

# SMALL GROUP LEADERS

## HANDBOOK

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Adult Ministry

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## Purpose of This Small Group Leaders Handbook

*The purpose of FPC Small Groups is to provide opportunities for spiritual growth and fellowship that complement and contribute to our church's ministry.* (Developed by FPC Small Group Leaders and Jim Wagner, approved by Adult Ministry on June 3, 2024)

Small Groups, like people, come in all shapes and sizes. They meet in person or by Zoom. They meet at church or in homes or in public places. They meet seasonally or year-round. They have one leader or share leadership. The intention of this Small Group Leaders Handbook is that it will be helpful and useful to both new and experienced Small Group Leaders (SGL) in a variety of Small Group settings, including settings where the leadership changes from one meeting to another.

The first part of the Handbook, Three Steps for a Small Group Meeting, will be most helpful to new SGL. It was developed to train SGL for a seasonal all-church small group program. But it can be used by SGL as a format/structure/outline to prepare for a “meeting” of a short-term or ongoing group. Experienced SGL can use all the material as a reminder or refresher of what needs to happen in their small groups: e.g., The Small Group Meeting Checklist.

The Resources Section includes basic resources that can be used in all small groups. The Appendix is meant to provide an introduction to Small Group Theories and Functions and may be of more interest to the experienced SGL. Hopefully, it will help all SGL better understand and manage the ebb and flow of their small groups.

The overarching goal of this Handbook is to be a resource that will help dedicated Small Group Leaders be more effective in leading, building, and strengthening the vital ministry of Small Groups at FPC.

## Reasons for Small Groups

- Small groups have been part of Christian tradition from the very beginning of the early church.
- While Jesus had many followers, He personally chose a small group of 12 to teach and nurture: e.g., Mark 3.13-19; Luke 6.12-16.
- In the early Church, the book of Acts as well as the letters of Paul tell how Christians gathered together in small groups to worship, pray, and study: e.g., Acts 2: 43-47.
- Our Small Group Ministry continues those early Church traditions. “Let us then pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding”: e.g., Romans 14:19.
- Small groups support the mission and values of FPCHHI.
  - Our Mission: Changing Lives ... Making Disciples (Both are essential goals of Small Groups.)
  - Our Values: Joyful Worship, Gracious Invitation, Sacrificial Service, Prayerful Study, Caring Connection. (Prayerful Study and Caring Connections are also essential goals of small groups.)

## Three Steps for a Small Group Session

### The Before, During, and After the Meeting

- **Before the Meeting**

1. **Communicating with each member** in the group: This is probably best done by email. Welcome each newcomer to the group. Give essential details regarding time, where and when the group will meet, and what they need to do to prepare for the first session.

2. **Planning the Session/Your Preparation:**

- Read all the appropriate materials\_for the study that the group has chosen.
- Review DVD or other Audio-Visual materials.
- Write out the goals and outcomes for the session.
- Plan out the flow and timing of the meeting.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Opening Activities
3. Study and Discussion
4. Wrapping up the Discussion
5. Reviewing Next Steps for Next Meeting
6. Closing Prayer

- **During the Meeting**

1. **Open with Prayer.** If you ask for Joys and Concerns, be sure to monitor the time. It might be a good idea for you to model “Joys and Concerns” by going first.

2. Start with an “**icebreaker**” at the beginning of the first meeting and maybe at the beginning of every meeting.

3. **Learning Together**

Video Viewing and Discussion  
Study and Discussion

#### 4. Wrapping Up

Closing Discussion

Closing Prayer

5. Remind the group of the **next meeting** time and date.

6. Make any necessary assignments.

- **After the Meeting**

1. Email all members the next day, thanking them for their attendance and contribution. Reiterate the date, time, and study assignments for the next get together.

