HANDBOOK FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS



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Bread of Life Church

2852 E. County Line Rd. Rogersville, MO 65742 (417) 262-6402 BreadOfLifeMO.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose of the home groups	3
What is home group?	5
Role of the home group leader	7
Frequently Asked Questions	14
Bible Resources	16
Church Resources	20

All Bible quotations in this handbook are from the New Living Translation (NLT)

PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS

The primary purpose of small groups is to bring people together. We believe that God created us for fellowship; we seek to be a part of a community, and that is the only way we can enjoy the fullness of life God gives us.

We are convinced that essential life changes happen in the context of **relationships**.

Forming or finding meaningful relationships in a large church environment can sometimes be challenging. In small groups, we receive the fellowship and help we need to make profound life changes.

The church is growing so that we can tell as many people as possible the life-giving message of Jesus. But we gather in small groups to enlighten and support one another. We are growing but at the expense of small fellowship groups.

"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Our small group model is based on the early church's experience as we read about it in the Bible in the book of Acts. It recounts the impressive growth of the early church in Jerusalem, the core of which was a home-based gathering of believers.

"And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah." Acts 5:42

In small groups, people find:

Fellowship

We don't have to go through life alone. God created us for fellowship, and in the small groups, we can make acquaintances, grow in fellowship, and grow in faith together.

"But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7

Support

When we are together, our problems don't seem so big anymore, and God gives us support and encouragement through people. Small group is a place where you are not just known by name but where people are interested in what is going on in your life and support you on your spiritual journey.

"We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters."

1 John 3:16

Spiritual Growth

We believe that within each person lies the potential from God to make a difference in our world. In small groups, we grow spiritually together to become more like Jesus and realize our potential.

"Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better." Colossians 1:10

WHAT IS SMALL GROUP?

Small Group is 10-12 adults, including leaders, and their children under 15 years of age.

Groups should meet at least once a month, preferably more often, twice a month, with the agreement of all group members.

Meetings can be held in various places: at a private home, in a church, in the park, at the coffee shop, or any other place that allows it. If in a private home, it can be at the home of the leader or someone from the group in turns. If it is impossible to meet at home, it can be done at the church, having pre-arranged the date and time with the church administrator.

Regardless of the number of people in your group, even if it is not yet complete, each meeting **should have** the following components:

Casual fellowship

This is a time for group members to socialize and get to know each other better.

Activity or discussion

This period of time can vary depending on the size of the group you are leading. It could be exploring a topic, evangelizing, or discussing Sunday's sermon.

Prayer

Ask group members to voice their prayer requests and pray at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Spiritual component

This is what makes your small group different from the weekend club in your neighborhood. You can have activities or discussions, but one way or another, God's Word should always be a part of your meetings. You can share with the group what God has placed on your heart or discuss a Bible verse you read this week.

Each group meeting **can't have** room for:

- Conducting business.
- Collecting donations.
- Studying unapproved materials or listening to unapproved speakers.
- Discussing non-biblical or political topics or issues that are controversial and divisive.

There is **possible** food and tea at the end of the meeting, a birthday party for the group members, or any other celebration, but this is optional and only by agreement of all people in the group.

ROLE OF THE SMALL GROUP LEADER

Each of us has a God-given role in the church, and small group leaders stand shoulder to shoulder with the pastors and ministers of Bread of Life Church in serving the people.

"Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13

The main task of the small group leader is to help the group members take one step forward in their walk with God. To do this, the leader must know their spiritual walk and pray for them. Notice their attendance at services and participation in the Communion. Find an individualized approach to each family in the group, get to know them better, their financial situation, and how they can be assisted to take the first step of spiritual growth.

Here are examples of a few steps forward you can help people with:

- · Begin to attend worship services regularly.
- Start reading the Bible regularly.
- Begin to pray regularly.
- · Receive water baptism.
- Join a volunteer team at church.
- · Begin tithing and giving to the church family.
- Start attending prayer services
- Invite a friend or neighbor to church or a home group meeting.

