



Community Groups

LEADER TOOLS

GROUP LEADER MANUAL

COMMUNITY GROUP VALUES

ABC

Apply the Bible:

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

We believe that God's Word—the Bible—has the authority and power to literally change people's lives. But, we must dig in it. One of the most transformational ways to do this is studying and applying the Bible *together*. As we do this, we'll learn to love God better.

Build Relationships:

"Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." (John 13:34, ESV) Loving one another is at the heart of what it means to live out the Christian life. Groups give us an environment to practice doing this well. As we seek to build relationships with each other, we can rely on one another for encouragement, care, prayer, and to point one another to Jesus.

Continue Discipleship:

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.'" (Matthew 16:24-25)

We believe everyone needs to grow in their spiritual relationship with Jesus and in what it means to follow Him. Princetown Church Groups are safe environments where singles or couples can learn, ask for accountability, and practice taking next steps to follow Jesus.

LEADER GUIDELINES 02

EXPECTATIONS FOR COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS description, qualifications

Description: A Community Group leader shepherds approximately 10-12 individuals toward maturity in Christ. Our vision for leaders is that they join us in creating an environment of discipleship where group members learn and apply God's Word, build relationships that care for one another, and begin to take next steps in obedience to Christ.

Qualifications:

- Member of Princetown Church.
- Community Group member for at least one session.
- Biblical character of a Deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
- Has displayed leadership and consistent attendance within their Community Group.
- Has been recommended by other church leadership.
- Humble, honest, teachable, and passionate to love Jesus, love one another, and to live with purpose.

Personal Expectations:

- Love God and one another. Seek to lead with intentionality and vulnerability
- Worship Christ through Bible reading, prayer, service, giving, and other spiritual disciplines.
- Faithfully attend a weekly Princetown Church worship service.
- Regularly connect with your Community Group leadership/staff.
- Commit to participate in Community Group leader team building sessions.

Group Expectations:

- Faithfully lead your group by being present consistently.
- Work through and faithfully carry out the community group covenant
- Foster care and biblical fellowship in your group, including contact outside of the group.
- Encourage individual group members to serve at Princetown Church.
- Develop future group leaders and encourage sending out new leaders to new groups.
- Take Community Group attendance each meeting.

Community Group Leader(s) Initial(s) _____ Date _____

Signatures _____

STARTING A GROUP 03

12 THINGS TO DO

1. **Pray** - Pray for your group members and their relationships with Jesus. Pray also that God would foster a biblical small group community within your group.
2. **Sequence of Meeting** - Decide what your first meeting should look like. Should include welcome, icebreakers, Group Map Forms (appendix), study, prayer, etc.
3. **Choose Your Destination:** Work through the Destination Planner (Appendix) with your group - Write out group goals that center on our Community Group Values and Princetown Church's Next Steps (Worship, Grow, Serve, Invite). Emphasize the role of a commitment to attendance as a key to the group being successful. Fill out Community Group Covenant Form.
4. **Share Your Story:** Sharing your story can be difficult. It can be hard to know where to begin, what to include, or how to start. Use the Share Your Story Form, questions, and story template to process how to share your story with your group.
5. **Choose Your Culture:** Whenever we have a group of people together, we create a culture comprising various values and rules—whether they're spoken or not. Use the Crew Culture Brainstorm activity to intentionally create your group's culture by choosing values and commitments together. Print out one for each member of your group, and then use it to guide your discussion.
6. **Design Your Time:** We want to use our time together in group on purpose and for our purpose. Use the Design Your Time discussion guide and activity to evaluate how you're spending your time as a group and how you'd like to spend it going forward.
 - a. **Apply the Bible** - Select your group's topic of study. Your group may use Princetown Church's sermon discussion guides (when available) or choose an approved study. Contact Pastor Ian (ianb@princetownchurch.com) for study approval (please allow 2-3 weeks for study reviews).
 - b. **Build Relationships** - Designate how much time you will spend on connecting with each other
 - c. **Continue Discipleship** - Decide how much time you'll dedicate to praying together, holding each other accountable, and practicing the truth of God's Word.

continued

STARTING A GROUP 03

12 THINGS TO DO

7. **Designate Your Route:** With your group, use the *Route Planner* guide at the beginning of each session to plan out your next season as a group. This will help keep your group balanced with content, social activities, and serving together, as well as ensuring your group is intentionally headed toward your Destination.
 - a. **Serve** - Who will your group serve in the next few months? Choose a person, family, or group of people to serve. You may also want to select service opportunities that are sponsored directly through Princetown Church. Check in with Pastor Ian for ideas.
 - b. **Social** - Map out a few times for your group to gather specifically for the purpose of “hanging out.” Go to a restaurant or sporting event. Host an ethnic-themed potluck. Enjoy a movie or game night together. Schedule some “fun time” together as a group.
 - c. **Schedule** - Make a Community Group schedule and be sure everyone in the group has it. This allows your group members to put important dates on their calendars, well in advance, through the end of the group session.
8. **Contact List** - Develop a contact list of group members, for those in your group. You may want to include: Names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mails, birthdays, and anniversaries.
9. **Group Roles** - Share the responsibilities in your group by deciding on some group roles. You may want to include: Serve coordinator, weekly email or text administrator, snacks coordinator, social gathering coordinator, etc.
10. **Groups Portal** - Take a few minutes to make sure your roster is up-to-date on the Groups Portal. Please ensure everyone’s name is listed, with the appropriate email and other contact information.
11. **Group Members** - Reach out to each of your group members to invite them to your next meeting. Be especially intentional about connecting with those who may only attend sporadically.
12. **Future Leaders** - Consider those in your group who would be quality future Small Group leaders. Offer them opportunities to facilitate lessons and plan activities. Talk with Pastor Ian about the possibility of them becoming a Community Group leader in the future.



