

GROUP LEADER TRAINING

Introduction

During the first two weeks, we're going to lay the groundwork and articulate the philosophy of groups and group leadership. We're going to spend a lot of time on this, because what you believe about groups and group leadership will greatly affect how your group operates. I believe that if you have a solid foundation, then the nuts and bolts of group leadership will come much easier for you.

Here's the schedule for the next three weeks:

1. Small Group Philosophy at Oak Leaf Church
2. Theology for Group Leaders
3. Leading a Kids, Student or Adult Small Group

Session One: Small Group Philosophy at Oak Leaf Church

When it comes to ministry, we always want to start with the Bible. What God says matters more than what we think. What can we learn from the pages of Scripture about small group ministry.

- In the New Testament, there are several references to the church that is in their house (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2).
- When Jesus began his public ministry, one of his first acts was to form a small group (Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 6:13). Jesus spent the majority of his time with this group of disciples. He taught the masses, but he also led this group of followers on a much deeper level.
- In Acts 2:42-47 you see small groups of people meeting together for teaching, community, prayer, worship, ministry and outreach. “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Fellowship and community are two purposes of the church that are best seen in a healthy small group.
- Exodus 18 – Moses and Jethro. Moses couldn’t do it all on his own. Jethro advised Moses to select capable, trustworthy leaders and appoint them to lead groups of people in the nation. Not only was this more effective, it allowed Moses to focus on hearing from God and representing the people to God.
- “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” - 1 Corinthians 12:7
- “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” - Hebrews 10:24-25
- “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” - 2 Timothy 2:2

How do groups work at Oak Leaf Church?

A small group is a little church. Everything that a church does, a group does on a smaller scale. Every group reflects the core values and participates in the core mission of the church, but with it’s own unique personality. DNA is the same; personality is different. Think of them like colonies of a larger country. Just like our church has a master strategy, every group has the same strategy – just on a smaller scale. They try to get people to church, help them have a good/God experience and help them follow Jesus.

Here's what groups at Oak Leaf Church do:

Know the Gospel – Bible Study, discussion, and attention to spiritual discussions. A small group needs to have a Bible component to it...this is not just a fellowship group or support group. Three ladies walking in the park isn't a small group. Tacking on prayer doesn't turn an activity into a small group.

Share the Gospel – inviting, mission, serving, sharing the gospel (share the gospel) Groups are outward focused, just like our church is outward focused. Invest, invite and live intentionally. Groups should be continually growing in size towards multiplication.

- Groups get people to groups. You can't wait for the church staff or some big sign up event to get people to your group. You need to go and invite people to be a part of your group.
- Groups participate in community outreach. Serving the community isn't the job of one pastor on staff, and it's not something that we can program. Every group needs to maintain an outward focus. In fact, since our natural tendency is to grow inward, you need to OVEREMPHASIZE sharing the gospel and being outward focus, just to stay balanced.
- The church grows the group; the group grows the church. As the church grows, the pool of people you can invite to your group grows. As groups grow, the church-at-large grows. It's a two-way relationship.

Live the Gospel – care, prayer, friendship, fellowship. Christianity is a personal faith, but it is not a private faith.

Ten Benefits of the Small Group Model

1. Involvement – in a small group, everyone can get involved
2. Welcoming environments – small groups can be very friendly and personal
3. Flexibility – groups can meet in a variety of places and at a variety of times
4. Good stewardship – we don't need lots of educational space
5. Relevance – talking about real issues is relevant
6. Relationships – group members need to be led on a personal, one-on-one level
7. Spiritual Growth – mentoring and discipleship happen best in a one-on-one relationship
8. Affinity – people in small groups often have a lot in common
9. Care – meaningful care happens best in a small group
10. Questions – questions can be asked and answered in a small group

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

If small groups are like "little churches," then small group leaders are like "little pastors." Just like churches are led by shepherds, groups are led by shepherds as well. Though the scale is smaller, the impact is larger. Jesus was a shepherd/leader of a small group (the 12 disciples). Group leaders must support the mission and vision of the church. For this reason, they must be official members in good standing.

Psalm 23 is a great picture of what a shepherd does: Leadership, protection, and care all come from the Shepherd. At Oak Leaf Church, group leaders are shepherd/leaders. The Bible says that shepherds are to know the condition of their flocks.

Leading a group isn't a task. It's a spiritual endeavor with great responsibility. Don't take group leadership lightly...in many ways, you will be the most influential spiritual leader in the life of your group members.

Three Ways Leaders Can Shepherd and Care for those in their group

1. Communication – calls, email, texts, conversations
2. Time – be intentional.
3. Prayer – pray with your group and for your group

What principles can we learn from the passages in the Bible dealing with qualifications for leadership? 1 Timothy 3:8-13; 1 Peter 5:1-5. 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 4:5; Philippians 4:9; Titus 1:6-9. Group leaders are true LEADERS in our church.

Here are seven qualities we look for and develop in group leaders.

- Christ Follower – *Having a passion for Christ* Leaders are not expected to be perfect, but our goal should be to become perfect in Christ (Col 1:28) and to reach maturity as described in Eph. 4:13: “...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (1 John 1:9; Rom 6:6; Col 3:16; 1 Peter 2:2; Rom. 7:6; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

You don't need to be a Christian to be a greeter or to serve coffee at Oak Leaf Church, but you need to be a Christian in order to lead a group. You can't lead people to follow someone that you are not following yourself.

- Character – *Paying attention to the heart* Depth of character is a matter of becoming more like Christ and less like the world. (Rom 8:28-30; 12:1-2; Phil 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:5; 3:1-15; 6:11; Titus 1:5-9). Some professing Christians do not have a godly character, and this isn't going to work for group leaders.
- Calling – *Called to shepherd God's people* Leaders have a heart for being caregivers. They see others with compassion as Christ saw them in Matt 9:36-38 – distressed and downcast, in need of a good shepherd who will protect them and provide nurturing care for them. Leaders are convicted about the need for ministry and the use of their spiritual gifts to shepherd others (Phil 1:8; 1 Thess 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- Competence – *Able to lead and guide a group* Leaders set direction, keep the group focused and guided toward its purpose. Leaders take time to develop the skills they need to effectively facilitate a small group. (Matt 4:19; 9:36-38; Acts 6:1-7). Over time, we will help you become a better group leader.

