

⊕ McLean Bible Church

church group
LEADER'S MANUAL

FALL 2023

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VISION
FOR CHURCH GROUPS

DC Metro is filled with busy people who are moving in a thousand different directions. If we aren't intentional, our churches can feel like that, too. We can enter just before the gathering starts, sit in the back row, and leave without anyone even knowing our name. Sadly, it's easy to be a part of a church family yet still feel disconnected and alone.

Thankfully, the Bible provides a different vision of the Christian life. It teaches us that we were designed to commune with God and God's people. We want every member of McLean Bible Church to experience this kind of healthy community. It's what we were made for. We want to resist shallow community and anonymous Christianity. Of course, no single tool or ministry can accomplish this task. But, at MBC, our Church Group ministry has had a significant effect in shaping the kind of culture that upholds God's design for His church.

MBC's Church Group ministry is centered on five values.

STRONG BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

We are committed to the spiritual health of every member at every MBC location. Biblical community cannot be reserved for only a subset of the body of Christ. Church Groups help us to leverage the strengths of a large church while not overlooking the benefits of a small church so that no one slips through the cracks. Through Church Groups, MBC members commit to care for one another, to help each other grow to become more like Jesus, and to make disciples together who are on mission in the world.

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 members for this mission here in the DC area or anywhere in the world. They provide a reproducible example of church life where MBC members can experience healthy biblical community without the resources that are rarely available in unreached places. Our goal is simple: by teaching the Word of God, following the Spirit of God, and committing to biblical community with the people of God, Church Group members will be equipped to serve churches in any part of the world, including among unreached peoples and places.

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

Church Groups reflect what we read in the New Testament. Healthy churches will look a little different according to their context, but their basic priorities will always be the same. At MBC, we call these the "12 Traits of a Biblical Church." Church Group Leaders will help to shepherd our MBC family to understand and live out all 12 traits of healthy church life (mcleanbible.org/12traits).

PERSONAL PASTORAL CARE

We want all MBC members to experience the pastoral care and leadership that the Bible says every Christian needs. At MBC, we're committed to providing that kind of care through Church Groups.

COMMITTED CHURCH FAMILY

God designed His church to be a family where different kinds of people commit to follow Jesus together. We should never live the Christian life in isolation—in fact, we *can't* live the Christian life in isolation. That's why we want a church committed to meaningful membership. At MBC, we encourage members to participate in a Church Group to experience firsthand what it looks like for a group of Christians to be committed to their growing in Christ. 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

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. In other words, they’re not made up of all singles or all 60-somethings or all young families. They include men and women of all ages, marrieds and singles, families with children in the home and families with grown children. Church Groups meet in all kinds of places and vary in size, though the typical group is between three and 30 people.

WHY “C-G-M”? (CARING, GROWING, AND MAKING DISCIPLES)

WHY ARE WE COMMITTED TO CARING?

The Bible tells us that God’s church is much more than an event on Sunday. Church is a family. As a family, we are committed to caring deeply for one another — for both our physical and spiritual needs. We are inviting you to be a part of our lives and we hope you will have us be a part of yours! (John 13:34-35; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; Romans 12:10-13)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COMMIT TO GROWING?

Growing as a disciple is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus.

The Bible tells us that before we trust in Jesus we are slaves to sin. Yet, God makes a way for us to be freed from our sin and reconciled to Him. That way is His Son, Jesus. This is the gospel. God sent His Son who lived a perfect and sinless life, one that we couldn’t live. Jesus willingly died the death that we deserved. That means that although we could not pay the debt of our sin, Jesus paid the entire debt on our behalf. The great news of the gospel is that if we repent of our sin and believe in Jesus as our Lord we are saved and united to Christ. The Bible tells us that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Jesus makes us new!

We can become more like Jesus, and that is what growing is all about. We are inviting you to join us as we all strive to do this together. Church Groups do this in the power of the Holy Spirit, by studying God’s Word together, and helping one another learn to obey and follow Jesus. (Romans 6:6-9; Ephesians 2:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

HOW DO CHURCH GROUPS MAKE DISCIPLES?

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus. As Church Groups, we are committed to following Jesus and helping others to follow Jesus. In what we call the Great Commission, Jesus told His disciples to make disciples of all nations. Church Groups strive to make disciples right here in the DC Metro area and to be a part of making the gospel known all around the world.

There are many ways Church Groups are involved in disciple making. We pray for those who don’t know Jesus. We give financially to make the gospel known around the world. We support missionaries who serve around the world and share the gospel with those who need Jesus. And, we actively tell others about Jesus right here in the DC area. We encourage each other, equip each other, and pray with and for each other as we make disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20).

ESSENTIAL GROUP ELEMENTS

While every Church Group strives to **C-G-M** (see above), the specific way they do that will vary from group to group. Church Groups regularly meet together, but they have freedom to tailor a format that works best for them. Most meet for about two hours, but that too will vary.

Although each Church Group will look different, each Church Group will prioritize the following three elements:

- **Building community.** This could include sharing a meal and using that time to talk and catch up on life. It could also include serving together in a ministry or outreach.

- **Studying God’s Word.** This could include discussing a sermon, doing a Bible study, or reading through helpful Christian books. Most Church Groups discuss the previous sermon. The goal of these discussions is greater understanding and specific application. To facilitate discussion, we usually provide an MBC Sermon Discussion Guide that can be found on our website (mcleanbible.org/discussion). We strongly encourage this approach because it promotes unity when our whole church is studying the same Scripture each week. Nonetheless, Church Group leaders have the freedom to tackle different areas of study in different seasons. Please work with your coach to ensure your plan is coordinated well with your MBC location’s leadership and direction.
- **Deeper sharing and specific prayer.** This could include praying in the larger group with everyone; it could include breaking into smaller “huddles” to pray more specifically for one another and share more deeply about life; it could also include meeting together at MBC’s Prayer and Worship nights.

Every Church Group has its own personality, but they all include these same three essential elements.

CHURCH GROUP HUDDLES

In a group of ten or twenty, it can be difficult to have enough time for each person to share important details and receive meaningful support. To help with this, a Church Group may choose to split everyone into “huddles.” Usually, these smaller groups are made up of 3–4 people of the same gender. They’re not all the same, but generally speaking they deepen friendships and encourage transparency and accountability, and provide time for prayer. If a member is straying or struggling, their huddle typically becomes one of the first lines of care.

The following format for a huddle meeting is very simple. Hopefully, it provides ideas for you. We encourage huddles to take time to “share” and take time for “prayer”.

SHARE

Share important things going on in your life. As the Spirit leads, ask one another questions to care for, protect, correct, and encourage one another. Praise God for His grace and for the great things He’s been doing in and through you. During this time of sharing, support each other, point one another to Christ, and build one another up in love.

PRAYER

Pray specifically for each other and for others, including those who don’t know Jesus. Ask about evangelistic opportunities. Commission one another to go in the power of the Spirit to make disciples.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR HUDDLES

Below are some sample questions that your group might consider. It typically works better to take your time with one or two questions that are particularly relevant during that week, rather than rushing to cover all of them. Some groups find it helpful to balance a variety of questions—some challenge people to grow, some that encourage reflection on God’s character, etc. Remember: this isn’t a checklist. The goal is simple: be intentional with your time together.

Sample questions:

- How have you seen or enjoyed God’s grace this week?
- How have you struggled to honor Jesus this week in your work?
- How has anger, fear, anxiety, selfishness, or addiction shown up in your life this week? How have those moments revealed what you’re really trusting in?
- What truth or promise of the gospel do you need to hear and believe yet again?
- How have you felt weary or discouraged this week?
- How have you been able to do your work with excellence as unto the Lord, with thankfulness in your heart?
- How have you managed your time this week?

- How have you felt yourself resisting obedience to God this week? In your mission to the lost? In your sacrificial love for community?
- In light of God's love for you, do you need to reconcile with someone? Are you consciously or subconsciously holding a grudge?
- How have you battled sexual temptation this week? How are you preparing to deal with it next week?
- How has the Holy Spirit been testing and growing you this week? Did you respond with faith or grumbling?
- Is anything (e.g., school, work, social media, entertainment) isolating you from important relationships?
- How are your rhythms going (e.g., Bible, prayer, mission, resting, worship)?
- How have you been enjoying God (e.g., His love, forgiveness, provision, joy, friendship, beauty, truth, power, comfort)?

Questions help us 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). Consider this proverb: “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Prov 20:5). Answering thoughtful questions is one way to discern the idols in our heart, apply the gospel to them, and grow to become more like Jesus.

Wise Christians ask a variety of questions because different questions affect people in different ways. Sometimes, it might be helpful to ask an uplifting question. Other times, it might be helpful to ask a challenging question. Sometimes, a personal and probing question will be most helpful. Other times, a light-hearted question may be best.

Prayerfully follow the Spirit as you discern how to respond. Sometimes you need to encourage; sometimes you need to gently correct. Sometimes you need to empathize; sometimes you need to speak up. Discerning both the right question and the wisest response is so important. Ask the Lord for help. Immerse yourself in the Scriptures. As your biblical knowledge grows and your spiritual discernment sharpens, you’ll become better and better at “speaking the truth in love.”

For specific training on how to use huddle time well, see Church Group Leader 201 Training, which can be found online at mcleanbible.org/church-groups-leader-resources.

SAMPLE MEETING FORMATS

As Church Group Leaders, you have the freedom to work with your MBC location leadership to decide what you think is best. That said, there are some common meeting formats that might work well.

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.

2nd and 4th weeks of the month:

- 60 minutes devoted to talking, catching up, and encouraging one another.
- 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.

