

 McLean Bible Church

# *church group* LEADER'S MANUAL

**AUGUST 2021**

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*VISION*

FOR CHURCH GROUPS

McLean Bible Church (MBC) has been committed to small groups ministry in many different ways for decades. Yet even with great ministries, it is still easy to be part of a large church family without deeply connecting with others. The DC Metro area is filled with busy people moving in different directions, often at a fast pace. And if we aren't intentional, we can keep that pace in our church involvement. We can enter our church buildings, sit on the back row, and quietly leave without anyone even knowing our name. Add to that dynamic a global pandemic that has left many people feeling disconnected and alone, and our need for genuine community in the church is evident.

The Bible tells us that we were designed by God to be a part of such community. We were designed to commune with God and to commune with God's people. We want every member of MBC to experience the deep healthy community that we read about in the New Testament - it's what we were made for.

With that in mind, we see five areas where Church Group ministry can help us experience church family according to God's good design.

### **STRONG BIBLICAL COMMUNITY**

We are committed to nurturing the spiritual health of the body of Christ at MBC by creating and strengthening opportunities for biblical community for every group member at every MBC location. We believe that Church Groups can help us leverage the strengths of a large church and yet offer the benefits of a small church community so that no one slips through the cracks. Church Groups commit to caring for one another, growing together to become more like Jesus, and making disciples together on mission in the world ("C-G-M").

### **PREPARATION FOR MISSION**

The Bible tells us that God invites us into His mission to make disciples among all nations. Church Groups intentionally prepare MBC group members for this mission here in the DC area or anywhere in the world. Church Groups provide a reproducible example of church life where MBC members can experience healthy biblical community without extra resources that aren't often available in unreached places. We believe that by teaching the Word of God, following the Spirit of God, and committing to biblical community with the people of God, MBC group members can be better equipped to start, strengthen, or support churches in any setting in our city or in any part of the world, including among unreached peoples and places.

### **NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE**

Church Groups reflect what we read about church in the New Testament. Every church looks a little different, but every church that obeys the Bible will embody certain traits. At MBC we call these the "12 Traits of a Biblical Church." Church Group Leaders will help shepherd our MBC family to actively live out all 12 traits of healthy church life ([mcleanbible.org/12traits](http://mcleanbible.org/12traits)).

### **PERSONAL PASTORAL CARE**

We want all MBC members to know and understand the personal pastoral care and leadership that the Bible says every Christian needs. At MBC, we're committed to providing that pastoral care to our church family in the smaller, more relational setting of Church Groups.

### **COMMITTED CHURCH FAMILY**

Church Groups are a great way to live out membership at MBC. God designed His church to be a family where different kinds of people commit to follow Jesus together. We were never meant to live the Christian life in isolation; God created a family in which we can thrive. Membership means bought-in commitment, and at MBC, we encourage members to participate in a committed community of believers - a Church Group. Membership also means our church is committed to its members' flourishing in this church and on mission around the world. Within the next few years, we envision that being an active member of MBC will mean being an active member of a Church Group.

*understanding*  
CHURCH GROUPS

## DEFINITION OF CHURCH GROUPS

At MBC, a Church Group is a group of people who commit to caring for one another, growing together to become more like Jesus, and making disciples together on mission in the world (“C-G-M”). Church Groups are designed to be representative of the entire body of Christ, including men and women of all ages, married and single, and families with and without children in the home. Groups will meet in all kinds of places and will likely be all different sizes, although they will typically range from 3-30 people.

## ESSENTIAL GROUP ELEMENTS

While every Church Group strives to care for one another, grow together to become more like Jesus, and make disciples together on mission in the world (“C-G-M”), how they do those things will vary from group to group.

Church Groups regularly meet together, but they have freedom to tailor a meeting format that works best for their context. We anticipate most Church Groups will meet for about 2 hours, but that too will vary.

Although each Church Group will look different, the core meeting of each MBC Church Group will include the following elements:

- **All Church Groups devote time to building community.** This could include doing things like sharing a meal or snacks and using that time to talk and catch up on life. It could include serving together in a ministry or outreach.
- **All Church Groups devote time to God’s Word.** This could include discussing a sermon, doing a Bible study, and discussing books that are based on Scripture. However, most group meetings will include discussing the sermon from the previous Sunday as the group members seek to understand and apply the sermon content. Most weeks we provide an MBC Sermon Discussion Guide that can be found on our website ([mcleanbible.org/discussion](http://mcleanbible.org/discussion)) to help facilitate the discussion. We strongly encourage this approach because it can promote unity when our whole church is studying the same passages of scripture together each week. However, based on the specific needs in each group, Church Group Leaders will have the freedom to tackle different areas of study in different seasons for the group. Please work with your coach to ensure your plan is coordinated well with your MBC location’s leadership.
- **All Church Groups devote time to deeper sharing and specific prayer.** This could include praying together in the larger group with all the Church Group members; it could include breaking into smaller “huddle” groups to pray more specifically for one another and share more deeply about the details of their lives; it could also include meeting together at MBC’s Prayer and Worship nights.

The bottom line is, every Church Group is different and has its own personality. Yet all Church Groups work to include the three essential elements listed above.

## CHURCH GROUP HUDDLES

As groups seek to spend time focused on sharing and prayer, they may choose to pair up group members into smaller groups, often 3-4 people of the same gender, for deeper sharing about the details of their life and for more specific prayer. We call these groups “huddles.” What people do during their time in huddles varies, but generally speaking, huddles help us to deepen friendships, live in transparency and accountability, and pray for one another. These huddles typically become one of our first lines of care at MBC.

