

SMALL GROUP HOST ORIENTATION



www.lifepointchurch.org
www.groupleader.org

Small Group Host Orientation

INTRODUCTION

Every Sunday hundreds of people who attend LifePoint Church are not connected. They do not know many people at this church, and they do not have anyone with whom to study the Bible. They do not have anyone serving and ministering to them, and many are not ministering to anyone else. In addition, there are many of your friends and neighbors who are in the same situation.

SMALL GROUP LAUNCH

Each February and September we offer opportunities for people to lead their friends, co-workers, and acquaintances through a study. These events are called **Small Group Launches**.

The purpose of a Small Group Launch is:

- To connect unconnected people for six weeks to build relationships, study the Bible, and develop a better relationship with Christ.
- To let the sermon series, along with a DVD and book, guide our group study.
- To encourage attendees to attend Connecting with Membership to learn more about LifePoint Church.
- To encourage HOSTs to attend Leadership Development 1 and continue the group as a Small Group.

Some Pointers:

- **Pray** for God's guidance
- **Attend** Worship
- **Begin** and end on time
- **Know** the lesson
- **Study** the Scriptures
- **Apply** the lesson to your members' lives

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Expectations of a Small Group Host:

- Attend HOST Orientation before launch day.
- Prepare for each week's study by attending worship and praying through the study.
- Personally invite four couples or eight singles to your group.
- Membership at LifePoint Church is not required to be a HOST. (Membership is required to be a Small Group Leader.)
- It is very important that you show up prepared for each meeting.
- Be sure all materials and equipment are ready.
- Pray for each member by name during the week as you prepare for the session.
- Tell the group that they can help you prepare by praying and attending worship.
- Honor everyone's time by starting and ending on time.
- Let God teach you and direct you as you study His Word.
- Find ways to challenge the group to apply the lesson during the coming week.

THE THREE OBJECTIVES OF A SMALL GROUP:



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HOW CAN I BECOME A SMALL GROUP LEADER?

- Be a Christ follower
- Be baptized
- Regard the Bible as God's authoritative guide for your life
- Be a member of LifePoint Church
- Hold to the essence of LifePoint Church
- Agree to come under the GroupLife structure
- Complete one of the following:
 - Attend a HOST Orientation session
 - Be in a Small Group for three to six months or participate in a Turbo Group
 - Apprentice alongside an existing Small Group Leader

COMMON FEARS OF BECOMING A SMALL GROUP LEADER

- ***What if no one shows up?***
 - Call everyone a few days before the study to remind them and give them directions. Ask them to bring something to the study like drinks, snacks, etc.
- ***My house is _____ . What will people think?***
 - If your house is relatively clean and everyone has a comfortable place to sit and feels welcome and included, you are good.
- ***I will never remember everyone's names.***
 - People will not remember names, so you should use name tags for the first few weeks.
- ***What if someone asks a biblical question that I cannot answer?***
 - As a HOST or leader, always be honest! It is NORMAL not to have all the answers. Let people with difficult questions know you will research their questions and get back with them. Don't wait until the next meeting to respond though. Call your Coach or Coordinator and ask for help. Then email or call the person back with your answer.

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How long should a meeting last?

- We ask that meetings be 1.5 to 2 hours long, with only one hour for Bible study. This allows the children time to be with their group as well as to participate with the family in the social time.

➤ What should I do about the kids?

- Childcare is up to the individual group. Some groups have each family pay \$5 per week for childcare. The church office can provide a list of names of students that are available to help. Other groups enlist a children's teacher to teach a Bible study while the adult study is happening.

➤ How do I feed this group?

- Food is comforting, magnetic, and can be simple.
- Cookies or chips keep people's hands busy, lighten the mood, and give people a chance to chat.
- Coffee after 6:00 pm? Don't forget the decaf.
- Share the responsibility by asking someone to help organize the food theme for each week.

➤ Is my house ready?

- **Seating:** Provide a comfortable seat for everyone; every chair should have a back.
- **Temperature:** Remember, too hot = dozing; too cold = squirming.
- **Lighting:** People need to be able to see each other.
- **Pets:** Keep them out of sight, out of mind, until after the study.
- **Phones:** Silence ringers and practice a one-hour phone fast.
- **Food and Utensils:** Avoid feeling formal. Think paper plates and plastic-R-us.

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MY FIRST MEETING

- Ask Ice Breaker questions such as:
 - Tell about your favorite vacation as a child.
 - What was the place of warmth in your home when you were growing up?
 - What was your best or worst job interview?
 - What is the funniest commercial you've ever seen?
- Bible study and discussion
- Prayer and praise time
- Social time around the food before, during, or after the Bible study

GROUP COVENANT

- A sample covenant can be found online @ www.lifepointchurch.org/smallgroupleadership. You can use this sample as a guide to writing your group's covenant.
- Allow everyone to have input into the wording of the covenant; then have them agree to live by it for the next six weeks. This will keep your group moving forward with clear expectations.
- You will receive an example of a covenant that includes these topics:
 - Meeting time
 - Plans for childcare
 - Importance of attendance
 - Respect
 - Participation
 - Confidentiality
 - Accountability

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ROSTER AND ATTENDANCE

Attendance is **crucial** for ministry and discipleship. Maintaining your weekly roster informs the church staff who is connected and who is not. You will be emailed a link along with instructions that will help you set up your roster and weekly attendance. Consider asking someone in your group to take attendance for you.

