



**Small Groups**  
**from A-Z**

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Covenant Seminary 2016  
Youth Ministry since 2007



**What defines a small group?**

# **What defines a good or bad small group?**

**Share any experiences**

# 12 qualities that make up a good small group

**EQUIPPED  
LEADERS**

**CONTEXTUALIZED  
CURRICULUM**

**LONGTERM  
VISION**

**APPROPRIATE  
EXPECTATIONS**

**DISCIPLING  
DISCIPLINE**

**INVESTED  
PARENTS**

**ALIGNED  
STUDENTS**

**STRUCTURED  
PLAN**

**INTUITIVE  
FLEXIBILITY**

**ARSENAL OF  
QUESTIONS**

**UNDISTRACTED  
PRESENCE**

**RIGHT LOCATION**

**1 quality**



**Our → context → Your**

**+**

**Our → method → Your**

**next steps toward implementation**

# What is your church's context?

size  
stereotype  
surroundings  
staffing  
\$budget  
structure  
scalability

+

# What is your philosophy of ministry?

vision  
method

**What is your ideal/realistic vision  
for where you want small groups  
to fit/function?**

## church

**size** - 500+

**stereotype** - white, suburban, wealthy, private

**surroundings** - country club, private schools, central suburban location

**staffing** - 3 pastors, 9 directors, interns

**\$budget** - 2.5 mil

**structure** - Sunday all programs, tues women, wed youth, elem school

**scalability** - *most potential areas of growth* - staffing (women, care, worship), volunteer support, school community