Why are huddles helpful? Sometimes in a group of ten or twenty people it can be difficult to have enough time for each person to share the important details of their life and receive meaningful support. In a group of 3 or 4 people it can be easier. Breaking into huddles can help every huddle member to be known and supported. We hope huddles will be an environment that offers every huddle member an opportunity to share openly, offer and receive care and support, and pray specifically and regularly with those in their group.

There are many different ways to structure huddles. The following is a very simple format that may provide ideas as you prayerfully consider how you might best use this time intentionally. In this model, we simply focus on “Share & Prayer”.

1. **SHARE:** This is a time when you might share the important things going on in your life. As the Spirit leads, ask one another questions to help care for, support, protect, encourage, correct, and advise one another in love. Praise God for His grace and for the great things He’s been doing in and through you. During this time of sharing, we ask how we can support each other, point one another to Christ and build one another up in love.
2. **PRAYER:** Pray specifically for one another and for others, including those who don’t know Jesus. Commission one another to go in the power of the Spirit to make disciples in the world.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR HUDDLES

Below is a list of sample questions that your group might consider discussing with one another. It typically works better to take your time with one or two questions that are particularly relevant during that week of your life, rather than rushing to cover all of the questions every time you meet. Some groups find it helpful to balance a variety of questions that encourage and questions that challenge people to grow. Remember, this list is not a checklist; it is provided to simply give some ideas for how to connect intentionally around times of deeper sharing.

Sample questions:

1. How have you seen or been experiencing God’s grace this week?
2. How have you struggled to honor Jesus this week in your work?
3. Are there any ways that anger, fear, anxiety, or addiction has shown up in your life this week? How does that reveal what you’re trusting in besides God?
4. How has selfishness shown up in your life this week?
5. What truth or promise of the gospel do you need to hear and believe to trust in God again?
6. How have you felt weary or discouraged this week?
7. How have you been able to do your work with excellence as unto the Lord, with thankfulness in your heart?
8. How have you managed your time this week?
9. How have you felt yourself resisting obedience to God this week? In your mission to the lost? In your sacrificial love for community?
10. In light of God’s love toward you, do you need to reconcile with somebody? Are you subconsciously holding a grudge?
11. How have you battled sexual or intimacy temptation and how are you preparing to deal with it next week?
12. How has the Holy Spirit been testing and growing you this week? Did you respond in faith or grumbling?
13. Is anything (e.g., school, work, social media, entertainment) isolating you from important relationships?
14. How are your rhythms going (e.g., Bible, prayer, mission, resting, creating, worship)?
15. How have you been enjoying God (e.g., His love, forgiveness, provision, joy, friendship, beauty, truth, power, comfort)?

Asking one another questions, in love, can be helpful for a variety of reasons. Questions can help us get to know and understand one another, and they can be the first step in “speaking truth in love” (Eph 4:15). Questions also provide a great way to give and receive wise counsel (Prov 19:20). Lastly, the Bible says, “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Prov 20:5). Asking loving questions is one way we help one another to discern the idols in our heart, apply the gospel to them, and grow to become more like Jesus.

When you ask someone questions about how they are doing and about the details of their life, it can be good to balance a variety of different kinds of questions, because different kinds of questions affect people in different ways. For example, sometimes it might be helpful to ask an uplifting question. At other times it might be helpful to ask a challenging question. Sometimes a personal and probing question will be most helpful, and at other times, a light-hearted question may be best.



Prayerfully seek to follow the Spirit and discern how best to respond to what someone shares with you. Sometimes, it might be most helpful to encourage, and at other times it might be helpful to gently correct. Sometimes, it might be helpful to listen and empathize, and at other times it might be helpful to speak more boldly. Discerning the right question and discerning the right way to respond can be helpful in huddles. As our biblical knowledge grows and our spiritual discernment sharpens, we become better and better at “speaking the truth in love” with one another.

For specific training on how to use huddle time well, see Church Group Leader 201 Training, which can be found online at [mcleanbible.org/churchgroups](http://mcleanbible.org/churchgroups).

## **SAMPLE MEETING FORMATS**

As Church Group Leaders, you have freedom to work with your MBC location leadership to decide what you think is best, as you focus your Church Group on caring, growing, and making disciples. That said, there are some common meeting formats that might help you to prayerfully structure a Church Group meeting that works well for your group.

### **OPTION #1 – WEEKLY RHYTHMS**

- 45 minutes devoted to talking, catching up, and encouraging one another.
- 45 minutes devoted to Bible study and sermon discussion.
- 45 minutes devoted to smaller group “huddles” for more specific prayer and accountability.

### **OPTION #2 – MONTHLY RHYTHMS**

1st and 3rd weeks of the month:

- 60 minutes devoted to Bible study and sermon discussion.
- 60 minutes devoted to talking, catching up, and encouraging one another during each meeting.

2nd and 4th weeks of the month:

- 60 minutes devoted to talking, catching up, and encouraging one another during each meeting.
- 60 minutes devoted to smaller group “huddles” for more specific prayer and accountability.

5th week of the month:

- Use this opportunity to serve or do outreach together.

### **OPTION #3 – FAMILY RHYTHMS**

1st week of the month: (Full group meets, intentionally involving children in some or all of the meeting time.)

- 45 minutes devoted to talking, catching up, and encouraging one another.
- 45 minutes devoted to Bible study and sermon discussion.

2nd week of the month: (Women only meet.)

- 90 minutes devoted to smaller group “huddles” for more specific prayer and accountability.

3rd week of the month: (Full group meets, intentionally involving children in some or all of the meeting time.)

