

Community Group Leader Handbook

The Chapel

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THE CHAPEL OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

Mission

We are on mission to ensure that every man, woman, and child have repeated opportunities to hear and see the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Vision

Each disciple of Jesus is transformed and mobilized in the mission as they love God, love the Church, and love the world.

Disciple

A disciple daily follows Jesus and compels others to do the same.

HOW GROUPS FIT

Community Groups exist among the greater body of The Chapel, Chapel Kids, Chapel Students, and Chapel Young Adults.

Community groups are a primary strategic vehicle for transforming disciples and engaging them in the mission.

Community Group participants gather together outside of a Sunday morning service to grow spiritually and build authentic relationships, which foster a genuine love for God, the Church, and the world.

COMMUNITY GROUPS OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

A Biblical Foundation for Community

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

Ephesians 4:11-16

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to **equip** his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be **built up** until we all reach **unity** in the faith and in the **knowledge** of the Son of God and **become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, **grows** and **builds** itself up **in love**, as each part **does its work**.

Community Group Definition

A small group of disciples from The Chapel characterized by Bible-centric, message-based discussions, Christ-like relationships, missional activity, and consistent leadership who together with the rest of the body pursue the Chapel’s mission and vision.

Community Group Vision

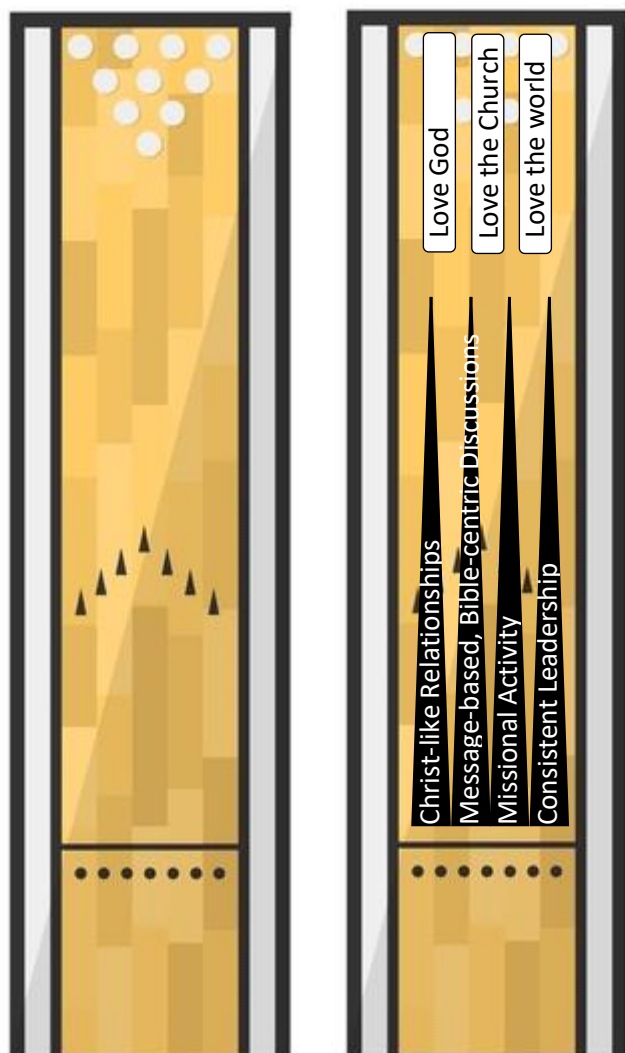
A safe place to grow spiritually and build authentic relationships with others that help us genuinely love God, love the Church and love the world.

Key Objectives

- Raising up and empowering new leaders
- Creating space for new people to join groups
- Providing support and accountability for leaders

COMMUNITY GROUP ESSENTIALS

- Christ-like Relationships (p.7)
- Bible-centric, Message-based Discussions (p.8)
- Missional Activity (p. 9)
- Consistent Leadership (p.10)



Whether you are an active bowler or not, most people know that the goal in bowling is to knock down all the pins. Most people also know that there are gutters on either side of the lane and when you get in a gutter, you've completely missed. While it is entirely possible to spend a whole game of bowling just trying to avoid the gutter, the game is best enjoyed by trying to knock down the pins. That's true with most things in life. One thing you might not know about bowling is that there are arrows and starting dots on every lane to help you. Rather than just looking 60 feet ahead and hoping the ball does what you want it to, there are arrows and dots to focus on depending on where you want the ball to go.