## youth

**size** - 125-150 (involved in small groups)

**stereotype** - white, suburban, wealthy, private

**surroundings** - private Christian school, homeschool, private school, close public

**staffing** - 3 Directors, 2 interns, 20 volunteers

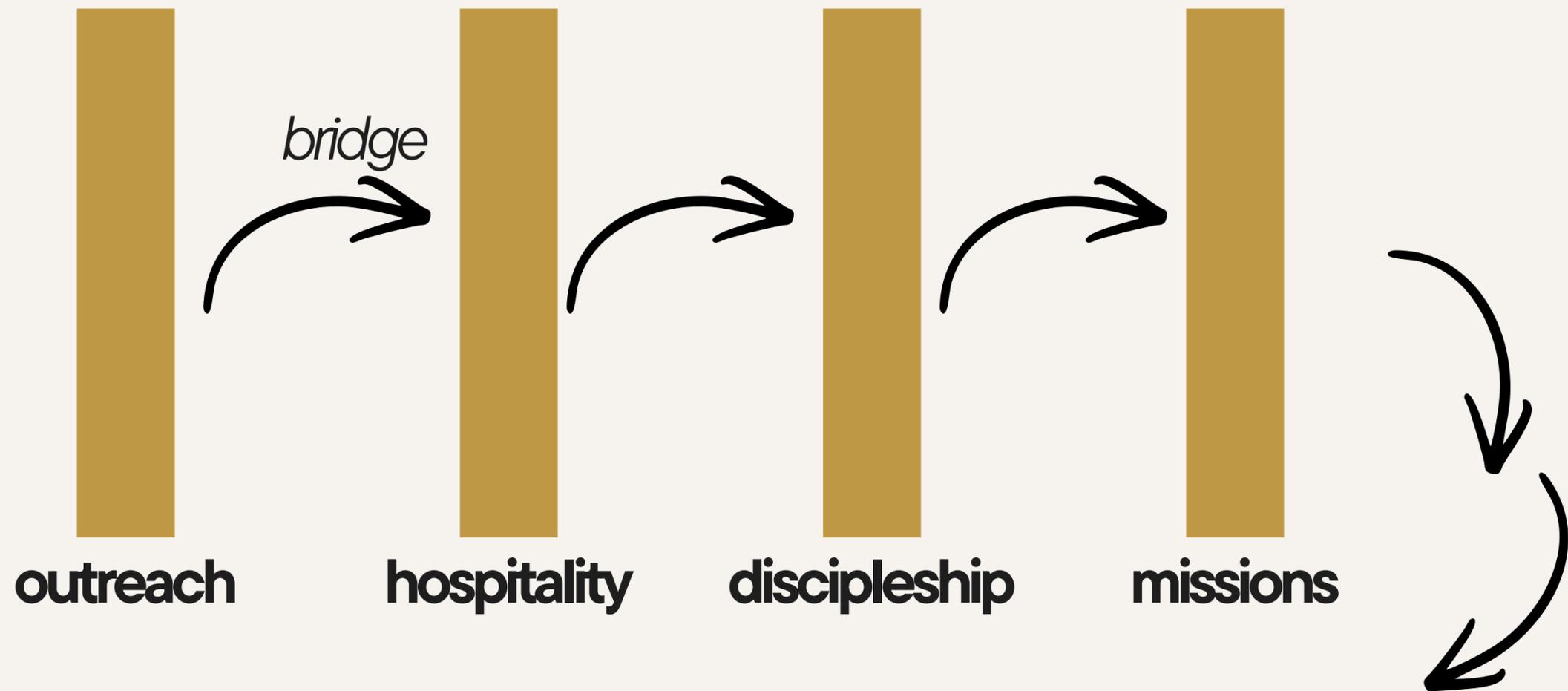
**\$budget** - 50,000

**structure** - Sunday HS large group, MS D Group, Wed flipped, events, retreats, conferences, missions

**scalability** - larger leadership base, training, clearly directed curriculum, space, service, church membership

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# advocates of the Gospel in the lives of teens



## What is your ideal/realistic vision for where you want small groups to fit/function?



**discipleship**

*Small groups will serve as the primary focus of our discipleship pillar. We believe that it is in the small group setting that we can mirror Jesus' model of discipleship, multiply the role of youth leader, and make sure that every teen in the ministry is seen, known, and led toward Jesus. We believe that this is so important that the majority of our budget, time, and development will focus here. It will be the next step for anyone attending our hospitality events and the step before encouraging students to think about what it means to lead others to Jesus..*

**What is your church's context?**

**+**

**What is your philosophy of ministry?**

**+**

**What is your ideal/realistic vision for where  
you want small groups to fit/function?**

**=**

**your filter/lense in determining the right approach  
in applying the 12 qualities**

# Equipped Leaders

**FALL IN LOVE WITH JESUS**

**BECOME A DISCIPLE**

**FIGURE OUT YOUR STORY**

True about them before we recruit

**FIND A PARTNER**

**FIND SOME TEENS**

Provided for them by our staff

**LOVE THE HELL OUT OF THEM**

Showing up is the most important part

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

Feed your people (food, community, content, rest)

**Remove barriers  
but create high  
standards**

**1**

# Equipped Leaders

- **What does your ideal leader of a small group look like?**
- **What barriers stand in the way of them joining the team or growing into the leader you need?**
- **How does your context lead your answers?**

**Remove barriers  
but create high  
standards**

**1**

# Contextulized Curriculum

6th-8th Grade	Programs
D Groups within the Student Ministry are to facilitate healthy Christian relationships through discipleship type teaching. The main objective is to help students and their groups grow in their ability to live their every day lives faithfully to Jesus.	Sunday D Groups, Parent Equipping Content
Curriculum	Attribute
<u>Semester 1:</u> Idolatry - What are other things we believe/follow?	In healthy intergenerational relationships, know healthy peer to peer relationships, Experience the need of Jesus
<u>Semester 2:</u> Gospel of Mark	In healthy intergenerational relationships, know healthy peer to peer relationships, Experience the need of Jesus
<u>Semester 3:</u> Relationships - What is Christian friendship/relationship?	In healthy intergenerational relationships, know healthy peer to peer relationships, Experience the need of Jesus
<u>Semester 4:</u> Ruth & Esther	In healthy intergenerational relationships, know healthy peer to peer relationships, Experience the need of Jesus