- 45 minutes devoted to talking, catching up, and encouraging one another.
- 45 minutes devoted to Bible study and sermon discussion.

4th week of the month: (Men only meet.)

- 90 minutes devoted to smaller group “huddles” for more specific prayer and accountability.

5th week of the month: (All ages meet.)

- Use this opportunity to serve or do outreach together.

There are many ways to combine elements from various meeting formats for how your group spends its meeting time. It’s up to you, as a Church Group Leader, to work with your coach to follow the Spirit in designing a tailored meeting format that works well for your context.

How we spend our meeting time is important. Yet, Church Groups go beyond the weekly meetings. In fact, some of the best parts of being a Church Group happen outside of Church Group meetings. So, encourage your group members to be creative in finding ways to support one another during the week, not just during meetings.

## **KIDS AND TEENS IN CHURCH GROUPS**

We invite all Church Groups to involve children and teens in their groups in meaningful ways. For example, younger children might join the full group for the mealtime and the “talking and catching up” time, and then go to kid’s ministry or childcare during “huddle” time. Sometimes Church Group members rotate providing childcare or ministry to the children in the group while the adults meet together. In other Church Groups, the parent(s) or guardian(s) might chip in to pay external childcare providers to care for the children during the adults’ meeting time.

We invite teens to participate in most aspects of Church Group life with the adults. So, we encourage them to join us during the whole group time when men and women, young and old, married and singles get together to talk about life, process a sermon, do a Bible study, etc. We invite teens to join our group when we do outreach and serve our city and world. We invite teens to participate in the small group time when a few people of the same gender get together for deeper sharing and more specific prayer. Depending on the teen’s age, personality, and other factors, their parent(s) or guardian(s) may pair their teenage child with the other teens during small group time, or their parent(s) or guardian(s) may pair with their own teenage child and the other adults in their small group for some intergenerational time. The parent(s) or guardian(s) decides what is best, and we encourage teens to join in the Church Group experience in an appropriate and beneficial way in accordance with the standards of their parent(s) or guardian(s).

In the case that a child or teen would like to visit or join a Church Group and their parent(s) or guardian(s) do not attend, we work to do this in a way that is fun and safe. Often that process will include the Church Group Leader/Coach working together to identify another family, with a similar age child, who is willing to show some love and hospitality by including the visiting child or teen in their Church Group.

Each group is responsible for the childcare in their group and each group will look different. Although each group looks different, all Church Groups are required to follow the MBC Child Safety Policy, and all Church Groups are encouraged to welcome children and teens in their Church Group family.



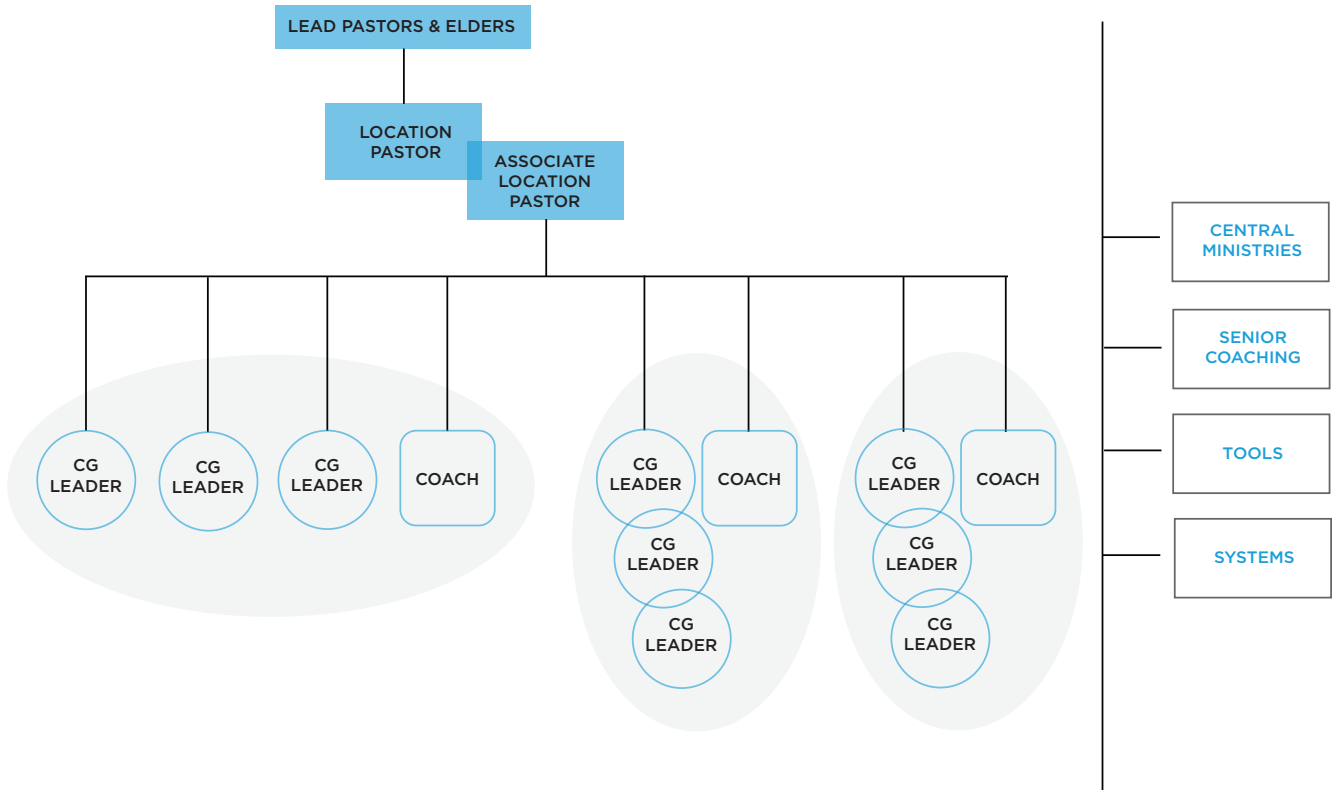
*Structure*  
OF CHURCH GROUPS

## MBC LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

MBC's Elders and Lead Pastors lead and oversee all of the people at MBC throughout all of our MBC locations and ministries. We also have Location Pastors who provide primary pastoral oversight for their respective congregations at their MBC location, including oversight of all Church Group Pastors and Church Group Leaders.

