

IMAGO DEI

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

Small Group Coach Guidelines

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WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Small Group Ministries of Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church! We consider each small group coach to be a gift from God and look forward to working with you as a member of our team.

This Small Group Coach Guidelines Manual is designed to provide guidance and help assure uniformity in the handling of small group practices. This handbook is not all inclusive and is intended only as a set of guidelines for use by the Small Group Coach and the Pastor.

All small group policies and guidelines are governed by the Bylaws of The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of MCC. Any policy in conflict with the UFMCC or Imago Dei MCC SOPs shall be superseded by those Bylaws or SOPs.

This handbook supersedes any previous manual or written or unwritten policies. Imago Dei MCC reserves the right to establish, administer, change or delete policies, guidelines and procedures at any time.

MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

Our Mission:

The mission statement confirms the reason Imago Dei MCC exists. It answers the questions, "who are we?", "what do we do?", "who do we do it for?", and "why do we do it?"

Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church offers spiritual growth and Christ-centered worship to the Rainbow Community preparing people to share their God-given time, talent, and treasures with our church and world.

Our Vision:

The vision statement is a view of how Imago Dei MMC works when all the elements have come together and are working as intended. It answers the question, "What do we want to become?"

Growing with Christ! Lifting Up Community! Spreading God's Love!

Our Core Values:

Core Values are at the heart of Imago Dei MCC. They are what the church, its members and friends are committed to.

*Christ-centered worship
Stewardship
Discipleship
Respect for all people (multi-generational) and beliefs
Integrity, honesty, accountability*

SECTION 1.0 GROUP DYNAMICS

Groups have lives, just like each individual in the group has a life. Just as there are stages of growth in our individual lives, groups go through stages. You would not expect a tiny baby to reason and solve problems anymore than you would expect your group to share on a deep and intimate level the very first meeting.

A man named Bruce Tuckman came up with a theory of group development in which the group goes through four stages: forming, storming, norming and performing. We can relate these phases to our own lives and call them infancy, the terrible twos, late teens and adulthood.

Stage 1: Forming

In the *Forming* stage, personal relations are characterized by dependence. Group members rely on safe, patterned behavior and look to the group leader for guidance and direction. Group members have a desire for acceptance by the group and a need to be know that the group is safe. They set about gathering impressions and data about the similarities and differences among them and forming preferences for future sub-grouping. Rules of behavior seem to be to keep things simple and to avoid controversy. Serious topics and feelings are avoided.

The major task functions also concern orientation. Members attempt to become oriented to the tasks as well as to one another. Discussion centers around defining the scope of the task, how to approach it, and similar concerns.

During infancy parents take a lot of time to see that their child develops in a healthy way. They need a lot of attention and direction. We can relate this to small groups. People are new to each other, have not developed trust and do not relate to each other intimately. This is true even if we get a group of our friends together. Friends relate in a lot of ways - maybe they go to the movies together or are on the same softball team. A person might even have one or two friends that they call when they are hurting and need a shoulder to cry on - usually not 10 or 12 friends.

When a group is in the infancy stage, the group leader will need to be more like a parent. It is vitally important at this stage to set the tone of confidentiality with the group. It needs to be stressed the first few meetings. If group members are not keeping things said in the group in confidence, they need to be held accountable. Little by little people will share more intimate things with the group. The fastest way to destroy a group is through a betrayal of that confidence.

In this infancy stage the group leader will need to be firm, but loving. The leader sets the example by starting and ending meetings on time and dealing with members who are constantly tardy or disruptive.

During this stage it is important to do a lot of "getting to know you" type activities rather than getting into deep personal sharing. A good way to do this is to have people share their histories. When people share things from their pasts, even in light ways, they develop trust. They begin to understand what each other has experienced that might be different from themselves. Also, sharing events from the past may not be as threatening as sharing events and feelings in the present, so people will get used to sharing personal details of their lives in ways that are not as threatening.

To grow from this stage to the next, each member must relinquish the comfort of non-threatening topics and risk the possibility of conflict.

Stage 2: Storming

The next stage, which Tuckman calls *Storming*, is characterized by competition and conflict in the personal-relations dimension and organization in the task-functions dimension. As the group members attempt to organize for the task, conflict inevitably results in their personal relations. Individuals have to bend and mold their feelings, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs to suit the group organization. Because of "fear of exposure" or "fear of failure," there will be an increased desire for structural clarification and commitment. Although conflicts may or may not surface as group issues, they do exist. Questions will arise about who is going to be responsible for what, what the rules are, what the reward system is, and what criteria for evaluation are. These reflect conflicts over leadership, structure, power, and authority. There may be wide swings in members' behavior based on emerging issues of competition and hostilities. Because of the discomfort generated during this stage, some members may remain completely silent while others attempt to dominate.

This next stage we will call the terrible twos. This is the "independence at all cost" stage. People say what is on their minds, they disagree, there is conflict. It doesn't always come after the infancy stage, but a lot of times it does. After people start to trust each other, even a little, they will be more honest about their feelings. When they get to the terrible twos they at least trust the group enough that they will not fear abandonment for speaking their minds.

This is a very scary stage for some group leaders, but it does not have to be. If the group never gets through this stage they will never become a genuine community. It is during this stage, if handled openly and non-judgmentally, that genuine community begins to develop. True community cannot develop if the group leader gets scared and tries to get rid of the conflict rather than dealing with differences openly. Don't let conflict scare you.

In order to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a "testing and proving" mentality to a problem-solving mentality. The most important trait in helping groups to move on to the next stage seems to be the ability to listen.

Stage 3: Norming

In Tuckman's *Norming* stage, interpersonal relations are characterized by cohesion. Group members are engaged in active acknowledgment of all members' contributions, community building and maintenance, and solving of group issues. Members are willing to change their preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members, and they actively ask questions of one another. Leadership is shared, and cliques dissolve. When members begin to know-and identify with-one another, the level of trust in their personal relations contributes to the development of group cohesion. It is during this stage of development (assuming the group gets this far) that people begin to experience a sense of group belonging and a feeling of relief as a result of resolving interpersonal conflicts.

The major task function of stage three is the data flow between group members: They share feelings and ideas, solicit and give feedback to one another, and explore actions related to the task. Creativity is high. If this stage of data flow and cohesion is attained by the group members, their interactions are characterized by openness and sharing of information on both a personal and task level. They feel good about being part of an effective group.

The major drawback of the norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future breakup of the group; they may resist change of any sort.

In the late teens stage the group is starting to gel. Norms are being set, people know what to expect. They are feeling more secure with the group - they feel like it is "our" group instead of "your" group. They will begin to develop "roles" within the group. At this stage, like a parent, the leader needs to start letting go. The leader needs to let the members explore their roles and take more initiative in the group. They may feel free enough at this point to recommend changes in the way things are done. This should not be threatening. Part of a group leader's job is to identify leaders - not be threatened by them. Remember, Jesus did not make disciples by holding them back but by encouraging them to go out and make disciples themselves.

Stage 4: Performing

The *Performing* stage is not reached by all groups. If group members are able to evolve to stage four, their capacity, range, and depth of personal relations expand to true interdependence. In this stage, people can work independently, in subgroups, or as a total unit with equal facility. Their roles and authorities dynamically adjust to the changing needs of the group and individuals. Stage four is marked by interdependence in personal relations and problem solving in the realm of task functions. By now, the group should be most productive. Individual members have become self-assuring, and the need for group approval is past. Members are both highly task oriented and highly people oriented. There is unity: group identity is complete, group morale is high, and group loyalty is intense.