Of course, elements can be switched around and combined. It’s up to you, as a Church Group Leader, to work with your Coach to follow the Spirit in designing a tailored format that works for your context.

It’s also worth remembering: Church Groups are more than just weekly meetings. In fact, some of the best parts of being a Church Group happen outside regular meetings. So encourage your group members to creatively find ways to support one another during the week.

KIDS AND TEENS IN CHURCH GROUPS

We invite all Church Groups to meaningfully involve children and teens. For example, younger children might join for the mealtime and the “talking and catching up” time, and then go to kid’s ministry or childcare during “huddle” time. Some Church Groups rotate the childcare between members; others might chip in to pay someone to care for the children. In every situation, Church Groups must adhere to the MBC Child Safety Policy.

We invite teens to participate in most aspects of Church Group life. We encourage them to join when the whole group—men and women, young and old, married and singles—get together to talk about life, process a sermon, or do a Bible study. We also invite teens to join when we do outreach. We even invite teens to participate, when appropriate, as huddles 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 other teens during small group time. Or their parent(s) or guardian(s) may stay with their own child. In every case, the parent(s) or guardian(s) decide what is best.

What if a child or teen wants to visit or join a Church Group without their parent(s) or guardian(s)? It’s possible, but it’s a situation we always approach with wisdom. Often, the process will include the Church Group Leader/Coach working to identify another family with a similarly aged child who is willing to show some hospitality.

Every Church Group is responsible for their own childcare, which means it will look different depending on the group. That said, all Church Group Leaders are required to pass the online MBC Church Group Child Safety training course and agree to follow the MBC Child Safety Policy. MBC Location leadership staff is available to help Leaders find a childcare situation that works well for their group.

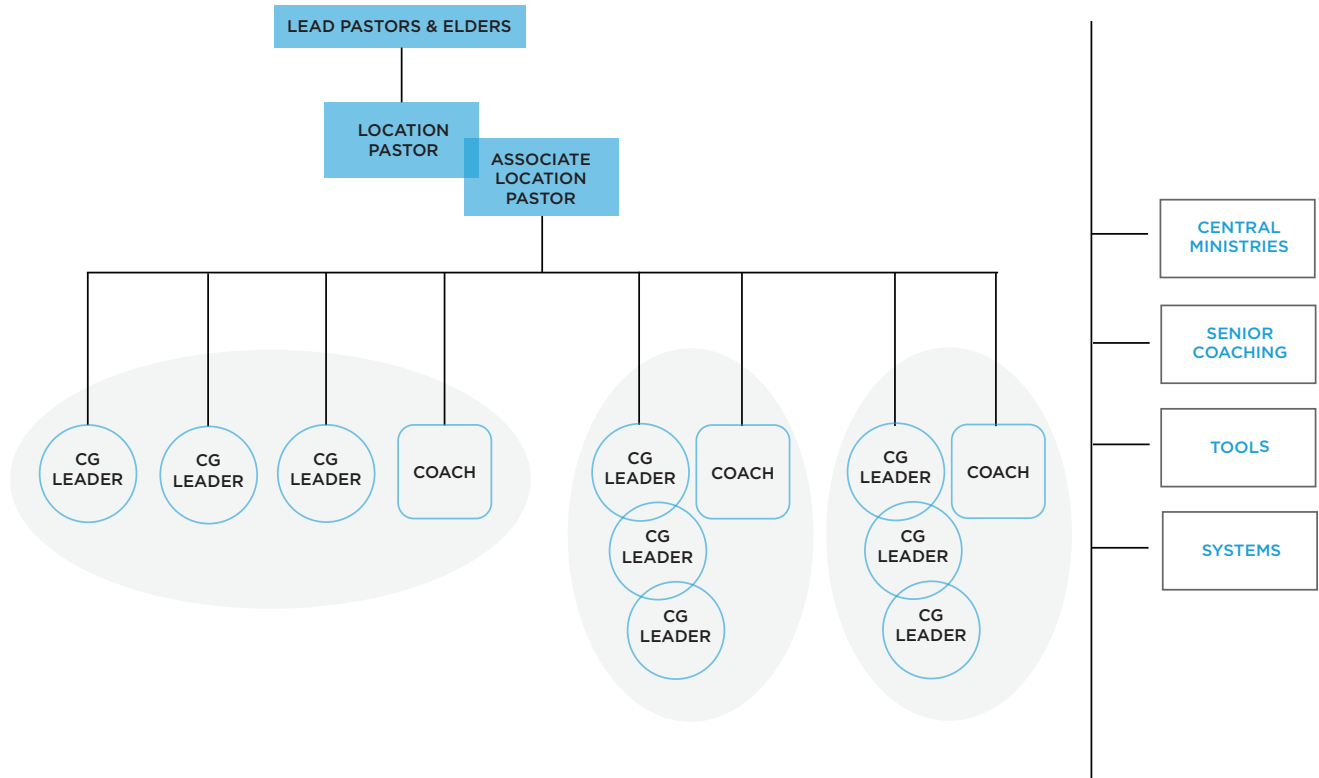
Structure
OF CHURCH GROUPS

MBC LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

MBC's Elders and Lead Pastor(s) oversee MBC members throughout all of our locations and ministries. We also have Location Pastors who provide primary pastoral oversight for their respective locations. This includes all Church Group Pastors and Church Group Leaders.

In addition, Location Pastors will appoint Church Group Coaches to support Church Group Pastors and Church Group Leaders across each 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 represent the entire body of Christ. They include men and women, senior saints and college students, married couples and single members, families with children and families without children. Groups meet in all kinds of places and are all different sizes.

CHURCH GROUP LEADERS

One day, Lord willing, every Church Group will be led by a Church Group Pastor. Appointing pastors is a weighty responsibility, so this process will take time. In the months and years ahead, we'll provide more details on the role of a Church Group Pastor. For now, we're thankful for our Church Group Leaders who lead their groups until a Church Group Pastor may be appointed. These men and women must meet the biblical qualifications for deacons in the church as seen in 1 Timothy 3. They lead, teach, and pray with and for their Church Group members.

What do they pray for? We've identified "Four Aims" that help each Church Group Leader discern whether they're moving in the right direction.

4 AIMS:

AIM #1: Strive to see all Church Group members caring for one another, 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 connect requests within four days.

AIM #3: Multiply disciples through your Church Group. The goal is to lead new people to Jesus, start new Church Groups, and raise up new leaders.

AIM #4: Serve the church as a whole, 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 attend Church Group Leader trainings.
- Church Group Leaders encourage their group members to serve in various MBC ministries (e.g., Kid's Quest, The Rock, Access, Local Outreach, Global Outreach, Welcome Teams, etc.)

The above can be summarized by the acronym **A-I-M-S**:

- **A**ll group members caring, growing, and making disciples.
- **I**ntegrate new people quickly and meaningfully.
- **M**ultiply disciples.
- **S**erve the broader church.

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 come alongside and help them. These leaders will serve under the Church Group Leader's authority. These situations won't all look the same.

Some Church Group Leaders may ask a few members to consider formal roles and responsibilities. Perhaps the Leader will divide various tasks that need to happen to help the Church Group meet its four aims. For example, you might assign one person to take charge of hospitality. Or you might put together a team of rotating teachers. Or you might appoint one member as the "connect person" who helps new group members integrate easily.

Every group will be different, but every Leader should offer members various opportunities to serve and use their gifts. We encourage you to prayerfully work with your Coach to find a model of shared leadership that complements your group's gifts and serves their needs.

Note: For more information on shared leadership in Church Groups, please see Appendix 4 on page 33.

CHURCH GROUP COACHES

Church Group Leaders are supported by their Location Pastor and their Church Group Coach. Coaches serve under the direction of their Location Pastor. As mentioned, men and women who serve as Church Group Coaches must meet the biblical qualifications provided in 1 Timothy 3 for deacons.

Typically, each Coach supports three to five Leaders and meets regularly with them in a peer-to-peer learning group. The goal is to cultivate a network of relationally connected Leaders called the Church Group Leaders Network.

Church Group Coaches have four main responsibilities:

1. ASSIST IN THE “4 AIMS”

Coaches help Church Group Leaders faithfully strive for the “4 Aims.” They lead Church Group Leaders Network meetings and provide advice to Church Group Leaders and Location Pastors. They’re also expected to pray for the Church Group Leader and their Church Group members.

2. DEVELOP THE “LEADER PIPELINE”

In partnership with the Location Pastor, the Coach helps to identify and train future Leaders. One way they do this is by working with Leaders to identify shared leadership opportunities within the group. For more information on how to develop a leader pipeline please see Appendix 3 on page 30

3. HANDLE ESCALATIONS

If the Leader or their group needs help, then the Coach and the wider Church Group Leaders Network serve as the first line of support. Depending on the nature of the need, the Coach may involve others, including their Location Pastor and other 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, then the Coach will likely coordinate with various people during the process.

4. CO-LEAD THE CHURCH GROUP MINISTRY

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

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

Note: For more information, see our MBC Church Group Coaches Manual.

rhythms
OF CHURCH GROUPS

CHURCH GROUP MEETINGS

Church Groups typically meet weekly for about two hours, though rhythms vary from group to group. Many take breaks during the year, often during August and December. The goal is to find a rhythm that offers both consistency and rest for each group.

CHURCH GROUP LEADERS NETWORK MEETINGS

Church Group Leadership teams stay connected through regular meetings for prayer, encouragement, and assessing the health and needs of the ministry. Coaches typically meet with three or four Church Group Leaders during a Church Group Leaders Network meeting. During these meetings, Coaches aren't the only ones helping. Leaders also help one another.

