SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP GUIDE

SMALL GROUPS ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF FREEDOM CENTRE.

Small groups exist to help people find freedom. We believe God created us to live in freedom, and this happens in the context of relationships. To be known and needed is vital, as it produces a sense of belonging and it hits the basic need of the human heart.

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Small Groups exist to make life changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

> TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOOD RETURN FOR THEIR LABOUR: IF EITHER OF THEM FALLS DOWN, ONE CAN HELP THE OTHER UP. BUT PITY ANYONE WHO FALLS AND HAS NO ONE TO HELP THEM UP. ALSO, IF TWO LIE DOWN TOGETHER, THEY WILL KEEP WARM. BUT HOW CAN ONE KEEP WARM ALONE? THOUGH ONE MAY BE OVERPOWERED, TWO CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES. A CORD OF THREE STRANDS IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN.
> - ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

FREEDOM CENTRE SMALL GROUPS MODEL

As we grow larger, we believe we can grow smaller at the same time. Freedom Centre is a church of Small groups, not a church with Small groups.

We base our Small Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where Small Group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

> DAY AFTER DAY, IN THE TEMPLE COURTS AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE, THEY NEVER STOPPED TEACHING AND PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH.
> - ACTS 5:42

CONNECT WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

SMALL GROUPS OFFER PEOPLE:

1. A PLACE TO CONNECT - "YOU MATTER"

> YES, WHATEVER A PERSON IS LIKE, I TRY TO FIND COMMON GROUND WITH HIM SO THAT HE WILL LET ME TELL HIM ABOUT CHRIST AND LET CHRIST SAVE HIM.
> - 1 CORINTHIANS 9:22

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Small Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A PLACE TO PROTECT - "I'VE GOT YOUR BACK"

> 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

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Small Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

Your Small Group will be a safe place for people to share their struggles and find healing and freedom. It will be a safe place that offers prayer, support and accountability when needed.

CONNECT WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

SMALL GROUPS OFFER PEOPLE:

3. A PLACE TO GROW - “I CAN HELP SOMEONE ELSE”

> AS IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO ONE PERSON SHARPENS ANOTHER.
> - PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Small Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you. Be true to you, people sharing their story, receiving prayer and support, can’t help but grow.

“WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS THERE IS FREEDOM”

HOW DO I GROW MY SMALL GROUP?

1. ENSURE JESUS IS NUMBER ONE IN YOUR LIFE

We lead well because we know our "identity" in Christ. Divine acceptance is the antidote to insecurity. Position in Christ always comes before position with people.

2. PRAYER

Pray for your group daily. Print off a list and have it in a place you see regularly. This will help prompt your spirit until it becomes a natural heart prayer.

3. SUNDAYS

Always looking out for people and asking them whether they are in a Small Group. Small Groups will always grow provided a leader is committed to putting in the time and effort required. The greatest way to promote your Small Group is still the one on one invitation.

4. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

If someone is not suitable for your group, ensure that they are connected into another more suitable one. This could mean that you personally Small over the next few weeks or months until they connect in.

5. PERSONAL GROWTH

A leader never stops growing personally. Who are the mentors or leaders that you personally see to ensure you as a leader are cared for, pastored and growing? Your growth is your responsibility.

> IF MY PEOPLE, WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND I WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND.
> - 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

WEEKLY REPORTING

PLEASE ENSURE YOU COMPLETE WEEKLY REPORTING DILIGENTLY

You will be sent an email weekly on your group, please follow the attendance requirements in Planning Centre. Please refer to video on how to take attendance on Planning Centre.

> BE SURE YOU KNOW THE CONDITION OF YOUR FLOCKS, GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO YOUR HERDS.
> - PROVERBS 27:23

If you need to add any additional names added or removed from your Small Group list for reporting purposes, please email smallgroups@freedomcentre.nz

"WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS THERE IS FREEDOM"

PEOPLE CARE

WHEN A SMALL GROUP MEMBER IS EXPERIENCING A CHALLENGE OR A CRISIS:

CONTACT:

Please ensure that you personally contact them immediately via phone call and text message. Continue to follow them up regularly as needed. Ensure where possible that your group is also involved in supporting and taking care of this person.

CARE:

Love, pray, encourage (and share scripture where possible) and be present. People remember who was present in their toughest times.