The task function becomes genuine problem solving, leading toward optimal solutions and optimum group development. There is support for experimentation in solving problems and an emphasis on achievement. The overall goal is productivity through problem solving and work.

The adult stage is where everything gels. The group is sharing on an intimate level - nothing is held back. This is the stage where the group is in genuine community. Personal and spiritual growth is evident in the lives of group members. They are more secure and have even taken on responsibilities in the group or within the church. Like a parent, group leaders need to let go of any control and let the group flow.

Stage 5: Adjourning

Tuckman's final stage, *Adjourning*, involves the termination of task behaviors and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes. Concluding a group can create some apprehension - in effect, a minor crisis. The termination of the group is a regressive movement from giving up control to giving up inclusion in the group. The most effective interventions in this stage are those that facilitate task termination and the disengagement process.

SECTION 2.0 SMALL GROUPS AT IMAGO DEI MCC

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.” John 15:4.

Jeffery Arnold in his book, *Starting Small Groups: Building Communities that Matter*, says when a church starts a small group ministry, there is an increased vitality that comes into the church. The reason for this is as people begin to develop a true sense of community within their groups and challenge each other to grow personally and spiritually, a new spirit begins to permeate the life of the church. When these groups come together for corporate worship, it is warm, genuine and exciting.

A healthy, growing small group ministry will produce a healthy, growing church. People learn to interact together in appropriate ways. Newcomers are welcomed and easily acclimated into the life of the church. Small groups provide a path for people on their spiritual journeys. They challenge people to grow spiritually and to think outside the box. Small groups provide a place where people can discover and develop their unique giftedness.

Forty five percent of Americans are in some form of small group. More than the 45% indicate an interest in joining a small group. Of these people involved in groups, 60% are church related. A large portion of the remaining 40% (not church related) are studying spiritual issues. People tend to move from group to group with no commitment. With no sacrifice or service, people are less likely to stay with a particular group. Few churches involve more than 5% of their congregation in some form of small group. In the UFMCC - most small group programs fail because of lack of support and training for the small group leaders. The ones that survive take an average of three tries to become successful. [All statistics, except those for UFMCC, are from the book by Jeffery Arnold, *Starting Small Groups: Building Communities that Matter*.]

People in our society today do not have the connection to the church as in the past. To get them interested in becoming part of a church, we can demonstrate the church is relevant to today. By offering a variety of small groups that meet people where they are, we can reach out to the community and invite people who would not otherwise come to the church.

Another benefit to the church is that people are nurtured and cared for in the small group, thus alleviating some of the care load of the pastoral staff. Yet, when it is necessary for the pastor to get involved, they have a line of communication to ensure people do not fall through the cracks.

The three essentials in a healthy small group are Bible Study, Group Building and Mission / Multiplication. All three are needed to stay balanced.

- To focus only on Bible Study will lead to scholasticism.
- To focus only on Group Building will lead to narcissism.
- To focus only on Mission will lead to burnout.

There is a game plan for the life cycle of the group where all of these elements are present in a purpose-driven strategy:

Bible Study: Growing with Christ!:

When the group is at Stage 1: The purpose is for the leader to share their spiritual story.

The greatest gift the leader can give a group is the gift of their spiritual story-the story of their spiritual beginnings, their spiritual growing pains, struggles hopes and fears. The Bible study is designed to help them tell their spiritual story to the group.

When the group reaches Stage 2: The purpose is to dig into Scripture as a group.

Group Bible Study is quite different from individual Bible Study. The guided discussion questions are open-ended. And for those with little Bible background, there are reference notes to bring this person up to speed.

When the group reaches Stage 3: The purpose is for the members to develop the habit and skills for personal Bible Study.

This is at two levels: (1) Personal – on their own, and (2) Group study with their small group. In the personal Bible Study, they will be introduced to skills for reflection, self-inventory, creative writing and journaling.

Group Building: Lifting Up Community!

When the group is in Stage 1: The purpose is to become a caring community.

In the first stage of the group, Group Building is the priority. Group Building is a four step process to become a close-knit group:

- The group leader shares their story.
- The group members affirm each other's story.
- The group leader shares their needs
- The group members pray for each other

When the group reaches Stage 2: The purpose is to transform the group into a mission-driven team.

The nine basic needs of a group will be assigned to nine different people. Everyone has a job to fill, and when everyone is doing their job the group will grow spiritually and numerically. When new people enter the group, there is a selection of ICEBREAKERS to start off the meeting and let the new people get acquainted.

When the group reaches Stage 3: The purpose is to move into discipleship with group accountability, shared leadership and depth community.

The group is reaching closure and the group building aspect will reach its goal with a “going-away” party. If there are other groups in the church in this program, the event would be for all groups. Otherwise, the group will have its own closing celebration and commissioning time.

Mission / Multiplication: Spreading Gods Love!

When the group is in stage 1: The purpose is to grow the group numerically and spiritually

The mission of the group is to bring new people into a personal relationship with Christ and the fellowship of a Christian community. In this stage, the goal is to invite new people into the group and try to double.

When the group reaches Stage 2: The purpose is to identify the Apprentice / Leader for birthing a new group.

In this stage, the leader will start dreaming about the possibility of starting a new group down the road. The questions at the close of each session will put the leader carefully through the dreaming process—to help them discover an Apprentice / Leader who will eventually be the leader of a new group. This is an exciting challenge!

When the group reaches Stage 3: The purpose is to commission the members of the leadership team from the group who are going to start a new group.

In six steps, the group will be led through a decision-making process to discover the leadership team within the group to form a new group.

SECTION 3.0 THE SMALL GROUP COACH

A widespread misunderstanding is that leading and managing are one and the same. Up until a few years ago, books that claimed to be on leadership were often really about management. The main difference between the two is that leadership is about influencing people to follow, while management focuses on maintaining systems and processes.

Positional leadership doesn't work in volunteer organizations. Because leaders don't have leverage – or influence – they are ineffective. In other types of organizations, the person who has position has incredible leverage. For example, in the military, leaders can use rank and, if all else fails, throw people into the brig. In business, bosses have tremendous leverage in the form of salary, benefits, and perks. Most followers are pretty cooperative when their livelihood is at stake.

The small group coach identifies small group leaders, builds them up, gives them resources, authority and responsibility and then turns them loose to achieve. The empowerment leadership model shifts away from 'positional power' where people are given leadership roles so they can contribute to their fullest capacity. Only secure leaders are able to give themselves away.

In addition, the Small Group Coach oversees and coordinates small group leaders and their groups so that they will be able to successfully achieve their group mission. The Small Group Coach serves for a one-year renewable term with up to five (5) groups and reports to the Pastor.

Small Group Coaches need to be able to:

- Explain the small group vision as described in Section 2.0
- Work well with others
- Encourage a leader who needs encouraging, confront the leader who needs confrontation and guide the leader who needs guidance
- Demonstrate Timeliness – being able to collect required forms and data in a regular and dependable manner
- Know when someone in a group needs referral
- Listen
- Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of group dynamics
- Help groups multiply

Small Group Coaches are responsible for the following during the course of the year:

Annual Activities	
January	Create Marketing Campaign for Imago Dei MCC's Small Group Ministry Program
February/March	Launch Marketing Campaign – Web, Email, Image, Leader's Council
April	Conduct an annual survey of the congregation for small group needs.
April 28 &/or 29	Lead A Small Group Leader Training Retreat based upon the Serendipity House Training Materials
May	Meet with new small group leaders identified from the congregational survey & training. Ensure new leaders complete an application for leading a small group. Supervise the choice of content and application of group materials.
June/July/August	Assist new group leaders in announcing their group and inviting new members.
September/October	Assist new group leaders with their first meetings and assist existing group leaders with their new materials as needed.
November	Review the Imago Dei MCC "Small Group Leader Guidelines" with the Pastor.
November/December	Equip, train, & coach the group leader to find their apprentices and to develop them. Prepare group leaders to birth new groups as apprentices develop. Review each group in its second year (2007) of existence for multiplying.