- *Articulate the Gospel clearly*
- *An understanding of the Biblical arc*
- *Able to identify a healthy church/ministry*
- *Experience the need of Jesus*
- *Express, confess, and define a faith that is their own*
- *In healthy intergenerational relationships*
- *Know healthy peer to peer relationships*
- *Feels like church is home*
- *Know how to read the Bible*
- *Know how to pray*
- *Serve the church regularly*
- *Attends worship regularly*

**Know where you are going and who you are teaching**

**2**

# Contextulized Curriculum

- **What does your ideal graduate look like?**
- **What are the needs of your students?**
- **How can you communicate more concise and clearly?**
- **How does your context lead your answers?**

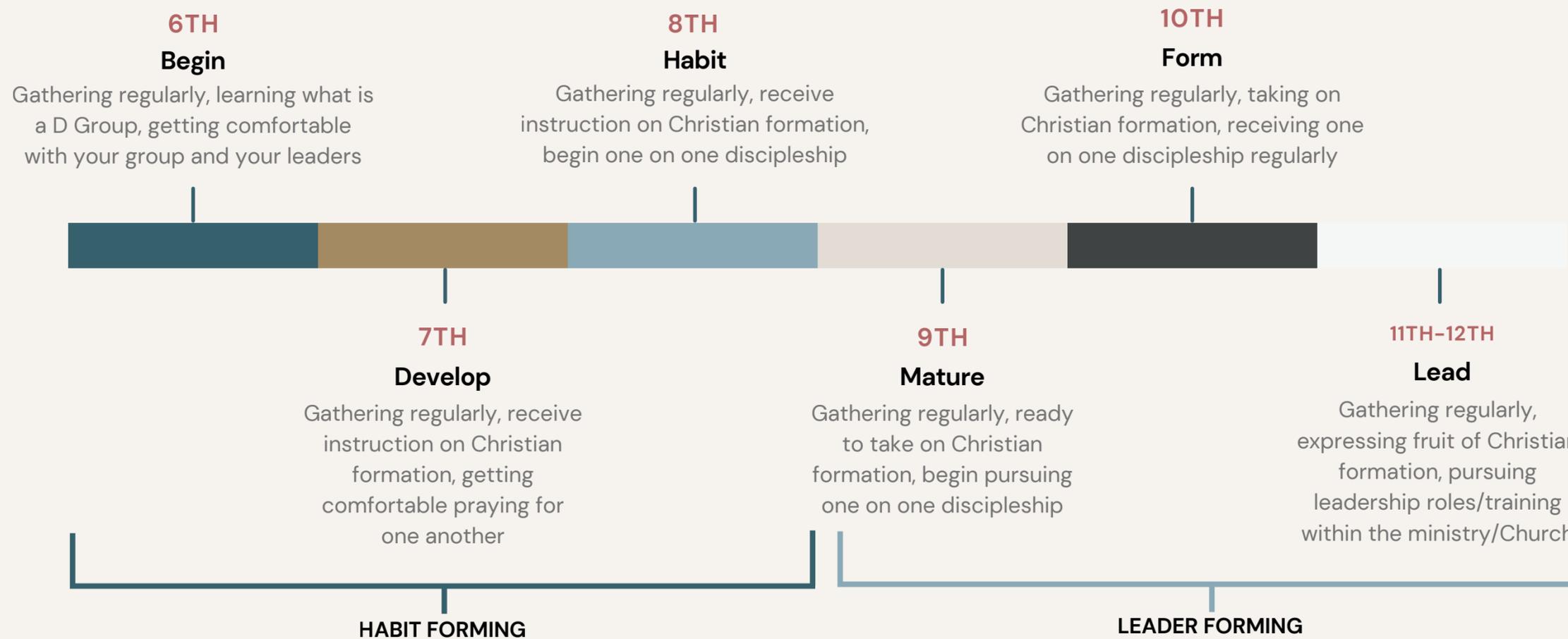
**Know where you are going and who you are teaching**