2. Let your members know that they may contact you by email if they have any questions or concerns about the meeting.

## Basic Facilitation

- **Begin and end on time.** If a session is running longer than expected, get consensus from the group before continuing beyond the agreed-upon end time.
- **Your Role.** Remember you are a facilitator and not a content expert. There are times when you might talk more to explain something in the material, but then you must transition to open discussion. Your job is to create an open atmosphere that invites participation of group members and values their input.
- **Arrange the group in a circle,** if possible, so that everyone can see one another. If members separate themselves from the group, encourage them to join in.
- Remember that **group discussion is the goal.** If the group looks to you for the answer to every question, redirect questions back to the group. For example: “Let me hear what some of the rest of you think about that first. Anyone care to respond?” Encourage multiple answers or responses before moving on.
- **Model openness** as you share with the group. Group members will follow your example. If you limit your sharing to the superficial level, others will likely do the same.
- **Try to include everyone.** There are always members of the group who are quieter and more thoughtful. Ask the more reserved person what he/she thinks about a topic you are discussing. Also, you can include members by giving them certain tasks, such as handling the technology, saying a prayer, or reading Scripture.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Rather than asking, “Did you like the Bible passage for this week?” ask, “What did you like about the Bible passage this week?”
- Don’t allow the group to get too far off topic. It will be necessary to **refocus** them on the topic from time to time.

## Small Group Resources

- **Small Group Covenant**
- **Small Group Leader Checklist**
- **“Ice Breakers” for Small Groups**
- **Link to Regularly Updated List of Small Group Resources (Located in the FPC Library):**  
[https://www.fpchhi.org/\\_files/ugd/108c94\\_9e3c9503a89e45a9b520f60ce6309a5e.pdf](https://www.fpchhi.org/_files/ugd/108c94_9e3c9503a89e45a9b520f60ce6309a5e.pdf)

**Small Group Covenant**  
**At First Presbyterian Church**  
**November 2024**

- I will make **attendance** at my small group a priority, knowing that my attendance greatly affects intimacy and the group.
- I will try to be **aware of my own assumptions and biases**, which are based on my individual experience.
- I will **listen with a compassionate** and curious heart to others, especially when their experiences and views are different.
- I will **not interrupt** other members of the group when they speak.
- If I **disagree** with others in the group, I will do so **respectfully** and gently.
- I agree to **confidentiality**. What members of the group share will remain confidential in the group.
- I will commit to seeking to **grow spiritually** in my personal walk with God, trusting the Spirit to work in our holy conversations.
- I will **pray** for group members often and on a regular basis.
- I will be **faithful in word and deed** to our commitment to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

(Suggestion: Revisit this Covenant periodically with group members.)

## Small Group Leader Checklist

### Pre-Meeting Contact

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact all participants regarding time, place, assignments, and materials to have available.

### Leader Preparation

\_\_\_\_\_ Review the last meeting of the group and make any necessary adjustments.

\_\_\_\_\_ Read the appropriate materials. If there is a leader's guide, read and study it.

\_\_\_\_\_ Read all the Scriptures quoted in the lesson. Watch the DVD if it is part of the lesson.

\_\_\_\_\_ Make sure you have all the essential materials: e.g., DVD, DVD player, Bibles, whiteboard or flipchart, leader's guide.

### Planning the Session

\_\_\_\_\_ Session Goals and Outcomes

\_\_\_\_\_ Getting Started

- Opening Activities/"Ice Breaker"
- Opening Prayer

\_\_\_\_\_ Learning Together

- Video Viewing and Discussion
- Study and Discussion

\_\_\_\_\_ Wrapping Up

- Closing the Discussion
- Closing Prayer

### After the Meeting

\_\_\_\_\_ Email all members the next day, thanking them for their attendance and contribution, reiterating the date, time, and study assignments for the next meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_ Let your members know that they may contact you with questions or concerns about the meeting.

## **“Ice Breakers” for Small Groups**

### **Personal**

- Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
- How many brothers and sisters do you have? Where are you in the birth order?
- What day of your life would you most like to relive and why?
- As a child, what defined you?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- If you're married, how did you meet your spouse/partner?
- How many children, if any, do you have and what are their names and ages?
- In what creative ways have you created memories with your children?
- What dreams do you have for your future?

### **Vocation/Education**

- Where did you go to school?
- If you went to college, what was your major? Do you wish you had studied something else?
- What did you do for work at the beginning of your career? Are you still doing the same thing?
- If you could do something other than what you are doing now, what would it be?