If you don't know how to do something, if you're committed...you will learn and figure it out. As a staff, we will commit to help you grow as a leader. We will send monthly

emails that have links and articles that will help you become a better leader. We're going to have quarterly training meetings (that's part of the commitment we're asking you to make as a leader). Your staff and your coach will help train you so that you become the best group leader that you can be.

- **Compatibility – *Having the temperament and passion for leadership*** Some leaders lead well because it's natural for them, it's part of how God wired them. Even those who do not consider themselves natural leaders are capable of leading (usually in humility) when they are mature and called upon to do so. Teamwork in leadership is essential. Using their spiritual gifts alongside others is the kingdom design for ministry. (Acts 6:2; Rom 12:8; Heb 13:7, 17)

This is very important, because we don't have time to reign in rogue groups. A group is not your personal church to do whatever you want. You need to support the mission and the vision of the church. You need to support the leaders. You may like everything, but you need to support everything. As a group leader, you need to participate in the training and be a part of the team.

- **Commitment – *Doing what it takes*** Spiritual leaders are committed to the vision of the ministry, to Christ, and to their calling, and to helping develop the members of their groups. They realize that leadership requires commitment, not convenience. Leaders are committed to seeing people grow in Christ and to reaching new people for Christ as they are able. (Matt 28:18-20; Rom 16:3-4; 2 Tim 2:2)

I want to be honest with you. Not everyone is cut out to be a group leader, because they can't handle the spiritual commitment. If you're leading a group for students on Wednesday night, that means that you must be committed to being available on Wednesday night. If you're leading a group of children on Sunday morning, it means you can't take 15 weekend vacations during the week. Commitment is required.

- **Capacity – *An ability to serve people and provide care for them*** Leadership is serving others and doing whatever it takes to accomplish the ministry. This means having time, energy, and resources at your disposal. Leaders must free themselves from unnecessary and distracting commitments so they have the capacity (spiritual, emotional, and physical resources) to do what God has called them to do. (1 Tim 3:4-5, 12)

Group leaders have leaders too...the role of the coach is to shepherd the leaders. Just like you're going to shepherd and lead your group, a small group coach will shepherd and lead you. Coaches lead the leaders.

Biblical Leadership

Biblical leadership is the task of leading God's people into mutual ministry with one another for the purpose of building up the body of Christ and reaching out to the world. (Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 28:18-20) Jesus cast a vision and then embodied the vision by becoming an example of it.

John 13:4-5, "He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel

around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him." This was the lowest job of the lowest slave in the house. *Why did Jesus do this belittling task?* To show us that leaders lead by example. Leaders serve those they are leading. No task is "beneath" a leader. In Mark 10:45 Jesus tells his disciples that he did not come to be served, but to serve. As a small group leader, you too are a shepherd. A shepherd cares for the flock as if they were his or her own children (1 Thess. 2:5-12)

You also are an example to the members of your small group and should model Christ-likeness. Paul told his disciples to imitate him.

- "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." – 1 Corinthians 11:1
- "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." – Philippians 3:17

Good motives for leadership

- Glorify the Lord *Col 3:23-25, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*
- Keep watch (shepherd) others *Acts 20:28, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."*
- Be an example *1 Peter 5:2-4, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."*
- Use your gifts to serve one another *Eph 4:11-13, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."*

Bad motives/hindrances to leadership

- Self-exaltation *Prov 27:2, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips."*
- To feel important or gain prestige *1 Thess 2:4-6, "On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed-God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else."*
- Because someone pressured you *1 Peter 5:2-4, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."*

Session Two: Theology and Doctrine

Why are we doing so much foundational work: because if you have a solid foundation, the building is easier. If you really understand what groups are, what being a leader means, and what the Bible says, then you are well on your way to being an effective group leader. The nuts and bolts of group leadership will come easier to you because you'll have a solid foundation.

You don't need to know everything about the Bible to be a great group leader, but you do need to have a good foundation. Chances are, you didn't know everything about being a parent before you had kids, but you knew some things. You don't have to know everything, in many cases you just need to know one more thing. There are lots of in-depth topics to discuss in theology, but group leader training will focus in the following three doctrines.

The Bible. What God says is more important than what we think, so like the weekend services at Oak Leaf Church, groups should focus on God's Word. We adjust our lives according to the Scripture, not the other way around.

As Christians, we must live the Bible. As group leaders, we must lead those in our groups to live their lives according to Scripture. The Bible speaks to issues that we struggle with... family, finances, relationships.

Importance of the written word:

- They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess. - Deut 32:47
- Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. - Deut 4:2
- All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, - 2 Timothy 3:16.
- He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! - Luke 24:25. Jesus rebuked his disciples for not believing the Old Testament Scriptures.
- And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. Psalm 12:6
- John 17:17 – "Your Word is truth."

The Bible is our authority. We must bend our lives around the Bible, not bend the Bible around our lives. To disobey scripture is to disobey God.

"What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity." - Matthew 23:27.

It's not well-sung. It's not well-read. It's well done. Don't just read it; do what it says.

Sometimes, we seek other things over the Word.

- The Spirit confirms the Word. The Spirit of God will never tell you to do something that contradicts the Word of God. Many speak a special word from the Lord. While God does still speak to his people, we must remember that He has already spoken through the pages of Scripture.
- Many pray about things that are clearly commanded and defined in Scripture. You don't need to pray about doing what the Bible already commands us to do.
- Sometimes, we value our feelings over the Truth. The Scripture supersedes our feelings or ideas.
- Sometimes, we value the word of a spiritual leader over the Word of God. I don't have any authority on my own. I have authority when I teach and preach the Scriptures. "As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men." - Acts 17:10-12
- Popular opinion or a personal opinion is not more important than the Word. "What does this mean to you?" is the wrong question. "What does this mean" is the right question. In your group, be careful that you're not just sharing your own opinion, but digging into what God says and what God thinks.