**2**

# Longterm Vision

KIRK STUDENT MINISTRY

## Developmental Stages of a D Group



**There should be signs of maturity, but they are not instant**

3

# Longterm Vision

- **What are the breakdowns of your groups?**
- **What are signs of maturity based on your breakdowns?**
- **How can you look forward to what your group can be while enjoying the group you have?**
- **How does your context lead your answers?**

**There should be signs of maturity, but they are not instant**

**3**

# Appropriate Expectations

# 4

KIIRK STUDENT MINISTRY  
Middle School

## D GROUP EXPECTATIONS

KIRK STUDENT MINISTRY  
High School

01 SHOW UP AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN

02 BE RESPECTFUL OF THE SPACES,  
PLACES, AND PEOPLE

03 ADHERE TO ANY OF THE RULES LAID  
OUT FOR THE NIGHT

04 HAVE A WILLINGNESS TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THE OUTLINED  
MEETING

01 SHOW UP CONSISTENTLY

02 BE RESPECTFUL OF THE SPACES,  
PLACES, AND PEOPLE

03 ADHERE TO ANY OF THE RULES  
LAID OUT FOR THE NIGHT

04 HAVE A DESIRE TO RECEIVE  
CHRISTIAN FORMATION

05 PARTICIPATE IN THE  
CURRICULUM  
(REFLECTIVELY OR  
VOCALLY)

06 SEEK THE BETTERMENT  
OF THE GROUP

**Be clear and up  
front at the  
beginning of  
each group**

# Appropriate Expectations

- What do you minimally expect from your groups when they are together?
- How does their age/stage dictate expectations?
- How do you get them to buy-in?
- What is your plan when they don't meet expectations?
- How does your context lead your answers?

**Be clear and up front at the beginning of each group**

**4**

# Discipling Discipline

- **Discipline that leads to Jesus**
  - **That Gospel is most digestable when our failures are on display**
- **Always make a way for them to come back**
- **Stay consistent**
- **Keep your expectations public**
- **Always inform parents, but you may not always have to involve parents. Most effective way we can connect with and disciple parents as well.**

**Don't be afraid of upholding the standard**

**5**

# Discipling Discipline

- What is your “strike method?”
- What is your method of “withholding” and returning?
- What does your communication plan look like with student and/or parent?
- Where has Jesus met /disciplined you in your failures?
- How does your context lead your answers?