FIVE UNDERLYING VALUES OF SMALL GROUPS

Care	➤ How was last week?
Safety	➤ Be yourself.
Authenticity	➤ Be real; say what is on your heart.
Growth	➤ Nudge others to take their next spiritual step.
Help	➤ Share what you need.

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WHAT IS A SMALL GROUP?

A small group launch is for a short period of time, usually six weeks. Small Group Hosts are asked to enlist four couples or eight singles to be part of their group for six weeks. We also try to add people from worship services through GroupLink. GroupLink is an event that helps connect members and attendees to a Small Group.

As a Small Group **HOST** you will:

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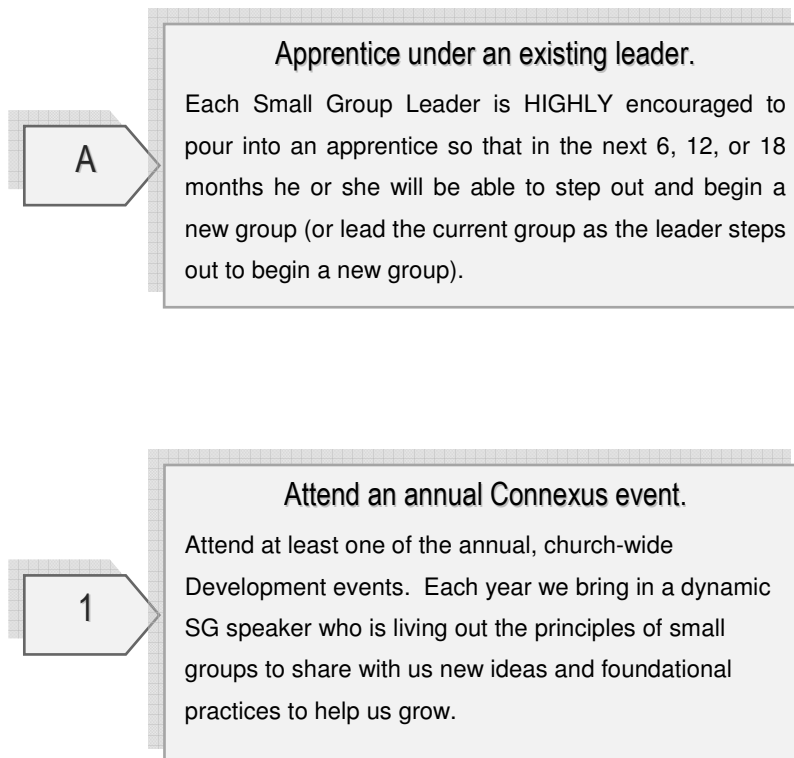
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HOW DO WE DEVELOP YOU AS A SMALL GROUP HOST?

- **HOST Orientation**, followed by **HOSTing** for six weeks
- **Leader Development 1**, as you continue to lead for a year
- **Leader Development 2**, as you start a new group via trained Apprentice
- **Advance Leader Development**, as you seek to be a Coach or Coordinator
- **Legacy Equipping Semesters**: Wednesday nights @ LifePoint Church

GROUP LIFE STRUCTURE

A-1-2-3 Development & Development Structure



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2

Attend at least two Small Group Luncheons per year.

Be present in at least two of the Small Group Leader Luncheons each year. We offer 2 to 3 luncheons immediately following morning worship each year. We share the objectives of Discipleship, Community, and Service and hear stories related to each of these objectives from various groups. Each Leader is encouraged to bring his or her apprentice or entire group to this luncheon to help cast the vision of Small Groups.

3

Hang out with your Coach at least three times per year.

Meet 'eye-to-eye' with your Small Group Coach each year. This is where a SGL is encouraged, seeks advice for issues in his or her group, and is prayed with/for concerning his or her own life as a Christ-follower. The Coaches are in touch with various groups to share ideas and new learnings. They are also the support persons when SGLs need to talk to someone.

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Ministry Structure

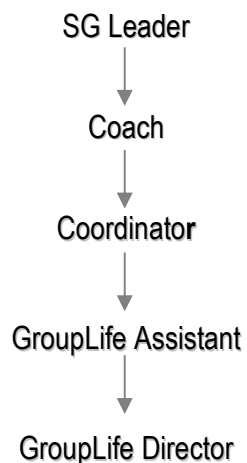
- Grow your group as God directs.
- Model Discipleship, Community, and Service to your group.
- Stay in contact with members weekly.
- Share the load by encouraging members to use their gifts and passions in the group.
- Develop an apprentice to start a new group in 6, 12, or 18 months.
- Guide the group to minister to each other as needed.

Sharing Structure

- Share stories with your Coach and friends monthly.
- Share enrollment and attendance with office weekly.
- Share struggles with your Coach as often as needed.

Not even Jesus tried to do ministry on His own. Here is FBC Smyrna's structure to help you:

Small Group Leaders are encouraged and mentored by a Coach. Coaches receive support from a Coordinator.



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As a Small Group Leader, I will remain faithful, teachable, prayerful, and patient. I will do everything I can to serve my Group and to lead them to a life of discipleship, community, and service.

NOTES:

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