives are refined here.
- The adult in the faith grows less dependent on others and on the discipler. (Not to say that we ever outgrow our need for accountability or for sitting under more mature believers.)
- Coaching is key in this stage as we help them find opportunities to spread their wings and fly.

Parent Stage: (able to feed others)

- When a person feeds themselves, has become stable and able to admit, analyze and solve personal problems, then this person can begin to serve and lead others more often.
- Shepherds can help them to identify and develop their gifts; finding opportunities for them to exercise and lead.
- They should be able to begin ministering to others and can start to shepherd those in less mature stages.
- This person's faith has been tested, they have matured, have significant victory over old sin patterns and are ready to spiritually reproduce.

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(Much of this material has been adapted from Redeemer Church's Fellowship Leader Handbook.)

Difficult People and Group Dynamics

1. Group Dynamics – Groups generally journey through different stages.
 - a. People journey together but may be on a different timeline
 - b. Memories from past groups
 - c. Expectations differ and come from outside sources
 - d. Not everyone is on the same page

2. Bonding Stage – could be the first 3–5 meetings
 - a. People are excited
 - b. Exploration
 - c. Some anxiety –
 - i. Do I belong?
 - ii. Do they like me?
 - iii. Do I like them?
 - iv. Can I trust the leader?
 - d. Critical in this stage – BE WELL PREPARED
 - i. Make the purpose well known
 - e. Bottom line – People need to feel:
 - i. Welcome
 - ii. Connected
 - iii. Relaxed
 - iv. Safe
 - f. Honesty – leader should set the pattern for honesty and sharing
 - i. Others will follow your lead
 - ii. Too much intimacy too quickly is not good

3. Growing Deeper Stage – the honeymoon is over!
 - a. Decisions are being made to commit or not to the group

- b. Differing personalities and conflicts may emerge
 - c. People asking how honest and deep they can be.
 - d. Asking how real and honest the leader is
 - e. Do members feel built up and helped?
 - f. Do members feel they are helping other members?
 - g. A real sense of “WENESS” is developing
 - h. Don’t be surprised if members leave – that is okay.
4. Mutual Ministry and Service Stage – looking past their own needs to others
- a. Fellowship, bible study, mission, prayer and worship are present
 - b. Genuine sense of caring about each other
 - c. Praying for each other
 - d. Look to each other and not the leader always
 - e. Members may voice deep personal problems
 - f. Significant Christian growth occurs
 - g. Be careful that one members needs don’t take over the group
5. Transition and Multiplying – make new leaders and groups
- a. Groups naturally may grow and need to multiply
 - b. Some groups may end – that is okay
 - c. New leaders can emerge
 - d. New groups begin
6. [Handling Difficult People in Small Groups – Who are they?](#)
- a. **Monopolizing Mike:** Mike talks from the moment he enters the room until the moment he leaves. He shares the same stories over and over whether they are relevant to the subject of group time or not. When Mike begins to talk, the group settles in for the long

haul and appears bored and restless, and often the energy is drained from the discussion time.

- b. **Shy Sherry:** Sherry seldom shares during small-group time. She has trouble looking people in the eye when she does talk. She attends group regularly, but the group members know very little about her because she has not opened up to them. It's easy to forget that she's even there.
 - c. **Expert Ed:** Ed is an expert on every topic you can imagine—especially the Bible. When the group discusses anything, Ed always chimes in with the "right" answer. Once Ed delivers his thoughts or opinions, the rest of the group is reluctant to share anything else, because Ed is clearly always right. Ed begins his sentences with statements like "Clearly, the Bible is saying ... " or "Don't you know that it means ... ?"
 - d. **Annie the Advice Giver:** Annie knows what everyone should do and is always looking for opportunities to share her advice. When a group member shares a struggle, Annie will immediately say, "You should" Although Annie desires to be helpful, her advice is usually unsolicited and simplistic.
7. [Handling Difficult People in Small Groups – How to deal with them](#)
- a. Be prepared to interrupt when necessary
 - i. Sit close to those that dominate – a gentle nudge or whisper
 - ii. Be sensitive to what is dominating and what may be a breakthrough
 - iii. "I'm going to have to interrupt now" is okay to say
 - b. Talk to the person outside of the group

- i. Annie, I always appreciate your advice to people but let's let them try and discover their options
 - ii. Sherry – When you have spoken, your input has been so valuable. Can I call on you sometimes?
- c. Affirm appropriate sharing
 - i. When any of the difficult people share well – affirm in front of people
 - ii. Affirm them later in private
 - iii. People need to hear when they have done well
- d. Redirect the conversation when necessary
 - i. “Thanks for sharing. Let's move on to another question”.
 - ii. The needs of the group are important
- e. Get help when you need it. Mike, Annie, Sherry and Ed are mild compared to:
 - i. Clinical depression
 - ii. Severe marital problems
 - iii. Personality disorders
 - iv. Divisiveness
 - v. Ask a pastor or elder for help

8. How does the Apostle Paul say to deal with difficult people? (Eph. 4:25–32)

- a. Commit to telling the truth
- b. Deal with issues quickly
- c. Always speak positively about group members
- d. Seek to understand the difficult person
- e. Clear the Air – don't let resentment settle into your group
- f. Act in a loving way toward every group member

(Much of this material has been adapted from Regroup and Redeemer Church's Fellowship Leader Handbook.)