**Don't be afraid of upholding the standard**

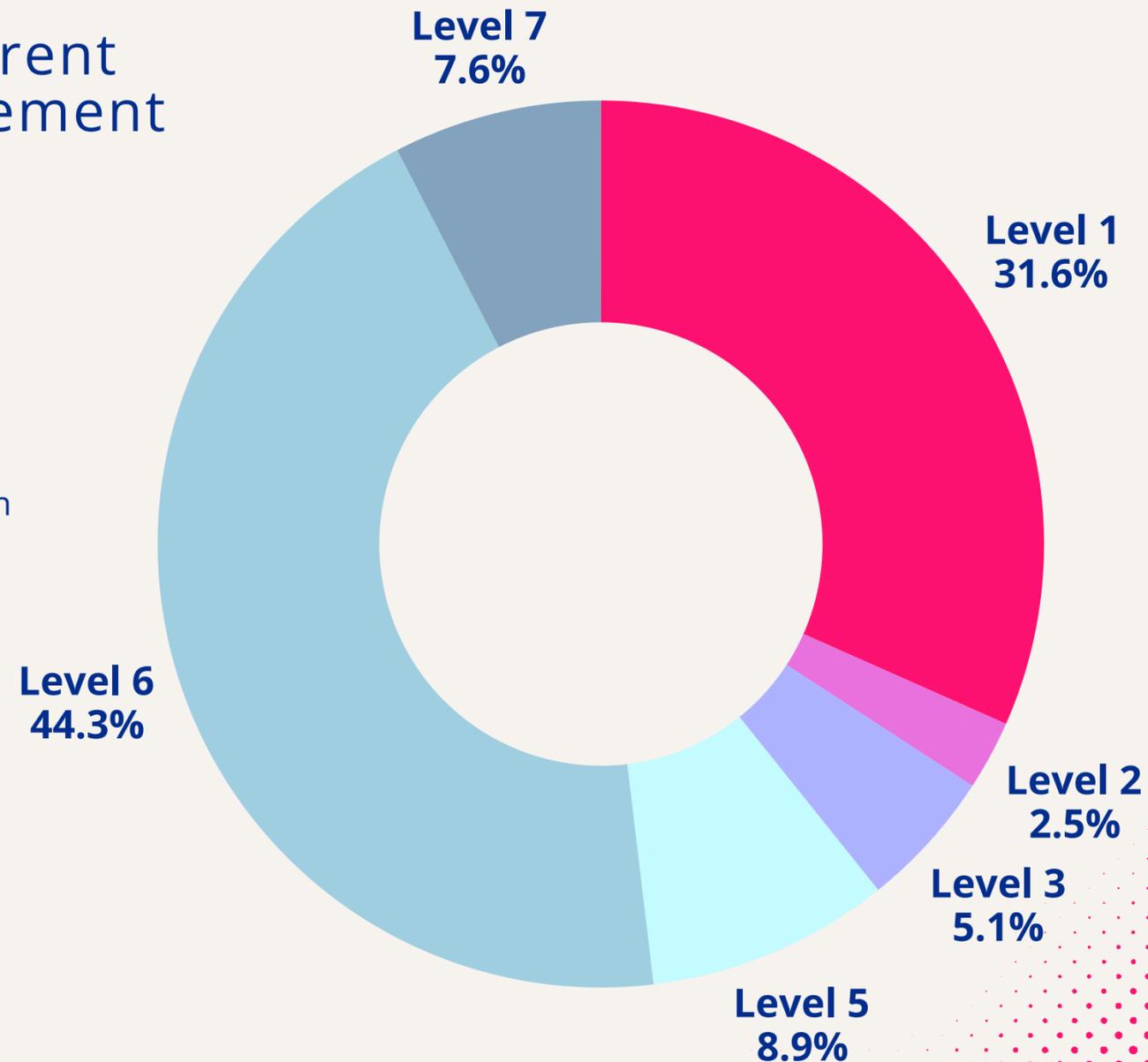
**5**

# Invested Parents

## Parent Engagement

Rough Spread of Parent Engagement/Involvement at the Kirk

- 1 Both Parents + Children
- 2 One Parent + Children
- 3 Both Parents + No Children
- 4 One Parent + No Children
- 5 Sister Church + Children
- 6 No Parents + Children
- 7 No Parents + No Children



Get as many parents to buy-in as possible

6

# Invested Parents

- **What is your spread of parent engagement?**
- **What barriers stand in the way of more parents being involved?**
- **Do your parents know, understand, buy-in to what you are doing as a ministry?**
- **What are the stages of a parent not being involved to being fully plugged-in look like?**
- **How does your context lead your answers?**