REAL COMMUNITY

04

8 BUILDING BLOCKS

- 1. Frequency** - Relationships take time, specifically time together. The more often your group meets, the more opportunities you have to develop real community. If you can meet every week, do it. Hebrews 10:25 says, *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*
- 2. Authenticity** - There are levels to fellowship. First, we share. We share about our families, jobs, and school. Next, we study God's Word. We learn together about who God is and what He wants for our lives. Another level of fellowship is serving. When we serve together, we grow together towards a common mission. Finally, suffering is the deepest level of fellowship. When someone in your group goes through tough life circumstances, your group has an opportunity to grow in authenticity. Another way to promote authenticity in your group is to confess your sins to one another. James 5:16 says, *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."*
- 3. Accountability** - Develop accountability relationships in your Small Group. Encourage and honor one another. Ephesians 4:29 says, *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*
- 4. Cultivated Courtesy** - Listen before speaking. Understand where people in your Small Group are coming from. Most people don't want to be fixed; they want to be heard. 1 Peter 2:17 says, *"Show proper respect to everyone, love the families of Believers, fear God, honor the emperor."* Romans 14:1 says, *"Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters."*

REAL COMMUNITY

04

8 BUILDING BLOCKS

- 5. Humility** - Humility is being honest about your weaknesses, not denying your strengths. It is about giving God the praise for the work He does in you. Humility is saying two words: Forgive me. It has been said, "Don't think less of yourself; think of yourself less." 1 Peter 5:5 says, *"In the same way you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."*
- 6. Honesty** - Most people do not have anyone who loves them enough to be honest with them. When we are honest in the midst of conflict and see it through, genuine *community* is produced. Ephesians 4:15 says, *"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ."*
- 7. Mercy** - God didn't give you what you deserve. Give your group members what they don't deserve. Offer Mercy. Colossians 3:13 says, *"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."*
- 8. Confidentiality** - The quickest way to kill your Community Group is by gossip. What is said in the group stays in the group. Exceptions are only for major issues such as criminal activity or abuse (i.e. substance, physical, sexual, emotional). Talk to Pastor Mike if this is the case. If someone is struggling in life (i.e. marriage, parenting, financial) and needs help or counsel, encourage the person(s) to talk to Pastor Mike or Pastor Ian. Proverbs 16:28 says, *"A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends."*

CULTURE COMMITMENTS 05

VALUE ONE ANOTHER - share opinion - don't convince

Las Vegas Rule - What is said in the Community Group, stays in the Community Group. Everyone needs to understand that what is communicated is not water cooler talk for the week, and may not be communicated outside of the group. Make sure everyone knows this in your group. (If sensitive subjects arise that you are questioning might have legal ramifications, meet privately with that person and include your apprentice and/or spouse. Consult with Pastor Ian for guidance).

Transparency - Allow others to get to know you as well as God knows you. We should strive to be men and women with no secrets so we can help one another grow. Create an environment of transparency. Remember this: A group will only go as deep as its leader is willing to go.

Don't Convince - It is completely okay to share your opinion - a difference in opinion is welcome. But please don't try to convince others to your side of thinking.

Listen - We should each value one another in the discussion, not just what we want to say. Be sure to listen while others are speaking. Do not be thinking about what you want to say next, really listen.

Pause - After a person shares, leave a pause to allow the entire group to feel the weight of what was shared. No one should feel rushed to "get their thoughts" out during the discussion time.

CULTURE COMMITMENTS 05

DON'T RESCUE - USE "I" STATEMENTS

Don't Fix - Hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they need your advice, they will ask for it. (It is okay to ask permission to share advice).

Don't Rescue - When someone is sharing a deeply personal or painful story, we can tend to try and make them feel better about the situation. This usually stops people from sharing any further and hinders them going deeper than they might have gone. Resist the temptation to "rescue" people.

Don't "Cross-Talk" - Be considerate of who is talking - don't have a side conversation while someone is sharing.

Use "I" Statements - It's easy to talk about the Church or others around you, but we want you to put yourself out there. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them," "the church," "us," "we," etc.

Self-Assess and Self-Reflect - It is very important that we use this time to consider where we are at in our relationship with Jesus, and what He would have us do.

Questions like these are helpful to remember:

- How am I walking this out in my personal life?
- How does this affect my ability to relate to others?
- What is my part of the issue/solution?
- What changes does God want me to make?



FACILITATION 06

STEER THE DISCUSSION

FOSTER CONNECTIONS

- Facilitate; don't teach. As a leader (facilitator), you should talk less than 20% of the time.
- Plan to be flexible. Be prepared, but if the group spends a lot of time on something important, let that happen.
- Steer the discussion without controlling it.
- Be curious. Actively listen so that you can ask clarifying questions to discover what is going on in people's lives.
- It is very important to foster connections between group members. The more comfortable people feel, the more likely they will be to share and discuss.
- Point out similarities between comments people make.
- Invite people to answer one another's questions. You are not responsible to answer all the questions. Remember, you are not the expert.
- Affirm questions with phrases such as: "Great question! What do all of you think?"