Shepherding small groups toward mission:

A church that exists only for itself ceases to be the church; the same thing applies to small groups since they are smaller versions of the Church. God is a missionary God, actively seeking the lost; as God is, so should His Church be. Wildwood small groups should be growing in maturity towards mission; actively participating in God's mission. However, these groups need to be shepherded towards mission since they do not gravitate towards it naturally.

All healthy Wildwood small groups should have some form of an outward orientation as Jesus did. (John 17:18)

Does this mean that every group needs to be on mission? Yes & No
Yes, every group of Christians is called to GO into the world as Jesus was sent into the world to live the gospel in word and deed. Some groups do this together as a group, utilizing various gifts within the group.

No, in the sense that, not all evangelism happens in groups, nor should it, due to the nature of some small groups. If the group is proactively equipping and sending their members out to live the gospel in daily life apart from the group, that is also being on mission. However, there needs to be accountability, prayer, and rejoicing together as a group for the individual evangelistic successes of group members.

Can they articulate the gospel?

Do your small group members know how to articulate the gospel? Purposefully equip them to proclaim the gospel, before you send them out on mission. Preach the gospel often around them so they can learn from you. After they have learned to articulate and communicate the gospel, you still have the big job of help them grow in living the gospel; sanctification.

The leader must shepherd towards mission:

People need to be shepherded towards mission, because if we were left on our own we would gravitate towards ingrown selfishness. People need to see the shepherd leading the way and coaching others. They need to hear evangelistic

vision cast repeatedly. The leader needs to try and make sure that group members are hearing and embracing the vision and personally experiencing the gospel. The gospel is the motivator not guilt or pressure.

Why consider group evangelism?

It takes advantage of all the gifts in the body of Christ working together in unison, rather than putting it all on one person. Some are gifted in establishing relationships with nonbelievers and inviting them in, others at apologetics, some at communicating the gospel or calling for a decision, and still others backing them up in prayer. All Christians are called to these jobs but some of us are more gifted in areas than others.

Small groups can be a visual expression of the gospel.

When people see the quality of our relationships and how we treat one another, it should compel them toward Christ and Christian community. If we love each other and our neighbors well, living sacrificially, bearing one another's burdens and living what we preach; that speaks a powerful message to visitors who come in contact with our group.

Below are three different models of evangelistic small groups:

1. **Seeker Groups:** Gather together a small group specifically for people interested in exploring Christianity with others. They have a focus group style on topics like "Exploring God" or "Who was Jesus?" Choose wisely what Christians you have in the group; hopefully those gifted in evangelism, compassion and hospitality. (This is a bit 90's but we still have a lot of 90's culture hanging around.)
2. **Missionary Small Groups:** These groups function primarily around the goal of mission. Many meet in public places where the likelihood of meeting the lost is high, rather than in homes or churches. They go to where people are, live out the gospel in their communities and intentionally interact with those around them.
3. **Open Group Evangelism (Missional Communities):** These groups strive to function as an authentic Christian community, which remains very open

to those outside the church. They purposefully invite the lost to join their groups with the belief that authentic Christian community is deeply compelling. In other words, they live and speak the gospel openly, and the Holy Spirit uses the hearing and seeing of the gospel to draw non-believers towards Christ.

With this model it is crucial that you do not change your normal agenda because you have a lost person show up. Instead, you live authentically like normal. However, you need to avoid Christian lingo and explain it if you use it. Explain why you do what you do as Christians.

Ways you could help guide your existing small group toward mission:

1. Pray: Lead them in prayers for the lost, and ask everyone to write down some names of lost people in their daily lives who they could begin to pray for. Ask God to give them a passion and a vision for the lost.
2. Outreach Dinners: Occasionally turn your small group gatherings into Dinners where your group can invite their lost friends to come. You could have an informal discussion over dessert about faith. (You might want to let them know in advance that faith will be discussed). Consider sharing the gospel at the end as it relates to the discussion.
3. Seasonal Block Party: Take advantage of what is celebrated in the culture like holidays, sports gatherings etc, and host a block party in a neighborhood where one of your small group members lives. This can act as an aid to their personal evangelism in that neighborhood. Invite all the neighbors, and have your small group pitch in to help with logistics. Purposefully get to know those who come and consider inviting them to your small group or maybe just to hang out some time in order to develop that relationship.
4. Investigative Bible Studies: Hold a month long mini-series investigating Jesus and or/the gospel. Invite your lost friends to join in.
5. Guest Speaker: Consider bringing in a seasoned pastor, missionary, lay leader who will speak about hot topics that could lead into the gospel and open it up for discussion afterwards.
6. Missional Service Projects: Have your group commit to some form of regularly schedule service project and invite the lost to come help your

small group serve. Then purposefully build relationships with them while serving together.