How often do these Network meetings happen? It depends. That's decided by the Coach and Leaders. Usually, they happen bi-monthly. New Leaders may meet with their Coaches more frequently, and seasoned ones may meet less frequently. The goal is for Leaders and their Coach to determine a rhythm that works for them. The Location Pastor determines whether it's best for him to tag along.

During Network meetings, the following questions might be asked:

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

We start by caring for one another. This impulse should characterize every area of our Church Group ministry.

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 also take time to talk about the challenges. We care for each other because faithful leadership typically comes with challenges.

HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

We aim to serve our Church Group Leaders by helping them with practical challenges. By listening carefully to how the Leader responds to this question, we may be able to discern how we can help our Leader continue to grow.

HOW CAN I PRAY FOR YOU?

Advice and practical help are great. But prayer is one of the most powerful things a Coach and the Leader's Network can do.

As Leaders and Coaches discuss these questions, sometimes they'll discover that they need help from a Location Pastor or Associate Pastor, who are always glad to provide additional support as needed.

LOCATION-WIDE CHURCH GROUP LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

Once a quarter or twice a year, a Location will gather all its Church Group Leaders together to celebrate what God has done. We also steer the ministry into the future, recalibrate any weaknesses, coordinate local and global outreach, and pray for God's guidance and provision. These meetings are typically two hours long.

Support
FOR CHURCH GROUPS

TRAINING

MBC offers training to help prepare leaders for Church Group ministry. The Church Group Leader 101 and 201 Trainings are accessible online at mcleanbible.org/church-groups-leader-resources.

CHURCH GROUP LEADER 101

Church Group Leader 101 Training is a set of short videos that introduce a Leader to the essentials needed to launch and lead a Church Group. These videos are required.

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.

LOCATION-SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Each MBC Location leadership team will assess the needs of its Church Group Leaders and Church Group Coaches. They may decide to provide location-specific training as needs arise.

ADDITIONAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

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

For specific ways Church Groups work alongside these ministries, refer to the corresponding sections starting on page 21 in Frequently Asked Questions.

ONGOING ASSESSMENTS

We try to make sure all of our Church Groups are flourishing. That's why we pray for them and make sure they have the right Leaders who have received the right training. 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're not meant to be intimidating like report cards. Instead, they help us to live life to the fullest, and they help Leaders lead with intentionality and love.

Church Group Leaders and 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 course, this tool doesn't tell the full story of God's work in and through a Church Group. It's simply one tool.

Note: For an example of our Health Reflections Assessment, please see Appendix 9 on page 40.

CORE AND ELECTIVE CLASSES

MBC offers Core Classes and Elective Classes. Core Classes teach foundational biblical truths and they're available to people across all MBC locations. MBC Elective Classes are non-Core classes that are offered at an MBC location with the consent of the Location Pastor. We're excited to offer both Core and Elective Classes to Church Group Leaders.

Core classes are designed to grow Leaders' understanding of theology and equip them for ministry. Here's a sampling of the topics they may cover:

- Christianity Explored
- Membership
- How to Study the Bible
- Stewardship
- Preparing for Marriage
- 12 Traits of a Healthy Church
- Global Outreach
- Baptism
- Adoption
- Church Planting

CHURCH GROUP
Faq's

HOW DO I START A CHURCH GROUP?

What a great question. It's worth considering with your Church Group Leader and Location Pastor. The process isn't one-size-fits-all. It's tailored to each prospective Leader. Nonetheless, the following steps are required at some point during the process.

STEP #1. TRAINING

Watch the "Church Group Training 101" videos. The Church Group Leader manual will supplement the video training modules.

STEP #2. APPLICATION

Fill out and submit a "Church Group Leader Application." A Leader will typically get back to you within 10 days to schedule a meeting. This will include affirming MBC's "What We Teach" document and our "Leader Commitments" document.

STEP #3. INTERVIEW

Complete your "Church Group Leader Interview" with a Coach or Leader. The interview typically takes 90 minutes.

STEP #4. CHILD SAFETY TRAINING AND ANY PRE-REQUISITES

Complete the MBC Church Group Child Safety Training course and agree to adhere to our MBC Child Safety Policy. Complete any "Church Group Leader Prerequisites" that your Coach or Leader asks of you. This will include a background check.

STEP #5. LAUNCH

Once approved, work with your coach to launch a Church Group or be assigned to an existing one. We encourage you to read through Appendix 10 on page 38.

STEP #6. DEVELOPMENT

Complete quarterly location trainings to help you continually develop as a Leader.

Typically, prospective leaders are introduced to a Coach after they complete their application. However, if you would like to speak with someone before that, then contact your MBC Location Administrator. We'll connect you to a Coach. If you're 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 online or in-person. These are the basic steps:

STEP #1

Complete MBC Connect, online or in-person, or go directly to mcleanbible.org/churchgroups.

STEP #2

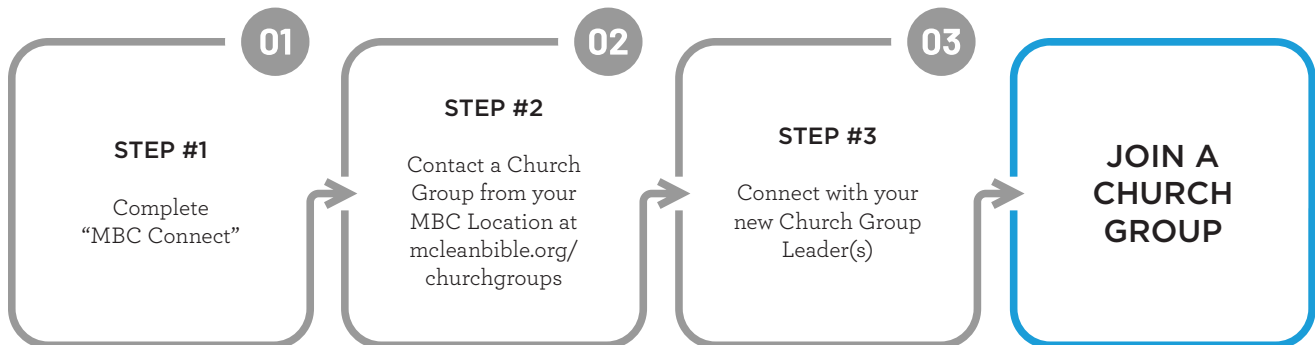
Choose a potential Church Group option from your MBC Location. View details and click "*Contact Group*" to reach out for more information, and someone will contact you to discuss how to connect with this group.

STEP #3

Connect with your new Church Group Leader(s), and join a Church Group.

The time between Step #1 and Step #3 is typically 3–6 weeks.

GET CONNECTED TO A CHURCH GROUP



IF I ALREADY KNOW PEOPLE IN A GROUP, CAN I JOIN THEIRS DIRECTLY?

Yes, someone can join a Church Group directly and bypass the three steps. If they continue in their Church Group, then they will likely be encouraged to complete the three steps at some point in the future. But that's not necessary.

DO CHURCH GROUPS PROVIDE CHILDCARE?

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

Note: For more information on Church Group Child Safety, please see Appendix 5 on page 34 and Appendix 6 on page 36.

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. When we talk about correction and care (sometimes referred to as "church discipline"), we are talking about something different. We're referring to a situation in which a Christian is "in sin"—that is, they are continually disobeying God without repenting (1 Tim 5:20). The Bible prescribes a process for this situation (Matt 18; 1 Cor 5; 1 Tim 5:20; Gal 6:1-2). However, every person and every situation is different. There's not a one-size-fits-all checklist to follow. Church Groups strive to faithfully and wisely follow the process the Bible prescribes, prayerfully seeking the Spirit along the way.

The following Care and Correction Process may help Church Groups wisely care for a group member who is stuck in sin.

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 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 (correction).
- If they remain unrepentant, take one or two others along to talk with them again (Matt 18:16).
- If they turn from their sin and run to Christ in repentance, then 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, consider fasting for them, and persevere for their good. Don't give up on them.
- 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 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 guidance and assistance in winning over the unrepentant Christian.
- The Coach will now guide the process going forward. The Coach will serve on behalf of and follow 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 OTHER CHURCH MINISTRIES?

KID'S QUEST

MBC is blessed to have a ministry like Kid's Quest that lovingly serves our children and contributes powerfully to their spiritual formation. Their ministry includes outreach, teaching, Scripture memorization, arts and crafts, community events, and retreats. We are so grateful for this vital ministry.

We encourage children to be involved in Church Groups because they are a primary way we care for any member or loved-one. This includes our children, even as we acknowledge the ultimate care and discipleship of every child's parent(s) or guardian(s). When possible, we try to include multiple children who are the same age in one group. We encourage children to participate in various aspects of Church Group life that are appropriate. If MBC members serve together in a ministry like Kid's Quest, 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, but simply 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, and retreats. We are so grateful for this vital ministry.

For the same reasons as above, we want our teens to experience church life with their families and other MBC members, so we invite them to join our Church Groups. When possible, we 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 that lovingly aim to include people with special needs as valued members of the body of Christ. Their ministry includes things like outreach, retreats, training, arts and crafts, and community events.

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

Church Group Leaders and Church Group Coaches partner 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 who are struggling or seeking specific direction. MBC offers this ministry to members and to regular attendees when appropriate. Some of the many ways MBC Counseling and Care partners with and supports Church Groups include:

- Provides training for Church Group 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 simple: 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 podcasts. Training can include classes and workshops on specific ways to care, including specific lay counseling classes.
- Provides senior coaching to Church Group Coaches and Church Group Pastors.

We don't want Church Groups to outsource all opportunities for 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 pursue it. MBC Counseling and Care exists to, at least in part, help Church Group Members care for one another well.