In addition, Location Pastors will appoint Church Group Coaches to help support Church Group Pastors and Church Group Leaders across each MBC location. They will all work together as a team to lead and shepherd the people in their Church Groups.

Our leadership structure is illustrated below:



## CHURCH GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Church Groups are designed to be representative of the entire body of Christ, including men and women of all ages, married and single, and families with and without children in the home. Groups will meet in all kinds of places and will likely be all different sizes, although they will typically range from 3-30 people.

## CHURCH GROUP LEADERS

Ideally, all of our Church Groups will one day be led by a Church Group Pastor. At the same time, we consider appointing pastors a weighty responsibility. Therefore, we will prayerfully and carefully transition to pastoral leadership in Church Groups over time. We will provide more details and training on the role of Church Group Pastor in the months and years ahead. In the event a Church Group Pastor has not yet been appointed for a respective Church Group, and knowing this process may take years, then a Church Group Leader will lead the group until such a time that a Church Group Pastor may be appointed.

Men and women who serve as Church Group Leaders must meet the biblical qualifications for deacons in the church as seen in 1 Timothy 3. The role of a Church Group Leader is to lead, teach, and pray with and for the Church Group members toward the following ends, which we call the “Four Aims.” We identify these “4 Aims” to help each Church Group Leader discern whether or not their Church Group is moving in the right direction.

### 4 AIMS:

**AIM #1:** Strive to see all Church Group members caring, growing, and making disciples.

**AIM #2:** Integrate new people quickly and meaningfully into your Church Group. We ask Church Groups to follow up with new people’s connect requests within 4 days from receiving a request.

**AIM #3:** Multiply disciples through your Church Group. Church Group Leaders strive to lead new people to Jesus, start new Church Groups, and raise up new leaders out of their Church Group.

**AIM #4:** Lead your Church Group to serve our church, not just your Church Group.

- Church Groups cooperate with all the other Church Groups to live all 12 traits of a biblical church together.
- Church Group Leaders join the other Church Group Leaders for the Church Group Leader meetings.
- Church Group Leaders encourage their group members to consider serving in MBC’s churchwide ministries (e.g., Kid’s Quest, The Rock, Access, Local Outreach, Global Outreach, Welcome Teams, etc.)

The above aims can be summarized using the helpful acronym “**A-I-M-S**”, which stands for the following: **A**ll group members caring, growing, and making disciples. **I**ntegrate new people quickly and meaningfully. **M**ultiply disciples through your Church Group. **S**erve your church, not just your church group.

## SHARED LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH GROUPS

We encourage Church Group Leaders and Church Group Pastors to consider raising up a team of leaders from within their Church Group to help lead it; these leaders will serve alongside the Church Group Leader and under the Church Group Leader’s responsibility and authority. There are different types of shared leadership you can consider as a Church Group Leader.

Some groups may choose to ask group members to consider accepting some functional leadership that shares roles and responsibilities. This might involve dividing tasks that need to happen to help the Church Group meet its 4 aims. For example, you might assign one person to help with hospitality and community building. You might have a rotating teaching team. You might consider having a “connect person” who helps new group members connect well. There are many ways to do this, but the key is to give group members opportunities to serve and use their gifts in your group. Another type of shared leadership could include a small group of leaders who together oversee the group by strategizing, making decisions together, and shouldering the responsibility of overseeing these souls together. We encourage you to prayerfully work with your coach to find a model of leadership that best serves the needs of your group.

## CHURCH GROUP COACHES

Church Group Leaders are supported by both their Location Pastor and their Church Group Coach. In short, the Location Pastor and the coach work together to ensure that Church Groups are healthy and moving in the right direction. Coaches serve under the direction of and provide support to their Location Pastor. Men and women who serve as Church Group Coaches must meet the biblical qualifications provided in 1 Timothy 3 for church deacons.

Typically, each Church Group Coach supports approximately three to five Church Group Leaders. The coach meets regularly with their group of 3-5 Church Group Leaders in a peer-to-peer learning group which becomes a relational network of leaders. It's called the Church Group Leaders Network.

### **Church Group Coaches have five main responsibilities...**

#### **1. ASSIST IN THE “4 AIMS”**

The coach helps Church Group Leaders to faithfully strive for the “4 Aims.” The primary ways coaches do this are by coaching Church Group Leaders in Church Group leadership technique, providing organizational leadership in the Church Group ministry, leading the Church Group Leaders Network meetings, providing advice to Church Group Leaders and Location Pastors, and praying for the Church Group Leader and their Church Group members.

#### **2. DEVELOP THE “LEADER PIPELINE”**

In partnership with the Location Pastor, the Church Group Coach helps to identify and train future Church Group Leaders. Coaches will also work with Church Group Leaders as these leaders work to identify shared leadership opportunities within their group.