FACILITATION 06

DON'T TEACH, FACILITATE

ALLOW FOR SILENCE

- Affirm “dumb” questions (i.e. “I can see why that would have been confusing, I’m glad you asked about it”).
- Encourage everyone to participate. Never call on a quiet person unless you know them well. Instead, ask a quiet person what they are thinking.
- Unless a person is asking for specific factual information (i.e. “What is a Gentile?”), defer to the group.
- Let them exhaust their discussion, then round it out and fill in any remaining gaps. “For me, this also means...”
- Allow Silence. Although this can be uncomfortable, some people need silence to be able to share.
- Show interest in what interests your group members.
- Tell Stories.



FACILITATION 06

CRAZY ANSWERS RABBIT TRAILS

DEALING WITH “CRAZY ANSWERS”

- Affirm the contribution! Better to express something erroneous so it can be addressed than to keep it hidden.
- “Hmm, say more about that... where are you seeing that reflected in the passage?”
- “I’m glad you brought that up. Can anyone else speak to that idea?”

DEALING WITH “RABBIT TRAILS”

- Mentally assess: Is this more important and pressing than the immediate study? If yes, then go with it. If not, redirect the discussion and suggest that you can discuss with the person after the group meeting.
- “I’m glad you’re thinking about these questions because they’re also important, but let’s stick with tonight’s study for now.”
- “That’s a great question and I want to address it, so let’s talk further about that after the study.” Make sure you follow up with the person.



FACILITATION 06

- **Communicate Well** - Figure out how those in your group best communicate and do that (i.e. email, phone, face-to-face). Be sure to over-communicate details about upcoming group studies, gatherings, and service projects.
- **Say, “Thank You”** - Let your group members know you appreciate them. Thank them for attending meetings, participating in discussions, and helping the group grow. This can be done verbally, by sending a card in the mail, or offering praise about them in front of others.
- **Ask, “How Can I Help?”** - Whenever you sense there is a need among those in your group, let them know you are available and willing to help. Then, listen well to discern how to best help them. If you or someone in your group cannot meet a specific need, find someone who can. If needed, contact The Elders or Pastor Ian.
- **Allow Silence** - For those of us who are more introverted, sometimes we need a little silence following a question before we’re willing to share. Silence can be the prod some need to begin to vulnerably open up with the group.
- **Discuss ‘Good Attendance’** - Openly discuss the importance of ‘good attendance’ with your group members. Groups that spend time together, grow together. If poor attendance has caused an issue in your group, let your coach know... we want to help!

DEALING WITH DOMINANT PEOPLE

- “Thanks Susie. Can anyone else add to that?”
- Pose question, “I’d like to hear from someone who hasn’t talked yet.”
- May need to talk to them afterwards. Let them know you appreciate their willingness to participate, because time is limited you just want to make sure everyone gets a chance to share.

DEALING WITH BLANK STARES

- Name the process: “I’m getting a lot of blank stares. Would you like me to rephrase the question? Is there something in particular that isn’t making sense?”
- Give a real life example: “I know in my life...” “Can anyone else relate to that?”
- “I’d like to go around the circle and have everyone share one take-away from tonight.”

FACILITATION 06

Talker-Listener Cards

Taken from *Why Don't We Listen Better?* - Jim Petersen

How do we respect and listen to each other in group? A good method is to use the talker-listener card. A print off of the card is available below.

The Talker

- **Who talks first? - I'm most bothered** - This person should go first (unless they go first each week, then refer to the "Dealing with Dominant People" section).
- **I own the problem** - I lead off and talk about my issues, agenda, or story from my point of view. The talker and listener look through the talker's eyes and experiences. Problem-ownership revolves around whose story we are discussing. Watch the pronouns. Let's say I tell you about my attempt to lose weight. You describe a foolproof method you know that could solve my weight problem. Note the ownership shift from my problem to your solution. I own the problem, which means the talker is responsible for handling the issue. In this case, dealing with my weight is up to me.
- **What does the Talker Do? The Goals:**
 - **Share my feelings** - describe our feelings (emotions) to a listener. It explains what's inside me rather than describing someone else. Don't say, "I feel that..." Most of the time, we share a judgmental thought instead of what we feel.
 - **Share my thoughts** - describes developing ideas, points of view, concepts, philosophies, memories, questions, guesses, and accumulation of facts and fictions. Saying, "I'm happy to be here," doesn't tell you what I think about being here. I might be happy to be here (feeling) because I plan to take your money (thought). It is wise to consider that our ideas might be hurtful, inappropriate, or poorly timed. We must always "speak the truth in love."
 - **MY thoughts and feelings** - I own them, I accept responsibility for what I say
- **What doesn't the talker do? Talk Without:**
 - **Talk without accusing, attacking, labeling, or judging** - when we're talkers, let's not attack (win at any price), accuse (lay blame), label (call names), or judge (put others beneath us).