In addition, the following **monthly** activities are completed while groups are in session:

Monthly Activities
<p>Meet one-on-one with each Small Group Leader to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect monthly reports and summarize into a report for the Pastor. See Appendix F for a sample Small Group Report Form. • Monitor the health of the groups. • Encourage and guide the group leaders in their own personal growth, including sharing faith, discipling, stewardship, Christ-likeness and leadership skills (communication, planning, recruiting, delegating, facilitation, modeling and motivating). • Help group leaders deal with people who are difficult. Help decide when to refer to support groups or other resources. • Monitor group participation in ministry projects and outreach efforts (newsletter articles and announcements, worship service testimonials, web pages, e-mail announcements). See Appendix E for a sample ministry project form.

Monthly Activities

Submit monthly reports to the Pastor on the progress of each of the group leaders being supervised; keep the Pastor abreast of strengths and problems in the group.

Contact worship service visitors in writing to let them know about existing groups, and upcoming groups. The Clerk of the Imago Dei MCC Board of Directors can provide a list of the prior month's visitors. See Appendix C for a sample letter.

Participate in one group session per month.

SECTION 4.0 SMALL GROUP LEADERS

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

What is a Leader and Who Can Be One?

According to John Maxwell, every leader’s potential is determined by the people closest to them. If those people are strong, then the leader can make an impact. If they are weak, they can’t.

The first definition of leader in The American Heritage Dictionary (1985. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, MA) is, "One that leads or guides." This definition infers something - that there is at least one follower. So, basically you could say that anyone who has a follower is a leader. Whether a leader is a good leader or a bad leader is another thing altogether.

Some people think a good leader needs to be strong and charismatic. Adolph Hitler and Jim Jones were strong, charismatic leaders. Were they good leaders? I think everyone would agree they were not.

There are strong, charismatic people who are known as good leaders, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Rev. Elder Troy Perry. How about Mother Theresa or Mahatma Gandhi? Neither are thought of as dynamic – both were quite introverted and unassuming – but most people in the world today think of them as good leaders because they believed in something strongly enough to take a stand. Mother Theresa’s heart went out to the orphans in Calcutta and Gandhi, treated as inferior by the whites in South Africa, began a life-long quest to achieve civil rights for all races.

So, the first pre-requisite for a good leader is to believe in something. There is a saying by Thoreau, "Everyone needs to believe in something. I believe I’ll go fishing." It probably has to be a little more than that. How about believing that God has created each of us and loves us? How about the realization that many people, particularly members of oppressed groups, do not know God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their lives? These two things alone would be enough to spur most of us into leadership.

Think of someone you know who has influenced your life as a Christian. What characteristics does he or she have that have made a difference for you? Almost always, the qualities we admire in the people who have had the most influence on our own lives are qualities we do not necessarily ascribe to a leader.

What Does a Small Group Leader Do?

Most people think to be a good small group leader you must be an excellent Bible teacher or be able to inspire people through facilitation techniques. This keeps many people from becoming small group leaders. Jesus was probably the greatest leader of all time. What did he do? He told stories, he listened, he washed feet, he served food and he made wine. He was a servant. Small group leaders are also servant leaders.

An article in appeared in the Small Group Dynamics on-line newsletter about two group leaders. The person who wrote the article must have been their coach or their coordinator because she visited both of their groups. She told how the first group leader was not smooth in his approach. He was awkward in leading the Bible study and often admitted his insecurities to the group. Although he was always prepared, it never seemed natural to him. But his group was growing by leaps and bounds and he had already birthed two new groups.

The second leader was technically superior. He had appropriate icebreakers and his facilitation skills were smooth. He seemed to know exactly what to do in any given situation. However, his group remained small and the members attended sporadically.

Confused as to what was going on, she began to look into these situations further. She found the first group leader really cared about his group members. He prayed for them daily. He remembered their birthdays and anniversaries. He never forgot to thank them for being so faithful to the group. He called them often, and would even get together with them outside of group meetings, especially if he knew they were going through tough times. Sometimes he would start a phone chain to get the group together for an impromptu movie or game night. Because he was not totally proficient at leading a group, he enlisted the other group members to help him do things – sometimes even asking one of them to facilitate the group discussion. She found that his group loved and respected him because they knew he loved and respected them.

The second group leader, although he spent time preparing for group meetings and although he cared about his group members, did not know how to show it. He rarely called them or contacted them in between group meetings. He did not remember to ask about previous prayer requests they had brought to the group. He didn't remember special days or ever do anything social with them.

Group leaders are people who love and serve others, and who want to give leadership away. Given those characteristics, everything else is a skill that can be learned.

Qualifications of Small Group Leaders

You need to determine, knowing your own congregation and your core values, what kind of person you will look for as a group leader. Some of the Christian leadership gurus have

come up with a few guidelines. David Limero in an article in *Small Group Dynamics* on mentoring leaders says to look for FAT people (faithful, available, teachable). John Maxwell says to look for people of FAITH (faithful, available, influential, teachable and honest). In the book, *Big Book on Small Groups*, Jeffery Arnold says a Christian leader:

- desires God's will,
- is willing to let God have control,
- is humble,
- is willing and able to use his or her gifts to help others,
- is aware of his or her strengths and weaknesses,
- is a risk-taker,
- is ethical,
- is nurturing,
- is sensitive in listening,
- is vulnerable,
- is a servant,
- is willing to give leadership away,
- and is able to devote the time and energy to leading a small group.

It is not as important what qualifications you decide upon as that you specify the qualifications and write them down. Then you will know what you are looking for and be more confident when you see it in others. Do not be obsessive over the requirements. Remember, if a person demonstrates character and a willingness to learn, they can acquire the skills to be a leader.

Where to Find and Recruit Small Group Leaders

God has already placed within any congregation what that congregation needs to take the first steps toward wider mission or more effectiveness in mission. God's provision includes the needed leaders, but these leaders are not apparent yet. In addition to those already visibly serving in leadership, any congregation has emerging and potential leaders, often unrecognized and not encouraged to develop as leaders. These hidden leaders may have issues within themselves that block their development as leaders, such as not seeing themselves as leaders, not knowing how to work with other people, not knowing how to work within the congregation system, or fear of criticism. Dynamics in the congregational culture may also exist that discourage the emergence of new leaders.

The best place to find small group leaders is in the small group. Current small group leaders are in the best position to identify potential small group leaders because he or she will be helping group members discover and develop their spiritual gifts. This is the ideal way to find potential group leaders, but you have to ask yourself if you will only allow them to come up the ranks as a small group leader apprentice. It is a good way, but very slow.

A suggestion is to think of several avenues to recruit leaders so you're not putting all your eggs in one basket. Perhaps you could look for a rising star in membership class. When evaluating the pros and cons of having membership class over a period of several weeks, this is one of the pros. Some churches have a sponsor for new members. If that is the case, make sure the sponsors know the qualifications and what you are looking for in group leaders and have them be on the lookout for potential candidates. Often when new people come into the church, they schedule one or more meetings with the pastor. You could have the pastor on the lookout among new people coming into the church. The advantage of looking for potential leaders among newcomers to the church is (1) you are able to direct them into small group leadership before they become busy in other areas of the church and (2) you get them involved while they are excited. There is more information below on how to train them and ensure they are ready for leadership.