How to Study the Bible

Here is how I typically approach a text to study, whether it's for personal use or sermon preparation.

1. Read the text. Read it several times, and read it in several translations. I try to read a word-for-word scholarly translation like the ESV and also a readable paraphrase like the NLT. When you read a passage, be careful to read the context. What's before it? What's after it?
2. Paraphrase the text. After reading the text, I try and summarize the ideas in my own words. Not only does this help me internalize it, it will help me communicate it.
3. Question the text. As you read, ask questions and let the text provide the answer. These are some helpful questions that help me understand the Scripture better.
 - a. Is there a command to follow?
 - b. Is there a promise to cling to?
 - c. Is there a characteristic of God?
 - d. Is there a principle to live by?
 - e. Is there an example to learn from?
4. Cross-reference the text. After I study a particular passage, I use the notes in a study Bible or a commentary to look at other verses. You want to compare verses in the Bible to other verses on the same topic. If something seems confusing, are there other passages

that contain more clarity? From time to time, you'll encounter something in the Bible that is confusing or even contradictory. In these moments, you need to let the clear passages explain the unclear passages.

5. Write down insights and application. As you complete your study, write down personal insights and application. Throughout the entire process, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate God's Word and to teach and guide you into all truth.

The Gospel. All group leaders (and group members, eventually) should have a clear understanding of the Gospel.

The word gospel literally means "good news."

Every group leader should be able to show someone how to become a Christian. We should be able to articulate the meaning of the Gospel.

- All have sinned: Romans 3:23. Sin is not a mistake or a hiccup. It's an offense to God. You must explain this to everyone in your group, on their level.
- All deserve death: Romans 6:23. Sacrifices in the Old Testament. Romans 1 says that we are accountable to God for our actions. Humanity has rebelled against God.
- God provided: John 3:16.
- Christ paid the price. Romans 5:8-9. Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for sins. Jesus doesn't ignore your sin; He paid for it.
- Salvation is free: Romans 6:23. We cannot contribute anything to the process. We can do nothing to earn it.
- Salvation is by faith: Ephesians 2:8-9.
- Repentance matters. Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19. Faith is turning to Jesus, repentance is turning away from sin.
- Receive it by believing and confessing: Romans 10:9-10
- God saves those who ask: Romans 10:13

You must explain this on the level of those in your group. Here's how you might explain some of these words to children.

- Sin – things we do wrong, no-no's. mistakes, disobey, make bad choices, making God sad
- Punishment – consequences, penalty, get in trouble
- Crucified - died on a cross; killed; hurt bad then died
- Savior – forever friend, rescuer, helper, took bad stuff for us, took our place, punished even though he did nothing wrong
- Resurrection – alive again, came back from being dead, didn't stay dead
- Ask Jesus into your heart – follow Jesus, become a Christian, become best friends with Jesus.
- Lord of your life – let Jesus show me the best way to live, let Jesus help you make the right choices
- Ask for forgiveness – say you're sorry, apologize
- Forgiven – not in trouble anymore
- Confess – admit you did wrong, tell what you did
- Eternal life – live forever in heaven with Jesus

The Church

Let me completely upfront about this. My goal is to help you be a revolutionary. I have been so moved by the spiritual authenticity of the revolutionaries I have encountered – and so disappointed by much of what I have seen and measured among Christians in the United States over the last twenty-plus years – that I want to understand and be part of this groundbreaking development....Whether you become a revolutionary immersed in, minimally involved in, or completely disassociated from a local church is irrelevant to me (and, within boundaries, to God). What matters is not whom you associate with (i.e., a local church), but who you are. – George Barna, *Revolution*

The local church is a community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, organized under qualified leadership, gathering regularly for preaching worship, observing the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, unified by the spirit and scattered to fulfill the great commission. (adapted from Mark Driscoll, *Doctrine*, p. 307)

Visible church is the group who comes together regularly to worship as a church and profess faith in Jesus Christ. When the New Testament speaks of an earthly church, it almost always refers to a local, specific congregation. Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 1 Cor. 1:2, 1 Thess. 1:1)

The church is God's plan for spreading the Gospel. Jesus did not say that he would build a publishing company, a worship band or a denomination...He said he would build his church. (Matthew 16:18). Jesus is so closely identified with the church that he said Saul was persecuting Him when he was persecuting the church.

Paul writes to the "church at Corinth" knowing full well that there were unbelievers there, some who would fall away, and others who didn't make genuine professions of faith. The church as we organize it will always include some unbelievers.

"In the midst of the constant, low-level drone of conversation about community, culture, missional and finding God, there is a place to worship, sing praises to our King, live in community, and grow in sanctification. And it's church." Kevin DeYoung on page 58 of *Why We Love the Church*

"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." – Matthew 16:18

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with his own blood." – Acts 20:28

Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. - Ephesians 5:25. The NT church (*ekklesia* – church or called out ones) was given a great cloud of witnesses to serve as an example and they are members of the great assembly. (Hebrews 12:1)

The church has an identity (who we are) and also a mission (what we do). We cannot err on either side, but we must embrace both parts of our calling.

Here are five metaphors the Bible uses for the church.

- **A Building.** “For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.” – I Corinthians 3:9. For the first 350 years or so of the church’s existence, they did not own buildings. We are the building. Christ is the foundation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. A church must be built on Jesus.

Churches who want Jesus without the church are like people who want a house with only the foundation.