Practical Helps:

Questions you could ask your small group to get their juices going:

1. Who are your friends or family who don't know Jesus yet?
2. What do you think it would look like to talk with them about what Jesus has done in your life?
3. What are some of your fears about sharing your faith?
4. What are some ways this group could help you reach out to your lost friends?

What is successful evangelism?

“Successful evangelism is taking the initiative to share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God.” This popular phrase is good for your group to memorize.

What if we don't have hearts that care for the lost?

Preach the gospel to your group. Lead prayers of repentance for your group. Coach your group to begin praying for the lost. Over time their faithful prayers for the lost should develop real care in their hearts for lost people. Then after they truly care for the lost, they should be motivated to share the gospel.

In mathematical terms:

Prayer + Consistency = Care

Care + gospel = Share

Gospel + Care = Evangelism



Growing by Developing an Apprentice Leader:

What do we mean by “growing”?

1. Sanctification: Members of group are maturing
2. Multiplication: Group growing numerically through inviting others to join
3. Discipleship: Developing New leaders from within the group
4. New Life: The group births a new group lead by an apprentice when it grows too large

Common Group objections:

1. We get along great and have built trust with one another, so lets just stay together.
2. Adding new people or sending out new leaders might mess up our group dynamic
3. Allowing someone else to lead our group will hurt our spiritual growth.
4. Multiplying is too painful, we would prefer to keep everyone together.
5. Note: Be ready for these objections, but deal with them in a compassionate and sensitive way.

Why should we raise up apprentices and send them out to multiply new groups?

1. Biblical Mandate: Matt.28:18–20 & 2 Tim. 2:2
2. Scriptural Pattern: Jesus and His disciples, Paul and his disciples
3. Wildwood Goals: Expand the Kingdom of God in Tallahassee, not limiting Kingdom expansion to our own groups or lives.
4. Wildwood desires to see people cared for and discipled but this becomes more difficult if our groups bulge in numbers or become ingrown.
5. Small groups the do not grow and multiply become ingrown or simply die.
6. Practically speaking, when our groups grow beyond 10–12 people, they simply lose the small group dynamic which often has spiritually malnourishing effects on people.

How do we grow a group numerically?

1. Create a culture where inviting people into the group is normative
2. Set the example as the leader, and invite people yourself to the group.
3. Consider doing things socially as a group to meet others
4. By raising up apprentice leaders who you can delegate responsibility to.

What should I look for in an apprentice leader?

1. Teachable Attitude
2. A passion for God
3. Compassion for people
4. Commitment to the group
5. Consistent growth in their spiritual life
6. Someone who understands the vision and can articulate it to others

How to train an Apprentice:

1. Help them to catch the vision
2. Include them in the planning process
3. Delegate responsibility to them
4. Read and discuss books or Scriptures together on a normal basis
5. Bring them along as you minister to others, let them see your example.
6. Have them take advantage of any available small group leader training
7. Encourage them especially when they do well. (What is encouraged is repeated)
8. Eventually, challenge them to lead the whole group in your absence
9. Help them identify people from within or from outside your group to start a new small group launch team.

Prayer: So ask the Lord to show you who He wants you to invest in and who He desires to raise up in leading future small groups. (Matthew. 9:27)



Small Groups Divide and Conquer strategy:

This is a wonderful way to begin to raising up apprentices while simultaneously taking some of the pressure off of one person.

-Divide & Conquer Strategy:

Connect: Delegate one person or a couple to organizing the social aspects of the group and who keeps the group informed through email or Facebook. People gifted in hospitality are usually a good fit for this.

Grow: Try to have one person who focuses on Shepherding the group. This includes teaching, vision casting and the mentoring in the group. Some of these responsibilities can be modeled and/or delegated to apprentice leaders. (Some groups have alternating teachers)

Serve: Find a group member passionate about service and empower them to find ways for the group to serve together; whether that be within the group itself, within the church, or in the community.

Go: Find a group member passionate about outreach and empower them to find ways to lead the group in outreach efforts. Encourage them to be a spark plug for helping the group reach out together and individually to the lost. In smaller groups, this may be the same person as the “Serve” person, since outreach often happens through service at Wildwood.



Extra Resources:

1. Wildwood has a growing collection of small group curriculum which can be downloaded off our website and picked up from our office.

2. Online Resources:

<http://www.lyfe.org.uk> (for a British spin on it)

<http://theresurgence.com/pages/community> (to hear about community)

<http://www.smallgroups.com/> (helpful small group info and materials)



Connect



Grow



Serve



Go