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is the foundation of our church and is essential for your small group.

"Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests from your group members.
- Pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group meetings.
- Pray for God to open hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for the formation of a cohesive fellowship.
- Pray for the spiritual development and growth of each member of your group.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your home group.

Successful ministry of the small group leader

- 1. Daily prayer for your group members.
- **2. Choose an assistant leader** to take a share of responsibility for helping people and serving in the group.
- **3. Keep in touch** with your group members during the week and between meetings through phone calls, emails, text messages, social media, or in person. Remind your group members to contact each other during the week and between meetings.
- **4. Create** a pleasant and relaxed environment at group meetings, smile, and have a good time.
- **5. Value time** of your people: start and end group meetings on time.
- **6. Invite** group members to attend church services, events, conferences, and mission and prayer services together.

7. Encourage group members to rally around someone who is experiencing a crisis. Be guided by wisdom and be sensitive.

The confidence of a small group leader

If you are only doing what is habitual and comfortable, you will not seek a reliance on God. It is best to seek God outside of your comfort zone.

As you serve God and people as a home group leader, He will prepare and empower you for effective ministry.

"For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7

Whenever in doubt about your leadership abilities, turn to Scripture to counter the lies of the enemy:

1. When it seems like you are running out of time, **remember that God created you for this purpose**, and He is always on time.

"Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest." Ecclisiastes 11:4

2. If you feel like you are not ready for this role, remember that **God** has already equipped you for it.

"It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life." 2 Corinthians 3:5-6

3. If you think you are unfit to be a leader because of your past, remember that **God works through imperfect people**.

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Creating positive group dynamics

1. Clarify expectations.

To help your group members feel comfortable, talk in advance about what they can expect from participating in the group. Tell them how your meetings will go. Let them know the start and end times of the meetings, how discussions and activities will take place, and how group members can voice their prayer requests and be actively involved in the group's life.

2. Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give group members the opportunity to speak, and don't take all the time just for yourself. The group leader should talk only 30% of the time, and 70% of the time, the rest of the group members should speak.

3. Keep the conversation positive.

If your communication becomes negative or destructive, return the conversation to a positive tone. Suppose someone needs to talk about a difficult or sensitive topic. In that case, you can speak to them separately at the end of the group meeting or call your deacon for help, to serve them better.

4. Make your discussion relevant to all participants.

Remember that the people in your group are at different stages of their spiritual journey. Consider this when discussing spiritual concepts or using church terms unfamiliar to new believers or churchgoers.

5. Respect your own and others' boundaries.

Men should serve men, and women should serve women. Married couples may minister to unmarried people. We strive to guard purity and holiness in small groups. These boundaries protect leaders and group members from potentially uncomfortable or inappropriate situations.

Support for small group leaders

Small group leaders are not on their own. Bread of Life Church has pastors, ministers, and deacons of the small group ministry who work with you to build fruit-bearing groups. They are all called to be your helpers.

Each small group leader is assigned a deacon who will always support the group leader.

Your deacon's priority is to pray for you daily.

It is also his responsibility to check on your spiritual condition, to meet with you, to support you, and to teach you how to conduct a small group if you need assistance.

Speak to your deacon whenever you have a need or problem or need a prayer. Keep your deacon informed about attendance in your group, potential new small group leaders, church service attendance, and participation in the communion. Let your deacon know if someone in your group has a severe spiritual or physical need.

Consult with your deacon about how to invite people to your group. If you are new to the church and don't know people, he should help you with this.

Also, if you are new to the church and are not yet known by people, your deacon and the church leadership can help you to get more publicity.

Small Group Leader Code of Conduct

As an integral part of the leadership family of Bread of Life Church, you should exemplify Christian maturity and have a sincere, heartfelt desire to serve.

In serving the body of Christ as a small group leader, you are committed to being an example of godliness to others. This applies to appearance and behavior: you should adhere to biblical standards in all things and situations.