### **Hobbies and Interests**

- What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
- What have you never done that you wish you could?
- What are some of your hobbies?
- What are you reading now? What kind of books do you like to read?

## **God and Church**

- In what church/denomination, if any, were you raised?
- What were you taught about God as a child?
- What has been your most significant encounter with God?
- What has helped you in your walk with God?
- How are you involved in the church?

## **Miscellaneous**

- If you were given \$100,000, but had to give it away in four weeks, what would you do with the money?
- Who is someone you admire and why?
- Who is someone who has positively influenced your life?
- If you could be any animal, what kind of an animal would you be and why?

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## **Shared Leadership and Group Member Functions**

### **Definition of Shared Leadership**

1. Leadership is something someone does or says within a group which helps that group get its job done by working together. What a person does or says in a group that assists the group in getting its job done is more important than who that person is: i.e., chairman, appointed leader, designated leader.
2. Leadership then is a function, something someone does, and not a person. Leadership in many instances must be shared because one person cannot perform all the functions necessary to help a group work effectively together.

### **Group Member Functions**

Careful analysis of any group shows two main kinds of participation:

1. Participation directed toward reaching the goal of the group: task activity;
2. Participation that affects the climate and morale of the group: maintenance activity.

Participation in either of these activities is a leadership function that can be practiced by any member of the group. A group in which the appropriate activities come from different members at different times has shared leadership and demonstrates the kind of supportive relationships found to be present in effective work groups.

## Role Functions in a Small Group

(Source: *Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*)

The members of an efficient and productive group must provide for meeting two kinds of needs: "What it takes to do the job, and what it takes to strengthen and maintain the group." Specific statements and behaviors may be viewed at a more abstract level than the content or behavior alone: i.e., in terms of how they serve the group needs.

What members do to serve group needs may be called functional roles. Statements and behaviors that tend to make the group inefficient or weak may be called nonfunctional behaviors.

A partial list of the kinds of contributions or the group services which are performed by one or many individuals follows.

**A. Task Roles:** Functions required in selecting and carrying out a group task.

1. ***Initiating Activity:*** Proposing solutions; suggesting new ideas, new definitions of the problem, new attack on the problem, or new organization of material.
2. ***Seeking Information:*** Asking for clarification of suggestions; requesting additional information or facts.
3. ***Seeking Opinion:*** Looking for an expression of feeling about something from the members; seeking clarification of values, suggestions, or ideas.
4. ***Giving Information:*** Offering facts or generalizations; relating one's own experience to the group problem to illustrate points.
5. ***Giving Opinion:*** Stating an opinion or belief concerning a suggestion or one of several suggestions, particularly concerning its value rather than its factual basis.
6. ***Elaborating:*** Clarifying; giving examples or developing meanings; trying to envision how a proposal might work if adopted.
7. ***Coordinating:*** Showing relationships among various ideas or suggestions; trying to pull ideas and suggestions together; trying to draw together activities of various subgroups or members.

8. **Summarizing:** Pulling together related ideas or suggestions; restating suggestions after the group has discussed them.

**B. Maintenance and Group-Building Roles:** Functions required in strengthening and maintaining group life and activities.

1. **Encouraging:** Being friendly, warm, responsive to others; praising others and their ideas; agreeing with and accepting contributions of others.
2. **Gatekeeping:** Trying to make it possible for another member to make a contribution to the group by saying, "We haven't heard anything from Jim yet," or suggesting limited talking time for everyone so that all will have a chance to be heard.
3. **Standard Setting:** Expressing standards for the group to use in choosing its content/procedures or in evaluating its decisions; reminding group members to avoid decisions that conflict with group standards.
4. **Following:** Going along with decisions of the group; thoughtfully accepting ideas of others; serving as audience during group discussion.
5. **Expressing Group Feeling:** Describing the reactions of the group to ideas or solutions.