When to Switch roles:

- Here's what you do when it seems time to switch roles: 1. Feed back the essence of what you heard. 2. Ask if your understanding is accurate. 3. Ask if the talker is ready to switch roles and be the listener. 4. If not, listen more, then repeat these steps.
- Agree to take turns and allow others to speak

The Listener

- **Who Listens first? I'm calm enough to hear** - Set the talker card with the talker side facing the person talking. The listeners set aside their concerns for the moment to focus on the other person's point of view.
- **I don't own the problem** - It does not mean we don't care about people. It means we're committed to helping them focus on what they are doing about their situations. We set aside our points of view, hot buttons, biases, and hobby horses. As we do, we become more able to focus on their situations and get inside their perspectives. This provides talkers the support they need to take charge of their lives better and make their *own decisions*.
- **What does the listener do? The Goals:**
 - **Provide Safety** - While difficult, let's cut talkers some slack and apply the three-day-return rule to communication here. Let's provide them an environment where they can calm down, think in safety, and be able to change their minds (and even grow).
 - **Understand** - Listeners become engaged in what talkers are trying to say — to see, hear, taste, touch, feel, reflect, and respect it.
 - **Clarify** - help talkers recognize their thinking and feelings. It enables them to better understand themselves and the interaction between their feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and world.
 - *Note: Interrupt long talkers to clarify what they are talking about. Waiting for a long talker to finish their 14 points is not polite. It is not helpful to them.*
 - *Note: Occasionally, problem people with heavy control needs can hurt you. What can you do if listening does no good? You best be realistic here and move on with your life, that is, listen to people where doing it improves their lives and yours.*
- **What doesn't the listener do? Listen Without:**
 - **Agreeing** - Agreeing is talking, not listening. We focus on what we think instead of listening. Once in a while, agree with a truth that a sin or wrong actually is wrong.
 - **Disagreeing** - This is more quickly and obviously argumentative as it shifts the focus from the talker's viewpoint to the listener's. If we go inside ourselves to think about how we will put our disagreement into words, we, in effect, leave the talkers alone to fend for themselves.
 - **Advising** - This is talking and not listening. We don't give the other person the room to figure it out on their own. We offer advice, and the other person isn't asking for it. When asked a question, ask a question.
 - **Defending** - This allows for a safe space for the talker to share and grow. Defending is attacking the other person. It doesn't let the other person figure out what they are going through on their own. To stop defending doesn't mean to get quiet, swallow it, and hang around in a warzone. Instead, it means to replace defending with listening. If an issue is too tough to talk through without defending, It's ok to acknowledge how painful this is to you and offer a better time to continue this discussion.

TALKER

*I'm most bothered
I own the problem*

GOALS

- To share my feelings
- To share my thoughts
- Accusing • Attacking
- Labeling • Judging

Without

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LISTENER

*I'm calm enough to hear
I don't own the problem*

GOALS

- To provide safety
- To understand
- To clarify

Without

- Agreeing • Disagreeing
- Advising • Defending

From: *Why Don't We Listen Better?*

CARE & CONNECT 07

COMMUNICATE WELL

SHOW YOU CARE

- **Spend Time With Group Members** - Spend time with group members outside of normal meeting times. This may involve connecting before or after worship on a Sunday morning, going to lunch, or inviting each member (individually or as couples) over for dinner. Just spend time with them to show you care.
- **Show Interest in Their Interests** - If your group members are involved in sports, go to a game with them. If they like music, go to a concert or musical. If they like baking, invite them over to bake with you. Show interest in what interests your group members.
- **Keep Them Connected** - Sometimes our group members do not stay in touch with us very well, especially over Christmas or summer break. Don't wait for them to reach out to you. Intentionally look for ways to get into their worlds. Send a card, stop by for a visit with a gift card, or call them on the phone. Show that you care by keeping your group members connected.
- **Think: Who Needs to Be Connected?** - Ask God, "Who in the group needs to be better connected?" Start with one person at a time. Intentionally invest in him or her.



EQUIPPED TO COUNSEL 08

REFER TO PASTOR

FOLLOW UP

As a Community Group leader you will have situations that have a 'counseling' feel. So, here are some helpful guidelines.

1. Remember that Community Group leaders are not endorsed by Princetown Church as trained counselors and that Community Groups are not designed to be counseling sessions.
2. The most important counsel provided in a Community Group setting is the encouragement of God's Word.
3. Some situations open the door to coming alongside those who are struggling with tough life events. We come alongside with words of encouragement and prayers.
4. There may be a Community Group meeting in which the gravity of a person's or a couple's struggle demands significant time together as a group of people who are committed to doing life together. However, you can't devote big chunks of time to the same situation every time you meet – that's when the group becomes a therapy session.
5. If something has a 'counseling' feel, encourage the person or couple to reach out to The Elders or Pastor Ian.
6. Follow-up with your recommendation to seek counsel from one of the pastors.

GROUP MULTIPLICATION 09

GREAT COMMISSION MAKE DISCIPLES

What is group multiplication?

Prinetown Church Community Groups are called to fulfill the mission of the church: Love Jesus, love one another, and live with purpose. At the heart of this is the Great Commission found in Scripture. This mission, to make disciples, drives the concept of group multiplication at Prinetown Church. Community Groups multiply by one individual or couple exiting their current group and starting a new group. This individual or couple could be a current leader or group member. Either way, the idea is that each group would “send” or commission an individual or couple to step out and act like a missionary by starting a new group when ready to do so.

When should our group multiply?