GLOBAL OUTREACH

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

- Provides opportunities for Church Groups to pray for the nations and missionaries overseas.
- Provides opportunities to support missions and missionaries around the world.
- Provides training in global disciple-making through classes, experiences, and even local opportunities to engage with internationals.
- Provides training in how to support missions well.
- Provides training in how to support a friend, family member, or Church Group Member who is considering missions.
- Provides opportunities to serve in missions all around the world. These can include short-term mission trips.
- Provides opportunities to serve missions locally. These can include 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 support Church Group members who may feel called to take the gospel to the nations. 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 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. When someone in your Group is considering their unique role in global missions, GO will often step in to take a leading role in that process. Of course, they will do so in conversation with that person's Church Group.

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. Following Jesus includes finding our 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

All Church Groups are encouraged to share the love of Jesus as they evangelize people in their communities. To that end, Church Groups are encouraged to invite nonbelievers to their groups. We also encourage multiple Groups to partner together for more structured opportunities to serve. See mcleanbible.org/localoutreach for ideas.

MBC Locations may have a Local Outreach leader who coordinates structured outreach opportunities. Church Groups are encouraged to connect to these local opportunities as they 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 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 how you can get involved.

*additional
resources*

FOR LEADERS & COACHES

APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES FOR CHURCH GROUP LEADERS AND COACHES

There are times when a Church Group Leader will need additional support. Sometimes we need to involve a Church Group Coach, Location Pastor, Associate Location Pastor, or outside help. These resources, although not exhaustive, are intended to help guide you to additional avenues of support when needed.

1. General resources are available to all Church Group Leaders and Coaches.

- Church Group Leader 101 Videos
- Church Group Leader 201 Videos (Resource Library)
- Church Group Leader Manual
- Church Group Leader Network
- Counseling Conversations can be found at mcleanbible.org/counseling-conversations

Note: The video resources and Leader Manual offer help and direction for common issues that may be faced in your Church Group. Please familiarize yourself with the topics covered in the resources even before you have need of them. The 101 and 201 videos and Leader Manual can be found at: mcleanbible.org/church-groups-leader-resources

2. Sometimes a Church Group Leader should involve their Church Group Coach.

Examples of situations where you should immediately contact your coach (this list is not exhaustive) would include:

- Any situation where you are not sure how best to proceed.
- Any situation regarding potentially illegal behavior (this includes any forms of abuse, assault, or action/intention that may pose a threat to a person's safety).
- A situation where someone is experiencing suicidal thoughts whether active (has a plan) or passive (desire to die with no intention of a plan).
- A situation where a person is experiencing ongoing self-harming behaviors (not related to suicidal ideation).
- A situation of ongoing, unrepentant sin where there is no active pursuit of repentance.
- A situation when a group member is causing contention in the group.
- Situations when group members are experiencing conflict with you.

3. Sometimes a Church Group Coach should involve or inform their Location Pastor or Associate Location Pastor.

When heavier or important issues arise, there are times when a coach should immediately contact their Location or Associate Location Pastor, and other times when it may be helpful or wise to inform a pastor. As a Church Group Coach, talk with your Location Pastor or Associate Location Pastor about what type of information they would like to receive from you.

Examples of situations where you should immediately contact your pastor (this list is not exhaustive) would include:

- Any situation where you are not sure how best to proceed.
- Any situation regarding potentially illegal behavior (this includes any forms of abuse, assault, or action/intention that may pose a threat to a person's safety).
- A situation where someone is experiencing suicidal thoughts whether active (has a plan) or passive (desire to die with no intention of a plan).
- A situation where a person is experiencing ongoing self-harming behaviors (not related to suicidal ideation).

There are other times when it may be helpful or wise to inform a pastor. A few examples might be:

- A situation when a group member is causing contention in the group
- Situations when group members are experiencing conflict with the Church Group Leader
- A situation where a Church Group is considering multiplying into two groups
- When group members show potential to be future Church Group Leaders
- Significant injury or illness
- A crisis of faith
- Spiritual questions

- The group member is considering leaving the church
- Death in the family
- Marital problems, especially if separation or divorce has been mentioned
- Weddings, births, or significant life transitions

Note: Please use your discernment. Depending on the situation, the Church Group Leader or coach may want to ask permission from the Church Group member before sharing some types of information.

4. Consider Specialized Resources and Care.

When an additional level of care is needed, coaches should contact their Location or Associate Pastor who can offer counsel towards the appropriate next steps. The pastor may encourage the person to reach out to the MBC Counseling Ministry for further help and direction.

In addition to speaking with an MBC pastor, other options for care include meeting with an MBC lay counselor, and/or discussing recommendations for trusted outside resources. These resources include: books or other media resources, professional Christian counselors, faith-based support groups, recovery programs, pregnancy resources, and more. For information on any of these resources reach out to our MBC Counseling Ministry by emailing counseling@mcleanbible.org.

Lay counseling consists of women and men from MBC who have completed training in biblical counseling or other related Christian counseling education and serve under the supervision of MBC's Director of Counseling. Lay counselors come alongside individuals or couples and provide intentional discipleship in the form of counseling. They offer biblical truth and compassionate care to those who are suffering or struggling. This gospel-centered counseling is available to MBC members and regular attenders free of charge.

MBC pastors also make up a part of the counseling process and are involved to pray and offer support when needed. Professional Christian counselors are fee-for-service professional counselors. Referrals to a professional Christian counselor come from a list of vetted counselors who provide both biblical and clinical care.

- When someone experiences loss of a loved one you can point them to GriefShare (griefshare@mcleanbible.org).
- If someone needs funeral assistance, they can contact their Location Pastor or Associate Location Pastor.
- When couples are struggling in their marriage you can recommend RE|ENGAGE (reengage@mcleanbible.org).
- When more intentional one-on-one spiritual mentorship is needed during challenging life circumstances, a Stephen Minister may be a good option (stephenministry@mcleanbible.org).
- When premarital counseling is desired, a couple may be directed to Preparing For Marriage (preparingformarriage@mcleanbible.org).

Note: Please consult your MBC Location Staff for individual resources that might be offered at your specific MBC Location.

APPENDIX 2: HEALTHY MULTIPLICATION IN CHURCH GROUPS

WHY SHOULD WE MULTIPLY?

The Bible tells us in Psalm 67 that we are blessed so that God's ways may be known on earth and all peoples can praise God. Scripture is full of examples of God's people blessing God and others through multiplying disciples and helping them become part of healthy community with other disciples. Multiplication blesses the nations because we spread the knowledge of God's ways on the earth.

Multiplication is also a direct command in Scripture. We were created to multiply (Gen 1:26-28), a mandate that is echoed by Jesus Himself. In Christ, we are "commissioned" as His witnesses (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8) to make disciples. According to Scripture, we make disciples through the proclamation of the person and work of God's Son Jesus Christ in the gospel (Rom 10:14). This is evangelism. As we "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim 4:5), we pray for God to draw people to Himself. When God raises up new believers, our job is to care for them and help them grow to be more like Christ. This means that biblical evangelism should always lead to biblical discipleship where we teach new disciples to obey all that Christ commands. The pattern we see in Scripture is that biblical discipleship always leads to gathering believers into churches where they can experience the healthy Christian life they were designed for. This is God's plan for His people. We are to glorify God by living in obedience to Him through fellowship and communion both with Him and with His people.

At MBC, one of the primary ways we experience biblical community is through Church Groups. We desire to warmly welcome everyone God brings our way so that they too can be a part of healthy biblical community.

Just as God's design for His people leads to spiritual health, lack of multiplication can lead to unhealth. When we don't multiply, we have limited space for new disciples which can lead to excluding others from the church. When we don't desire to multiply, we can grow stagnant in our proclamation of the gospel. And, when we don't multiply, we miss an opportunity to bless our neighborhoods and the nations by giving God the glory due His name. Therefore, at MBC our goal is to keep our Church Groups open to new group members or attenders when possible. We know that groups sometimes need to be closed for a season. However, only on rare occasions will we have "closed" groups. Instead, our first instinct and desire is always to multiply rather than close our group. We don't want to turn anyone away from an opportunity to become a committed part of our church family.

WHAT (OR WHO) SHOULD WE MULTIPLY?

- **Disciples.** We believe that healthy disciples make disciples. Biblical evangelism and discipleship should be a normal part of our lives. See Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8.
- **Leaders.** Church Group Leaders and Coaches should have an intentional plan to help raise up and train new leaders. As Christians, we have been given spiritual gifts to help us equip and build up the church. We want to help our brothers and sisters grow in their giftings and have opportunities to use the gifts God has given them. See Rom 12:4-8.
- **Church Groups.** The mission of our church is to glorify God by making disciples and multiplying churches among all nations, beginning in greater Washington, D.C. One way we seek to make disciples throughout the DMV area is by opening new Church Groups in areas where there are not yet groups, or in areas where there is limited capacity in existing groups. We desire to provide healthy biblical community for all whom God brings our way. See 1 Thes 5:14, Gal 6:2, Rom 1:12.

Multiplying disciples, leaders, and Church Groups go hand in hand - they all impact each other. If we are great at evangelism, but do not raise up new leaders, we will not have the capacity in our groups to welcome those who would like to join our groups. If we want to provide groups for new people to join, we need to have trained leaders so we can start enough groups that we never have to turn anyone away. Let's plan intentionally and pray for God to do great and mighty works of multiplication in and through our Church Groups.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS TO CHURCH GROUP MULTIPLICATION?

As we seek to multiply Church Groups, we acknowledge that the process can be difficult. Listening to common struggles can help us plan and prepare. Some common objections to starting a new group include:

- “Our group is close and tight knit. It took a long time to develop this community and we do not want to break it up—these are some of our closest friends in the church!”
- “We don’t have enough faithful people. What about the nights when several people don’t come?”
- “We don’t have another leader who feels they are ready to lead.”
- “We have tried to multiply our group previously and it was painful. We are not sure if we are ready to try again.”
- “Multiplication requires a lot of work, and we don’t know how to do it well.”

