**Colts Neck Community Church:**

**Small Group Leader Guide**

Revised Summer 2022

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**Leadership Pipeline for Small Groups**

**\***This packet focuses on Small Group Leaders (Level 2), but the entire Small Group leadership pipeline is included so that everyone reading it can see the whole Small Group leadership structure.

**Purpose of Small Groups at CNCC**

* The mission of CNCC is to “declare and demonstrate the grace of Jesus Christ.”
* The purpose of Small Groups at CNCC is to fulfill our mission by creating a setting for discipleship and Christian friendship among our members (Proverbs 27:17; Colossians 1:9-14; 2 Timothy 2:2).
  + Small Groups accomplish their purpose by providing members with the opportunity to…
    - Encourage one another through Bible reading and prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
    - Stir up one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24)
    - Serve one another with their spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7)
    - Work with one another to proclaim the Gospel (Acts 1:8)
  + Small Groups stay centered on their purpose by…
    - Reflecting the core values of Small Groups
      * Think biblically (Psalm 1)
      * Pray continually (Philippians 4:6-7)
      * Love wholeheartedly (Mark 12:29-31)
      * Live holy (1 Peter 1)
      * Practice candor with kindness (Ephesians 4:15)
      * Work excellently (1 Corinthians 15:10)
    - Participating in a yearly evaluation (for more details on evaluation, talk with pastor Ethan)

**Annual Schedule**

* *The goal for Small Groups is to meet as regularly and often as possible.* We seek to meet that goal in 2 ways.
* Way 1 – 6-to-8-Week Fall and Spring Meetings
  + We understand that life comes in seasons. So, we have two dedicated times for small groups to meet throughout the year. We have one 6-to-8-week study in the fall and one in the spring.
  + ***This fall, all groups will participate in a 7-week discussion of the book of 1 Peter from the week of September 25th through the week of November 6th.***
* Way 2 – Year-Round Meetings
  + We would also love for groups to meet regularly throughout the year. Therefore, each small group leader has the freedom to work with the rest of the group to establish a meeting schedule that works for everyone. That said, there are a few expectations for groups that meet year around. Specifically, all groups will…
    - Meet at least 2 times per month
    - Not make anyone feel like a “bad group member” if they cannot make a meeting or even need to take a short break (e.g., time off in the summer if the group meets all summer long).
    - Keep Pastor Ethan in the loop on their schedule
    - Put a “hang out” on the calendar if the group takes a break for summer, the holidays, or another reason
  + Small Groups are encouraged to participate in an act of service (e.g., going to the Jersey Shore Rescue Mission) together as a group.

**Leader Character Expectations**

* Possesses and fosters godly character
  + Exemplified in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24)
* Relies on the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer and study/application of the Scriptures
* Leads group by personal example
  + **Attitude**
    - Keep apositive and uplifting attitude!
  + **Recruiting Leaders**
    - Pray about one person to recruit as a “group leader in training.” Discuss this person with Pastor Ethan and then approach that person about serving.
  + **Church Activities**
    - Attend Sunday Morning service with consistency
    - Maintain a healthy involvement in the life of the church

**Leader Competency Expectations**

* Facilitates group discussion in a way that respects everyone’s time
  + Keeps any one individual from dominating discussion
  + Helps move the discussion forward
  + Encourages participation by all group members
* Multiplies Small Group leaders
* Handles conflict within the group biblically, if/when it occurs
* Fosters Christian community within the group
* Provides service opportunities for the group

**Leader Commitment Expectations**

* For leaders of 6-to-8-week meetings,
  + Attend at least 5 of the 7 meetings
* For leaders of Year Around Meetings
  + Attend at least 80% of the meetings
* Attend leader trainings
* Run weekly Small Group gatherings according to the responsibilities in the “Weekly Meeting Flow and Leader Responsibilities” section below
* Come to Pastor Ethan if any personal or group issues arise
* Host Small Group in their homes when possible, but hosting is not mandatory for being a Small Group leader.
  + Church space is available if no one in the group is able to host in their home. However, home meetings are the ideal setting for Small Groups.