When multiplying, Community Groups will face the tension between growing as a group vs. multiplying the group. This tension has existed from the beginning of Christian discipleship due to the nature of the Great Commission. God’s mission involves growing people and then sending them out. Some groups may be ready to multiply every 1-2 years, other groups may multiply every 2-3 years, and some may take longer. Regardless, ***set a goal to try to send an individual or couple from your group to start a new one every two years.*** Fulfilling this goal will depend on the dynamics of each group.

What can I do to work towards multiplying my group?

As leaders, you should constantly be praying about who in your group exhibits group leader characteristics. Look for people who are “shepherds” or care-takers. You can discover these characteristics in your group members by delegating leadership tasks to them, such as prayer, social activities, service projects, and administrative responsibilities. You can even ask them to facilitate a study once or twice. When you identify a potential future leader, tell Pastor Mike.

How is a new leader selected?

Ultimately, The Elders select new leaders for groups. However, leaders play an important role because he will ask existing group leaders for recommendations. Those who are asked to consider leadership will be given a ministry description and application.

How will our group make the leadership transition?

Each group is different. Some leadership transitions will seem quick, others may be gradual. However, The Elders will walk your group through its transition.

Final Thoughts...

Sending an individual or couple out to start a new group is like a church sending a family into the mission field as missionaries. It can be challenging, but it is something worth celebrating because our groups are growing and we get to be part of fulfilling the Great Commission. Celebrate the sending of friends and the birth of a new group together!

ALCOHOL AND GROUPS 10

Resources For You

ALCOHOL & GROUPS

QUESTIONS? CONTACT Ian or Brad

Let's say your group decides to go out for dinner to a nice Italian restaurant in town. As everyone arrives and you are seated at your table, the hostess provides menus and requests everyone's drink orders. A relatively new couple to your group say they would like a beer and a glass of the wine on special. The couple then suggests to the whole group, assuming it would be a polite, "get to-know-you" sort of gesture, that they would like to buy drinks for everyone at the table.

As a Community Group leader, what do you do?

Instantaneously, you sense the uncomfortable nature of the situation as thoughts begin to race through your mind:

This is a "church" event, and people are ordering alcohol! What does the church believe about alcohol? What if someone from the church sees us or hears about this? Will I get in trouble? Am I a bad Small Group leader if I don't say anything...or, what if I do say something?

Not only do you feel like you need to figure out if this is appropriate or not, you need to determine (relatively quickly) how you are going to respond.

So, how would you respond? How would you respond if you ask a different couple to host your group gathering, and they serve alcohol with the snacks? What would you do?

Alcohol and Community Groups creates an interesting dynamic. Some people may be very comfortable consuming alcohol appropriately. Others may struggle deeply by simply being in the same room where alcohol is being served. You throw "church event" into the conversation, and the discussion gets really interesting!

Concerning alcohol and Princetown Church ministries, our desire is to reach unchurched people, but also that alcohol would be managed appropriately. Therefore, Community Groups are not to stress prohibition of alcohol, but Small Groups should not promote alcohol consumption.

If you would like discuss alcohol and Community Groups, please contact Pastor Ian.

Love Jesus. Love One Another. Live With Purpose.

FORMS AND APPENDIX 11

Resources For You

Guidelines for Hosts of Small Group Meetings

Dear Host,

Thank you for opening your home to a Community Group! The mission of Princetown Church is *to love Jesus, love one another, and to live with purpose*. By hosting a Community Group, you are helping to fulfill this mission.

Below we have outlined a checklist for hosts of Community Groups. These may seem like very detailed items, but we have learned through experience what it takes to provide the best environment in which to facilitate Small Group gatherings. If you are unable to fulfill any of these items, please inform your Community Group leader as soon as possible.

Please ensure the following are adhered:

1. Please pray for the leader(s), the meeting, and those who will be attending.
2. Please be home at least twenty minutes prior to the meeting so the leaders can come, settle in and receive early arrivals.
3. Ensure the meeting area is clean and sanitary. If you have pets, please ensure that areas where pet hair or feathers have accumulated are swept up and/or dusted.
4. Turn the ringer off on your telephone so it will not ring and interrupt the meeting.
5. Please turn the volume on the answering machine down as low as possible so that a personal message will not be heard by the group and that a message will not interrupt the meeting.
6. Ensure there is ample lighting available so people can easily read and write.
7. Maintain the temperature within the home at a comfortable level.
8. If you have pets, please place them in another room or outside prior to people arriving so that they will not disturb the gathering.
9. If you have children, please either have them at a babysitter's or ensure they are in another location within the home, where, if they make noise, it will not disrupt the gathering. If children are home, please ask them not to interrupt the meeting unless there is an emergency.

Thank you so much for your sacrifice and service to Christ and His Church! May God bless you for your kindness!

Princetown Church Leadership

Child Care Responsibilities for the Church & Group

Child Care Options:

- Arrangements for child care are the responsibility of the individual or the group as a whole.
- Princetown Church does not intend to pay or reimburse for Community Group child care.
- Individuals can pay separate child care providers.
- The group members can collectively pay for group child care.

Princetown Church Responsibility

- Community Groups are Princetown Church programs, therefore:
 - Princetown Church is responsible to protect Community Group participants as much as is reasonable and possible.
 - Princetown Church is required to perform background checks on all adults providing Community Group child care, when the care is collective and not when it is for one family and in one home. Failing to perform a background check is a form of negligence on Princetown Church's part if any abuse happens.
 - Princetown Church requires that minors under the age of 18 must have an adult (with a background check) in supervision over collective child care.
 - If a community group is having a non-Sunday morning group while on the church property, parents may supervise children while they are in another room. They must sign the Child Care Group Agreement to use the facility.