A good way to find potential candidates among long-time members is to keep up with their tenure on church boards (the Board of Directors, Council of Ministries, etc.) and try to catch them before they get involved in something else. You might have activities in your church, such as social activities, church retreats and fellowship times before or after services where a large number of people are gathered that could be used as a fishing pool for potential leaders. It is okay if you enlist people who are involved in the church (choir members, Sunday school attendees, etc.) but not a good idea to approach people who have other leadership responsibilities in the church. A person needs to be able to give the time and energy necessary to lead a small group.

How to Train Small Group Leaders

The best way to train small group leaders is on-the-job training. This can happen in two ways. You can have a current group leader mentor an apprentice. The majority of the time an apprentice will be identified by the group leader in the group he or she is currently leading. However, nothing should preclude you from contacting a group leader to see if he or she will accept an apprentice that was discovered outside the group (for example, in membership class). Also, if you want to have a successful apprenticeship program, be sure to offer the group leaders plenty of guidelines and skill building opportunities so they will know what to do with an apprentice when they find one. Part of this is being able to identify when the apprentice is ready to lead his or her own group.

A second way to give potential small group leaders on-the-job training is to have a small group for leaders. In this group, each person will take responsibility for leading the group. They will take turns facilitating discussions and leading prayer. The group leader for this group should be willing to model for them what they should expect to do when they start their own groups and teach them how to do the same.

Initial training for small group leaders is vitally important, but ongoing leadership meetings for continued skill building is critical. These meetings are the epitome of on-the-job training because the group leaders are actually experiencing real-life group

situations. Adults learn best when the topics are relevant to their jobs. When actually leading a group, things like healthy conflict resolution, how to have dynamic meetings, special holiday activities or mentoring an apprentice, become tangible tools that are applicable to their experience.

Leadership meetings should be interactive. It might be a good idea to start off each meeting with a unique icebreaker – one that they can use in their groups. Skill building sessions should include a little instruction and a little participation. Have them break into small groups and discuss pre-prepared questions about the topic for the evening or have them do role-plays. You also might want to have a time when they can report on curriculum they have used in their groups. Having a devotional or even a short time of worship might be appropriate. Try to vary the format so the meeting is interesting.

Three things mentioned by Carl George in his books that each meeting should have are vision, huddle and skill. He calls them VHS meetings. Having touched on the skill-building, let me mention briefly the other two. The vision is the role of the senior pastor – taking the topic of the evening and putting it into a global perspective of the whole church. This will keep group leaders from becoming focused only on their own group. They will begin to see how everything they do in the small group has an impact on the church as a whole.

The huddle is a time when the group leaders can talk about what is going on in their individual groups. When you get more than five group leaders, break them into small groups of not more than five for this discussion. Like in their own small groups, it is important that each person gets to share as much as he or she needs to, but it is also important not to let one or two individuals dominate the discussion. If you have coaches in place, it is a good idea to break them into groups with their own coach as the discussion leader. Hopefully, the coach is building a relationship with his or her group leaders and they will feel more comfortable sharing openly with a person they trust. This also builds a bond between the group leaders. It is important that they feel they have a group of peers with whom to share.

Apprentices should be required to attend the leadership meetings as part of their apprenticeship. They should break into their own small groups rather than being in the small group with their group leaders. The reason for this is, it is important that apprentices begin to think outside their current group and begin to envision the group they will soon lead. Their shared group experience in the leadership meeting should focus on that vision.

SECTION 5.0 CONFLICT

“Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?” Acts 15:10.

As mentioned previously, the terrible twos is the stage where conflict will begin to be an issue in the group. There are several good books on the market about dealing with conflict. One is *Caring Enough To Confront* by David Augsburger and recommend highly by Elaine German.

Conflict is not good or bad – it is neutral. The group leader should help the group create an atmosphere for healthy conflict. Keep the group a safe place – different opinions are welcome and disagreement is good, but it doesn't mean we judge the other. In the group's interaction together they should use "I" statements. Using statements like, "You know how you feel when something like that happens," is not nearly as powerful as, "I know how I feel when something like that happens," because we take ownership for our feelings. Rather than talking about our feelings we learn to feel our feelings. Also, group members are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own feelings instead of making them someone else's fault. If I am hurt because you were teasing me, I can be more effective by saying, "When you tease me I become hurt," rather than saying, "You hurt me." Our response to another person is a choice. The person does not "make" us do anything, rather we choose to do it. The key is to get people to give each other the space to be different and to have different points of view, yet continue being loved and accepted by the group.

The Group Covenant

The Biblical meaning of covenant and the modern definition of covenant are somewhat different. In the Bible God made covenants with God's people. Often these covenants were one-sided. God promised something and it did not matter what the people did, God kept the promise. For example, the rainbow is a sign of God's covenant with Noah not to ever destroy the world again with a flood. It does not matter what we do, God will stick to that promise. God made a covenant with Abraham to make of Abraham's seed a great nation. God has kept that promise to the Jews regardless of what the Jewish nation has or has not done. We as Christians are under what we call the new covenant -- the atonement of our sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That is a promise from God. But we have to do something. We accept Jesus Christ as our personal savior. That latter covenant is more like the modern definition of a covenant which is, according to The American Heritage Dictionary, "A binding agreement made by two or more persons or parties..."

There are a number of reasons why it is important for small groups to have covenants. One reason is that the group leader can introduce some ground rules and get the group officially to agree to them. That sounds pretty controlling, but the leader knows some of

the things that will make a group successful so he or she will have an edge over the others when it comes to writing a covenant. Some of the things are what were mentioned before – confidentiality, being non-judgmental, using "I" statements, etc.

The group will put the purpose of the group in the covenant. It is important that the group agree on the purpose of the group. For example, if you decide to have a Bible study will the purpose of your group be to meet together once a week for Bible study? I hope not. Bible study is a means to an end. A better purpose might be "to grow in Christ and challenge each other to new depths of discipleship through studying the Bible."

Another reason a covenant is so important is that it will give group members a chance to say the things that are important to them. So, even though the group leader will have input, so does the group - and hopefully the covenant will aid in making the group experience more meaningful for everyone in the group.

The most important thing to remember about writing a group covenant is that decisions must be made by consensus. That means if one person in the group cannot agree to something, the group needs to keep talking about it and reworking it until everyone can agree. Effective small groups are not a democracy. A truly effective group will reach consensus in everything. This will take longer, and may require some additional training for group leaders, and maybe even for the group, but it will be worth it for the trust and intimacy that will develop.

It will take several weeks to complete a covenant. The group can be as creative with it as they like. If the group agrees, they can all sign the covenant and make it "official". They do not have to sign it, but they must all agree to it. They should all get copies of it. If group members start to slack off on keeping the covenant, the group leader may bring it back out and remind them of their promise. Remember, however, something could have been put into the covenant originally that the group finds they just cannot do. A group leader should not be afraid to revise the covenant if need be. He or she should be flexible and do what is best for the group.

SECTION 6.0 MISSION AND MULTIPLICATION

*“Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word.”
Acts 8:4.*

If anything in the natural world is truly alive, it will grow, and that is a pretty good test for groups as well. Groups that are alive are like biological cells. They grow and divide, divide and grow. That is why we do not encourage groups simply to maintain and never change. We encourage groups that divide and give birth to other groups.

Step 1 Desire

Is the group purpose-driven about mission? The greatest danger to any chain is its strongest link. This is especially true of Bible Study groups. The very depth of the study keeps new people from joining, or feeling comfortable when they join. In the end the group grows inward, becoming self-centered and spiritually insensitive. To prevent this from happening in your group, take this pop quiz and share the results with your group.