**C. Both Group Task and Maintenance Roles**

1. **Evaluating:** Measuring accomplishments against goals.
2. **Diagnosing:** Determining sources of difficulties and appropriate steps to take next; analyzing the main blocks to progress.
3. **Testing for Consensus:** Tentatively asking for group opinions in order to find out whether the group is nearing consensus on a decision; sending up trial balloons to test group opinions.
4. **Mediating:** Harmonizing; conciliating differences in points of view; making compromise solutions.
5. **Relieving Tension:** Draining off negative feelings by jesting or putting a tense situation into a wider context.

People sometimes behave in nonfunctional ways that may actually harm the group and the work it is trying to do. Some of the more common types of such nonfunctional behaviors are described below.

#### D.Types of Nonfunctional Behaviors

1. ***Being Aggressive:*** Working for status by criticizing or blaming others; showing hostility toward the group or some individual; deflating the ego or status of others.
2. ***Blocking:*** Interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent; citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem; arguing too much on one point; rejecting ideas without consideration.
3. ***Self-Confessing:*** Using the group as a sounding board; expressing personal, non-group-oriented feelings or points of view.
4. ***Competing:*** Vying with others to produce the best idea, talk the most, play the most roles, gain favor with the leader.
5. ***Seeking Sympathy:*** Trying to induce other group members to be sympathetic to one's problems or misfortunes; deploring one's own situation, or disparaging one's own ideas to gain support.
6. ***Special Pleading:*** Introducing or supporting suggestions related to one's own "pet concerns" or philosophies; lobbying.
7. ***Horsing Around:*** Clowning, joking, mimicking, disrupting the work of the group.
8. ***Seeking Recognition:*** Attempting to call attention to oneself by loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, unusual behavior.
9. ***Withdrawal:*** Acting indifferent or passive; resorting to excessive formality, daydreaming, doodling, whispering to others, wandering from the subject.

In using a classification such as the one above, people need to guard against the tendency to blame any person (whether oneself or another) who falls into "nonfunctional behavior."

Pfeiffer, W. (1981). *Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*.  
University Associates Publishers.

## **Process for Bringing a New Member into your Small Group**

1. The group leader meets with the new members(s) to explain the purpose of the group, to remind about meeting times, and to answer questions that the new member(s) might have.

- At that meeting, all new members share a brief bio with the group. The bio might include such things as name, address, number of years on the Island, number of years of church membership, name of profession, and one additional thing they would like to share.
- Time management is the leader's responsibility in this meeting.

2. At the first class session, each new member shares his/her short bio with the full group. Also, at that meeting it would be good to conduct an "icebreaker" with the group. Topics as these could be addressed: e.g., "what I like most about this group" or "why I joined this group" or "what I find most beneficial about this group." The new members could answer these questions or just share their expectations for membership in the group.

3. The new member would be assigned or could choose a "buddy/mentor" from the existing group.

4. The "buddy/mentor" would be responsible for answering any questions that the new member has, as well as periodically checking in with the new member. Hopefully, the new member would perceive the "buddy/mentor" as a go-to person. The formal "buddy/mentor" role should last for 6 to 12 months.

## How to Handle a Difficult Small Group Member

January 9, 2023

(Published by The Gospel Coalition)

Rachel Bailey

Rachel Bailey (MA, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary) serves as the community life director at Peace Church in Middleville, Michigan. She works to develop the hospitality team, engage in local outreach initiatives, and build up small group leaders through teaching, training, and developing curriculum. Rachel and her husband, Logan, live in Hastings, Michigan.

Small group Bible studies are a joy to lead. Any chance to study Scripture in community is a gift. But they can also be challenging to lead, particularly if you have a difficult group member.

Perhaps this person has a lot of strong opinions and she's decided this group is the best place to air them all. Maybe she overshares personal information or always directs the conversation back to herself. She might gossip, revealing inappropriate information about others under the guise of a prayer request. Or perhaps she dominates the conversation, not leaving space for anyone else to speak. Am I making any leaders squirm yet?

As I've trained leaders to handle these challenging situations, I've found three principles helpful.

### 1. Set Firm Boundaries

Establishing standards and expectations from the beginning is loving. This gives something tangible to refer back to when boundaries are tested. And it creates an opportunity to clearly address problems like gossip, talking over one another, or disregarding Scripture.