#### **3. MANAGE THE CONNECT PROCESS**

The coach works with the Church Group Leaders to ensure there are sufficient openings for all of the people who want to join a Church Group. The coach manages the connect process, in partnership with the MBC Location Administrator, to ensure it operates effectively.

#### **4. HANDLE ESCALATIONS**

If the Church Group Leader or their group needs help, their coach and the Church Group Leaders Network serve as the first line of support to help them. Depending on the nature of the need, the coach may involve others, including their Location Pastor and MBC Central Ministries.

*NOTE: In cases of correction and care (sometimes referred to as church discipline), whether it's moderate or severe, early-stage or late-stage, the coach will serve as the first line of support to the Church Group Leader. If additional leaders get involved, the coach will likely coordinate the various people during the process.*

#### **5. CO-LEAD THE CHURCH GROUP MINISTRY**

Church Group Coaches participate in the Church Group Leaders meetings to help pray, assess, and guide the Church Group ministry.

Location Pastors will build a team of Church Group Coaches at each MBC location. If someone is interested in becoming a Church Group Coach, they should speak with a Location Pastor.

*rhythms*  
OF CHURCH GROUPS



## **CHURCH GROUP MEETINGS**

Church Groups typically meet weekly for about 2 hours although each Church Group Leader will work with their group and their Church Group Coach to find a rhythm that works well for their individual group. Many groups take breaks during the year, often during the months of August and December, to allow periods of rest. The important thing, however, is finding a rhythm that works well for each group that offers consistency for the group and rest when needed.

## **CHURCH GROUP LEADERS NETWORK MEETINGS**

Church Group Leadership teams will stay connected through regular meetings for the purpose of prayer, information sharing, encouragement, and assessing the health and needs of the ministry. Church Group Coaches typically meet with three or four of their Church Group Leaders in their Church Group Leaders Network meeting. The coach is not the only one helping the Church Group Leaders; the leaders also help one another. What they do when they meet together is often fluid, meaning they pray about and discuss whatever makes the most sense to help one another, as the Spirit leads them.

Church Group Leaders Network meeting frequency is determined by the Church Group Coach and Church Group Leaders. Often, however, these meetings are held bi-monthly. In the case of a newer Church Group Leader, the coach and leaders may meet more frequently in the beginning, such as once-a-month. In the case of seasoned Church Group Leaders, they may meet less frequently like once-a-quarter or twice-a-year. The leaders and their coach determine a good rhythm that works for them. The Location Pastor determines whether or not it's best for him to attend some of these Church Group Leaders Network meetings. Many of the Church Group Leaders will discuss the following in network meetings:

### **HOW ARE YOU DOING?**

We begin with caring for one another. Caring for one another should characterize every area of our Church Group ministry, including coaching.

### **WHAT ARE YOU CELEBRATING?**

We take time to thank God for the good things He's doing in and through our Church Groups. We praise God together.

### **WHAT CHALLENGES ARE YOU FACING?**

We will most likely face challenges. We care for each other in these seasons because faithful leadership typically comes with challenges.

### **HOW CAN I HELP YOU?**

We aim to serve our Church Group Leaders. We provide help to practical challenges. Additionally, by listening carefully to how the leader responds to this question, sometimes we may be able to discern how we can help our leader continue growing as a follower of Jesus and a leader.

### **HOW CAN I PRAY FOR YOU?**

We can provide practical support to a leader in the form of advice or training, but often praying for God to work in their Church Group is one of the most powerful things a coach and the Leader's Network can do for one another.

As leaders and coaches ask these questions, and listen carefully to one another's responses, sometimes they will discover a situation that would benefit from getting a Location Pastor or Associate Location Pastor involved. These pastors are eager and glad to provide additional support and overall leadership as needed.

## **LOCATION-WIDE CHURCH GROUP LEADERSHIP MEETINGS**

Location-wide Church Group Leadership meetings gather all of our leaders in the Church Group ministry together at their MBC location (typically once a quarter or twice a year) to invest in our leaders and the ministry. Specifically, we do things like celebrate what God has been doing in Church Groups, steer the ministry into the future, recalibrate anything that might not be optimal, coordinate ourselves for local and global outreach, pray for God's guidance and provision, and train and encourage ourselves so that we are continually growing as leaders. Meetings are typically about two hours long.

*Support*  
FOR CHURCH GROUPS

## TRAINING

MBC offers training to help prepare leaders for Church Group ministry.

### **CHURCH GROUP LEADER 101**

Church Group Leader 101 Training is a set of short videos that introduce a Church Group Leader to the basic essentials needed to launch and lead a Church Group. These videos are required for all Church Group Leaders and Church Group Pastors. These videos will be accessible online at [mcleanbible.org/churchgroups](http://mcleanbible.org/churchgroups).

### **CHURCH GROUP LEADER 201**

Church Group Leader 201 Training is an online resource library where Church Group Leaders can find more specific information on particular topics that will help them excel at leading a group. These resources will be accessible online at [mcleanbible.org/churchgroups](http://mcleanbible.org/churchgroups).

### **CORE LEADERSHIP TRAINING (CLT)**

Core Leadership Training is the in-depth core training for all Church Group Leaders at MBC. This intensive training is required within the first 3 years of leading a group. Each leader can work with their Location Pastor or Church Group Coach to determine when and how to complete this essential training.

## CENTRAL MINISTRIES

MBC Central Ministries come alongside Church Group Leaders and Church Group Coaches to provide support in specific areas. Examples of Central Ministries may include: Kid's Quest, The Rock Student Ministries, Access Ministry, Global Outreach, Local Outreach, Counseling and Care, Training, etc.

For specific ways Church Groups work alongside these ministries, please see the Frequently Asked Questions section at the end of this manual.