	Yes	No
1. Are you a committed follower of Jesus Christ?	r	r
2. Do you believe that Jesus Christ wants you to share your faith with others?	r	r
3. Do you believe that every Christian needs to belong to a small, caring community where Jesus Christ is affirmed?	r	r
4. Do you know of people in your church who are not presently involved in a small group?	r	r
5. Do you know friends on the fringe of the church who need to belong to a life-sharing small group?	r	r
6. Do you believe that God has a will and plan for your life?	r	r
7. Are you willing to be open to what God might do through you in this small group?	r	r
8. Are you open to the possibility that God might use you to form a new group?	r	r

If you can't say "No" to any of these questions, consider yourself committed!

Four Fallacies About Small Groups

Are you suffering from one of these four misconceptions when it comes to small groups?

Check yourself on these fallacies.

Fallacy #1: It takes 10 to 12 people to start a small group.

Wrong. The best size to start with is three or four people—which leaves room in the group for growth. Start “small” and pray that God will fill the “empty chair” ... and watch it happen.

Fallacy #2: It takes a lot of skill to lead a small group.

Wrong again. Sticking to the three-part tight agenda makes it possible for nearly anyone to lead a group. For certain support and recovery groups more skills are required, but the typical Bible Study and Care Group can be led by anyone with lots of heart and vision.

Fallacy #3: To assure confidentiality, the “door” should be closed after the first session.

For certain “high risk” groups this is true; but for the average Bible Study and Care Group all you need is the rule that “nothing that is said in the group is discussed outside of the group.”

Fallacy #4: The longer the group lasts, the better it gets.

Not necessarily. The bell curve for effective small groups usually peaks in the second year. Unless new life is brought into the group, the group will decline in vitality. It is better to release the group (and become a reunion group) when it is at its peak than to run the risk of burnout.

Step 2 Assessment

Is your church purpose-driven about groups? Most of the people who come to small groups in the church are from the highly committed CORE of the church. How about your group?

Pinpoint Your Group

The graph on the opposite page represents the four types of people typically found in your church and in your community.

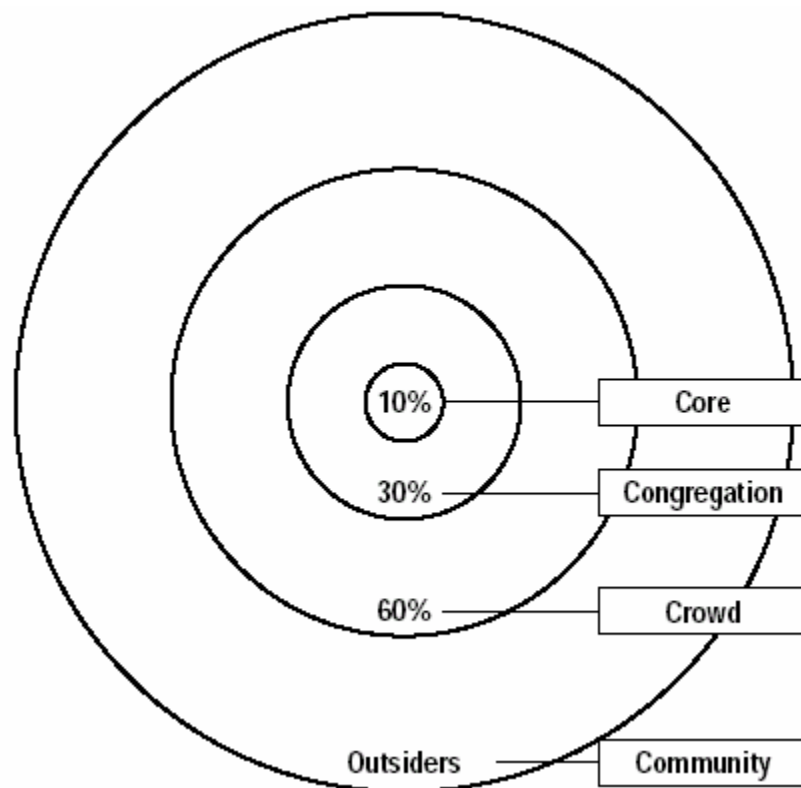
- 10% Core: The “spiritual core” of the church and the church leadership.

- 30% Congregation: Those who come to church regularly and are faithful in giving.
- 60% Crowd: Those on the membership roles who attend only twice a year. They have fallen through the cracks.
- Outside Community: Those who live in the surrounding area but do not belong to any church.

Step 1: On this page, put a series of dots in the appropriate circles where the members of your group come from.

Step 2: If you know of other small groups in your church, put some more dots on the graph to represent the people in those groups. When you are finished, stop and ask your group this question:

“Why do the groups in our church appeal only to the people who are represented by the dots on this graph?”



4 Kinds Of Groups

SUPPORT / RECOVERY GROUPS

- Felt needs
- Low-level commitment
- Short-term
- Seeker Bible Study

These groups are designed to appeal to hurting people on the fringe of the church and in the community.

PULPIT-BASED GROUPS

- Around the Scripture in the Sunday lesson
- With handout in Sunday bulletin
- With discussion questions
- No homework

These groups are designed to appeal to those who come to church and listen to the sermon but do not want to do homework.

DISCIPLESHIP / DEPTH BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

- Year-long commitment
- Homework required
- Depth Bible Study
- Curriculum based

These groups are designed to appeal to the 10% highly committed core of the church who are ready for discipleship.

COVENANT GROUPS






- Three-stage life cycle
- Graded levels of Bible
- Renewal option Serendipity Study: 101, 201 and 301
- Begins with 7-week contract

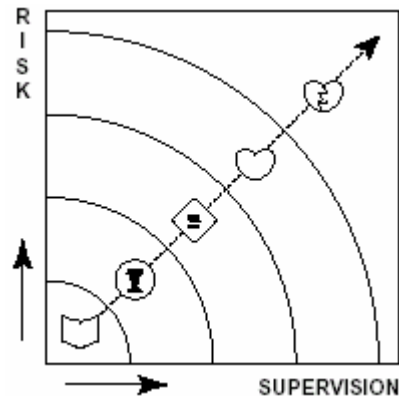
Church Evaluation

You do NOT have to complete this assessment if you are not in the leadership core of your church, but it would be extremely valuable if your group does have members in the leadership core of your church.

1. Currently, what percentage of your church members are involved in small groups?
2. What kind of small groups are you offering in your church?
(Study the four kinds of groups on the opposite page.)
 - r Support / Recovery Groups
 - r Pulpit-Based Groups
 - r Discipleship / Depth Bible Study Groups
 - r Three-stage Covenant Groups
3. Which statement below represents the position of your church on small groups?
 - r “Small Groups have never been on the drawing board at our church.”
 - r “We have had small groups, but they fizzled.”
 - r “Our church leadership has had negative experiences with small groups.”
 - r “Small groups are the hope for our future.”
 - r “We have Sunday school; that’s plenty.”
4. How would you describe the people who usually get involved in small groups?
 - r 10% Core
 - r 30% Congregation
 - r Crowd 60%

Risk and Supervision

This depends on the risk level of the group—the higher the risk, the higher the supervision. For the typical Bible Study group , pulpit-based group  or covenant group  (where there is little risk), supervision is minimal. For some support groups  and all recovery groups , training and supervision are required.



Step 3 Survey

Where's the itch for those in your church who are not involved in groups? The survey in Appendix B been written for churchwide use.

Step 4 Brainstorming

What did you learn about your church from the survey?

The Itch: Debrief together what you discovered from the survey about the need for small groups in your church. To begin with, find out in your group who checked Q3 for any of the 101 Video and 101 Beginner Electives (courses 1–17). Jot down.