Community Group Leader Responsibility

- For **group** child care:
 - Ensure background checks are done on any 18 years or older provider.
 - Ensure an adult, with a background check, is supervising a minor child care provider.
- For general activities, realize that Community Groups are a programmed Princetown Church activity and therefore are viewed as a representation of the church.
 - Risky activities: bungee jumping may not be the best Community Group activity.
 - Public liability: confronting social activists, LGBTQ, will be viewed as a Princetown Church confrontation and might need Princetown Church leadership inclusion.

Child Care Group Agreement



We value adult and child participation in Community Groups at Princetown Church. Ideally we'd love to see parents attend a group at the same time as their children, however we know that is not always possible.

If a Group Member has a child who needs to be in the building during a group time when there is no children's group, the adult Group Member is responsible for his/her own child.

If there are free rooms next to or in close proximity to the Group Member's group meeting space, the child(ren) are welcome to be in that room (with prior office permission) unsupervised with the following understandings:

- The nursery (room 10) is not available
- Children are to remain in the designated room and not wander throughout the building
- Children are to bring their own entertainment - books, crafts, legos, games, tablets
- Children are not to take things off of shelves in kids classrooms to play with unless there has been explicit permission
- If snacks are consumed they must be *peanut free* and cleaned up
- The room needs to be put back in order the way it was found after the group session
- Parents are still responsible for their children and must check in on them during group time.
- Any injuries or items broken are the responsibility of the parents and the church/group/group leaders are absolved of any responsibility.

Groups can also get creative and provide child care in other ways, whether hiring a babysitter or having a rotating adult member of the group watch the children.

By signing below you agree to the above terms

Group Member signature

Group Leader signature

Community Group Covenant



OUR DESTINATION

Write out what your goals are

Apply the Bible. Love God.

- Attend *WORSHIP* services regularly
- _____
- _____

Build Relationships. Love one another.

- _____
- _____

Continue Discipleship. Live with purpose.

- *NEXT STEPS* - continue to build trust and encourage each other in growth with God
- *INVITE* others to know Christ, join or worship community, or take their next step
- _____
- _____



OUR CULTURE

Based on the "Crew Culture Brainstorm," write your top 3-5 for each:

We Value:

Trust

Our Commitments:

listen to/care for one another, no gossip



OUR TIME

We will be intentional with our time to Apply the Bible, Build Relationships, and Continue Discipleship. How much of your group time will be spent on each?

_____ **Apply the Bible** (Learn and Apply) _____ **Build Relationships** (Connect with each other)
_____ **Continue Discipleship** (Praying together and practicing the truth)



OUR ROUTE

Meeting Date Range: _____ - _____ Day: _____

Time: _____ Location: _____

What will we study? _____

Outside Activities: Overnights, Service, Social Activities: _____



OUR AGREEMENT

Leader: Out of Confidence in who God says I am, I commit to leading with Intentionality and vulnerability

Group Member: I commit to becoming more known and loved by others in this group by trusting them with my real self and seeking to grow in my relationship with God.

Group Members' Initials:

Date:



Destination Planner

Deciding ahead of time where you want to go as a group helps to clarify expectations and define your goals together. Use this exercise to take notes as you discuss your group's destination.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What do we want our relationships to be like in this group?

How do we want to grow in our faith as a result of this group?

RELATIONSHIP NOTES

SPIRITUAL GROWTH NOTES

OUR GROUP GOALS

Check in: Are these goals important enough to us to prioritize this group despite the busyness of life?