**Get as many  
parents to buy-in  
as possible**

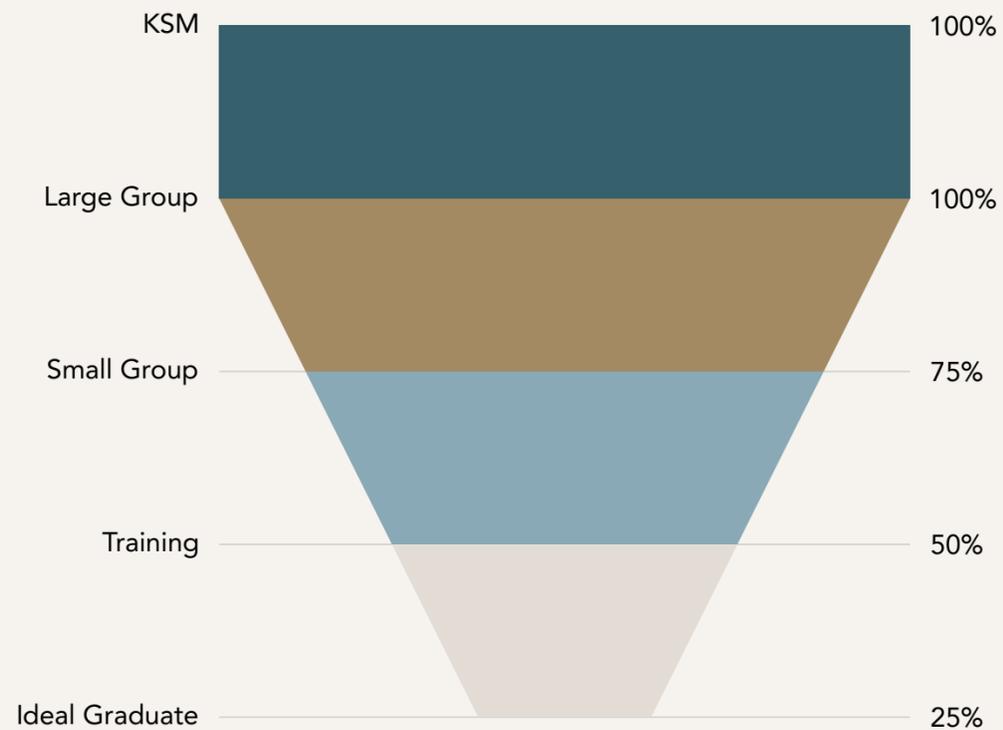
# Aligned Students

## UNDERSTANDING D GROUP

D Group falls under the area of ministry that is labeled "small group." This area of ministry is designed to help students grow in their faith walk through relational teaching models. For the 6th-12th grade ministry we call them Discipleship Groups or D Groups.

A D Group is the main area in which we do our student ministry and it is our goal to get as many, if not all, students into a discipleship relationship. That being said, **we believe that not all students may be ready for the entire discipleship process** and that is ok because our programs are designed to help students find a path toward discipleship.

We have other areas of ministry, mainly our large group gatherings (SNF/WNF) and events that help push, challenge, and lead students toward a desire and readiness level for discipleship.



**The bus can't go  
anywhere unless  
you all agree on  
where it is  
headed**

7

# Aligned Students

- **Where are you going?**
- **How do you use your expectations to align your students?**
- **What is your metric for determining alignment?**
- **How do you get different students in the same group to become aligned for where you are going?**
- **How does your context lead your answers?**

**The bus can't go anywhere unless you all agree on where it is headed**

**7**

# Structured Plan & Intuitive Flexibility

# 88%

Better to have a plan to break than to wonder what you are going to do next

## GAME OPTION

### Bucket Ball:

2 Buckets, 1 Ball, Play anywhere (hallways, whitfield, parking lot, etc.)

Ultimate frisbee style game. Whoever is holding the ball cannot move. The ball must move forward in the air. Each team has a bucket holder on opposite sides. The bucket holder has to stay within the predetermined endzone. Your team is trying to shoot the ball into the bucket, but the person holding the bucket has to stay within "endzone" and can only score if the ball stays in the bucket.

## D GROUP REMINDERS

- Gym Availability: 5:00-5:40pm, 6:20-7:00pm
- Whitfield Availability: 5:00-7:00pm
- FH is off limits on Sunday Nights this year. Try to keep games upstairs, but downstairs hallways are available.
- Van Available for 7th-8th Grade outings (6th outings will come later in the semester)

### D Group Rooms

- 6th Girls - Susan Office
- 6th Boys - 107
- 7th Girls - Nursing Moms Room
- 7th Boys - Andrew Office
- 8th Girls - Library
- 8th Boys - John Office

### Sample Schedule

#### 5:00-5:45pm

- Arrive
- Hang out/Free Play/Question of the Day
- Dinner

#### 5:45-6:15pm

- Go to D Group Room
- Devo
- Hi/Lo/Buffalo
- Pray

#### 6:15-7:00pm

- Planned activity

#### 7:00pm

- Pick up in Gym



### QUESTIONS

1. What is something you want to excel at?
2. What motivates you to perform well at that thing?
3. What types of sacrifices do you make in order to excel at that thing?