Although boundaries are ideally established from the start, if you're leading an existing small group, it's never too late. Look for a natural place to introduce boundaries, like after a summer break, at the start of a new year, or when changing your topic of study.

Establishing standards and expectations from the beginning is loving. One way to set boundaries is to create a written group agreement and have everyone sign it. Another option is to write it out in an email and ask all participants to reply to indicate they've read it. Or you might just have the conversation verbally. Consider the dynamics of your group and what would be most loving and effective in your situation.

## **2. Extend Grace**

When you have a difficult member in your group, it can be easy to focus on the challenges he or she creates for you as the leader. Take a deep breath and ask God to help you see the bigger picture. Let's think through a few reasons someone may be a difficult group member:

She's lonely, lacking other community bonds, and expressing her desire for connection in unhealthy ways.

She's an immature Christian (or not a Christian at all), lacking the fruit of the Spirit.

She's struggling with a mental or emotional disorder which may inhibit her ability to function appropriately in the group.

She's been hurt by a community in the past.

What do all these situations have in common? They describe people who need the grace and kindness of God as much as you do. If you discover your difficult group member has one of these deeper concerns, let it inform how you approach her. Exercise wisdom based on her particular circumstances, and seek to extend the same compassion and grace you've received from the Lord.

## **3. Have a Conversation**

Extending grace doesn't mean allowing inappropriate behavior to continue unchecked. When a boundary has been repeatedly crossed, it's time to speak with the person and address the issue clearly.

Confronting others makes my palms sweat. Perhaps it makes you uncomfortable too. But lovingly correcting a brother or sister is a biblical call we must take seriously, particularly as leaders (2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Thess. 3:15). Here's how you might approach the conversation depending on the issue you need to address.

### **Conversation Dominators**

If someone constantly dominates the conversation, you have the freedom and responsibility as the leader to redirect the discussion during group time:

"Hey, \_\_\_\_\_, thanks for your thoughts. Let's take a moment to hear from \_\_\_\_\_ about this topic."

In a private conversation with the group member, specifically describe her negative behavior. Encourage her to hone her gifts by looking out for those who are shy or not engaging and to use her voice to cheer on others whose voices aren't being heard.

### **Toxic Sharers**

Your group needs to be a refuge for sharing struggles, not a place for gossip to fester. Toxic Sharers may divulge too much information about themselves or others in the group, or they might share other members' prayer requests with people outside the group. All of this must be snuffed out immediately. Don't shy away from quickly redirecting the conversation during a group meeting, even if it feels awkward.

As with the Conversation Dominator, you should have a private conversation with the Toxic Sharer where you describe her negative behavior. Acknowledge her need to feel seen and heard, and give her examples of appropriate ways to handle sensitive information in the future.

### **One Who Needs to Leave**

What if you've had multiple conversations with a difficult group member and brought another believer with you to confront her, yet she's still unwilling to change? At this point, we're talking about blatant disregard for the boundaries and well-being of the group. Set up a time to meet with the person in a public space, potentially with a mediator, and include the following in your conversation:

- A specific description of the behavior that is disrupting the group;
- A clear request for the person to leave the group, effective immediately;
- A sincere commitment to pray for her.

It's important to remember that we as imperfect humans will never adhere to standards and expectations perfectly, whether as group members or as leaders. But by God's grace, we can seek to maintain a healthy, God-honoring atmosphere in our small groups.

When you encounter a difficult member in your group, I encourage you to pray through your approach, seek the wisdom of your pastor or ministry leader, and avoid the pitfalls of inaction or anger. May our good and merciful God be glorified in how we handle the difficult group members in our care.

## When a Group Member Is Emotionally Troubled and Disruptive

--Jeanne Lane

10/29/25

In rare cases, small group leaders in our church have experienced sudden, unexpected, and/or ongoing disruptive behaviors that cannot be predicted, such as abrupt leadership challenges, verbal domination<sup>1</sup>, or toxic argumentative interactions.

Even skilled group leaders struggle to handle gracefully out-of-the-blue outbursts with a calm response that balances empathy for the disruptive member with the needs of the other group members.