As Christians, our appearance, actions, and attitudes can influence how those around us view Christ. Our actions should not bring Christ into disrepute but exemplify the best qualities of a mature, faithful, and servant leader.

Embodying the highest standards of morality, Bread of Life Church leaders shall exercise discipline in Bible reading, prayer, and fasting. In addition, one should refrain from:

- Profanity.
- Smoking or the use of chewing tobacco.
- Gambling.
- · Consuming wine or other alcoholic beverages.
- · Making profits by dishonest means.
- · Illegal drugs.
- Pornography.
- Sexual immorality and other behaviors that grieve Christ and serve as a stumbling block to others.

By leading by example in word and deed, we help others grow in Christ and become servant leaders ourselves. This lifestyle is based on the sincere commitment of Bread of Life Church leaders. We should see this attitude as integral to our growth, not as restrictions or prohibitions.

The commitment of a small group leader

To be a small group leader - to be a minister to the entrusted people in your group. It means being an example of Christian living in behavior and conversation. To be motivated to serve them and to carry them in your prayers. A small group leader is a possible future deacon of the church.

"In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives[e] must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Standards for ministers and leaders:

- To be sincere, to be respected by others, and to have a good reputation.
- Be financially responsible as other members of Bread of Life Church. Participate in the life of the church by tithes and offerings.
- Have a desire to serve and help people.
- Possess the ability to lead, motivate, and train people.
- Be able to create a positive group dynamic and resolve conflicts that arise.

Thank you for becoming an essential part of the home group movement at Bread of Life Church.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I invite people to my group?

Start with those who are already in your sphere of influence. (co-workers, friends, and neighbors). Consider those new to our church, new believers, or those who have not yet shown interest in attending small groups. Look for those whom you can help realize their potential. Ask God to bring the right people into your group.

Where can I hold my small group meetings?

We recommend that small groups meet wherever you feel comfortable. Often, groups meet in private homes, restaurants, parks, coffee shops, and other places. Meeting in a church building is also possible, but you must inform the church administrator first.

How often should my small group meet?

Home groups should meet at least once a month, ideally once every two weeks or once a week, if all group members agree.

What age of the children can be in the group?

Children under 15 can be in a group with their parents. After 16, they attend youth ministry and can be in youth small groups.

What do you do if not everyone in the group wants to meet?

This is a normal reaction of people who have never been to a small group. Participation in the group should be voluntary; do not force them, but encourage them to come and see how the meeting is going without asking them to participate. Pray for them, and try to create a welcoming and home-like atmosphere at your small group meetings to attract them.

What if people are refusing to come to small group meetings?

This is also a normal reaction; don't force them. Your task is to pray for them that the Lord will change their attitude toward small groups and to notice their attendance at services and participation in the communion. Make contact with them, be friendly with them in church, find a way to approach them, and invite them to join your group.

What should I do if someone asks a question I don't have the answer to?

We don't know the answers to all questions, and that's okay. Fortunately, we can seek the leading of the Holy Spirit through prayer and reading God's Word. Encourage your group members to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Let them know that you will try to answer the question asked of you at the next home group meeting. Gather information, research the question, and ask your deacon for advice.

What should I do if one of the group members voices an issue that requires help or input from people outside my group?

If you are facing a difficult situation in your group, remember that you are not alone. If someone is struggling, you can mobilize others in the group to support him (or her) with prayer, words of encouragement, and support. Adhere to wisdom and act on the situation. If you are unsure what the right thing to do is, talk to your deacon or church ministers.

BIBLE RESOURCES

At Bread of Life Church, we believe that ministering through the Word of God is the most effective way to care for people. When you pray for your people according to the Scriptures, mention that person's name in your prayer to make it more personal.

We recommend that you, as a leader, select and memorize at least three scriptures that will help you in a difficult situation and give you the strength to lead your home group.

Below are Bible verses that can be applied to any situation:

"And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these."

Mark 12:30-31

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. **Philippians 4:13**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Proverbs 3:5-6

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9

"And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for."