The Nitch: For the top three courses in the box above, find out if anyone in your group checked Q2 for these courses—i.e., that they would be willing to host or help lead a group that was interested in this course. Jot down the names of those in your group who checked Q2.

The Apprentice / Leader and Leadership Core: Now, as a group, look over the names of the potential hosts and leaders you put in the box above and try to discern the person on this list who you think could easily be the leader of this new group, and one or two others who might fill out the Leadership Core for this new group. Jot down these names.

Step 5 Barnstorming

Who are you going to invite?

In the previous step, you identified the Apprentice / Leader and one or two others in your group who are going to be the leadership cell or core to start a new group. Now, as a whole group, spend a few minutes creating a prospect list of people you would like to invite into this new group. Ask someone in your group to be the secretary and write down the names of people who come to mind.

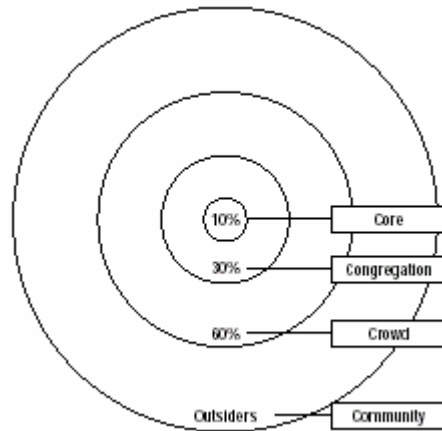
Friends: Who are your friends in the church who you think might be interested in a small group?

Affinity: What are the special interests of the people in your leadership cell and who are the people in your church with the same interests? For instance, if the people in your leadership cell love tennis, who are the people in your church who might be interested in a small group before tennis? What about book lovers, entrepreneurs, empty nesters, senior citizens, stock watchers, etc.?

Felt Needs: Who are the people you know with the same felt needs? These people might be on the fringe of the church or even outside of the church. Go back to the survey 101 courses and think of people you feel could be hot prospects. For instance, who would be interested in “Stressed Out,” “Marriage,” “Wholeness,” “Healthy Relationships,” “Parenting Adolescents,” etc.?

Geographical Location: Where do the people in your leadership team live or work, and who are the people in your church in the same area?

The Four Circles: Now, on this diagram, pinpoint the people you have jotted down in the four circles. Do you have any people on this list from the Crowd (the church dropouts)? Do you have anyone on your list from the Community (who do not attend any church)? It’s really important that you have people from all four circles on your list.



Step 6 Commissioning

Congratulations. You deserve a party. Only two things remain for you to decide: (1) How are you going to commission the leadership team for the new group and (2) What is the rest of your group going to do next?

Going-away party

You have several options. If the church is planning a church-wide event for all of the groups (such as a graduation banquet), you would have a table at this event for your group. If your church is not planning an event, you must plan your own going-away party.

At this party, you may want to reminisce about your life together as a group with the questions in Appendix G, have fun making some “Wild Predictions”, share a Bible Study time, and conclude with a time of commissioning and prayer.

What do we do next?

For those who are going to stay with the “mother group,” you need to decide on your new covenant and who you are going to invite to fill the empty chairs left by the departing “missionaries.”

Do we ever meet again?

Definitely! Plan NOW for “homecoming” next year when the new group returns for a time of celebration. Four good times: the World Series, Super Bowl, Final Four and Stanley Cup.

SECTION 7.0 LEADERSHIP COVENANT & VALUES

“For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.”

Titus 1: 7 - 9

People don't first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthy causes. Every message that people receive is filtered through the messenger who delivers it. If they consider the messenger to be credible, then they believe the message has value. Being a part of leadership in the Body of Christ is a sacred privilege and something that should not be taken lightly. The Bible has clear criteria for leaders. At Imago Dei MCC, we are committed to following these Biblical standards to the best of our abilities.

By accepting a leadership role at Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church, I submit myself to the following covenant:

1. **Spiritual Growth:** Leaders are committed to grow as Christians through regular worship, personal prayer and increasing study. The Church must be led forward by Christians who are going forward into their relationship with God.
2. **Exemplify Positive Faith:** Things that leaders say to others should demonstrate their faith in God's grace by choosing to be constructive, supportive and positive. Leaders believe that God can change a situation and rather than simply complain or criticize; leaders pray and do what they can to make a difference. They do not talk about the problem with anyone who is not directly involved in the problem or its solution.
3. **Tithing:** Leaders make a financial commitment to the church. They lead the membership in developing a financial base to ensure future viability of the church. The membership has no reason to trust the leader's integrity if they are not being honest in their financial covenant with God.
4. **Praying:** Leaders regularly pray for the Pastor, the Board, the Staff and Leaders who are guiding the church. We should be able to count on the sustaining prayers of our sisters and brothers.
5. **Living a Morally Mature Life:** Although MCC is not in the habit of dictating how people ought to live, leaders understand that members expect them to be healthy examples. Leaders evaluate their behaviors in light of that reality and attempt to live in such a way that they are not stumbling blocks for others.
6. **Mutual Accountability:** The Bible talks about being submitted to one another in love (Eph.5:21). Leaders must be willing to receive instruction and even discipline from fellow leaders or those put in authority over them. It is healthy that everyone can be accountable to someone and willing to participate in a mature way in this process.

As a potential leader of Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church, I am willing to participate in this covenant relationship with other leaders of this church. May God's power strengthen me to be faithful and may God's grace forgive me should I fail.

Signature

Date

In addition, the code of conduct in Appendix A encompasses the criteria of the Bible and UFMCC bylaws. Furthermore, they state ethical values in which we expect our leaders to abide.

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John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*

Appendix A

CODE OF CONDUCT – Imago Dei MCC revised January, 2004

The following Code of Conduct, adopted by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), defines un-becoming conduct, disloyalty and dereliction of duty. It is the policy of Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) that elected officers, employees and ministry leaders subscribe to this code.

UNBECOMING CONDUCT:

1. Pattern of untreated public drunkenness or substance abuse which places a person's or congregant's safety in danger.
2. Misappropriation of church funds or property.
3. Misuse of the powers of the appointed or elected office for personal or sexual gain.
4. Any sexual relations with persons below the age of consent.
5. Non-consensual physical abuse or violence.
6. Sexual relations between supervisors and those they supervise or counselors and those they counsel.
7. Pattern of deceit or dishonesty.
8. Creating a person-centered ministry rather than a Christ-centered ministry, i.e. creating emotional dependency of the pastor, abuse of authority or divisiveness.
9. Knowingly violating the sanctity of another person's relationship covenant.
10. Inappropriate violation of confidentiality.
11. Sexual harassment, i.e. any sexually related behaviors that is unwelcome or offensive and which fails to respect the rights of others.

DISLOYALTY

1. Patterns of deliberate or malicious acts which damage or bring harm to a persons, a congregation or other church body within UFMCC.
2. Initiating or performing a ministry on behalf of UFMCC which is unauthorized and/or unaccountable.
3. Undermining the authority and ministry of the Pastor.

DERELICTION OF DUTY:

1. A pattern of ministry that leaves churches weakened rather than strengthened.
2. Leading a church into unreasonable indebtedness or breach of fiduciary duties.
3. Negligent supervision.
4. Failure to report acts of misconduct to the appropriate entities (authorities).

I pledge to uphold the Code of Conduct of the Imago Dei MCC as printed above:

Signature

Date

Appendix B

SMALL GROUP SURVEY

The following four pages may be photo-copied for the annual small group survey. Duplex copying (one-sided to two-sided) is recommended to prevent the survey from becoming unwieldy for the survey participant.