Multiplication is often hard and can even be painful if it is not done with care. At the same time, we believe that God’s design for His people is for us to multiply. And, when done carefully, it is healthy and encouraging for those involved. So, let’s prayerfully plan well to help alleviate some of the common problems encountered when multiplying groups.

HOW SHOULD A GROUP MULTIPLY?

Consider 8 Tips for Healthy Church Group Multiplication:

- 1. Cast a vision for multiplication from day one.** Let your group know that multiplication is the long-term goal for disciples of Jesus. See the MBC Church Group Leader Starter Guide (mcleanbible.org/churchgroups) for ideas on how to cast vision and start off well.
- 2. Pray for multiplication (Acts 1:8, Acts 2:47).** Ask God to multiply disciples, leaders, and Church Groups through your group. Make this a rhythm in your group time so group members are joining together asking God to bring new disciples, raise up new leaders, and provide new groups. Pray that God will give you a vision for a new neighborhood or street where there is not currently a group. When God brings new faces, or new leaders, or new vision and excitement- rejoice at this direct answer to prayer!
- 3. Do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5).** Encourage your group to share the gospel with those whom God brings into their lives. You might consider a monthly fellowship night where each member is encouraged to invite neighbors and friends. Pray each week about who you know that needs Jesus, who you can invite to the group, and hold each other accountable to share the good news of Jesus with those who need to hear.
- 4. Have a plan for intentionally developing leaders (Rom 12:3-8).** Be prepared for God to answer your prayers for multiplication. One way to be prepared is to have a plan for intentionally training and equipping potential future leaders. This may involve helping your group members identify their spiritual gifts and find opportunities to use their gifts in the group. Let your coach know when you see group members with leadership gifts.
Note: For further information on how to develop a leader pipeline see appendix: “Leadership Development within Church Groups.”
- 5. Talk with your Church Group Coach and seek counsel (Prov 11:4).** Every group is different, and every group has different areas that can make multiplication difficult. Your coach is here to help you all along the way. Seek counsel, ideas, and support from your coach. Your coach can help you assess potential new leaders and, when the timing is right, help new leaders begin the process of potentially becoming a new Church Group Leader. Your coach will communicate with, or help you communicate with, your Location Pastor or Associate Location Pastor as you seek counsel and input. They can help you develop a timeline and launch plan for the new group.
- 6. Communicate well with your Church Group (Gal 6:9-10).** After talking with your coach, take your time to talk, plan and pray as a group. Don’t rush to multiply. Sometimes in our urgency we can leave folks behind. Communicate well with the group and offer an opportunity for group members to share their feelings, questions, and concerns.

7. Consider how you will divide (Phil 2:4). It is sometimes wise to send a core of volunteers rather than simply dividing the group in half. It is often helpful for the new group to have, in addition to the new leader, at least two committed members who will be faithful and consistent even as the new group is small and forming. We also recommend considering physical proximity to the new group as you consider who will join the new group. Seek input from your coach as you make decisions.

8. Take a step of faith (2 Cor 5:7). Sometimes the only thing holding us back from multiplication is the fact that we do not take the next intentional step. If we have been faithful to cast vision, pray, seek counsel and affirmation from church leaders, raise up leaders, and communicate, we should strongly consider taking a bold step of faith to multiply our Church Group.

Three important items to consider as you develop a launch plan for a new group.

- Before launching a new group, all new Church Group Leaders must be affirmed as an MBC Church Group Leader by your MBC Location Pastor or Associate Location Pastor. This will involve them completing the process that can be found in Church Group Leader 101 Training, at mcleanbible.org/church-groups-leader-resources.
- Church Group 101 Training will walk the new leader through the process for “How to Lead and Launch a Group.”
- If possible, plan a prayerful send-off celebration for the new group. Pray for them, support them, and stay connected with them as they start their new group.

NOTES

APPENDIX 3: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CHURCH GROUPS

WHAT IS A LEADER PIPELINE?

We are commissioned to make disciples that make disciples. We are called to help each other grow to become more like Jesus. We believe that discipleship happens best when we seek to follow God and obey his commandments in the context of God's people, and at MBC that is modeled through Church Groups. God is bringing many new faces to our church, and we want to steward that responsibility well. Yet, our reality is that a significant limitation to healthy group multiplication is a shortage of trained and ready Church Group Leaders.

One of the 4 AIMS of a Church Group Leader is to multiply disciples, leaders, and Church Groups. We know that an essential part of healthy multiplication is the process of leadership development. All current Church Group Leaders should be seeking to help develop new leaders.

We encourage an informal, organic type of Church Group Leader apprenticeship that involves both modeling and equipping. This process does not necessarily need to be an intensive or formal process, but it does need to be careful and intentional. After Jesus modeled washing the feet of His disciples, he said to them, "For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (John 13:15). The apostle Paul tells the church in Corinth to "imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

As we seek to lead in ways that serve as a model to others, we should be intentional to pray for God to raise up new leaders. When God answers this prayer, we must be ready to help train and equip these new leaders and offer them opportunities to serve and grow. Paul tells Timothy, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). We call the intentional development and training of new leaders our "Church Group Leader Pipeline."

9 TIPS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS WITHIN YOUR CHURCH GROUP:

1. Pray (Rom 12:12). Pray alone and with your group asking God to raise up new leaders. This is an integral and essential part of the entire process of developing leaders.

2. Cast vision within the entire group for multiplication (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:47). This is a core part of our mission and vision as a church. We desire to glorify God by making disciples and multiplying churches. To help do this, let's cast a vision for healthy multiplication within our Church Groups.

3. Consider the spiritual giftings of those in your group who are believers (1 Cor 12:1-11). God often uses our local church family to help us understand and grow in our giftings. The Bible tells us that all believers are given at least one gift, and these gifts are given for the benefit of the body (1 Cor 12:7, Rom 12:6-8, Eph 4:11-13). There are tools that can be used to help determine our giftings, but one of the best ways to learn how we are gifted is often to simply serve in the church and see where we thrive and grow.

- You might discuss Scripture passages like 1 Cor 12, Rom 12:6-8, Eph 4:11-13.
- Make shared leadership in your group the norm. Followers of Jesus should have a way to serve in their gifting through their local church.
- Some Church Groups have roles such as: Hospitality Coordinator, Local Outreach Point of Contact, Missions Connector, Women's Huddle Coordinator, Men's Huddle Coordinator, Fellowship Coordinator, etc.
- Watch your group members serve in their giftings and give verbal affirmation when appropriate. Help them find ways to continue to grow and serve.
- Pray with them and for them.

4. Consider faithfulness, readiness, and qualifications as you prayerfully assess potential leaders (2 Tim 2:12, 2 Tim 2:15, Jam 3:1, 1 Tim 3:8-13).

- Look for faithfulness and fruitfulness
 - » Does this person have a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? As far as you can discern, are they a maturing disciple of Jesus?

- » Do they regularly spend time in God’s Word and in prayer?
- » Do they appear to be teachable?
- » Do they faithfully attend Church Group gatherings and Sunday gatherings with our broader church family?
- » Do others tend to follow them when they lead?
- » Are there areas of faithfulness or fruitfulness where you can help them grow?
- Look for qualifications
 - » Do they meet the qualifications for deacon/deaconess according to 1 Timothy 3?
 - » Is their character worthy of imitation?
 - » Does this person relate well to others?
 - » Do they support the MBC vision for Church Groups?
 - » Are they a member of MBC? (Note: this is not required for shared leadership within your group, but if they aspire to be a Church Group Leader they would need to be a member of MBC)
 - » Are there areas of qualification where you can help them grow?
- Look for readiness
 - » Do they have experience leading? If not, how can they get that experience in your Church Group?
 - » Do they have a desire to lead or help lead?
 - » Do they have a growing knowledge and understanding of God’s Word?
 - » Are they able to apply God’s Word appropriately to life situations?
 - » Are they striving to live out the 12 traits of biblical Church?
 - » Does this person display leadership skills that would help them in this role (e.g. facilitating discussions, asking good questions, organizing events if needed, etc.)
 - » Are there areas of readiness in which you can help them grow?
- Communicate with your Church Group Coach and seek their input as you prayerfully consider in whom you should invest your time.

5. “I do. You watch. We talk.”

When you see a potential leader, let them know you see leadership giftings in them and ask if they’d be willing to facilitate a discussion in the future. Ask them to watch how you facilitate (1 Cor 11:1).

- Affirm their value and giftings.
- Cast vision for multiplication and leadership development.
- Ask them if they would be willing to lead the discussion one night.
- Give them an opportunity to watch and pay careful attention to how you lead before they need to lead.
- Share your preparation resources with them.
- Offer an opportunity to answer any questions.

6. “You do. I help. We talk.”

Ask them to lead the discussion one week while you are present and available to assist (2 Tim 2:2).

- Ask them how you can help them prepare. The sermon discussion guides are online at mcleanbible.org/discussionguides.
- As they lead, be an active part of the discussion, if that will be an encouragement to them.
- You might still open the gathering, introduce the time, and close the meeting in prayer.
- Debrief afterward. Find a time either over the phone or maybe meet for coffee but plan for a time when you can ask them how they thought it went. Find specific ways to encourage them. Be honest with them if there are areas of concern. You might consider offering three statements of encouragement for every one statement offering an area for growth. We recommend you tell them in advance that you plan to debrief afterward, so it’s not a surprise.
- Offer them resources and equipping.