## ONGOING ASSESSMENTS

We foster the effectiveness of each Church Group through a variety of ways including strong leadership, practical training, pastoral care, and dependent prayer. Additionally, sometimes we use tools to help. One of these tools is what we call Group Reflections. These help us get a sense for how God has been working in our lives and making disciples. They are not meant to be intimidating like report cards. Rather, they help us to live life to the fullest, and they help leaders to lead with intentionality and love.

Church Groups Leaders and their Church Group Coaches use Group Reflections once a year to pray for the Church Groups they serve, collaborate with one another, and renew their focus on the 4 aims of Church Groups. However, it is important to remember that Group Reflections do not tell the full story of God's work in and through the life of a Church Group. They are simply one of many tools that might help the Church Group ministry foster biblical community well.

## CORE AND ELECTIVE CLASSES

MBC offers Core Classes and Elective Classes. MBC Core Classes teach foundational biblical truths. Produced by MBC, these classes are available to people across all MBC locations. MBC Elective Classes are any class, other than an MBC Core Class, offered at an MBC location with the consent of the MBC Location Pastor. We are excited to offer both Core and Elective Classes to Church Group ministry leadership.

Core classes are envisioned to include classes to grow our understanding of theology, classes to help you grow, and classes to equip you for ministry. Some of the classes could be God, Man, Salvation, Church, Christianity Explored, Membership, How to Study the Bible, Stewardship, Preparing for Marriage, 12 Traits of a Healthy Church, Global Outreach, Baptism, Adoption, Church Planting, Core Leadership Training, and more.

CHURCH GROUP  
*faq's*

## HOW DO I START A CHURCH GROUP?

The process to help you prayerfully consider leading and launching a Church Group is a relational process with you and a Church Group Coach or Location Pastor. The process is tailored to you, and it's fluid, meaning you and your location leadership will follow the Spirit and do what makes the most sense. Sometime during the process, you will need to complete the steps below.

### STEP #1. TRAINING

Watch the "Church Group Training 101" videos. These videos provide more detail on how to lead and launch a group.

### STEP #2. APPLICATION

Fill out and submit the "Church Group Leader Application." A leader will typically get back to you within 10 days to schedule a meeting.

### STEP #3. INTERVIEW

You will complete your "Church Group Leader Interview" with a coach or leader. The interview typically takes 90 minutes.

### STEP #4. PRE-REQUISITES

Complete any "Church Group Leader Pre-Requisites" that your coach or leader asks you to do, such as watch a Church Group Leader lead a meeting, read an article, or complete a class like "How to Study the Bible."

### STEP #5. LAUNCH

Once approved, work with your coach to launch a Church Group or be assigned to an existing Church Group.

### STEP #6. DEVELOPMENT

Complete MBC's Core Leadership Training (CLT) within 3 years of leading your Church Group.

You are typically introduced to a coach after you complete and submit your Church Group Leader application. However, if you would like to speak with someone before you complete the application, contact your MBC Location Administrator, and we can connect you to a coach. If you are already in a Church Group, then you probably also want to share the news with your current Church Group Leader that you would like to consider leading a group.

## HOW DOES SOMEONE JOIN A CHURCH GROUP?

If someone new would like to join a Church Group, the "MBC Connect" meeting will walk them through the whole process. To make it easy, they can complete the MBC Connect meeting on the MBC website or in-person. These are the basic steps:

### STEP #1

Complete MBC Connect, online or in-person.

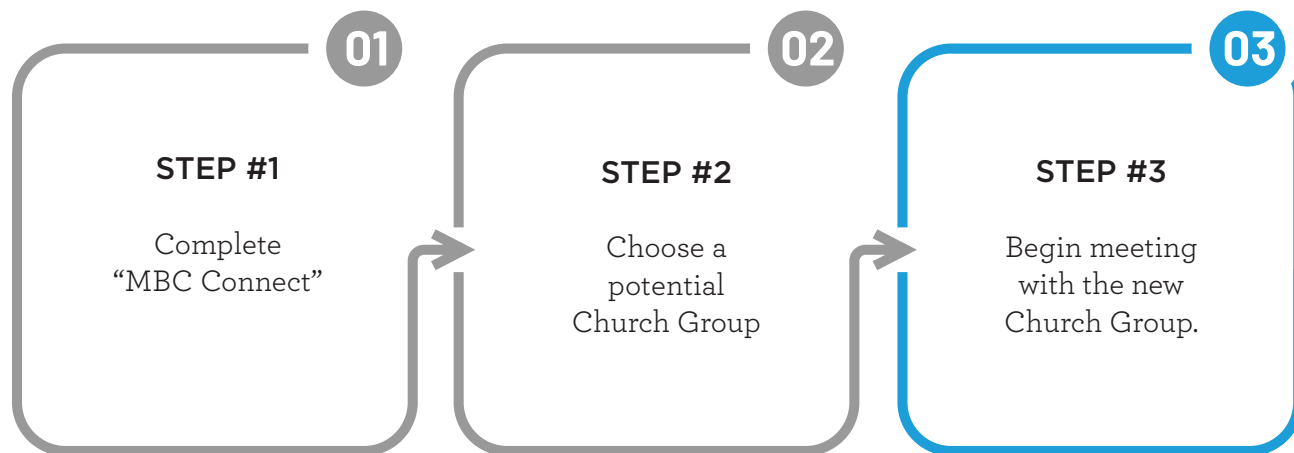
### STEP #2

Choose a potential Church Group option from the MBC location website. Click "contact group" to initiate contact with a leader from your location. Someone will contact you to discuss how we can help you get connected well.

