

# Small Groups

## AN INTRODUCTION TO



### Mission

To create a life-changing environment.

### Vision

Multiplying communities where participants connect and grow in faith.

### WIGTake\*

A format of honesty and transparency where all are welcome, and no one is left behind.

### Key Values of Small Groups

1. **Pray:** Nothing is more powerful than praying for your group and being prayed for by your group.
2. **Prepare:** There is a prepared intentionality to each meeting and the topics discussed.
3. **Care:** The group grows in accountability and genuine Christian affection towards one another.
4. **Report:** Quarterly reports on attendance and other requested information assists follow-up and connectedness with the church.

\* What's it gonna take?

## Group Roles

For groups to maintain their mission and vision, specific roles need to be filled. At the beginning, many roles can be shared, and participants may take on multiple roles. But as the group grows, these roles should be designated and often rotated. While some are gifted in one or more of these areas, it is important that everyone be given an opportunity to discover and appreciate the different roles and those giftings.

- **Group Leader:** The group leader is the prime driver of initiating the group and keeping the group going for at least the first year.
- **Group Host:** The group host is responsible for the location and logistics of the group meeting site. This role may be rotated as often as the site is rotated.
- **Group Guide:** The group guide leads the curriculum discussion. While the initial group guide should have some experience in this type of role, others should be rotated in as soon as they are able.
- **Hospitality:** Snacks, meals, potlucks are great ways to engage. Having someone coordinate meeting amenities and social events is a must.
- **Coms Facilitator:** The coms facilitator coordinates group communication avenues (email, social media, etc.).
- **Service Pro:** The service pro keeps on top of service opportunities, both at CBC and in the community.



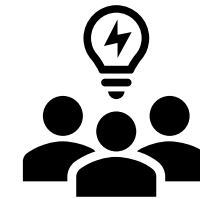
## Choosing Group Curriculum

- **Approval:** Small group curriculum must be approved by the Pastor of Discipleship.
- **Libraries:** CBC has a library of home-grown and pre-approved series in addition to our membership with the *RightNow Media* video library. (The home-grown library booklets can be printed in-house for each participant.)

The small group curriculum library can be found at:

*[cbcfamily.net/groups](http://cbcfamily.net/groups)*

- **Approved non-CBC Library curriculum:**
  - The length of any series should be eight weeks or less.
  - CBC can purchase series video and/or leader guide materials. Participant booklets must be purchased by each participant (directly or as a reimbursement).
- **Consent:** Regardless of source, curriculum must be made known to the Pastor of Discipleship prior to the start of any small group series.
- **Promotions:**
  - The number one best way to promote a group or group series is by word-of-mouth invitation.
  - For posting the start of a new series on the CBC groups webpage, weekly update, and/or Sunday slides, series information must be received by the Pastor of Discipleship a minimum of two weeks prior to its start.



## Group Leader Getting-Started Tips

### Preparing For Your First Meeting

1. Call each group participant the week before your first meeting. Don't just leave a voice mail message. At this stage, personal contact is critical.
2. Enlist a co-participant to help make the calls. Increased buy-in is important.
3. When you call, your enthusiasm is very important. Prepare yourself before you make the call.

### First Meeting Follow-up

1. Call or touch base with each participant who attended the meeting to encourage them. This extra step helps to continue relationship building. Look for them at church. Any contact in-between meetings will help to cement them into the group.
2. Call those who signed up for your group but did not come to the first meeting. This will show that you genuinely care and want them to be part of your community.
3. Call / text / email all your new group participants two days before your second meeting. Don't assume that they will remember. They need your encouragement.

### Simple Steps to Keep in Mind

Steps to ensure you have a well-functioning, healthy meeting:

1. **Food:** People enjoy eating. Work as a group to provide some type of meal or snack for each of your meetings. It helps to make a schedule of who will bring what.
2. **Prayer & Praises:** Allow time for prayer and celebrate what God is doing in participants' lives. It may be best to finish with this.



3. **Dive In:** As close to the set starting time as possible, after everyone arrives and a brief time of fellowship, dive into the curriculum.
4. **Communication:** A major part of keeping small groups going is maintaining connections with group members throughout the week. Look for opportunities to text, email, call, or visit between meetings.

### Giving

Each Small Group will be expected to challenge their participants to give/serve in two ways.