- **A Bride.** In the Old Testament, the prophets presented Israel as a bride who had repeatedly committed adultery. The New Testament picks up this imagery and talks about the church as the bride of Christ. Jesus is the bridegroom in John 3:29 and the church is the bride in Ephesians 5:22-32. Revelation 21 describes the marriage feast. There’s a great love between the bride and the groom. This is why we don’t trash the church....you don’t call a bride ugly.
- **A Family.** I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. I Cor 1:10. That word brothers means those who are siblings in God’s family. Fellowship is not eating. It’s not a room. It’s living life together...it’s being connected. I love watching our church become more and more like a family. We want this to be like home.

People seem to want fellowship without commitment. But families don’t just hang out with each other – they are committed to each other.

- **A Body.** Every part of the body matters. Every part of this church is minister. A minister is not someone who has been to seminary, it’s someone who sees a need and meets it.

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. – Romans 12:4-8

Every part of the body is important. Every part of the body depends on another part of the body. Jesus is the head of the body. If you cut yourself off from the body, you are cutting yourself off from Christ.

Parts of the body should not exist independently from the body. Dismembered body parts are gross.

- **An Army.** In Ephesians, Paul says to put on the armor of God. 2 Corinthians says that we don’t fight with worldly weapons. And the great commission really is a mission. The church is compelled to act because we have a God-given mission.

The church is not a cruise ship, with ministries and programs designed to entertain the people and make them comfortable. We are a battleship, with a mission and a strategy and a commander in Chief who gives us our orders.

Your group (a little church) is charged to spread the Gospel. The outward focus of your group is important....a group is not just a Bible study or a discussion group – you are the church on mission, and you cannot separate the mission of spreading the Gospel from your existence.

In the Old Testament, God's glory was displayed in the tabernacle and later the temple. In the New Testament, it was displayed in the person and work of Christ. How is God's glory displayed to the world today? Through the Church.

What we're doing here is very important. And your group is very important. Your leadership of that group is very important.

I Peter 5:1-5 talks about the relationship between church leaders and church members. The Bible does not teach a leaderless church. You are the leader of your group. And your pastors are your spiritual leaders.

A group is not your personal church for you to do whatever you want. Rogue groups will divide a church. We are one church.

Leading a group in this church matters, because the church matters to God. Your group is your ministry, and your group members are your calling.

Application: Membership Process
oakleafchurch.com/membership

Recommended Resources

Dug Down Deep, Joshua Harris

The Reason for God, Timothy Keller

What is the Gospel

Session Three: Teach for life change.

It's not just knowing the word, but doing the word that matters. Through various stages of life, we want to emphasize the following core teachings. Little churches and little pastors... the same model for children's ministry, student ministry and adult small groups. Though the content will be different based on age, the philosophy and the majority of the training is the same.

Three things groups do: Learn the Gospel, Share the Gospel, Live the Gospel. Knowing the Bible and learning about God is important, and the content varies by age group. Here's a quick breakdown of what we teach kids and students.

a. Preschoolers (First Look is our curriculum)

- i. God made me
- ii. God loves me
- iii. Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

b. Elementary Children (252 basics is our curriculum)

- i. I need to make the wise choice.
- ii. I can trust God no matter what.
- iii. I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

c. Teenagers (XP3 is our curriculum)

- i. I am created to pursue an authentic relationship with God.
- ii. I belong to Jesus Christ and define who I am by what He says
- iii. I exist every day to demonstrate God's love to a broken world.

Seven Steps to Having a Great Adult Small Group

Ingredients of a Healthy Small Group

- Commitment. Regular attendance and a priority among the members.
- Honesty. Open, honest and transparent sharing.
- Discretion. What is shared in the group, stays in the group.
- Accountability. To each other via God's Word as the standard.
- Accessibility. Members must have the right to call each other in times of need.
- Spirituality. It's not a social club.
- Mission. Groups must stay on purpose, not drift.

Here's seven steps to have a great small group

GET PEOPLE TO YOUR GROUP

Don't expect people to find your group – you must be actively looking to add people to your group. It's not the job of the staff to send people to your group; it's the job of the group to pursue new people. Every group should look to add new people throughout the entire year.

A group is never full! When it gets crowded, new groups should be ‘sent out’ or ‘launched’ from the original group. This is the way that groups accomplish the great commission.

Step 1: Before you begin inviting new members

- Involve everyone in the process. The mission of everyone in the group is to invite new people.
- Teach your group about the empty chair. Remind group members constantly that there are people who are not there that *should* be there. Let a physical chair represent the concept.
- Regularly pray for God to fill the open chair. Spend time praying for people who need to be there.
- Develop a list of potential members. (Ask for a list from the church of people currently not in a small group)

Step 2: How to invite new members

- Develop relationships prior to the group meeting.
- Explain the vision of your group to the potential member
 - o Know the Gospel
 - o Share the Gospel
 - o Live the Gospel
- Ask them to pray about joining the group
- Allow them to meet other members of the group before they ever attend a group meeting
- Allow them to attend a few meetings before they have to make a final commitment

Step 3: After new members attend the group

- Have everyone briefly retell their own stories. If someone is uncomfortable sharing then help them share with the group. Let's not put first timers on the spot if they aren't ready for it.
- Celebrate what is happening in your group. A group is a community – be proud of it and what God is doing. People will see that and want to be a part of it.

HELP GROUP MEMBERS USE THEIR GIFTS (*Adapted from “Leading Life-Changing Small Groups” by Bill Donahue*)

You can get a free spiritual gift tests at www.spiritualgiftstest.com

Here is a process for helping people deploy their spiritual gifts in your small group. It will help the group function more effectively and allow each member to grow and mature in their area of giftedness.

- Cast a vision for mutual ministry – Together you should read and study Ephesians 4:11-13 and 1 Corinthians 14:26. Help your group understand the value of serving together and serving one another. Group is not about a leader serving everyone it is about everyone working together for the needs of the group.
- Help members identify their gifts – Spiritual gift assessment tools like will help people identify their gifts. Go through this material as a group.
- Discuss giftedness with each other – Ask group members to explain their gifts to the group and how they might use them to encourage other members of the group.