Members who volunteer to lead small groups have the support of our church staff when these isolated - but upsetting - circumstances occur. The following members of the church staff are available to contact for counsel and guidance to discuss the incident(s), gain context on why it/they may have occurred, and strategize the most empathetic response: Director of Faith Formation, Director of Volunteer Ministry, one of the pastors.

*Small group leaders are not expected to handle out-of-bounds behaviors on their own.* A leader may be entirely unaware of circumstances in a disruptive person's life, especially if the person is new to the group, new to the church, or has had a life-changing event (such as the death of a family member or the onset of dementia).

Small group leaders are entitled to guidance and assistance from the church staff in these rare cases and will be supported and affirmed if unresolved contentious behaviors ultimately dictate that the person must be asked to leave the small group<sup>2</sup>.

Lastly, when the church staff is aware of a disruptive person, it is incumbent upon the staff member to have a private conversation with a potential new group leader before a disruptive person participates in their small group or engages in group shopping because they are asked to leave one small group and seek to join another.

For more examples and insights, visit this resource from which the words in the footnotes come.

### **Practical Ministry Skills: Ministering to Difficult Group Members.**

<https://cornerstonechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Dealing-with-Difficult-Group-Members.pdf>

1. "Few barriers can subvert the depth and transforming power of a small-group discussion faster than one or more group members who dominate the conversation. Such members can monopolize entire gatherings with their problems and perspectives and can hinder the participation of everyone else in the group" (p. 12).
2. "One of my overriding principles of leadership is that the group is more important than the individual. This principle always surprises leaders; it seems antithetical to the concept of community. But it's essential. If people join a group to grow, they need a reasonably healthy environment in which to mature. Even one person who brings serious problems and (and this is the operative word) who can't or won't respond to leadership or correction will discourage other group members. Soon you'll experience complaining, absences, or both" (p.6).

## Becoming a Small Group

Source: Cokesbury, United Methodist Church

Any group (or the church, for that matter) has a lifespan, which has been described in the shorthand of “form, storm, and norm.” People come together for some reason (form); they get to know one another and figure out the stated work of the group (storm); and then develop stronger relationships and a sense of mutual purpose that allows them to become an entity with common goals, values, and ways of working and being (norm).

### The Healthy Group Lifespan

A longer description focuses more on functionality: “birth, formation, stability, decline, death.” *Birth* and *formation* are essentially the same as *form* and *storm*. *Stability* may be misleading, because *vitality*, not stability, is what the group needs. *Vitality* allows the group to adapt, change, look ahead, evaluate honestly what it is and what it's doing, and create. Perhaps a better way to think about *stability* is by understanding that *instability* is what leads to decline and perhaps death. Many things will destabilize a group: the presence of new members, the absence or loss of members, competing tasks, time pressures, change of leadership, change or loss of vision or purpose, change of space, and discouragement, to name a few.

For a group to remain vital, the group leader must *always* attend to both the group's life and the group's vision. A healthy group stays in a “formation—stability” loop. When circumstances change, the whole group “regroups” or “re-forms.” It revisits its purpose, orients new people into the group vision and culture, reaffirms its “marching orders,” maintains effective communication within and outside the group as necessary, and makes intelligent adjustments to its plans and strategies. When a group slips away from this healthy way of functioning, it begins to decline.

Some signs of decline are obvious; for example, people “vote with their feet” and go elsewhere; withhold their time, money, or commitment; get cantankerous with one another; or create winners and losers by voting instead of working by consensus. Some signs are less obvious but can be equally deadly: becoming too consumed with *doing* to pay attention to *being*, getting lax about maintaining the means of grace that mark the group as ministry, failing to welcome or properly orient new people, wishing for different circumstances rather than dealing with current reality, and so on.

### The End of a Group

A strong leader will act to keep the group stable and vital and may intervene at the point of decline. When the pattern of decline is not attended to, the group will

eventually die, though that could take a very long time. We have all seen sad examples of a group that has dwindled in size to just a few people who most often have no real sense of mission or purpose anymore; they hang on because of their relationships or simply out of habit.