1. **Serve-One-Worship-One** – Serve-One-Worship-One encourages our members to take part in worship and God's Word in one service and give their time and talents by serving during another service. (Ex: Worship team, production, greeters, children, etc.)
2. **Serve Our Community** – Each small group will be challenged to move beyond the walls of CBC and find ways to reach out to our greater community, continually exploring new options for demonstrating, declaring, and making disciples. This catalyst will help motivate our members to intentionally live a SENT life of service.

### You Are Not Alone

Your CBC leadership wants to make sure that every leader, host, or guide has all the resources and support they need. It is our joy to assist you in every possible way so that your Small Group is a success!

We all need someone running alongside us, encouraging us, praying for us, and loving us during this season of community.

Never hesitate to ask for assistance.

## Small Groups FAQ's

### What's the ideal size for a small group?

- In Matthew 18:20, Jesus says, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them."* But optimally, a group of six can get things started. Groups larger than 18 need to start new groups.

### What do we do with the kids?

- Much depends upon the number, ages, and needs of the kids. It also depends upon the overall tolerance of the group participants. It is not recommended for group participants to rotate watching over children and thereby missing group time. The top two suggestions are:
  - 1) The free-range model: Let the kids participate and come and go as they please.
  - 2) Hire a babysitter(s) to watch the kids either at the meeting location or a prescribed location off-site.

### When is the best day and time to meet?

- There is no optimum time, only a time that will work for a prescribed number of participants. Consistency is the key. Therefore, the best time is whenever your group can consistently participate.

Sunday is a good choice. A Sabbath Day means to rest from, or stop, your work and devote the entire day to the LORD. It's not a "me" day, it's a "God" day. Holding your group on Sunday encourages this.

### How do I promote my group?

- The number one best way to promote a group is by word-of-mouth invitation. If you want to grow your group, your participants need to be consistently inviting others.
- Your group information will be posted on the CBC Groups webpage and Groups brochure as requested.

### What about financial giving?

- Group giving is not to take the place of tithes to CBC or offerings promoted by CBC, in whole or partially. Beyond this, small groups are free to give to projects affirmed by their small group. (Use of group funds might include offsetting of hospitality expenses, babysitter costs, special outreach projects, and member care needs.)

### How much Bible knowledge does a Group Guide need?

- While leading a small group by no means requires any kind of seminary education, it does require preparation. Always, always prep and know where the study is taking the group **before** the meeting. In addition, communicating with other group leaders and those with more Biblical knowledge can be a big help. If you need help, ask for help!

### How do I facilitate a great discussion?

- The less you talk the better. Make sure everyone is a part of the discussion by encouraging everyone to participate – don't let one or two occupy all the time. It's important to keep the discussion focused on the topic and not indulge in rabbit-chasing. This is where prepping ahead of time helps. Know where you want the discussion to go and be okay with saying "I don't know, but I will find out."

### How often & long do small groups meet? Do they take breaks?

- Most small groups meet weekly; some meet every other week. Meeting length can vary depending on intent. Regarding duration, some groups have met for over five years, and some take summer breaks.

### What about having just plain social time?

- Pure social time is good, especially for the first meeting so people can get to know one another and the "ground rules" and intents of the group can be presented.
- A good time for social events is between study series.

## Small Group Session Format Demos

One recommended pattern to follow is what is known as the “Three-Thirds” Session Format.

### First Third

Look Back

*How did it go?*

### Second Third

Look Up

*What does it mean?*

### Third Third

Look Forward

*What will I do?*

### ◀◀◀ Look Back (20 – 30 Minutes):

1. Praise what God had done since the last meeting.
2. Weekly disciplines assessment using the 3-Step, 1-on-1 Encouragement Process. (Available on the CBC Groups webpage: [cbcfamily.net/groups](http://cbcfamily.net/groups).)
3. Review of the last meeting’s content discussion and challenge outcomes.

### ⚡ Look Up (30 – 45 Minutes):

1. Just enough Biblical content to obey.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16*

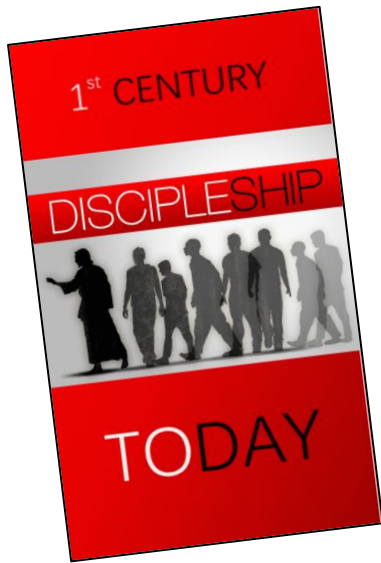
2. A discussion leading to understanding of the content. What is the content teaching and/or rebuking?
3. A discussion leading to personal application. What in our lives needs correction and training?