Pages 3-4 of the survey are based on small group studies available from Serendipity House as of July, 2005. Similar materials from other publishers may be substituted after review with the Pastor. Please note that not all Serendipity House materials are inclusive. Studies which have not been used at Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church in the past may need to be adapted or substituted.

The secret to an effective small group program is developing groups that meet the needs of our congregation. Please take a moment to mark those statements that best describe you. Feel free to remain anonymous. If you choose to include your name, you may be contacted by the person leading a group which focuses on a need (or needs) you selected. Otherwise, a new list of small groups will be available soon so you can find a group that meets the needs in your life.

Here is another way you can help us help you. If you can think of someone who might be a good leader for a small group on a particular topic, write his or her name next to the group. Your nominations of group leaders can help us find the right person, with a little training, to lead that group!

The Preliminaries...

The following statement best describes me and my family members (choose more than one if you wish):

- I need a refresher course in Christian beliefs
- I would like to meet more of my fellow church members
- I would like to meet other women in this church
- I would like to meet other men in this church
- I would like to meet other couples in this church
- I would like to meet other singles in this church
- I would like to know how I can get more involved in our church

Getting Focused...

I need to focus in on the following issues in my life:

- Parenting: When it's not a stroll in the park
- Wholeness: Finding balance as a whole person
- Christian faith: Learning the basics
- Marketplace: Christianity in the real world
- Who am I? Discovering my potential
- Stress: Finding the right prescription when I'm emotionally drained
- Who is Jesus? What was he really like?
- Gifts & Calling: Finding my passion
- Spiritual Warfare: Winning the battles
- Men's Issues: Getting beyond fabulous
- Engagement: Are we fit to be tied?

Understanding the Bible...

The Bible contains a wealth of information and guidance to help us follow Jesus Christ. In a small group, Bible study can come alive with discussion, application and prayer.

Generally I am interested in Bible study ...

- with at-home study during the week
- with no homework (I'm too busy)

Specifically I am interested in studying the following parts of the Bible ...

- Gospel of Mark
- Parables
- Sermon on the Mount
- Miracles
- Life of Christ
- Romans
- 1 John
- Philippians
- 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus
- Ephesians
- 1 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Revelations
- James

Graduating to New Adventures ...

One valuable way a small group can enrich your life is by helping you determine how you can serve God. This is especially true after a group has been together for awhile. The people in your small group are the best resources for discovering your place in God's kingdom!

If a small group could help me "graduate" to a new adventures of growth and service, I would be most interested in...

- r Ministering: Taking Christ into my world
- r Equipping: Strengthening my Christian gifts
- r Networking: Gathering the tools to follow my dream
- r Skills Inventory: Solving the puzzle of my mission
- r Team-Building: Moving out into the world as a group
- r Pit Stop: Retooling our small group for the next journey
- r Leadership: Becoming a small group leader

Name and phone
(optional): _____

Name _____ Phone _____

* Section 2: Interest in Shared-Experience Groups

A shared-experience group is short-term in nature (7–13 weeks) and brings people together based on a common interest, experience or need in their lives. The various topics being considered for shared-experience groups are listed below.

1. Which of these shared-experience groups might be of interest to you? Check all that apply in the grid below under **Q1**.
2. Which of these shared-experience groups would you be interested in hosting or co-leading? Check all that apply in the grid below under **Q2**.
3. Which of these shared-experience groups do you think would be of interest to a friend or relative of yours who is on the fringe of the church? Check all that apply in the grid below under **Q3**.

Felt Need Courses — 7–13 weeks:		Q1	Q2	Q3
1.	Dealing With Grief & Loss (Hope in the Midst of Pain)	r	r	r
2.	Loss/Grief Recovery (Picking Up the Pieces)	r	r	r
3.	Relationship Enrichment (Making a Good One Better)	r	r	r
4.	Parenting Adolescents (Easing the Way to Adulthood)	r	r	r
5.	Healthy Relationships (Living Within Defined Boundaries)	r	r	r
6.	Stress Management (Finding the Balance)	r	r	r
7.	12 Steps (The Path to Wholeness)	r	r	r
8.	Blended Families (Yours, Mine, Ours)	r	r	r



BIRTH STAGE Bible Study — 7- to 13-week Courses

		Q1	Q2	Q3
9.	Stressed Out (Keeping Your Cool)	r	r	r
10.	Core Values (Setting My Moral Compass)	r	r	r
11.	Marriage (Seasons of Growth)	r	r	r
12.	Jesus (Up Close & Personal)	r	r	r
13.	Gifts & Calling (Discovering God's Will)	r	r	r
14.	Relationships (Learning to Love)	r	r	r
15.	Assessment (Personal Audit)	r	r	r
16.	Family (Stages of Parenting)	r	r	r
17.	Wholeness (Time for a Checkup)	r	r	r
18.	Beliefs (Basic Christianity)	r	r	r
19.	Men of Faith (Encouragement for a Man's Journey)	r	r	r
20.	Women of Faith (Encouragement for a Woman's Journey)	r	r	r



GROWTH STAGE Bible Study — Varying Length Courses

	Q1	Q2	Q3
21. Supernatural: Amazing Stories (Jesus' Miracles)	r	r	r
22. Discipleship: In His Steps (Life of Christ)	r	r	r
23. Wisdom: The Jesus Classics (Jesus' Parables)	r	r	r
24. Challenge: Attitude Adjustment (Sermon on the Mount)	r	r	r
25. Endurance: Running the Race (Philippians)	r	r	r
26. Teamwork: Together in Christ (Ephesians)	r	r	r
27. Integrity: Taking on Tough Issues (1 Corinthians)	r	r	r
28. Gospel: Jesus of Nazareth (Gospel of Mark)	r	r	r
29. Leadership: Passing the Torch (1 & 2 Timothy)	r	r	r
30. Excellence: Mastering the Basics (Romans)	r	r	r
31. Hope: Looking at the End of Time (Revelation)	r	r	r
32. Faithfulness: Walking in the Light (1 John)	r	r	r
33. Freedom: Living by Grace (Galatians)	r	r	r
34. Perseverance: Staying the Course (1 Peter)	r	r	r
35. Performance: Faith at Work (James)	r	r	r



DEVELOP STAGE Bible Study — 13-week Courses

	Q1	Q2	Q3
36. Ephesians (Our Riches in Christ)	r	r	r
37. James (Walking the Talk)	r	r	r
38. Life of Christ (Behold the Man)	r	r	r
39. Miracles (Signs and Wonders)	r	r	r
40. Parables (Virtual Reality)	r	r	r
41. Philippians (Joy Under Stress)	r	r	r
42. Sermon on the Mount (Examining Your Life)	r	r	r
43. 1 John (The Test of Faith)	r	r	r



REBIRTH STAGE Bible Study — 5-week Course

	Q1	Q2	Q3
44. Rebirth	r	r	r



OTHER SUGGESTIONS

	Q1	Q2	Q3
45. Other _____	r	r	r

Appendix C

SAMPLE WORSHIP VISITOR LETTER

The following letter is a sample that can be used to inform the prior month's worship service visitors about small groups at Imago Dei MCC.

New Individual
000 State Street
Media, PA 19063

Dear New;

I am so happy you decided to join us at a worship service recently. It's easy to get lost in a crowd, even though you may be surrounded by worshipers on a given Sunday. That's why Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church has Small Groups. We want everyone to have the opportunity to be known and cared for and to find your niche. You can connect in a caring, interactive group where you can feel free to ask your real questions and sense the support of the group.