Within Community Groups, the goal is to love God, love the Church, and love the world so that as a church we can get after our mission. Rather than just putting you out there and telling you to knock the pins down or to not go in the gutter, it is our hope that by giving you little arrows to aim at in the form of Community Group Essentials, you would be less intimidated by the goal that can feel far away and less anxious about going in the gutters.

The great part about all the dots and arrows in bowling is that not every arrow or dot will be looked at on every shot. Instead, bowlers focus on certain arrows depending on where they want the ball to go. When you want to get the ball rolling toward "loving God" for example, you might try aiming at an aspect of "Christ-like Relationships" or "Bible-centric, message-based discussions". These essentials are meant to answer the question, "Which things, if done well, would lead to thriving community groups that help people genuinely love God, love the Church, and love the world?"

CHRIST-LIKE RELATIONSHIPS

Biblical Foundation

Philippians 2:3-8 - Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

John 13:34-35 - A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Clarifying Christ-like Relationships

Christ-like relationships are best understood by looking at the life of Jesus and how he lived and interacted with others. From that understanding, we can learn to live as Christ lived and love as Christ loved. In order to do this, we are called to encourage, sharpen, and be consistent in meeting together. By our love for one another we give the people around us another opportunity to see and hear the Gospel.

Examples

Checking in with someone in your group about how their Bible reading is going

Not sharing people's personal information outside of the group

Bringing meals or groceries to a group member who recently had a family death or health issue

Texting or calling a group member to encourage them about a prayer request they shared

Getting together for dinner or coffee to get to know someone in your group better

Opening up about a hard conversation you had with someone last week

Taking time to ask someone more questions about something they shared then praying for them

BIBLE-CENTRIC, MESSAGE-BASED DISCUSSIONS

Biblical Foundation

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Matthew 7:24-25 - Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

Hebrews 13:17 - Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Philippians 4:9 - Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Clarifying Bible-centric, Message-based Discussions

The primary reason we use Bible-centric, message-based discussions in community groups is to create alignment across the church and simplify the curriculum for Community Groups to encourage the application of God's word into our lives.

Because all scripture is God-breathed, group discussions should always involve God's word and return often to the Bible when directing conversation or seeking to better understand what is being talked about.

Because we have confidence in our church's leaders, discussion is meant to help us put their teaching and way of life into practice. This does not mean talking about whether you liked or disliked the message, but rather the focus is on the understanding and application of the message in the lives of group members.

Examples

Talking through the Community Group questions

Encouraging and taking time to help each other to understand personal application from the message

Brainstorming specific ways that people could put the message into practice

Spending time reading and diving deeper into the passage that was taught on

Putting an aspect of the teaching from the previous message into practice during your group time

Ex. If teaching on prayer, spending extra time during group to pray

Creating space to follow up on how group members have been applying God's word in their life

Reading and discussing other passages of scripture that are relevant to the conversation

MISSIONAL ACTIVITY

Biblical Foundation

Matthew 28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Matthew 5:14, 16 - You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Romans 10:14-15 - How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Clarifying Missional Activity

Our mission is big yet focused. We are committed to ensuring that every man, woman, and child has repeated **opportunities to see and hear** the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our example of this. In order for people to see and hear, we must live out our faith in word and deed. One of the primary ways we do this is through serving as Jesus served. While this can be done formally and communally, it can also be done informally and personally. The main point is that Community Groups aren’t just a “holy huddle” or a little friend group, but they serve within the body of Christ to further God’s mission. So how is your group engaging in that mission?

Examples

Finding opportunities to serve all together as a group

Ex. specific needs in the community, Serve Day, EDOH, mission trips, etc.

Pointing out each other’s spiritual gifts and encouraging each other to use them

Encouraging group members to be regularly serving at our church (production, Students, etc.)

Challenging one another to share the Gospel when the spirit leads

Spending time in group praying for the people in each other’s lives who don’t know Jesus

Sharing creative ways that you have been living missionally

Ex. asking your server at a restaurant how you can pray for them

Taking time to serve in little ways, like greeting the people around you at church

CONSISTENT LEADERSHIP

Biblical Foundation

John 13:12-17 - When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Titus 1:7-9 - Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

1 Timothy 4:16 - Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Clarifying Consistent Leadership

Consistent leadership is critical to the “success” of a community group. While the role may vary in form, Community Group leaders follow Christ’s example by serving the people in their group. Consistent means putting your “yes” on the table in terms of commitment to showing up, investment in relationships, and maturity in Christ. Group leaders will function in two primary roles: facilitator and leader.