### ▶▶▶ Look Forward (20 – 30 Minutes):

1. A challenge for each participant to identify and apply over the coming week.
2. Prayer for the coming week.

Another Demo is the **Living Truth** Session Format.

1. **How's Life?** This portion of the meeting is part of the opening introduction/fellowship. It's a brief, two-minute max, update per person.
2. **Loving Accountability:** Weekly disciplines assessment using the 3-Step, 1-on-1 Encouragement Process. (Available on the CBC Groups webpage: [cbcfamily.net/groups](http://cbcfamily.net/groups).) (10-minutes)
3. **A Jesus Story:** What did Jesus do in your life this week? (15-Minutes)
4. **A Prayer:** Invite each person to share one praise and one prayer request. If God could answer one prayer in your life right now, what would it be? (10-minutes.)
5. **Bible Reading/ Discussion:** This could be curriculum-based or a walk through a book of the Bible. However, if you find additional insights in your study and research, share what you learned with your group. (30-minutes)
6. **Reflection and Application:** As you read the passages and answer the questions, reflect on what the Lord wants to teach YOU about who He is and about His call on your life to make disciples.
7. **Hear and Obey:** What did you learn from this lesson? What action do you need to take?  
  
Each participant makes an Obey Statement. This begins with "I will..." and should be a measurable goal. (A good example: "I will fast during my normal lunchtime on Friday." This is measurable. A bad example, "I will do better at fasting." This is not measurable.) Share your "I will..." statement with the group (10-minutes)
8. **Memory Verses:** It's important that we hide His Word in our hearts, so we encourage groups to memorize a weekly Bible verse.

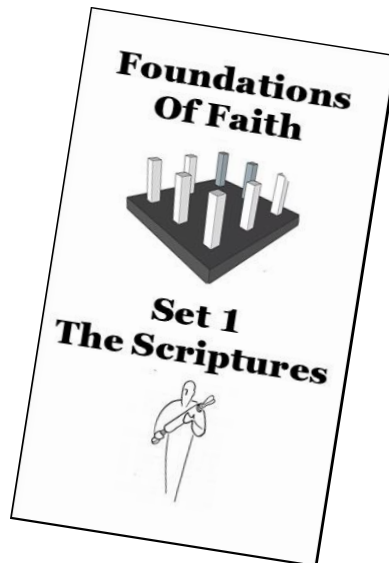


We aren't called to sit in church; we are called to fill the world with disciples.

*1st Century Discipleship Today* is a 16-session study that builds in CBC participants the Biblical foundations for a disciple-making process and lifestyle that can influence others for generations.

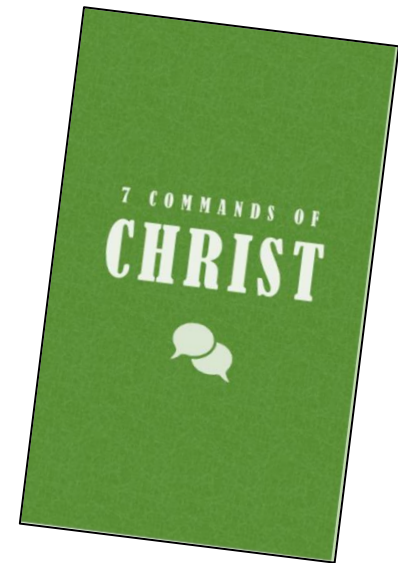
What do we believe and why do we believe it?

*Foundations of Faith* is a 20-set series that looks in-depth at the scriptures and how they form the basics and foundations of our beliefs. God's Word is our guide, but what does it say?



Every believer, new to the faith or lifelong adherent should practice and disciple others in basic commands.

*7 Commands of Christ* walks through these basic practices of a Christian lifestyle.



There is so much power in a story. *7 Stories of Hope* presents seven accounts of how Jesus gave people hope, especially those who were perceived as unworthy.

This study is useful for everyone, the curious to the faithful.