Even at the point of death, a creative intervention may breathe new life and purpose into a faltering group, though its members may have to agree to a change that seems radical to them. Dying, however, for a “Resurrection people,” can be liberating and should be handled with dignity. No one needs to feel as if his or her participation and the strong relationships have been wasted, but sometimes people don’t know how to come to a graceful end. As the small group ministry leader, you may be the one who steps in to end a group.

Always remember the personal touch, and never underestimate the power of ritual. If you step in, visit each of the remaining group members, one at a time, with a member of your core team, if you can. (Witnesses to this conversation are important, as feelings may run hot and deep.) Having that personal attention, in which you invite the person to reflect on what the group has been and might yet become through a rebirthing process with others, sends the appropriate message that the individual and the group are valued. Invite remaining group members to be mentors or advisors or “seed members” of a new group. Celebrate their life as a group in worship or with some other recognition. Find a way to keep their group “story”—their contributions to the church’s story—alive.

## **Support for All Small Group Participants**

Small group ministry that is integral to the mission of the church requires regular, intentional support. Plan quarterly gatherings for everyone participating in a small group, not just the leaders. These gatherings will ideally include sharing a meal, a brief time of small group training, informal conversation, and worship. These gatherings are important because they will build connections among all the various groups and provide ongoing training. They are an opportunity for groups to learn from one another.

Quarterly gatherings are ideally for small group participants only. They are not open to everyone in the congregation. Members of the congregation who wish to participate in the quarterly meetings may do so on the condition they join one of the small groups.

Finally, the recommended order of worship for the conclusion of these quarterly meetings is the Love Feast found in *The United Methodist Book of Worship* on page 581. The Love Feast is an important part of Methodist spirituality. It is a powerful time of informal worship that includes hymn singing, Scripture reading, prayer, testimony, sharing bread and water, and a collection to support ministry with people who live in poverty. One of its important features is that it is intended to be led entirely by laity. The Love Feast empowers people and builds community among people who share the common experience of participation in a small group.

Cokesbury, The United Methodist Church

## ZOOM TUTORIAL

### 1. Sign Up and Download Zoom

1. Go to the Zoom website and sign up for a free account.
2. Once you're registered, download the Zoom app for your computer or mobile device. You can find the download link on the Zoom website.

### 2. Hosting Your First Meeting

- Open the Zoom app and click "Sign In."
- Click "Host a Meeting" to start an instant meeting. You'll have options to enable video and audio.
- Invite participants by sharing the meeting link or sending them an email invitation.

### 3. Meeting Controls

- During a meeting, you'll see various controls:
  - **Mute/Unmute:** Click the microphone icon to mute or unmute yourself.
  - **Start/Stop Video:** Toggle your video on or off.
  - **Invite:** Invite more participants by email or copy the meeting link.
  - **Manage Participants:** See who's in the meeting and control their audio/video settings.
  - **Share Screen:** Present your screen or specific applications.
  - **Chat:** Communicate with participants via text chat.
  - **Record:** Record the meeting for future reference.
  - **Reactions:** Use emojis to express yourself.

### 4. Scheduling a Meeting

- Click "Schedule" to set up a future meeting.
- Choose the date, time, and other settings.
- Share the meeting details with participants.

### 5. Joining a Meeting

- To join a meeting, click "Join" and enter the meeting ID or use the invitation link.

- If prompted, enter the meeting password.

## 6. Mobile App

- Download the Zoom app on your mobile device (available for iOS and Android).
- The mobile app has similar features to the desktop version.

Remember, practice makes perfect! Feel free to explore more features like virtual backgrounds, breakout rooms, and polling as you become more comfortable with Zoom. And don't worry—I promise Zoom won't turn you into a pixelated potato!  [123](#)

If you'd like more detailed instructions, there are some great video tutorials available on YouTube. For example:

- [ZOOM TUTORIAL | How To Use Zoom STEP BY STEP For Beginners! \[COMPLETE GUIDE\]](#) (by Dorothy Tutorials)
- [Zoom Tutorial for Beginners: How to Use Zoom Video Conferencing](#) (by Simon Sez IT)