COMMUNICATION:

Ensure that for any categories listed on page 8, please email your People Care Director at people@freedomcentre.nz

“WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS THERE IS FREEDOM”

PEOPLE CARE

CATEGORY	ISSUE	REQUIREMENT
Health	• Surgery • Illness/Cancer • Birth of a child	• Prayer • Hospital Visit • Meal Train (see below)
Crisis	• Funeral/Wakes • Grief/Loss Support	• Prayer • Visitations • Meal Train (see below) • Practical Support • Refer to counselor or psychologist if required
Trauma	• Abuse • Bullying	• Prayer • Book a Freedom Prayer Session • Professional help with a psychologist
Mental Health		• Prayer • Book a Freedom Prayer Session • Professional help with a psychologist
Relationships	• Marriage Issues	• Pray • Pastoral appointment • Book a Freedom Prayer Session • Professional help with a counselor
	• Engagement	• Premarital counseling advised.
	• Separation	• Pastoral appointment • Counseling advice
Meal Train Process www.mealtrain.com		• Sign up and create a 1 week meal plan for small group member • Ensure address and mobile added • Send link out to your small group and the individuals group of friends to select a night to do dinner

FOUR LEADERSHIP ROLES OF A SMALL GROUP

HOSPITALITY

- Organizing food for the group
- Creating a welcoming atmosphere with setup

HOST

- Opening up your home or space for the group and making the space ready and inviting
- Welcoming people at the door

DISCUSSION

- Leading and directing the group to discuss Sunday's message or content
- Getting people to share & asking questions to engage others
- Encouraging every - one to be praying and reaching out to include others for Sunday

FOLLOW UP

- Calling and inviting all the new signups each week and continuing to follow up to connect each week
- Communicating on Planning Centre (our organisational tool for details of each person)
- Reporting on our database each week who attended

We encourage you to create a group chat with your four leaders to keep communication clear.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ALL LEADERS IS KEY TO BUILDING A HEALTHY GROUP

HOSPITALITY

KEYS TO GREAT HOSPITALITY

FOOD

Humans love gathering around food! Food and fellowship go hand in hand and it can be a very powerful tool for your group. We encourage group leaders to go out of their way to bring joy through food to their group.

THEMES ARE GREAT

Make it fun. Have a theme for the night that helps the meal come to life and people get excited for the party aspect.

CATER TO YOUR GROUP

Make sure you check for any dietary restrictions in your group, if someone is gluten free, vegan or vegetarian you want to make sure you have options and food for all.

PREP, PREP, & PREP

Avoid feeling rushed by preparing well, have the meal/food made and ready by the time guests are walking in. Have a good stock of drinks/teas and options for people.

PRESENTATION

Do you feel the difference when you eat of a plastic plate compared to fine china? The details make a difference! Go out of your way to care for, serve and bless the people in your group. Serving is a great way to show people that you genuinely care for them.

THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE YOU FEEL WELCOME IN THEIR HOME - BE THEM!

HOST

Opening your home or your delegated space every week/fortnight/month creates a consistent, welcoming space for people to gather for a small group. As a host you are welcoming people into the family.

TOP TIPS

CLEAN HOUSE

If your group starts on Tuesday. Clean and be ready for guests coming on Monday night. Small details like having a clean bathroom, enough soap and toilet paper and comfy places to sit make a huge difference.

ATMOSPHERE SET

Have music playing and designated areas for coats and bags before people walk in so the area is well presented. Your home or space is a reflection of you.

HONOUR YOUR GUEST

Make sure every one has drinks and feels comfortable in the space; make sure your guests have everything they need. Serve them well!

HAVE A BACK UP

If you are traveling for a week or are sick, have a plan with your small group leaders of where small group could be hosted so that you are never scrambling

DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

To help people find freedom through God's word

+

To live out and apply Sunday's message or your content to our daily lives by pointing people to Christ

The time of discussion during Small Groups creates a safe, welcoming space where people can share and be heard, listen to others and grow together. God's heart is for us to share life with others and commune with one another .

PREPARATION

BE EXPECTANT ON SUNDAYS

- Listen to what God is sharing with you personally during the message, these are the keys of connecting the message to your life first - then it will flow out to others.
- Take good notes on Sundays during the message.
- Or prepare by looking over and understanding your group content
- Pray over the message or content and for the individuals in your group to have a revelation from the word.

TALK WITH YOUR LEADERS

- Share with each other what you got out of the message or content and what you want to talk about.
- Review who is attending your group. This helps to read the atmosphere of your group - is it lots of new people, regulars, small or big?

DISCUSSION

KEYS TO REMEMBER

ENGAGE

Ask questions that are open for everyone to answer.
Don't spend too much time talking yourself.

REDIRECT

As the leader of the group, feel confident to redirect the conversation with another question or thought if it gets too off topic from the heart of the message.

BE FLEXIBLE

Let God into the room; pray during the night and for the people in the room, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you. If the night didn't hit an expectation don't feel it is on you. Keep the focus on pointing people to Jesus and building the church.