1 John 5:14-15

But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the Lord; their vindication will come from me. I, the Lord, have spoken! Isaiah 54:17

"A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. **Ephesians 6:10-18**

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

Romans 8:28

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

Ephesians 2:10

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that

cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

Matthew 5:14-16

"No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:39

Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

Hebrew 13:5-6

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

Isaiah 41:10

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."

James 1:2-4

"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

"So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ." Romans 10:17

"The apostles said to the Lord, "Show us how to increase our faith." The Lord answered, "If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'May you be uprooted and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you!" Like 17:5-6

"Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see."

Hebrew 11:1

"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking."

Jamesa 1:5

"Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers."

Proverbs 11:14

"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death."

Romans 8:1-2

"Come now, let's settle this," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.

Isaiah 1:18

"And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

CHURCH RESOURCES

Ministers of Bread of Life Church

Mykola Illyuk - senior pastor Alex Muzichuk - associate pastor Vitaliy Subbotin - pastor Yevgeniy Chernioglo - deacon	(417) 773-4771 (417) 493-9634 (916) 308-1849 (916) 873-5937
Vladimir Kashubin - deacon of small groups Anatoliy Struk - deacon Sergey Vedernikov - deacon of small groups Alex Loboda - deacon of small groups Anatoliy Chernioglo - deacon of small groups Dima Martinov - deacon of small groups Viktor Matlashevsky - deacon of sm. groups Vitaliy Shapoval - deacon of small groups Vladimir Yevtushuk - deacon of small groups Aleksey Illyuk - deacon Pavel Lutsik - deacon of small groups Vladimir Gula - deacon of small groups Vladimir Garbuzov - deacon of small groups Vitaliy Pulber - deacon of small groups Michael Kolomiza - deacon Konstantin Petrovskiy - deacon Vladimir Goloveychuk - deacon	(417) 379-1629 (916) 439-7571 (417) 849-5252 (720) 312-3818 (916) 873-5123 (417) 234-2290 (417) 860-4501 (417) 612-1089 (951) 965-0419 (417) 773-2747 (503) 888-7807 (417) 521-8812 (916) 416-7700 (916) 335-4918 (330) 350-7141 (916) 459-7199 (425) 501-2514
Nick Marchuk - secretary/administrator	(417) 631-6600

Subscriptions to church calendars



← Church Calendar (public)

Leaders Calendar → (closed)



Church App

Help people in your group install the app, create a profile, attach bank card, and teach them how to use it. To install, scan the QR code, or in the app store search for "BreadoflifeMO".



In the app, you can watch live stream of all services, view past services and individual sermons, see all church events, register for events, visit the church calendar and announcements, see all small groups and sign up for them, read and listen to the Bible in different languages, give donations, pay for the funeral fund, and much more.

Meetings in church

If you would like to meet at the church, first check the leader's calendar for available dates, then let the church administrator know the date and time of the meeting to put on the leader's calendar. If you need sound or visual equipment during the meeting, please get in touch with Media Ministry Leader Nick Marchuk (417) 631-6600. If you need to use the nursery during the meeting, please contact Bible Land ministry leader Leah Gula (417) 569-2908. Once approved, it is your responsibility to find a babysitter.

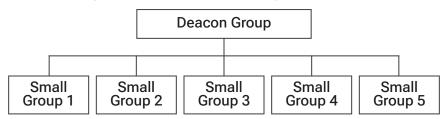
Group changes

If someone in your group wants to move to another small group for any reason or if someone asks to join your group. Notify your deacon first, and then notify the church administrator.

Suppose your group has grown to more than 16 adults. In that case, it needs to be divided, and it is your job as a group leader to find a potential leader from within your group who can start a new group. Consult with your deacon on this matter and notify the administrator.

Small Groups Structure

One Deacon group consists of five Small groups.



Each Small group consists of 10-12 adults including leaders of the group, and kids of all families in the group up to 15 years of age.

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