- » They might consider MBC classes like “How to Study the Bible” or “Intro to Global Mission.” Upcoming classes are listed at mcleanbible.org/classes.
 - » Our MBC Bookstore at the Tysons Location has great resources on how to study the Bible, prayer, godly living, discipleship, missions and more.
 - » Encourage them to check out the Church Group Leader 201 Resource Library found at mcleanbible.org/church-groups-leader-resources.
- Continue to pray with them and for them, asking God to raise up new leaders and groups.

7. “You do. I watch. We talk.”

Ask the potential leader to lead the entire gathering, an event, or outreach when you are in attendance but letting them lead.

- This might involve having them prepare for more than leading discussion alone –they may need to consider community building time, a team building ice breaker, how to break into huddles etc.
- This could include organizing a group serve day or an outreach event.
- Debrief afterward.

8. “You do. Someone else watches.”

Ask the growing leader to take part in a regular teaching/facilitating rotation (2 Tim 2:2).

- Allow them opportunities to teach or lead when you are not in attendance.
- Debrief on occasion as a teaching team. This is an excellent opportunity for all leaders (yourself included) to receive encouragement, input, and feedback. Model transparency and humility.
- Continue to pray with them and for them asking for direction and discernment as you ask God to raise up new leaders.

9. All along the way, talk with your Church Group Coach and MBC Location Leadership (Prov 11:14).

- In coordination with your MBC Location leadership, consider asking them to prayerfully consider a more formal co-leader role for a season with the goal of starting a new group on a future date.
- Ask them to consider officially starting the process to become a Church Group Leader.
 - » Ask them to watch CG Leader 101 videos.
 - » Ask them to fill out a Church Group Leader Application.
- Set a potential timeline and next steps for potential multiplication.
- If they are affirmed through the Church Group Leader application process, communicate the plan to the group and ask the group to pray for them and support them.
- Ask the group to consider joining this new leader to start a new Church Group.

Note: Some ideas and terms have been adapted from resources such as:

Leading Small Groups by Chris Surratt
 The Big Book on Small Groups by Jeffrey Arnold
 The Gospel-Centered Community by Robert H Thune and Will Walker

APPENDIX 4: SHARED LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH GROUPS

At MBC, we encourage Church Group Leaders to prayerfully consider how they can share the leadership responsibilities involved in leading a Church Group.

God’s Word tells us that all followers of Jesus have received a spiritual gift (or gifts) that we should use to serve one another (1 Pet 4:10). We have been equipped to serve and should seek to use our spiritual gift(s) for the glory of God and for the equipping of His church. Our Church Group members can observe our lives and help us discern how we are individually gifted. As a Church Group, when we observe areas of giftings we see in each other, we can help affirm the way God has uniquely equipped those in our group to serve and strengthen the body of Christ.

We encourage Church Group Leaders to help Church Group members consider how to use their spiritual gift(s) to serve. If a group member excels at administration, they might be encouraged by the opportunity to plan or organize some events. If a group member is gifted in the area of hospitality, they might enjoy opening their home for meals or gatherings, or they might enjoy coordinating snacks for a fellowship night. There may be someone in your group who would enjoy being the point of contact to help your group stay connected to missionaries overseas. The goal is to offer opportunities for those in our groups to use their Spirit-given gift(s) to equip and strengthen the church. As they use their gift(s), they bless the church and grow more like Christ.

You might consider a sign-up sheet offering different ways to share group leadership. See the following example:

Name	Communications Coordinator	Food/Hospitality Leader	Huddle Coordinator	Global/Local Outreach Coordinator	Facilitation Team	Service/Activity Planners
Group Member	X					
Group Member		X				
Group Member				X		
Group Member					X	
Group Member						X
Group Member			X			

APPENDIX 5: CHURCH GROUP CHILD SAFETY OVERVIEW & FAQs

Child Safety is of utmost importance to us at McLean Bible Church, so we fully adhere to our MBC Child Safety Policy whenever we interact with children and students at any and all MBC events or gatherings, both onsite in our church buildings or offsite in homes or other venues.

All Church Group Leaders must pass our online Church Group Child Safety Training, carefully read the entire MBC Child Safety Policy (available in the online training modules), and abide by the entire policy.

Note: The information below is more fully explained in the online training. If you have watched the training and still have any questions or concerns, please talk with your MBC location leadership team.

Involving children in Church Groups can be done through four ways, all of which fully comply with the MBC Child Safety Policy.

- **Option #1: Full Involvement**

Children and students are involved in the entire Church Group gathering with the adults.

- **Option #2: Partial Involvement (but children remain in full line of sight of adults)**

Children and students are involved in a portion of the Church Group gathering and, at all times, remain in the line of sight of the adults in the group when not involved in the gathering.

- **Option #3: Private Setting**

Children and students are in another room, part of the house, or private area under the supervision of two vetted childcare workers at all times.

- **Option #4: Signed Waiver**

All parents who have children who attend the Church Group annually sign a waiver assuming full responsibility over their group's childcare plan.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Are all MBC Church Groups required to adhere to the MBC Child Safety Policy?

Yes, all MBC Church Groups from all MBC Locations are required to adhere to the MBC Child Safety Policy. Groups can abide by the policy by adhering to all standards in the policy or by having all parents with children in the Church Group sign an annual waiver.

2. Who is required to complete the MBC Child Safety Training?

All MBC Church Group Leaders at all MBC Locations are required to complete and successfully pass the MBC Child Safety Training.

3. Is any action required for a Church Group that has no children attending?

The Church Group Leader should take the training and agree to abide by all standards in the policy. After they complete the training, nothing additional would be needed from them since they are already in full compliance. If any children start attending the group, the group will abide by all standards or ask the parents of children attending to sign the waiver at that point. (Please notify your MBC Location staff if children or

students start attending your group.)

4. If a Church Group chooses to use the child safety waiver, who in the group needs to sign the waiver?

Every parent in the group who has a child that attends the Church Group should sign the waiver annually, but failure of any parent(s) to sign a new waiver does NOT nullify a prior waiver.

5. What do we do if our Church Group chooses one option for compliance and desires to go in a different direction at a later date?

Please let your MBC Location staff know of any changes to your childcare plans. They will let you know what additional steps are needed for compliance as things change.

6. If new families with children start to attend a Church Group that uses the waiver, when must the new families sign the waiver?

Any new or visiting families with children in the Church Group should submit a signed waiver no later than their third visit to the group. During the initial two visits, if they have not yet signed the waiver, the

parents may give verbal consent to the group's Child Safety decision. The Church Group should explain their childcare decision and make the visiting family aware that the parents in this group assume full responsibility for those they trust to provide childcare, as well as for when and how they offer such childcare.

If, during these first two weeks, a family prefers not to provide verbal consent, the family may attend the gathering but their kids should stay with their parents at all times.

If parents are unwilling or unable to sign the waiver for any reason, please contact your MBC location staff team.

7. What if Church Group members have children, but the children do not attend Church Group meetings because they stay at their homes with a babysitter? Does that Church Group have the option to do nothing? Or do all the parents need to sign the waiver?

The Church Group Leader would take the training and agree to abide by all standards in the policy. Nothing additional would be needed from them since they are in full compliance as is, since the children do not attend the Church Group gatherings. Should children start attending gatherings, the Church Group must adhere to all standards in the policy or choose to sign the waiver at that time.

8. What if the Church Group Leaders have children or teens, and the Church Group meets in that couple's home for Church Group meetings, but no other children attend? If the parents want to have their children play in the basement alone (unsupervised), or remain unsupervised in other areas of the house, is it okay for the Church Group to do nothing at this time?

Since a Church Group gathering is an MBC sanctioned event, the parents would need to sign the waiver even if the meeting is in their own home.

9. What is involved in the approved childcare worker vetting process?

Anyone who watches minors will undergo a multi-step vetting process which includes an application and interview, references, a signed affirmation, and a background check with fingerprinting.

10. Does MBC store fingerprinting and biometric data for vetted childcare workers?

MBC does not hold any fingerprinting or biometric data. This information is held by the FBI via the outside vendor, Fieldprint.

11. Are the results from background checks kept confidential?

Yes, the only group that has access to the results from the background check is our MBC Human Resource Department.

12. If a volunteer has been previously approved to serve in Kids' Quest, would they need an additional background check to watch children for a Church Group gathering?

Anyone who has previously been fully vetted to work with children in another MBC ministry will be pre-approved for childcare in the Church Group ministry as long as the previous process has met all of these requirements and their background check and approvals are still active and current. If you have any questions about this, please talk with your MBC Location's leadership team. They can help you determine if anyone is pre-approved.

13. If our Church Group chooses to pay specific vetted workers to care for children, who would pay them for their work?

If a Church Group chooses to hire vetted childcare workers, the Church Group is responsible to pay for their service. However, if there is a financial hardship, some scholarship assistance may be available on a case-by-case basis. Please contact your Church Group Coach if financial assistance is needed.

14. If I am hosting or attending a social event with some/all people from my Church Group on a non-Church Group night, is that an official MBC event that will require adherence to the MBC Child Safety Policy?

Church members are encouraged to host these types of social events outside of their normal Church Group gatherings. We would not call these official Church Group events, or MBC events, and it should be communicated in advance that they are not official Church Group events. For these events, just like in any private event, parents acknowledge and agree that MBC is not responsible for those who provide childcare in connection with any non-Church Group event.

If this social event is an official Church Group activity then the group must adhere to the Child Safety Policy at the event.

15. If I have completed the training and still have questions, who do I contact?

Please contact your MBC Location staff, they are ready to help!

APPENDIX 6: CHURCH GROUP CHILD SAFETY WAIVER SAMPLE



Note: This is a sample of the waiver for your information only. The official child safety waiver must be completed online and can be accessed using the included QR code. For further information please contact your MBC Location Leadership Team or your Church Group Coach.