PRAYER

End the night strong in prayer. Having people either break off and pray in groups or as a big group asking for prayer requests and praise reports. Create a culture during the week to be praying for the requests from the Small Group and checking in on how they are doing.

DURING THE SMALL GROUP

GAUGE THE ATMOSPHERE

Is the group big or small? If it is a larger group discussion works better splitting up into two groups to help more people engage in the conversation.

SET A TIME FRAME

Honour the people in the room and have a set time goal of when you want to start and end discussion. We suggest 1.5 - 2 hours maximum for the group. Depending on the nature of the group we require a minimum of 15 minutes in the word or prayer.

HAVE A GAME PLAN

Prepare beforehand what you think the focus of the discussion will be.
Be prepared.

BREAK WALLS DOWN

Start the discussion with a fun question or an icebreaker, opening in prayer, introducing yourself, or sharing the history of the group and purpose of the night.

FOLLOW UP

PURPOSE: TO CONNECT AND PLANT PEOPLE IN THE HOUSE

Follow up and connection build and establish people in God's House. We have a heart for the one because of God's heart for us.

> LET EACH OF YOU LOOK NOT ONLY TO HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.
> PHILIPPIANS 2:4

STEPS

1. PRAY FIRST

Pray for people by name and ask God by His Spirit to plant them and establish them, He will anoint our efforts and work in partnership with us. We will be less burnt out about follow up if we pray first then step out in faith as we go through these steps.

2. CALL & CONNECT

Keeping up communication is vital. Use technology to your advantage, by texting and calling your people so that they feel loved and cared for.

3. PLANNING CENTRE

Organisational platform for getting details and tracking members and new people in your small group. Use this as a tool to continue to know where people are at in relationship to community.

3. REPORTING

Use our database, Planning Centre, to report every week by the following day who came to your small group.

HONOUR CODE

As an essential part of Freedom Leadership is that you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behaviour. This should be the heart of your desire to serve in a leadership position here at Freedom.

While serving the Body of Christ as a Small Group Leader at Freedom, you pledge to present a good appearance at all times. In both attire and behaviour, you should strive to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations.

As Christians, the way we present ourselves can influence the way others perceive Christ. Our conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ, but should exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer and servant-leader. This includes avoiding the appearance of evil, or anything that appears to be questionable.

Exemplifying the highest moral commitment, leaders are to maintain a disciplined life of Bible reading, prayer and fasting.

You must also refrain from such things as:

- PROFANITY
- GAMBLING
- OVER INDULGING IN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
- DISHONEST GAIN
- ILLICIT DRUGS
- PORNOGRAPHY
- SEXUAL IMMORALITY, AND ALL BEHAVIORS WHICH MIGHT CAUSE CHRIST TO GRIEVE AND OTHERS TO STUMBLE

HONOUR CODE

By providing an example in speech and action, we encourage others to grow in Christ and become servant-leaders themselves. Should you struggle with anything on page 16, we as a church will do our best to guide and help you through these situations but this requires honestly, transparency and authenticity from you as a leader.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Be consciously aware that young people see everything we post, like, tag, comment and share. Never post pictures or comments containing anything that could be misunderstood by youth or fellow believers (eg. No pictures of you clubbing, consuming alcohol, with any nudity or banned substances). Be mindful of hashtags that may direct followers to inappropriate images.

ALCOHOL

In relation to alcohol consumption, we ask you to use your wisdom and remember that as a leader, you're an ambassador for Christ and the church at every moment. While most of the leadership team have made a decision to live with complete abstinence from alcohol, we never want to create rules for peoples lives. Here are some guidelines to help with your decision-making: Leaders should not drink in the presence of young people. Leaders must not consume alcohol at any church-related event, including small groups.

What you consume in the privacy of your own home is between you and God, however drunkenness is straight up out of bounds.
(Rom. 13:13, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:20-22, Eph. 5:17-19, 1 Tim. 3:2-4 and 1 Peter 4:2-4).

LEADERSHIP COMMITIMENT

The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women-same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.
- 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10

QUALIFICATIONS

- Sincere, worthy of respect, and of a good reputation.
- Tithe regularly to Freedom Centre.
- Have a genuine desire to serve and minister to other people.
- Able to love, lead, motivate, and teach other people.
- Able to create positive group dynamics, and deal with conflict resolution within the group.
- Never gossip. We protect the unity of the church.
- Problems go up, compliments go down. We report problems to our up line, never to our peers or this gives room for the devil.

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP GUIDE

THANK YOU

freedom centre

freedom centre

SMALL GROUP LEADER DECLARATION

I _____,
Accept and agree to the Honour Code (page 16/17)
and the Leadership Commitment (page 18).

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Signed by: Small Group Leader

Date

Signed by: Small Group Pastor

Date