### SCRIPTURE

But you shall go over and take possession of that good land.<sup>17</sup> Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the Lord your God has forbidden you.<sup>24</sup> For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Dt: 4:22-24.

### COMMANDMENT #1

"You shall have no other gods before me"

### TEMPTATION #1

We make greater sacrifices for things other than God

"a god is what we sacrifice for and what we pursue"

- What does it mean that God is a jealous God?
- Why would He be jealous?
- What types of sacrifices do you make for your relationship with Jesus?
- What sacrifice could you make in order to pursue God more than other things?
- How can you pursue God in those things you want to excel at?

# INTENTIONAL FREE TIME

## CREATE MEMORIES

- Play
- Explore
- Ask
- Create

LAUGHTER | EXTRAVAGANCE | NEWNESS | TRAUMA

CREATE A ROUTINE, BUT DON'T VOICE THE ROUTINE  
BREAK THE ROUTINE, BUT NOT TOO OFTEN  
ALLOW FOR SPONTANEITY, BUT DON'T PLAN ON IT

## PLAY

- Play a game
- Random Object Exercise

## EXPLORE

- Do something no one has ever done
- Let student be the expert

## ASK

- Ask silly questions
- Tell stories to get good questions
- Alphabet exercise

## CREATE

- Create some art
- Make a new game together
- Spontaneity

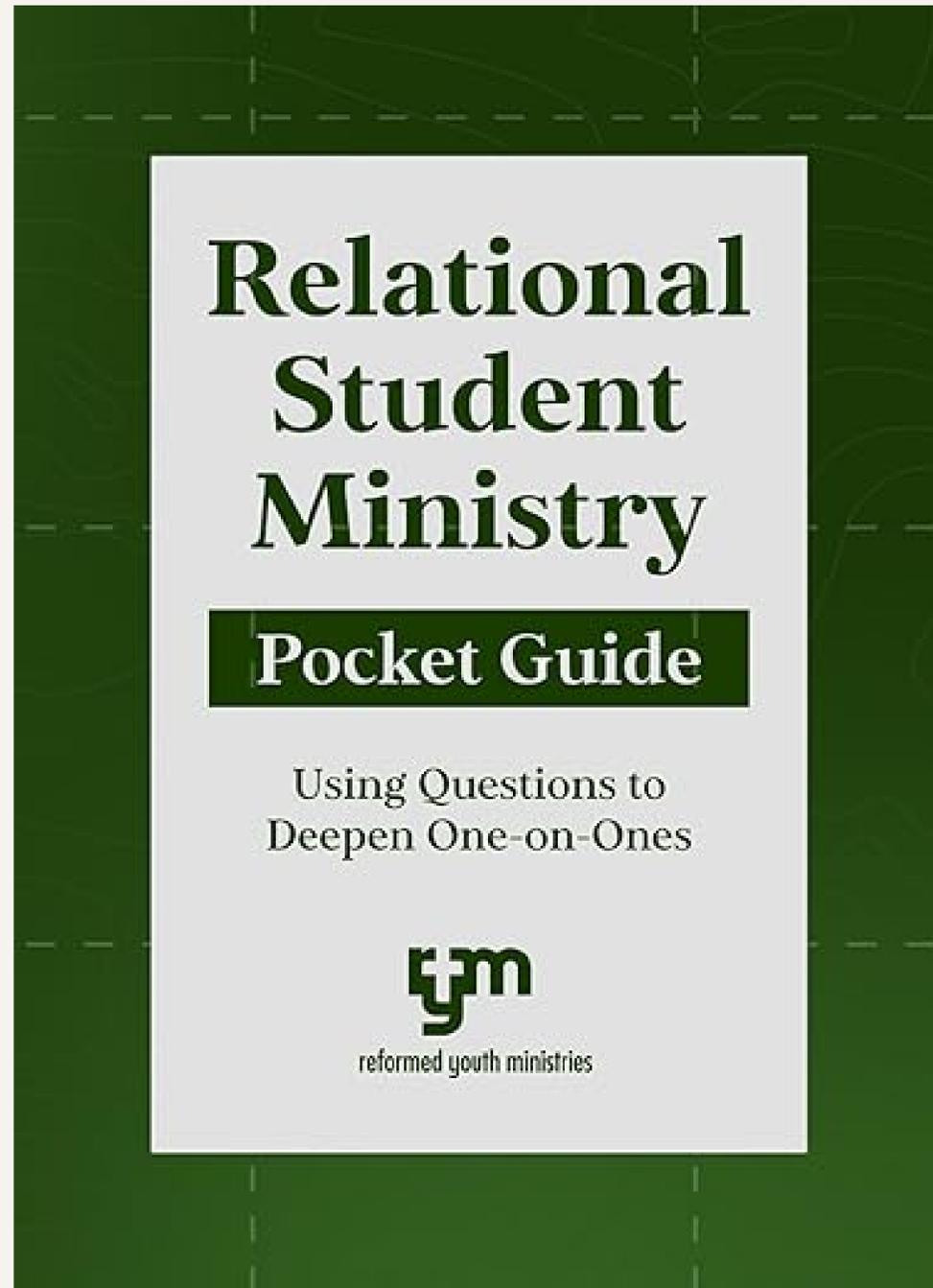
# Structured Plan & Intuitive Flexibility