ANNUAL CHURCH GROUP PARTICIPANT AFFIRMATION REGARDING CHILDCARE

McLean Bible Church ("MBC") has a detailed Child Safety Policy (the "Policy") setting out MBC's general convictions related to protecting children within the church, including vetting of volunteers, restrictions on adults being alone with children, limitations on social media and other digital contact between adults and children, releasing of children to adult caregivers, and reporting of any suspicion of child abuse.

This waiver was created by experienced legal counsel and approved by the MBC Elder Board to recognize the primary authority of parents to determine what is best for their children. It should be signed annually by all parents of children within the Church Group, but failure of any parent(s) to sign a new waiver does NOT nullify a prior waiver.

This waiver is designed solely for use within MBC Church Groups and may not be used for any other purpose or function.

Any new or visiting families with children in the Church Group should submit a signed waiver no later than their third visit to the group. If parents are unwilling or unable to sign the waiver for any reason, please contact your MBC location staff team.

1. I am a participant in the _____ Church Group and I am familiar with the MBC Child Safety Policy. I understand that the Policy standards apply to any childcare that MBC provides in connection with any Church Group activity.
2. I also understand that any childcare that is provided in connection with any Church Group activity and that does not comply with the Policy standards must be approved by all participants of the group.
3. The _____ Church Group may provide childcare that does not comply with the Policy.
4. I acknowledge and agree that MBC is not responsible for those people who provide childcare in connection with any _____ Church Group activity. I and the other participants of our group are solely responsible for those we trust to provide such childcare, as well as for when and how we offer such childcare. We may agree among ourselves or with a childcare service provider or other babysitter to provide childcare, and, in that case, any liability would be subject to that agreement.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX 7: GENERAL SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MBC CHURCH GROUPS

As part of our annual Church Group rhythms at MBC, there will be times when we do not produce a Sermon Discussion Guide. Guides are generally not written during August and December and over some holidays. Sometimes, due to the nature of our multi-site church, a guide will be written for the sermon preached at MBC Tysons when there might be a different sermon preached at other MBC locations. Please feel free to use this document as a guide for discussing the sermon on those occasions.

ICEBREAKER

What has been one “high” and/or one “low” from your past week?

SERMON RECAP & PRAYER

Review the main points from the sermon. Take a moment to read the full Scripture passage aloud as a group.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. OBSERVATION (What does the passage say?)

- What type of writing is this text? (Law? Poetry or Wisdom? History? A letter? Narrative? Gospels? Apocalyptic?)
- Are there any clues about the circumstances under which this text was originally written?
- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text that might help the reader understand the focus of the passage?
- Who is involved in the passage and what do you notice about the specific participants?
- What actions and events are taking place? What words or themes stand out to you and why?
- Was there anything about the passage/message that didn't make sense to you?

2. INTERPRETATION (What does the passage mean?)

- How does this text relate to other parts of the Scriptures (e.g., the surrounding chapters, book, Testament, or Bible)?
- What does this passage teach us about God? About Jesus?
- How does this passage relate to the gospel?
- How can we sum up the main truth of this passage in our own words?
- How did this truth impact the hearers in their day?

3. APPLICATION (How can I apply this to passage to my life?)

- What challenged you the most from this week's passage? What encouraged you the most?
- HEAD: How does this passage change my understanding of the LORD? (How does this impact what I think?)
- HEART: How does this passage correct my understanding of who I am to the LORD? (How should this impact my affections and what I feel?)
- HANDS: How should this change the way I view and relate to others and the world? (How does this impact what I should do?)
- What is one action I can take this week to respond in surrender and obedience to the LORD?

Note: Some questions have been adapted from One to One Bible Reading by David Helm.

HUDDLES

Break into small groups of 3-4 people of the same gender for deeper sharing, accountability, and prayer.

APPENDIX 8: HOW TO START A CHURCH GROUP WELL

First impressions are important. When launching a new Church Group, we encourage an intentional plan. You may consider the following as you organize your first few group meetings:

WEEK ONE: STRONG BEGINNINGS

- Consider a fellowship night. You may want to host a simple dinner or a fellowship night. We recommend you keep it simple and easy.
- Remember, hospitality is not the same as entertaining. We desire to offer a warm welcome and want to prayerfully prepare our hearts as we prepare to open our homes.
- Get to know the group. Use your meeting time to intentionally get to know your group. You may want to ask an ice breaker question or two to help the group open up and share a little about themselves. Maybe you could ask, “What’s your favorite way to spend free time?” Or, you might ask “If you could share a meal with any person throughout history, who would it be and why?”
- Encourage bringing a friend. From the beginning, encourage your group to make disciples. Let your members know that guests are welcomed in your group!
- Pray and send each other out. Before you close for the evening, take some time to ask for prayer requests and pray together as a group. We intentionally “send each other out” and encourage each other to go and make disciples.

Note: Before you all leave you may want to share contact information within your group.

WEEK TWO: SET THE DIRECTION

- Cast vision through the 4-AIMS. This is a great opportunity to share the “4-AIMS” and talk about what they mean for you as a Church Group. How will you all work together to “C-G-M”? How will you welcome new people? Talk about what it means to multiply disciples, leaders, and maybe even Church Groups. And, consider ways you all can serve either individually or as a group.
- Plan your rhythms. When will your group meet? How will your group include time for community building, time in God’s Word, and time for intentional sharing and prayer? Will you meet year-round or will you take a couple of months off, possibly during the months of August and December?
- Discuss roles. Will you divide tasks among the group members? Would you consider shared leadership within your group? Encourage your group members to use their Spirit given gifts to build up the body
- of Christ. Offer opportunities for them to lead and serve within your group.
- Encourage bringing a friend. As always, encourage your group to make disciples. Let your members know that guests are welcomed in your group.
- Pray and send each other out. Before you close for the evening, take some time to ask for prayer requests and pray together as a group. Send each other out to live on mission and make disciples throughout the week.

WEEK THREE: LET’S DO THIS

- Spend time building community. Plan ahead for this time. You may want to ask everyone their “high” from the week and their “low” from the week. Take time to talk, laugh, and connect as a family. You may want to do this around snacks or coffee.
- Spend time together in God’s Word. We recommend you use the Sermon Discussion Guide (found online) and talk about ways to apply the sermon together.
- Form Huddles. This is a great opportunity to divide your group into smaller groups of 3-4 people of the same gender for deeper sharing and prayer. For this first night, you might ask the huddles to spend their time just getting to know each other.
- Encourage bringing a friend and send each other out in prayer.
- Remind each other that we are “sent” by Jesus! (John 20:21)

APPENDIX 9: GROUP HEALTH REFLECTIONS

There are many ways that we seek to care for our MBC family. We hope to foster the effectiveness of each Church Group through strong leadership, practical training, pastoral care, and dependent prayer. Sometimes we use tools to help. One of these tools is a short questionnaire that we call Group Reflections. These Group Reflections help us get a sense for how God has been working in our lives and in our Church Groups. These are not meant to be intimidating, nor are they report cards! Rather, we hope they will help us to live life to the fullest and help Church Group Leaders lead with intentionality and love.

Church Group Leaders and Church Group Coaches use Group Reflections about 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, we realize that Group Reflections do not tell the full story of God’s work in and through the life of a Church Group. These Church Group Reflections are simply one of many tools that might help the Church Group ministry care for those in our groups as we seek to bring much glory to God.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CHURCH GROUP MEMBER

Our desire is to gather information that will help us care for you well. If any question makes you uncomfortable, or if you’d prefer not to answer a specific question, feel free to leave that question blank! Please note that although individual responses will be anonymous, Church Group leaders will see the aggregate responses from their Church Group so they can help assess the needs of the group.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- How often do you attend your Church Group gatherings?
- Have you made a personal profession of faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior?
- Have you been baptized after you became a believer in Jesus?
- Are you an active member of MBC?
- How often do you attend worship services at MBC?
- Do you actively serve in a ministry at or through MBC?

Please consider the following statements and rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5. (1—disagree, 2—slightly disagree, 3—unsure, 4—agree, 5—strongly agree)

CARING

- (1 2 3 4 5) — I feel known by the people in my Church Group.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I feel like I know the people in my Church Group.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — If I have a physical, spiritual, or emotional need, I feel that I can share it with my Church Group and request help if needed.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I’m willing to adjust my schedule at times and make sacrifices to show care and concern for members of my Church Group.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — If I unexpectedly miss our Church Group gathering for a couple of weeks, others will notice and are likely to contact me to check-in on my well-being.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I believe that my Church Group family genuinely cares for me and I genuinely care for those in my group.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I can think of tangible ways our Church Group members have shown care for other group members in need.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — If harder issues arise, I know that I can go to my Church Group Leader or an MBC pastor to receive additional help or counsel.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I can be “real” with my group and I am comfortable sharing prayer needs and concerns.

- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group values healthy biblical fellowship and provides time for fellowship and community building.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I spend time with some of the members of my Church Group family outside of our regular gatherings.

GROWING

- (1 2 3 4 5) — I am growing in my knowledge and understanding of God's Word.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I spend personal time in God's Word on a regular basis.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I spend personal time in prayer on a regular basis.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I don't allow my schedule to become too full, in which my spiritual disciplines become crowded out.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — My life is marked by contentment.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — My life is marked by thankfulness and gratitude.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — My life is marked by peace and joy.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I generously share my time, treasures, and talents with others.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I'm committed to serving God, even if it requires sacrifices or changes in my lifestyle.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I have opportunities to use my spiritual gifts to serve the MBC church body.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I believe that my love for Christ is greater this year than it was last year.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Although I'm not perfect, I have seen victory in battles against sin this year.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group regularly spends time in God's Word together.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group regularly spends time in prayer together.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — We have seen God answer specific prayer requests in our Church Group.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — My fellow Church Group members hold me accountable to live as a disciple of Christ.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I hold my fellow Church Group members accountable to live as disciples of Christ.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I sincerely desire to help my fellow Church Group members grow to be more like Jesus.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Through the teaching within my Church Group, I'm challenged to continue growing as a disciple of Christ.