- Serve in areas of giftedness – Allow people to serve according to areas of giftedness and passion within your small group
- Consider ministry opportunities – Discuss ministry opportunities within the group that will utilize people's giftedness.

Here are some group activities that can be shared by members of your group, depending upon their gifts and desires.

- Leading discussions
- Social time or prayer time
- Keeping the group roster
- Organizing group outreach
- Hosting the group
- Becoming an apprentice – co leader of the group
- Leading worship – how you praise God in your group
- Writing notes and cards
- Visiting members who have needs or who are ill
- Preparing for group meetings – someone who likes to study
- Keeping a list of birthdays of members
- Choosing curriculum
- Providing feedback and evaluation

This is just a partial list, but it should help you and your group share the responsibilities of group life together. As we stated earlier the group functions as a small church. And by using our gifts we are actively engaging in the purpose that God has created us for. To love God and love others.

It also allows the group members to discuss how they are using their gifts in serving the church as a whole.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CURRICULUM

When it comes to curriculum for your group, you have two options. You can choose the discuss the weekend message using the group discussion guide, or you can choose something from the pre-approved list.

- **Curriculum should never “drive” a group.** It is a mistake to forfeit opportunities for extended prayer or service, or to cut short a necessary community-building activity because “we have to get through the curriculum.” Remember, Jesus did not say, “Go therefore into all the world and complete the curriculum.” Your goal is ultimately to make disciples – Christ followers – who are obedient to Jesus, yielded to the Spirit, and loving toward others.
- **Never substitute a curriculum for the Bible.** Curriculum and study guides should be used to enhance the group's purpose and move people into the Scriptures.
- **Don't feel obligated to finish all the questions.** Competent leaders know what questions to use and how many of them to use. If a curriculum has too many questions, then choose a few good ones. *If recommend five to seven questions at most. Many*

times, two to three good questions followed by the right kind of group process are more than enough. Better to have a great discussion grappling with a few good questions than answering all the questions at a superficial level. The goal is to actively engage people with the truth of God's Word as it relates to their own heart and growth.

- **Make sure the curriculum is “group friendly.”** Many small group studies are designed for understanding the Bible, not building relationships or generating a deep sense of community and caring. Look closely at not only the questions but also the process. Does the curriculum allow for lots of interaction? Does it ask person disclosure questions that challenge people to open up and share their lives? Or is it filled with content-based “what” questions, often ignoring personal “why” questions?

An application section that simply asks, “How would this apply to your life?” is weak. But if the writer asks questions like, “It’s clear from this passage we need to share our faith with others. And it is clear that we all know how and that it would please God. But let’s talk about why it is so hard for you and me to start spiritual conversations with seekers. Are there fears or other barriers you face in communicating the Gospel? How does it feel when you picture yourself talking to an unsaved person about Christ?” These questions will get a people’s motives, thoughts, feelings, and needs. Only then can we truly encourage and pray for one another.

REMEMBER THE EMPTY CHAIR

God has had an Open Chair mind-set since the beginning of time. It has been God’s desire to create a people who would have fellowship with Him for all eternity. Though He enjoyed perfect fellowship as a tri-unity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), God’s desire was to expand that community to all who put their faith in Him. From Genesis to Revelation, we see God’s heart in reaching people and including them in this new community:

- The promise of a Messiah (Gen 3:15)
- The promise to Noah (Gen 9:8-17)
- The promise to Abraham to make him a great nation (Gen 12:1-5)
- God’s promise to make the Israelites His people (Ex. 6:7)
- God’s promise to David of an eternal kingdom and a place for God’s people to dwell (2 Sam. 7:1-7)
- God desires to be known among all nations of the earth (Ps. 67)
- The invitation for all to come and be part of God’s community (Is. 55:1-3)
- The promise of a Messiah who would become known throughout the earth (Mic. 5:2-5)
- God will be known among all the nations of the earth (Zeph. 3:8-10, 20)
- The invitation for all to come and receive Christ (Matt. 11:28-30)
- The command to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20)
- The promise that all who believe will become part of a new community (John 3:16)
- The power of the Holy Spirit will enable all to witness for Christ (Acts 1:8)
- The world will not hear the Gospel unless we take it to them (Rom 10:14-15)

As you can see, God has been inviting people into his “open chair” for centuries. This is evident in a personal way in the life of Jesus. Jesus used the concept of the open chair to develop relationships with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery, and the 12 disciples – and His invitation continues today. Andrew opened the chair for Peter,

Barnabas opened the chair for Paul, and Paul opened the chair for Timothy. Part of discipleship is opening the chair to those who are not involved in biblical community. This includes seekers, fringe Christians, and committed believers who are seeking fellowship.

Jesus had 12 disciples right? Well we read about the original 12 in the scriptures because they get their names mentioned but Jesus at points in His ministry had 'thousands' following Him. There was always room for one more. He was always looking to enlarge a true biblical community. In the midst of relationships people begin to change. By increasing groups constantly it keeps it from getting stale and people have a hard time of hiding sin from each other. True biblical community can be messy but it will bring about change in our lives.

Many of you may be asking, "How do I fill the empty chair?" Here are some steps to think through and a chart that will help you brainstorm the names of people who could potentially be added to your group.

- Ask your neighbor – would you believe that most people prefer to visit your home than visit your church.
- Get the party trailer from church and throw a get together for people in your community then invite them to church/group.
- Serving on a volunteer team at church is the perfect area to find someone who needs a group. People at this point are usually ready for a group experience, they just need to be asked.
- Look at your co-workers. If God has put them on your heart then it is for a reason. Begin praying now and just ask.
- Actively seek to know people in church. When meeting someone new look for them again to begin making a connection.
- Got kids? Great, you will always have a pool of functions in which you attend to look for new recruits.

LAUNCH A NEW GROUP

Adapted from "Leading Life-Changing Small Groups" by Bill Donahue

Healthy things grow and healthy things reproduce.