**Weekly Meeting “Flow”**

* Small Group will last for around an hour and a half
* Each Small Group meeting should consist of 3 main components: prayer, Bible study, and fellowship.
  + The practical outworking of how they are carried out during a Small Group meeting is flexible and up to the Small Group leader. Below is an example schedule for a Small Group meeting from 5:30 pm to 7 pm.
    - 5:30 to 5:50 – Fellowship and refreshments
    - 5:50 to 6:10 – Pray for one another
    - 6:10 to 6:45 – Bible study
    - 6:45 to 7 – Fellowship and eat refreshments
  + Refreshments will be left up to the discretion of each Small Group leader since variables such as meeting time, people attending, and dietary considerations will vary from group to group.
    - Pastor Ethan recommends that groups have a weekly “theme” and bring refreshments potluck style based on the theme. For example, one night could be cookie night and everyone in the group can bring a different type of cookie.
    - A full meal is not required, but if your group wants to then go for it
* Weekly Leader Responsibilities
  + **Preparation**
    - Study the lesson in advance
    - If you are not the host, ensure the host home has what they need prior to group starting and/or that all need supplies are at the church and labeled for your group.
  + **Attendance**
    - For leaders of 6-to-8-week meetings,
      * Attend at least 5 of the 7 meetings
    - For leaders of Year Around Meetings
      * Attend at least 80% of the meetings
    - We understand that family emergencies and other schedule conflicts arise. We want to be as understanding as we can with leaders. At the same time, our goal for leader attendance is consistency. If leaders attend 80% of meetings, then it will be hard for the Small Group to develop a sense of community.
    - If you are gone, then make sure some else in the group can lead the meeting in your absence. Contact Pastor Ethan if you need help covering the group in your absence.
  + **Be on Time**
    - Be ready for members and guests to arrive no later than **15 minutes prior** to the scheduled group starting time, visiting with people before you get started. Regular attenders may not be early, but guests almost always come early.
  + **Dismiss on Time** 
    - Be respectful of the all the families represented each week.
  + **Lesson/Discussion** 
    - We want our time together to be fruitful and fulfilling. We also want to keep people engaged. Work to keep the prayer time focused on prayer, the Bible study time focused on the Bible, and fellowship time focused on connection with others.
  + **Take Roll**
  + **Follow-up** 
    - Call, text, or email all prospects that attend your group or any event. Please make sure Pastor Ethan has the contact information for any guests.
    - Contact any members who have been absent recently and/or regularly to let them know they were missed and to ask if there are ways the group can be praying for them. This should be done on a regular basis.
    - Please let Pastor Ethan know if there are any issues going on in a member’s life that may be helpful to know in ministering to them.
    - Please let Pastor Ethan know if you have any concerns, thoughts, or ideas that can help Small Groups keep improve.
* *Culture Matters!* Therefore, as you lead each weekly meeting, please keep the following in mind.
  + **Sit in circles not rows** 
    - Engaging conversation is the goal. Setting the environment is key. Please be sure to keep the room set-up in circles or a horseshoe shape.
  + **Lead don’t Lecture –** If you are talking more than 50% of the time you are not succeeding.
  + **Replace “the podium” with a chair** 
    - The goal is to facilitate and participate. Sitting in a chair with the people, rather than standing over them makes a big difference.
  + **Words Build Worlds** 
    - As we lead our people in authentic relationships, a few small intentional words go a long way in building culture. Here are 2 big ones:
      * **Leader –** We don’t “teach” a Small Group, we lead a Small Group. Teachers have students. We are living life together as a group, not “taking a class being taught.”
      * **Re-birth –** We don’t “split” current groups, we re-birth new groups. Healthy things grow and reproduce.

**Study Material**

* All Small Groups need to be studying the Bible.
  + Ideally, this means picking a book of the Bible to go through as a group. If the group wants to study a topic, i.e., stewardship, then Pastor Ethan will work with you to find a solid study. However, the goal is to spend more time in Bible books and less time in topics.
* Pastor Ethan recommends you using RightNow Media
  + If you have another study in mind, Pastor Ethan is flexible, but he needs to approve it first to ensure that it lines up with CNCC’s beliefs.

**Childcare**

* If your group needs childcare, the church will pay for it.
* Small Group Leaders will need to work with Pastor Ethan to establish childcare for your group.

**Small Group “Wins”**

* Small Groups are
  + SEEING group members grow in relationship with Jesus and one another
  + STIRRING one another up to love and good works
  + SEEKING the lost and/or unconnected
  + SHEPHERDING group members
  + SERVING the group and SERVING with the group.
* Desired group size should run between 12 & 16 adults on average.
* Small Groups should be growing so that they can re-birth new groups.