### STEP #3

Begin meeting with the new Church Group.

The time between step #1 (completion of MBC Connect) and step #3 (begin meeting with a new Church Group), is typically 3-6 weeks. It looks like this...



### **IF I ALREADY KNOW PEOPLE IN A GROUP, CAN I JOIN THEIR CHURCH GROUP DIRECTLY?**

Yes, someone can join a Church Group directly and bypass the 3-steps. If they continue to stay in their Church Group, then they will likely be encouraged to consider completing the 3-steps at some point in the future, but that's not something that they necessarily need to do now if they would like to try out the new group.

### **DO CHURCH GROUPS PROVIDE CHILDCARE?**

Yes, many (but not all) Church Groups provide some sort of childcare. Childcare is the responsibility of the individual group. As Church Group Leader, you can work with your coach to talk through potential options to help you include children into the life of your Church Group. Additionally, many Church Groups welcome children to join the adults in many of the Church Group activities. All Church Groups will strictly abide by the MBC Child Safety Policy.

### **HOW DO CHURCH GROUPS HANDLE CORRECTION AND CARE?**

It's important to clarify that we all struggle, we all sin, and we all fall short of the glory of God, but in this discussion about correction and care (sometimes referred to as "church discipline"), we are referring to a situation in which a Christian is "in sin" (continually disobeying God without repenting [1 Tim 5:20]). The Bible prescribes a process for caring for a Christian who is "in sin" (Matt 18; 1 Cor 5; 1 Tim 5:20; Gal 6:1-2). However, every person and situation are different, so there is not a one-size fits-all specific task list to follow. Therefore, Church Groups strive to faithfully obey the process that the Bible prescribes while following the Spirit in discerning the specific ways to apply the Bible's process.

The following Care and Correction Process may help Church Groups to navigate caring for a group member who is in sin. We ask our group members to work through the following process:

#### **PHASE 1: HAVE A PRIVATE CONVERSATION**

Try to win them over through a private conversation.

- Have a private conversation with the person in sin (Matt 18:15).
- Express sincere love and humility. Ask good questions, seek to understand, and listen carefully. Strive for the facts to be clearly understood, clearly shown to be true, and clearly communicated.
- Use prayer (ask God to turn their heart), encouragement (inspire, motivate, nurture), and admonishment (mild correction).
- If they remain unrepentant, take one or two others along to talk with them (Matt 18:16).
- If they turn from their sin and obey God, you have won them over. If they remain unrepentant, then continue on to Phase 2.

## **PHASE 2: INCLUDE YOUR CHURCH GROUP LEADER AND FOLLOW THEIR LEAD**

Try to win them over by including your Church Group Leader and following their lead.

- Inform your Church Group Leader of the situation and ask for their guidance. The Church Group Leader will guide the process going forward.
- Continue praying for the person in sin, consider fasting for them, don't give up on them, and persevere for their good.
- It would not be uncommon for the Church Group Leader to speak with the person in sin and continue to pray, encourage, and admonish them. If they still remain unrepentant, then the Church Group Leader will work with the coach to determine how best to love and care for the one in sin, continuing on to Phase 3.

## **PHASE 3: INCLUDE THE CHURCH GROUP COACH AND FOLLOW THEIR LEAD**

- The Church Group Leader will include the Church Group Coach for advice and to help win them over.
- The Church Group Leader will inform the Church Group Coach of the situation and ask for their guidance.
- The coach will guide the process going forward, serving on behalf of, and following the instruction of, the Location Pastor and Elders.
- Upon repentance and demonstration of the fruit of repentance (Luke 3:8a), the person who was in sin will be joyfully restored to fellowship in their Church Group and MBC.
- In the unfortunate situation that they remain unrepentant, the Church Group Leader and Church Group Coach will work with the Location Pastor and the Lead Pastors and Elders to consider whether to recommend to the congregation (Matt 18:17) that the person in sin be removed from membership (Matt 18; 1 Cor 5:1-13). Whatever is decided, it will be done in humility and love, for the sake of restoration of the person in sin, and for the good of the church as a whole.

For more details about how MBC handles correction and care, including situations that might follow a different biblical process than the one outlined above, please reference MBC's Principles and Procedures for Confrontation.

## **HOW DO CHURCH GROUPS WORK WITH CENTRAL MINISTRIES?**

### **KID'S QUEST AND AWANA**

MBC is blessed to have ministries like Kid's Quest and Awana that lovingly serve our children and contribute powerfully to their spiritual formation. Their ministry includes outreach, teaching, Scripture memorization, arts and crafts, community events, and retreats. We are so grateful for these vital ministries. We also encourage children to be involved in Church Groups because Church Groups are a primary way we care for any member or loved-one in MBC, including our children, which is done under the ultimate care and discipleship of their parent(s) or guardian(s). When possible, we try to include multiple children, similar in age, in one group. We encourage children to participate in various aspects of Church Group life that are appropriate to them. In the event that members of MBC serve together in a ministry like Kid's Quest or Awana, these relationships could potentially be an opportunity to start a Church Group. We do not assume that this approach would be practical for every family; rather, it is one idea that families could explore.

### **THE ROCK STUDENT MINISTRIES**

MBC is also blessed to have The Rock Student Ministry that lovingly serves middle school and high school students and contributes powerfully to their spiritual formation. Their ministry includes outreach, teaching, training, community events, retreats, and leadership. We are so grateful for this vital ministry. Similarly to children, we also want our teens to experience church life with their families, so we also invite teens to join our Church Groups because Church Groups are a primary way we care for any member of MBC including our teens. When possible, we try to include multiple teenagers in one group, so they have another friend or two, in the same life-stage.