- Cast a vision for launching from the onset of the group
- Prepare an apprentice for group leadership
- Help the group understand that their purpose is to give life to other groups
- Help the group catch a vision for those who are not yet in Christian community

Like any birthday, this is a time for celebration. As the new group begins to finally separate from the existing group, it's time to gather together and celebrate new life. Here are some ways to celebrate the joys and experience the sadness of a group birth on the day of birth.

- Have a launch party
- Hold a time of prayer as you commission and bless the new group
- Recognize and affirm the new leadership in each group
- Allow members to express their feelings of celebration and sadness.
- Have a time of communion together and share the victories and blessings of the previous group

- Spend time praying about the future of both groups and what God might do to help each group grow spiritually and numerically
- Set a schedule for a few planned social events together in the future so that the group reunites on a regular basis

COMMUNICATE WELL

Just like any good organization communication is key on how effective you can be. When communicating with your people here are some things to keep in mind:

- When are you meeting?
- When are you *not* meeting?
- Is the time the same?
- Where are you meeting this week?
- Who is leading the discussion?
- What are you to have been studying ahead of time?
- Who's bringing a friend?
- Who's bringing the food?
- Anyone running late?

As you can see we need to clearly communicate all the who, what, when, where & how's of everything. This is why it is great to find that person with the gift of administration in your group to follow up with all these details.

Communication is also key in the group. Here are some listening skills for when the group is taking place. As you utilize these skills in your group they will become great habits over time.

- Don't talk so much. You can't talk and listen at the same time.
- Try not to interrupt. Interrupting people discourages them and makes it less likely that they will contribute to your group's conversations in the future.
- Use body language in your communicating. Sit or stand up straight and look the other person in the eye.
- Actively listen to the speaker. Don't think about what you're going to say while the other person is talking.
- Listen for the themes. Try to identify and understand the speaker's main idea.
- Always be alert. Watch for non-verbal cues that indicate what the speaker maybe feeling.

START AND END ON TIME

People do not want to attend a group where you have to wait for everyone to arrive and you spend half the night in debate. Want to see your group implode? Then focus on not setting boundaries for your group. This is a great way to turn off people from group and might give them a bad taste in their mouth for the future.

Start on time and end on time. This helps people value the group's time and other's feelings. Stopping the group allows those that need to leave the chance to go. You can always finish a discussion after the allotted time, just be sensitive to those around you.

PRESCHOOL GROUP LEADER TRAINING

Relationships are what bind us together and are the mortar for our commitments. Our first goal is to know whom we are serving with. This will be done intentionally through gatherings and conversations. As relationships are built and cultivated within each preschool team, value and commitment rises.

OUR STRATEGY

Oak Leaf Kids has the same strategy as the church.

1. Get kids/families to church: invite, invite, invite. Share stories. Events like StoryTime. Freedom to plan events.
2. Make sure they have a good/God experience: teach Jesus on kids levels, create contagious and fun, age-appropriate environments
3. Connect them to God: model Jesus, build relationships, teach truth

LEADERSHIP ROLES

My Coach is:

Other Leaders in my environment are:

Your role as Leaders:

Ocean & Arctic: Recognizing the importance of encouraging and supporting parents, volunteers create a safe and loving environment for infants and toddlers to experience a great first impression of their Loving Heavenly Father.

Desert & Jungle: Recognizing the importance of encouraging and supporting parents, volunteers engage children in a safe and loving environment where they grow in knowledge of the 3 Core Truths: God Made Me, God Loves Me, and Jesus Wants to Be My Friend Forever

WHAT WE DO

1. Learn the Gospel: are you growing in your walk with Jesus?
2. Live the Gospel: are you bearing fruit?
3. Share the Gospel: are you communicating God's love & plan for the world?

WHO WE SERVE

1. Jesus: everything we do is for His glory
2. Kids: build relationships/trust with caring adults, getting them ready for City Small Groups
3. Families: come along side them. Let them know they're not alone. Equip them to lead their children to Jesus. What parent wouldn't love a phone call from one of their child's leaders?
4. Each other: we serve together, what happens when you aren't there

HOW WE DO IT

By the time a child enters kindergarten, we want them to know three Core Truths:

1. God Made Me
2. God Loves Me
3. Jesus Wants to be My Friend Forever

These three goals are emphasized throughout our curriculum, *My First Look*.

THREE THINGS EVERY LEADER MUST DO

1. Be prepared: Reading through lesson during the week. Praying for the weekend-the kids, leaders, message
2. Be Committed: Show up. Be ready to serve. Give it 110%. Embrace your value.
3. Be Relational: This should be a priority. Warm, caring, & friendly to parents & children.

DO IT WELL

- Birthdays: We'll provide Birthday lists and cards. A hand-written card from a small group leader to our church is a powerful reminder.
- Training: Quarterly, combined with fun. Occasional articles or information.
- Service Order: Especially for the Desert & Jungle. In the process of developing a service schedule, so no matter what service a child comes to, they know the general order of things. Sets the child up for success. Settling in activities.
- Environments: Organize. Out of sight, out of mind. Evaluate.
- Prayer/Outreach Cards: pray over infants & toddlers and communicate this to parents through a prayer card
- Parent Resources: books, websites, Bibles

STUDEN GROUP LEADER TRAINING

Fuel

Pre-Service (6:00-6:30)

Your role: connect with students

Main Service (6:30-7:15)

The teaching each week will be...

- Culturally relevant
- Biblically based

Small Group (7:15-8:00)

This is a time to...