Facilitation primarily focuses on the process of group interaction. A facilitator helps manage discussions, encourages participation, and ensures that all voices are heard. In our context their goal is to create a safe place to grow spiritually and build authentic relationships with others.

Leadership concentrates on setting a vision and direction for the group. A leader often makes decisions, inspires others, and drives them toward our vision to love God, love the Church, and love the world.

Examples

Encouraging and helping to balance conversation between different personalities

Modeling good group behavior, ex. humility, listening, positive language, encouragement, etc.

Having a conversation with a group member who is disrupting conversation outside of group time

Ensuring time is spent well and used appropriately, ex. ensuring prayer time

Empowering other members of the group to lead and grow in maturity in Christ

Leading a life of discipleship to Jesus and practicing spiritual disciplines

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER COMMITMENTS

As a leader of a Community Group at The Chapel, I will...

Group Commitments

... lead my group to the best of my ability toward the goal of seeing each disciple in my group love God, love the Church, and love the world.

... create a community group environment that is wise and stumble-free. (Creating a safe and encouraging space, free of drugs, alcohol, and smoking).

... gather as a Community Group at least two times per month.

... follow the direction of The Chapel's leadership as I seek to best lead my Community Group.

... take initiative to invite people to join my Community Group and care for group members well.

... seek to fulfill the Key Objectives of Community Groups while maintaining the four essentials in alignment with the mission and vision of The Chapel.

... do my best to attend all Community Group leadership events throughout the year.

... communicate with the campus team or designated Chapel staff if I intend to lead my group through any content that is outside of the regular rhythm of Bible-centric, message-based discussions.

... oversee my group on Planning Center (attendance, communication, group information, etc.)

Personal Commitments

... grow and mature in my relationship with God through personal spiritual disciplines (habits of grace), active church participation, and involvement with accountability.

... pursue an attitude, choices and lifestyle that are both Godly and above reproach knowing that my lifestyle is a model for all Chapel members.

... faithfully attend The Chapel on Sundays and intentionally engage with and greet those in my Community Group.

... steward my time, talent, and treasure in a way that honors God.

... pray regularly for my Community Group.

... be prepared to lead our group gathering and facilitate discussion.

... adhere to our statements regarding sexuality, substance abuse, and social media (see pg 12).

LEADER ONBOARDING PROCESS

1. Fill out The Chapel's Service Application (thechapel.com/serve)
2. Fill out the Community Group specific application
3. Interview with a Chapel staff member or pastor
4. Complete Community Group Leader training
 - a. Community Group handbook training
 - b. Community Group video training

Once approved, begin forming your group by personal invitation or open group sign ups.

Potential Community Group leaders are generally required to be involved in a group for six months prior to leading their own group.

STATEMENTS ON BEHAVIOR

We hope to be a source of encouragement and support for you if any of these areas are a personal struggle. For the sake of our ministry and your own personal testimony, here is what we expect Group Leaders to communicate and model:

Sexuality

We believe that sex was created by God as an expression of intimacy between a man and a woman within the context of marriage. As Christ-followers, we are called to be people of purity. For married people, purity looks like fidelity within the marriage relationship. For single people, purity looks like remaining celibate until such a time as you are married. We desire for Community Group Leaders to set a godly example in this very important arena of life. We ask that unmarried individuals who are in dating relationships maintain separate residences in addition to embracing a lifestyle of purity.

Substance Use

The use of alcohol is a matter of Christian liberty, and we believe that it is a matter of conviction for each disciple. The Scripture is clear that drunkenness is always sinful, and so any alcohol consumption should not be to the point of impairment, lowering judgment, or compromising self-control. This applies beyond alcohol as well, though it should be a guiding principle for each Christ-follower. We desire that Community Group Leaders would likewise be good examples in this area, and preferring to protect other brothers and sisters over exercising their own liberty in Christ.

Social Media

The people in your group will visit and follow you on social media. While social media can be a great connection tool, it also serves as a window into your life. In light of that, we ask that you leverage social media with your group members in mind.

Summary

As disciples of Jesus, each of us are called to live in such a way that is worthy of the Gospel. While the standard or expectation is not sinless perfection, the call is for us as leaders to be above reproach. In other words, the overall pattern of our lives should be in the direction of holiness. Yes, sin is still present in our lives, and we will not be perfect on this side of eternity. But sinful patterns should be confessed, brought into the light, and repented of. If you find yourself in any area - not just these listed - to need help or guidance, please reach out to your campus pastor. We are here to help.