MAKING DISCIPLES

- (1 2 3 4 5) — I understand the Great Commission and seek to obey it.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I know how I can personally be involved in missions.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I give sacrificially to make the Gospel known where it is not known.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I have shared the good news of Jesus Christ with a non-believer in the past (choose one)
1 month, 3 months, 6 months.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — I would be willing to "go" if God calls me to go as a short-term or even long-term missionary.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group has a vision for integrating new members quickly and meaningfully.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group encourages me to share Christ with my friends, co-workers, and neighbors.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Visitors are welcome in our Church Group.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — As a Church Group, we pray for people who don't yet know Jesus.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group serves together through outreach or ministry opportunities.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — Our Church Group supports and prays for MBC missionaries.
- (1 2 3 4 5) — If needed as our Church Group grows, we are willing to multiply into two groups so that more people can experience biblical community.

APPENDIX 10: CHURCH GROUP LEADER COMMITMENTS

1. Church Group Leaders commit to spending regular time in God's presence through prayer and meditation on His Word, reflecting God's character in life, family, and work, and sharing God's gospel with people who don't know Christ.
2. Church Group Leaders commit to spending the necessary time each week preparing for a group gathering, leading the group gathering, and most importantly building relationships with group members.
3. Church Group Leaders commit to pray regularly and meaningfully for their group members.
4. Church Group Leaders commit to encourage their members to be a family who cares for one another both physically and spiritually.
5. Church Group Leaders commit to strive to help their members grow in the likeness of Christ, making sure that members have encouragement and accountability in their battles with sin, as well as care and support amidst hardship and suffering.
6. Church Group Leaders commit to encourage their members to disciple one another and to make disciples of others both locally and globally.
7. Church Group Leaders commit to work toward the 4-Aims of a Church Group Leader (as outlined in the Church Group Leader Manual) and to strive help all group members understand and live out the 12 traits of a biblical church.
8. Church Group Leaders commit to complete the annual Church Group Health Reflections of both their individual and group life and ensure group members do the same.
9. Church Group Leaders commit to create a group environment that prioritizes the safety of children and follows the MBC Child Safety Policy.
10. Church Group Leaders commit to biblical conflict resolution with the goal of restoration and unity in the body of Christ as described in Matthew 18 and as outlined in the "Correction and Care" section of the Church Group Leader manual.
11. Church Group Leaders commit to maintain a group environment that avoids gossip or slander and instead promotes a spirit of grace and unity in the church.
12. Church Group Leaders commit to be biblically responsive and submissive to MBC leaders, including a willingness to work with a Church Group Coach, attending leadership meetings, and responding to leadership correspondence and communication, as needed.

APPENDIX 11: TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON ISSUES IN GROUP LEADERSHIP

Common challenges often arise within Church Groups. Outlined below are a few common issues and some potential solutions. Of course, there is no cookie cutter solution when working with group dynamics. So, we prayerfully seek to address issues with Scripture as our authority and guide, and with a desire to display the fruit of the Spirit as we interact with our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is our delight to patiently work through challenges for the sake of building healthy biblical community among God's people.

SYMPTOM: QUIET MEMBER

You might try to...

- Ask clear and concise questions. Ask some easy or unthreatening questions.
- Express appreciation for the contributions they make.
- Ask them to read the Scripture passage aloud.
- For application questions, break into smaller groups of 2-3.
- Allow time for silence before asking another question too quickly.
- Never force a member to participate.
- Be patient, gentle, and affirming.
- Reach out to them for one-on-one conversation before and after the group and use that time to connect and build a relationship.

SYMPTOM: OVERLY TALKATIVE OR DOMINANT MEMBER

You might try to...

- Talk to them privately about the need for silence after some questions to allow for thought and reflection.
- Remind the group of the group's purpose.
- Ask for their help in drawing out the silent members.
- Direct questions to people by name.
- Ask, "What do some others think?"
- Sit next to the talker. This both affirms them and lessens the likelihood you'll make eye contact with them and invite conversation.
- Privately say, "You know, you and I talk a lot each week. How could we work together to draw out some others who don't tend to speak up?"

SYMPTOM: MEMBER WHO MONOPOLIZES THE CHURCH GROUP GATHERING WITH A PERSONAL PROBLEM

You might try to...

- Talk to the person privately, suggesting specific resources.
- Recommend meeting outside of the normal group time if additional sharing is needed.
- Feel free to set a time limit on sharing prayer requests if needed. Yet, feel the freedom to adjust the schedule if a unique problem truly does require additional time and attention.
- Continue in prayer and loving support.

SYMPTOM: DISAGREEING MEMBER

You might try to...

- Try to find the cause. (e.g., Is the person sheltering a deep hurt? Is there something else bothering them?)
- Ask for clarification: "What exactly causes your hesitation?"
- If there is a serious theological disagreement, seek counsel from a pastor or coach.
- Offer to talk with the member one-on-one.

SYMPTOM: MEMBER AVOIDS ANY CONFLICT TO KEEP PEACE

You might try to...

- Explain that biblical community should properly address conflict rather than avoid it.
- Model healthy conflict resolution and refer to Scripture.
- Reassure them that it's okay for people to disagree on some issues.

SYMPTOM: SUPERFICIAL SHARING

You might try to...

- Be open and transparent in your own sharing. Humility is contagious!
- Break into huddles of 3-4 people of the same gender for deeper sharing and prayer.
- Meet outside the group to find out interests, opinions, and ideas.
- Allow grace and time for those who are slower to open-up.

SYMPTOM: A CONTROVERSIAL QUESTION IS RAISED

You might try to...

- Set some ground rules before the discussion.
- If appropriate, acknowledge that Christians hold different views on the topic.
- Remind the group that all viewpoints should be supported by Scripture.
- Work to display Christlike unity in our diversity.

SYMPTOM: A MEMBER IS ARGUMENTATIVE AND OBSTINATE

You might try to...

- Keep your composure; don't take things personally.
- Examine what is being said and try to find the good in it.
- Visit one-on-one to see if there is a deeper issue at hand.
- Communicate that their ideas are important, but that the behavior isn't helpful or honoring to the group.
- Pray with them and for them.
- Seek counsel from your Church Group Coach or pastor.

SYMPTOM: LACK OF PRAYER TIME OR STIFLED PRAYER TIME

You might try to...

- Plan time for prayer in schedule planning - this is essential.
- Everyone can pray their own prayer requests rather than sharing and then praying.
- Break into huddles-groups of 3-4 same members of the same gender to share and pray.
- Pray one-sentence prayers offering praise, confession, thanks, and requests.
- Read a Psalm or pray Scripture.

SYMPTOM: A DIFFICULT QUESTION IS RAISED

You might try to...

- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."
- Offer to find an answer and report on it next time.
- Pose the question to the group.
- Ask members to research the question and suggest appropriate resources to use.
- Talk with your coach or pastor.

SYMPTOM: A TANGENT ARISES

You might try to...

- Acknowledge the tangent, but gently bring the group back to the topic: “That’s a great topic, but let’s table that for the time being.” Then bring the group back to the topic by reviewing and summarizing where the discussion got lost.
- Use a key word (e.g. rabbit trail) to remind the group they’re on a tangent and gently pull the group back on topic.
- Agree to discuss the tangential topic at a later time.

SYMPTOM: GROUP APATHY, CONFUSION OR COMPLAINTS OF WASTING TIME

You might try to...

- Keep a regular schedule so members know what to expect.
- Start on time and end on time.
- Remember to incorporate the functions of a Church Group – Caring, Growing, Making Disciples.
- Ask for input from group members and allow them to take some part in planning your group time.
- Display enthusiasm and energy.
- Discuss your vision and the purpose for the group.

SYMPTOM: A MEMBER OF THE GROUP TENDS TO BUG OR RUB YOU THE WRONG WAY

You might try to...

- Pray for this person regularly.
- Ask God to change your heart and let you see them through His eyes.
- Step back and let the Holy Spirit work in both of you, love them as an act of faith and obedience.

SYMPTOM: PERSONALITY CLASH BETWEEN GROUP MEMBERS

You might try to...

- Emphasize points of agreement.
- Help each side to clearly listen to and understand the other.
- Be honest. You might need to talk with each of them privately to ask how they are relating. Give them counsel from God’s Word and hold them accountable to treat each other in a way that is honoring to Christ and to each other.

SYMPTOM: MEMBERS COME LATE

You might try to...

- Set a definite time that is workable and agreeable to the group members.
- Begin on time and end on time.
- Discuss time with group: “We’re having trouble getting started. Is it too early? Do we need to change the time?”

A GROUP MEMBER STOPS ATTENDING/UNCOMMITTED.

You might try to...

- Reach out to them to check in how they’re feeling about still being a part of the group.
- Reset expectations of regular group participation. If the group member is struggling with regular attendance talk to them and see if their needs can be met by the group.
- After resetting expectations, observe the group member to see if they’re consistently following through on those expectations and follow-up with them. This may be a harder season in their life –how can we help?
- If needed, have an open conversation with the group member to determine if they should remain in the group at this time. Bring in your coach if needed!

We pray that every person who calls MBC home will experience the biblical community that God has designed for us.

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