- Connect with your students
- Discuss main teaching
- Personalize the topic
- Pray with your students

Outside of fuel

- Pray for your students everyday
- Contact | Connect with your students weekly
- Hangout with your students monthly
- Serve with your students quarterly

Curriculum

XP3 = Experience Three

- Wonder – I am created to pursue an authentic relationship with my creator
 - o Recognize. There is more to life than we can see with our eyes.
 - o Pursue. God initiate a relationship with us, and the Christian faith is how to pursue this relationship through spiritual disciplines.
 - o Follow. We're invited not just to believe in Jesus, but to follow Him through faith.
- Discovery – I belong to Jesus Christ and define who I am by what he says
 - o Made. I have been uniquely made to contribute to God's world.
 - o Accepted. We are loved sons and daughters of the perfect Father.
 - o Transformed. I am continually being changed by my growing relationship with God.
- Passion – I exist everyday to demonstrate God's love to a broken world
 - o Restore. God allows us to participate with Him in restoring a broken world.
 - o Connect. We live in complexity of relationships and the value God places on them.
 - o Serve. As the people of God, our lives are marked by our love for one another.

APPENDIX 1: OAK LEAF CHURCH AT A GLANCE

PURPOSE

Our purpose answers the question, “why do we exist?” Oak Leaf Church is here to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be. That’s our mission; that’s why we do what we do.

VALUES

Our core values are the philosophical foundation behind our ideas, programs, ministries and behaviors. They are the things we consider important and the guiderails for our decisions. We have seven core values:

1. Lost people matter to God.
2. Create contagious environments.
3. Make bold moves.
4. Teach for life change.
5. Intentionally develop leaders.
6. Unleash a culture of generosity.
7. Keep it simple.

VISION

A vision is a picture of the future, a description of where we are going as an organization. Our vision is to grow the church through launching ten regional campuses and grow the Kingdom by starting 60 churches (50 largest cities in the US + 10 International cities)

STRATEGY

Once we know where we’re going and what’s important to us, our strategy tells us how we will get there in the quickest and most efficient way. The strategy of Oak Leaf Church is threefold:

1. Get people to weekend services. Whether it’s serving the community, putting out road signs, encouraging people to invite or hanging door-hangers, everything starts with getting people to a weekend service.
2. Help them have a good/God experience. When people do attend a church service, we want them to have a good experience. From their first interaction with the Guest Services team to the quality of the music and message, people must have a good experience. In addition, we want them to hear from God, not simply be impressed. Even people who do not attend church on a regular basis expect church to be about God. People want to know about God and understand the Bible. A good experience is a start, but it’s not enough...people must experience God.
3. Help them follow Jesus. Ultimately, we’re trying to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be, and in order to do that, we need to help people take steps in their faith. The main way that people can take steps is by joining a volunteer

team, participating in a small group, or taking a class. We call this *serve plus*. We want people to serve somewhere, plus join a group or take a class. In addition, we look for opportunities for offline spiritual growth – things that do not require meetings and programs.

This is our **MACRO** strategy, meaning that it's the strategy of the entire organization at the highest level. But this is also a **MICRO** strategy, meaning it's the strategy at the individual ministry level.

- The strategy of Oak Leaf Kids is to get kids to church, help them have a good/God experience, and then help them follow Jesus. The strategy is individualized for kids, because getting kids to church looks different than getting adults to church. The experience is also tailored to children, and the points of growth are also focused on kids.
- The strategy of Oak Leaf Students is to get students to church, help them have a good/God experience, and then help them follow Jesus. The mechanisms for those things are Fuel and small groups, but the overall strategy is the same.
- The strategy for Oak Leaf Church is to get people into groups, help each group have a good/God experience, and help people in those groups grow in their faith.

REGULAR PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES

In keeping with our core value of simplicity, we do not do many programs in order to do excellent programs. We want to do things well, not just do things.

1. Weekend Service. The weekend service is the most important ministry that we do. For most, it's the front door to our church. This means that we place a disproportionate amount of focus on the weekend services. From service planning to advertising, we start with the weekend.
2. Family Ministry. Our demographic is heavy on children and students, and we reach a large number of families.
 - a. Oak Leaf Kids involves preschool and elementary ministries. We utilize First Look and 252 Basics to teach Biblical principles to children in age-appropriate environments.
 - b. Oak leaf Students meet on Wednesday night. The program involves worship, teaching and small groups. We use the XP3 curriculum to teach Biblical principles.
3. Groups. From elementary to students to adults, groups at Oak Leaf Church are like "little churches." They seek to accomplish all of the purposes of the church, just on a smaller scale. They are led by group leaders who function like pastors, caring for the needs of the members and helping them live on mission.

4. Classes. From theology to parenting, classes are information-driven environments designed to distribute Bible teaching. Classes range from 4-12 weeks. Eventually, content will be placed online and will be available on-demand.

All of these regular programs require leaders, so leadership development cuts across every program and ministry of the church.

BIG EVENTS

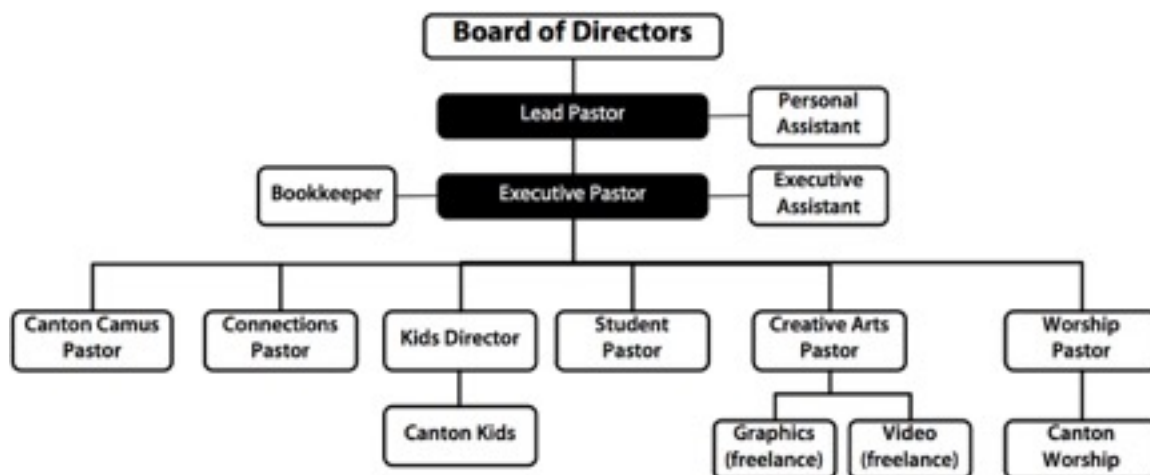
1. The Egg Drop happens in the spring, usually the week before Easter. It's a large-scale community event with two primary purposes: provide a fun environment for families and increase awareness of the ministry of Oak Leaf Church.
2. Action Week is our version of Vacation Bible School. It happens at the end of every summer and serves as the launching point into a new school year. The primary purpose is to reach unchurched children in our community and connect kids to adult leaders in our church.
3. The Man Games is a large-scale event for men. It happens in the fall.