- What is your minute by minute plan for your time-frame?
- What is your default?
- How often should you break the plan and who should dictate it?
- Where are your pile of resources coming from?
- How does your context lead your answers?

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**Better to have a plan to break than to wonder what you are going to do next**

# Arsenal of Questions



- **Would you rather**
- **Scales**
- **Leading**
- **Random**
- **Alphabet**
- **Cultural**
- **Driver's Seat**

# 10

**The more you  
can get them to  
talk, the more  
comfortable  
everyone will be**

# Arsenal of Questions

- **What questions get most people talking?**
- **What is controversial, provocative, or thought provoking?**
- **What are they an expert in?**
- **What are you wanting to teach them and how can you get them to think about it through a question?**
- **How does your context lead your answers?**

**10**

**The more you can get them to talk, the more comfortable everyone will be**

# Undistracted Presence & Right Location

- **Fight for the right space**
- **Remove what might be tempting**
- **Add what could enhance attention**
- **Leave home well**
- **Check your boxes**
- **Don't be surprised by how little you need**

# 11&12

**The right location is determined by what will provide undistracted presence**

# Undistracted Presence & Right Location

- What is the objective of that particular small group?
- What would allow you to show up and be present without distraction?
- What would allow your students to show up and be present without distraction from the objective of the night?
- How can you make your “default” space for your group?
- How does your context lead your answers?

# 11&12

**The right location is determined by what will provide undistracted presence**

**what is an  
area you  
need to  
develop or  
improve**

**+**

**workshop  
with peers**

# Gather is small groups based on area you would like to workshop

CONTEXT  
PHILOSOPHY  
VISION

EQUIPPED  
LEADERS

CONTEXTUALIZED  
CURRICULUM

LONGTERM  
VISION

APPROPRIATE  
EXPECTATIONS

DISCIPLING  
DISCIPLINE

INVESTED  
PARENTS

ALIGNED  
STUDENTS

STRUCTURED  
PLAN

INTUITIVE  
FLEXIBILITY

ARSENAL OF  
QUESTIONS

UNDISTRACTED  
PRESENCE

RIGHT LOCATION

# What are we currently working on?

**ALIGNED  
STUDENTS**

**IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT  
STUDENTS**

**INVESTED  
PARENTS**

**INCREASING PARENT  
INVOLVEMENT**

**CONTEXTUALIZED  
CURRICULUM**

**PACING OUT CURRICULUM**