## **ACCESS MINISTRY**

MBC is blessed to have ministries (like Access Ministry) which lovingly serve and aim to include people and families with special needs as valued members of the body of Christ. Their ministry includes things like outreach, discipleship, training, arts and crafts, community events, retreats, and care ministries.

Additionally, MBC's Access Ministry also provides important support to Church Group Leaders and members ensuring that our loved ones with special needs are well-cared for and well-connected in the life of our Church Groups. The support they provide could include things like training, advice, finding an accessible meeting location, adaptive resources, providing an extra set of hands, and help forming a Church Group that is uniquely designed to love and serve families with special needs.

Therefore, Church Group Leaders and Church Group Coaches partner together with Access Ministry to provide unique avenues and opportunities for those with special needs to hear the gospel, grow in Christ, and be involved in healthy church life.

## **COUNSELING AND CARE**

MBC is blessed to have a specialized counseling ministry (MBC Counseling and Care) for those of us who are struggling or seeking specific direction and care. MBC Counseling and Care provides ministry to members of MBC and to regular attendees when appropriate. They also partner with Church Groups to help groups strive to care for one another, grow to become more like Jesus, and make disciples. Some of the many ways MBC Counseling and Care partners with and supports Church Groups include:

- Provides thought leadership on counseling and care, in accord with the Lead Pastors and Elders.
- Provides training to coaches, Church Group Leaders, and Church Group Members on how to counsel and care for one another.
- Handles escalations. As Church Group members help one another (through counseling and care), sometimes we get stuck. When that happens, we can go to our Church Group Leader for help. When our Church Group Leader gets stuck, they can go to their coach and/or Location Pastor for help. When they get stuck, they can go to MBC Counseling and Care for help. The bottom line is, we all work together, and we rely on God to provide everything we need.
- Provides tools, resources, and training. Tools can include helpful strategies for care. Resources can include things such as articles, books, videos, and audio resources. Training can include classes and workshops on specific ways to care, including specific lay counseling training classes.
- Provides senior coaching to Church Group Coaches and Church Group Pastors.

We don't want Church Groups to outsource the ministry of care to the MBC Counseling and Care team. "Caring for one another" is one of the primary things Church Groups do, and God calls every one of us to excel at it. MBC Counseling and Care equips and supports Church Group Members to care for one another well. MBC Counseling and Care strengthens the entire Church Group ministry through investing into our coaches, pastors, and leaders.



## **GLOBAL OUTREACH**

MBC is blessed to have a Global Outreach (MBC GO) department that partners with and supports our Church Groups as we all strive to make disciples globally (and locally). MBC GO partners with and supports Church Groups in many ways. MBC GO does the following:

- Provides opportunities for Church Groups to pray for the nations, missionaries, churches, and ministries.
- Provides opportunities to support missions and missionaries around the world.
- Provides training in global disciple making through classes, workshops, tools, experiences, and even local opportunities to engage with internationals.
- Provides training in how to do missions and support missions well.
- Provides training in how to support a friend or family member or Church Group Member who is considering missions.
- Provides opportunities to serve in missions all around the world. These can include things like short-term mission trips.
- Provides opportunities to serve missions locally. These can include things like showing hospitality to missionaries who are back in DC, housing interns, investing in future missionaries, supporting volunteer missions projects, and much more.
- Provides opportunities for a group to adopt or support an MBC missionary or missions partner.
- Provides senior coaching to coaches, pastors, and leaders as they advise and support Church Group members who may feel called to take the gospel to the nations vocationally. GO's development process (The MBC Missionary Pipeline) walks with a prospective missionary from the point that they wonder about a call to go... all the way to living on the mission field.

Church Groups and GO do not have a prescribed way to engage with one another, so Church Group members are encouraged to contact GO for anything related to global missions. In the case that someone is considering their unique role in global missions, then GO will often serve a leading role in that process while also including the person's Church Group since the group is that person's close community.

We don't believe global missions should be thought of as a department in a church; it should be the culture and passion of everyone in the church. Following Jesus includes finding our unique role in spreading a passion for God's glory among all nations. Therefore, we encourage Church Groups to engage with their coach and MBC GO to become a group who joins in all the fun of making disciples locally and globally.

## **LOCAL OUTREACH**

MBC is blessed to have a team (MBC Local Outreach) who focuses on identifying local opportunities and helping all of us to serve through those opportunities. All Church Groups are encouraged to participate in outreach through sharing the love of Jesus through their personal witness throughout their communities. All Church Groups are encouraged to invite nonbelievers to their groups. Sometimes we join together with other groups for more structured opportunities where we can serve together. MBC Local Outreach helps by coordinating structured outreach opportunities in coordination with MBC locations. Church Groups and members are encouraged to connect to these local outreach opportunities as communicated through their location. Group Leaders and coaches are also welcome to work directly with MBC Local Outreach to learn about opportunities to serve and to establish a plan for their group.

## **WHAT ARE "COMMUNITIES" AT MBC?**

In addition to Central Ministries and Church Groups, MBC is very blessed to offer many diverse "Communities" of people who gather regularly to do things like spend time in God's Word and encourage one another in areas of common interest, life stage, or shared activity. God works powerfully in and through these Communities. They are often specific to an MBC location, and each MBC location will offer details about what Communities are meeting and how you can get involved.





We are praying that every person who calls MBC home will experience the biblical community that God has designed each of us to thrive in for His glory.

**Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.**

EPHESIANS 3:20-21

 McLean Bible Church

[mcleanbible.org](http://mcleanbible.org)