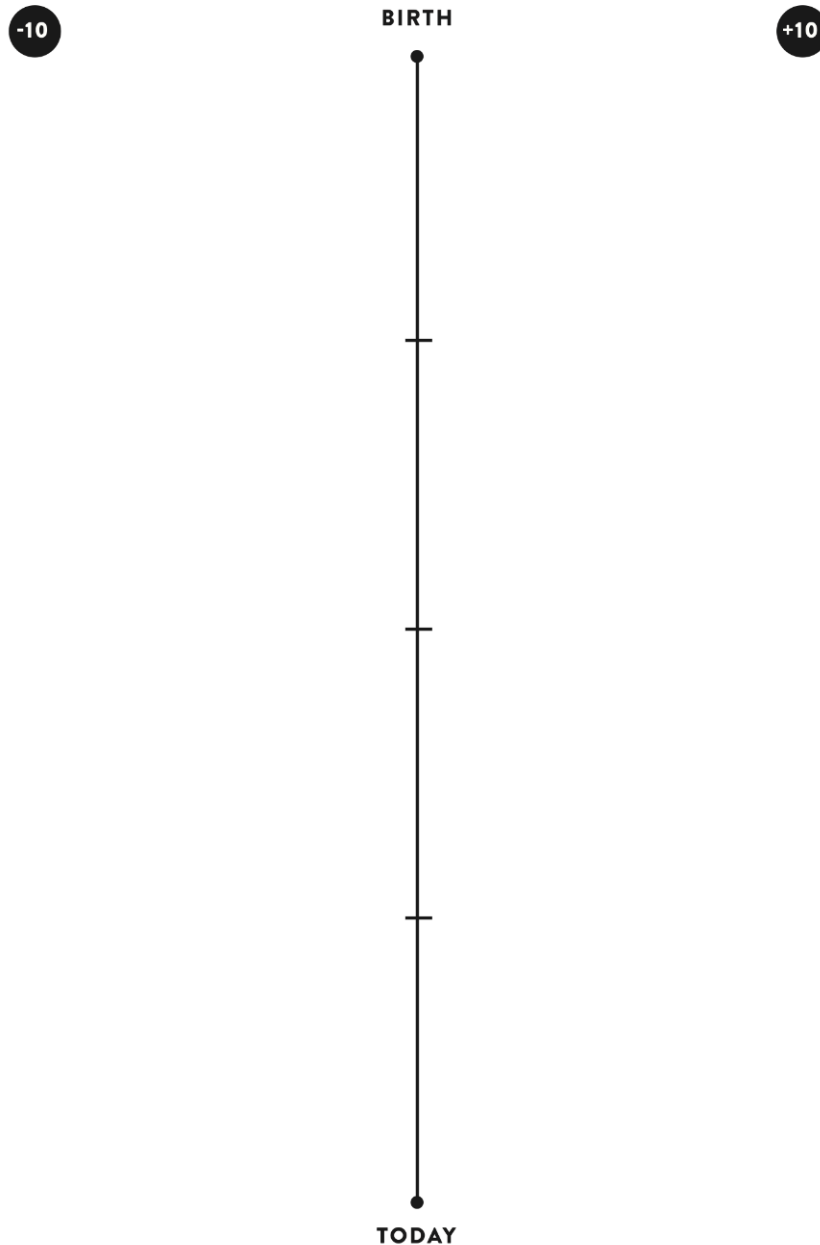


Sharing Your Story

Sharing your story can be difficult. It can be hard to know where to begin, what to include, or how to start. Use the following Life Map, questions, and story template to process how to share your story with your group.

LIFE MAP:

Plot the high points (+10s) on the right and low points (-10s) on the left chronologically.



Take notes with what comes to mind regarding the following questions: **Page 38 of Embark**

<p>What are three words that described your home growing up?</p>	<p>Who has been an influential person in your life and why?</p>
<p>If you didn't incorporate your faith story into the timeline, write it out here.</p>	
<p>In this next season, what do you think God wants for your heart and for your relationship with Him?</p>	



SHARING WITH THE GROUP:

Pages 39-40 of Embark

You don't need to share everything from the previous exercise with your group—in fact, if you did, it would probably take a few hours! Over time, many of these events and experiences will come up on their own if your group is committed to living vulnerably.

To prepare for sharing your story, look back at your Life Map and circle six events that you feel were particularly influential and that you are willing to share. Remember, you will signal how vulnerable and authentic you want this group to be. Is there something on your Life Map that makes your heart beat a little faster when you think about sharing it? Or is there something you didn't include on your Life Map because you prefer to keep it hidden? Consider sharing this uncomfortable topic. It takes a lot of courage, and it's alright if you're not ready. Talk to God about it, and ask yourself some questions like, "Why am I so worried about sharing this? What am I afraid it will say about me?"

Use the template below to guide your story and help you incorporate your answers from the four questions above.

STORY TEMPLATE:

I'm _____. I grew up in _____ and three words that described my home growing up were: _____, _____, and _____.

6 Life Events (include pieces of your faith journey).

- | | |
|---|---|
| • | • |
| • | • |
| • | • |

The person that was the most influential to me was _____, because . . .

In this next season, what I think God wants for my heart and my relationship with Him is . . .





Crew Culture Brainstorm

Whenever we have a group of people together, we create a culture comprising various values and rules—whether they’re spoken or not. Use this activity to intentionally create your group’s culture by choosing values and commitments together. Print out one for each member of your group, and then use it to guide your discussion.

VALUES:

Individually:

What do you want to define your culture? Look at the list below for ideas and add any others that you think of. Circle your top ten and put a checkmark next to your top five.

Our Group’s Culture Is . . .

Fun	Vulnerable	Spontaneous
Safe	Daring	Timely
Authentic	Sensitive	Purposeful
Powerful	Caring	Emotional
Brave	Wise	Flexible
Silly	Deep	Real
Thoughtful	Transparent	Open
Joyful	Funny	Comfortable
Intellectual	Focused	Easy-going
Challenging	Serious	_____
Welcoming	Casual	_____
Tight knit	Formal	_____

As a group:

Share your top 5 descriptors with your group and explain why you picked those. Look for similarities in everyone’s answers. You can vote to whittle it down to the top 3-5 for your group.

GROUP NOTES:



COMMITMENTS:

Individually:

What are some commitments that you think would help protect this kind of culture? Look at the list below for ideas and write in your own. Circle your top ten, and then put a checkmark next to your top three.

To Protect and Create This Culture . . .

We don't fix.

We stand with each other.

We commit to confidentiality.

We don't preach.

We don't demean.

We wait to be asked before giving advice.

We practice radical candor.

We look for ways to affirm each other.

We don't do sarcasm.

We don't judge.

We don't take ourselves too seriously.

We look for ways to serve those around us.

We don't veer from scripture.

We listen first to understand.

We value who someone is over what they do.

We don't ignore conflict.

We prioritize listening to the Holy Spirit.

We have fun without negativity.

We believe _____.

We want to learn and grow.

We speak encouraging words.

We pray for each other weekly.