Please accept this invitation to join one of the following groups now or in the future:

Loving is easy...and hard. A small group bible study led by the Congregational Care Ministry

Most of our life experience drives us toward isolation. But we believe that we were made for exactly the opposite: relationships with one another. Without community we cannot experience the abundant life that God designed us to experience. Seven Tuesdays at 7 PM, starting Jan 3, 2006. For information contact Christine Kanicki or John Houton at ckanicki@imagodeimcc.org or houton@ren.com.

Pastor's Sermon & Discussion Series

Discussion series on The 10 Spiritual Truths for Successful Living For Gays and Lesbians led by Rev. Karla Fleshman. Ten Sundays starting January 8, 2006 following Worship at noon.

Men's Spirituality - "Uniquely Designed"

The men of Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church get together regularly to build friendships, strengthen, and encourage one another in our spiritual journey. Seven Saturdays, starting January 7, 2006 at 10:00 AM. For more information, please contact Jim Day at 484-840-2680/ jamesday1@verizon.net

Coming...Fall 2006 DISCIPLE...

A bible study that aims at TRANSFORMATION, not just information! For additional information, please contact Therese at 267-735-9615 or tmm76id@peoplepc.com.

It was *great* having *you* join us for Worship! I hope you will consider joining our community as we share our spiritual journey. I truly hope you return soon. In the meantime, may God's Spirit shower you with Blessings!

Sincerely,

Jim Day
Small Group Coach
Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church

Appendix D

SMALL GROUP LEADER APPLICATION

The following application will be completed by each prospective Small Group Leader at the direction of the Small Group Coach. Applications will be maintained on file in the church office.



Group Leader Application

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

How long have you lived in the area? _____

Are you a member of our church?

- Yes How long have you been a member? _____
- No

Why did you become a member of our church?

What activities have you been involved in at our church?

Have you been in a small group before? Explain your experience.

Why do you want to be a small group leader?

Write a brief history of your relationship with Jesus Christ.



Group Selection Worksheet

This worksheet will help you decide the type of small group you would like to lead. Completing this form will also help your Small Group Coach promote your group effectively and quickly.

Flexibility: On a scale of 1 to 10 indicate how flexible you are on the type of small group you would like to lead. On this scale, 10 means you are very flexible on the type of group you lead, and 1 means you have a specific type of group you would like to lead.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Subject: What issues, needs or interests would you like to focus on in your group (i.e., outreach, cancer, recovery, artists, discipleship, etc.)?

Issues: What kinds of issues would you address in this type of small group?

People: What kinds of people, in what kinds of situations, would be most interested in this type of group?

Benefits: How would someone benefit from this small group?

Other: Are there any other special issues you might need to consider as you plan this Small Group (special meeting times, anonymity, child care, etc.)?

Publicity: How could you inform those people who might be interested in the Small Group?

Description: On the back, write a description (about 75 words) of the small group you have in mind (using the above information), and feel free to add your own "personality".



Group Leader Goals

Write down your goals for your small group. Later, your Small Group Coach will talk with you about how things went in your efforts to achieve these goals.

Name of Group: _____ Date: _____

Group Leader Name: _____

1. How many people do you want to have in your group?
2. What is your target date for multiplying a new group?
3. Regarding outreach, how many new people do you want to invite to your group?
4. What is your strategy for inviting new members into your group?
5. In what ways do you see your small group benefiting the lives of the group members?
6. How will you know if your group is a success?
7. What is your dream for developing new leadership from within your group?
8. What are your long-term goals for your Christian service?

Appendix E

MINISTRY PROJECT WORKSHEET

The following worksheet will be completed by the Small Group Leader with their team and reviewed with the Small Group Coach.



Ministry Project Worksheet

Name of Group: _____ Date: _____

Group Leader Name: _____

Use this worksheet to help your group brainstorm as you decide on a group ministry project.

1. Are we ready to work on a ministry project?

- Yes
- Not yet

2. What should our time commitment to this project be?

- A one-time project
- A set term project
- A continuing project

3. Who should we help?

- Each other
- People in our church
- People in our community

4. What kinds of needs should we meet in people's lives?

Stage of Life

Children
Teenagers
Young Adults
Middle-aged
Elderly

Basic Need

Shelter
Food
Clothing
Love & nurturing
Clean & safe environment

Special Conditions

Spiritually lost
Poor / Homeless
Physically disabled
Sickness
Emotional distress / grief

Take turns sharing your "passion" for the different stages of life, needs and special conditions that you chose. Share your ideas and dreams with the group and then work together to reach a consensus for a ministry project.

5. Discuss how you could do your project "in Jesus name". How can your small group represent your church as compassionate, Christ-like witnesses?

Appendix F

SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

The following form will be completed at the end of each month by each Small Group Leader and reviewed with the Small Group Coach. The reports are summarized by the Small Group Coach and reported to the Pastor.

Appendix G

Commissioning Reminiscing

Reminiscing Questions

1. What do you remember about the first time you attended this group?
2. How did you feel about opening up in this group and sharing your story?
3. What was the funniest thing that happened in this group?
4. What was the high point for you in this group?
5. What will you miss most about this group?
6. How would you like this group to stay in touch with each other after you multiply?
7. How did this group contribute to your life?
8. What is the biggest change that has occurred in your life since joining this group?

Wild Predictions

Try to match the people in your group to the crazy forecasts below. (Don't take it too seriously; it's meant to be fun!) Read out loud the first item and ask everyone to call out the name of the person who is most likely to accomplish this feat. Then, read the next item and ask everyone to make a new prediction, etc.

THE PERSON IN OUR GROUP MOST LIKELY TO ...

Make a million selling Beanie Babies over the Internet

Become famous for designing new attire for sumo wrestlers

Replace Vanna White on Wheel of Fortune

Appear on The Tonight Show to exhibit an acrobatic talent

Move to a desert island

Discover a new use for underarm deodorant

Succeed David Letterman as host of The Late Show

Substitute for John Madden as Fox's football color analyst

Appear on the cover of Muscle & Fitness Magazine

Become the newest member of the Spice Girls

Work as a bodyguard for Rush Limbaugh at Feminist convention

Write a best-selling novel based on their love life

Be a dance instructor on a cruise ship for wealthy, well-endowed widows

Win the blue ribbon at the state fair for best Rocky Mountain oyster recipe

Land a job as head librarian for Amazon.com

Be the first woman to win the Indianapolis 500

Open the Clouseau Private Detective Agency

Reflection Bible Study

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off — Acts 13:1–3, NIV

13 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

1. Why do you think God chose this small group in Antioch to launch the first missionary journey (instead of the church headquarters in Jerusalem)?
 - r It was merely coincidental.
 - r They were following the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - r They were a bunch of outcasts from the fringe of the church.
 - r They didn't know how to “paint inside the lines.”
2. How do you think the leadership back in Jerusalem felt when they heard what these guys were doing?
 - r thrilled
 - r embarrassed
 - r angry that they didn't follow protocol
 - r They probably didn't hear about it until later.
3. Why do you think the small group chose two people to send out instead of one?
 - r for companionship
 - r They had different gifts: Paul was a hothead, Barnabas an encourager.
 - r It was coincidental.
4. As you think about sending out some members of your small group to give “birth” to a new group, what is your greatest concern for these people?
 - r keeping the faith
 - r keeping the vision
 - r keeping their personal walk with Christ
 - r keeping in touch with us for support
5. As one who is going to lead or co-lead a new group, how would you describe your emotions right now?
 - r a nervous wreck
 - r pregnant with excitement
 - r delivery room jitters
 - r Ask me next week
6. If you could say one word of encouragement to those who are going to be new leaders, what would it be?
 - r I'll be praying for you.
 - r Call me anytime.
 - r You can do it.
 - r It's okay to fail.