We serve together once per year, quarter, month, etc.

We memorize scripture.

As a group:

Share your top 3 with your group. Again, look for similarities in your answers and discuss why you picked those commitments. Narrow it down through conversation or voting, until you have 3-5 everyone feels on board with.

GROUP NOTES:





Our Culture:

VALUES:

Our group's culture is . . .

COMMITMENTS:

To protect and create this culture, we . . .





Design Your Time

We want to use our time together in group on purpose and for our purpose. Use this discussion guide and activity to evaluate how you're spending your time as a group and how you'd like to spend it going forward.

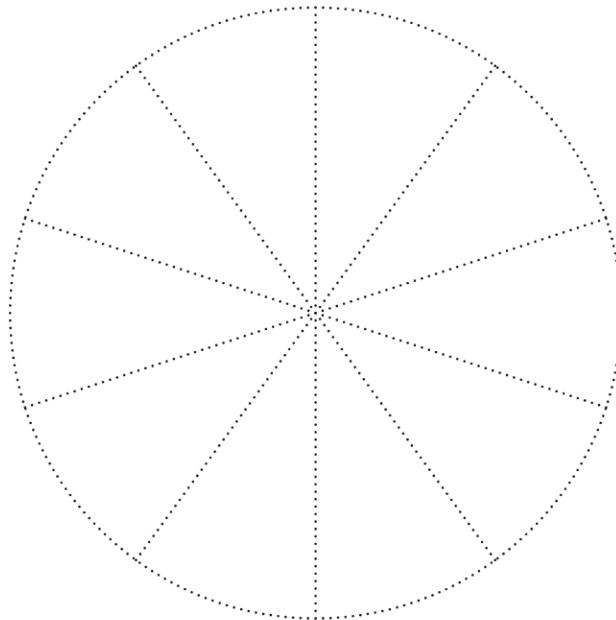
DISCUSS:

- How do we feel about how we're using our time in group?
- Is there anything missing in our time together that we'd like to add?
- What ends up happening in our group that distracts us from our purpose?
- How can we use our time to intentionally move toward our destination or group goals?
- How can we encourage each other to live out these truths in our real lives, *without* it becoming a checklist? (**Tip:** This can be a great time to share with each other more about your individual wiring, how you feel supported, and ways others can come alongside you!)

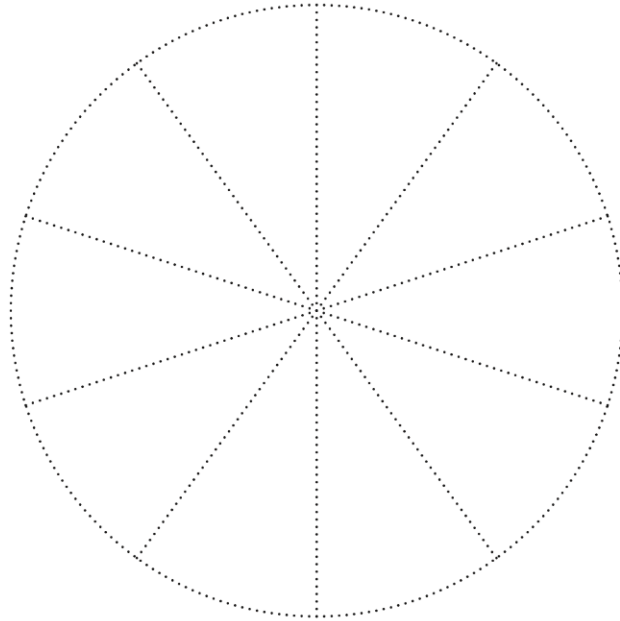
ACTIVITY:

There are three big categories of how you spend your time as a group: Apply the Bible (*learn and apply*), Build Relationships (*connect with each other*), and Continue Discipleship (*praying together and practicing the truth*).

How are we currently spending our time?



How would we like to be spending our time in group?



What are the biggest barriers to spending our time this way? What do we foresee being a challenge?





Route Planner

Use this guide every 4-6 months to plan out your next season as a group. This will help keep your group balanced with content, social activities, and serving together, as well as ensuring your group is intentionally headed toward your Destination.

DISCUSS TOGETHER:

The Big Three:

- Are we maturing and continuing to grow?
- Are we becoming more known by each other?
- Are we overflowing and becoming more focused on others?

Revisit these parts of your group, using your Group Map:



Destination: Is our destination still correct? Do we need to shift it?



Captain: Are we being vulnerable with each other and growing in trust?



Crew: Are we reflecting our values and living by our commitments?



Ship: How are we spending our time together? Does anything need to shift?

PLAN THE ROUTE:

Give everyone a few minutes to ponder the following three questions, then together as a group.

- How do I want to grow?
- How do I want to have fun with my group?
- Where do I want to serve?

Growth

Fun

Serve



Look for similarities in everyone's answers in the three categories, and then start actually whittling down what you want to do in the next 4-6 months.

Use the blank calendars on the following pages to plot your route or print out extras at ***trueface.org/cureforgroups***.

Don't miss this! Put another Route-Planning Session on the calendar to repeat this exercise in 4-6 months.

Route dates: _____ - _____ **Next Route-Planning Session date:** _____



PRINCETOWN CHURCH EXISTS TO

LOVE JESUS,

LOVE ONE ANOTHER,

AND LIVE WITH PURPOSE.

Princeton Church

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