STRUCTURE

Like the pipes in the wall of a house, structure is usually not visible, but without it, we would not function properly. An effective structure should allow us to make decisions in the context of relationship as well as allow us to quickly adjust to trends and opportunities. Oak Leaf Church is board-protected and staff-directed.

The Board of Directors consists of pastors and leaders from other Gospel-focused churches and their primary function is to set the salary of the Lead Pastor and approve the operating budget. They have the authority to remove the lead pastor.

The Lead Pastor and the Executive Pastor are charged with the task of leading the church. They lead the staff who lead the church. A Lead Team is a group of pastors and staff members in the church who meet regularly to discuss big-picture ministry. Most big decisions come from this team. The staff runs the day-to-day operations of the church and focuses on developing volunteers to do the work of the ministry.



APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

About the Bible: The Holy Spirit inspired human authors to write the books of the Bible. God Himself chose every word of Scripture. The Bible is God’s love letter to all of humanity and is the final authority in every issue it communicates. It is complete Truth, and we can trust it for all matters in this life and eternity.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

About God: Scripture teaches that God created everything we can see (and even everything we can’t see) out of nothing. Although it might be difficult for the human mind to comprehend, the Bible teaches that He is one, yet has existed since the beginning of time as three distinct and equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

About Jesus: Jesus Christ is God’s Son and an equal of the Father. He has existed from the beginning of time, yet lived on earth during the first century A.D. Throughout His earthly life, He was completely God and completely human at the same time. After living a perfect, sinless life, Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for every human being who has ever lived by dying on a Roman cross. After three days in the grave, He defeated sin and death by rising from

the grave. He then ascended to Heaven and will return to earth one day to reign as King.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33;

16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

About the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is a full and equal part of the Trinity. He works in the world to make all people understand their need for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit lives inside every follower of Jesus from the moment they decide to follow Him. The Spirit is our power source for life, ministry and spiritual growth. To tap into that power, we must continually yield to the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

About Salvation: Our disobedient nature has eternally separated us from our Creator. No matter how hard we try, we can never earn our way back into God's presence. Our only hope is to trust Jesus as God's provision for our disobedience. When you make that decision, you step into the eternal and abundant life Jesus promises for all believers.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

About Eternal Security: Your salvation is through the most trustworthy being in the universe – Jesus Christ! You didn't do anything to earn your salvation, and you can't do anything to lose it. Your salvation is maintained by God's trustworthiness and love not by what you do.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

About Eternity: God made you to exist forever. Heaven is a perfect place, and since none of us is perfect, we are all headed for an eternity of separation from God. That's why God sent Jesus: to pay the price for our sins so that we can spend eternity with Him. What you decide about Jesus Christ in this life will determine where you will spend eternity. If you reject Him, you'll be eternally separated from God in Hell. If you accept Him, you'll spend it eternally connected with Him in Heaven.

John 3:16; John 2:25; John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; 1 John 5:11-12; Matthew 25:31-46

About the Church: The Bible tells us that the church is the body of Christ in the world today. The New Testament tells us the church is a local body of baptized believers. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. The biblical purposes of the church are worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and ministry to others.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

About Christ's Return: God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth, the dead will be raised and Christ will judge all men in righteousness.

Mark 14:62; Heb. 9:28; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8-11; Matt. 28:20; Mark 13:21-23; John 2:18; 4:1-3; Luke 12:32; Rev. 21:1-5; II Pet. 3:13; Matt. 28:18

APPENDIX THREE: GROUP LEADER COVENANTS



The City - Small Group Leader Job Description

Provides leadership and connects relationally to a small group of kids in The City.

Accountability: Is served and led by the Oak Leaf Kids Small Group Coach.

Qualifications:

- Is committed to Oak Leaf Church's mission of *Leading people from where they are to where God wants them to be.*
- Has a committed and growing relationship with Jesus Christ
- Participates weekly in an Oak Leaf church service
- Is committed to helping children grow in wisdom, faith and character
- Has completed a background check and application process

Responsibilities:

- Builds relationships with their kids
 - Connects with kids weekly in The City by leading discussion and activities
 - Connect with kids outside of the weekend
 - Send birthday cards
 - Follow up with a kid who has been absent
 - Welcome a new kid in the group with a card
- Serve the community once a quarter as a group – this can include other small groups as well as the parents of the kids in the group.
- Be a resource for parents

Other

- Follow Oak Leaf Kids Guidelines & Procedures



City Small Group Leader Covenant Fall 2010

Thank you for serving as a Small Group Leader in The City. As a Group Leader you will be viewed by those in your group as a leader in the church. As a result, we ask that you enter into covenant with the other Group Leaders by making the following commitments:

- 1) I will embody and reflect the values and principles of Oak Leaf and will follow the leadership of the Staff Team (please refer to the Oak Leaf Church Member Covenant).
- 2) I will faithfully attend Oak Leaf on a regular basis.
- 3) I will make my Group a priority by:
 - Faithfully attending.
 - Preparing before hand.
 - Welcoming others to join the group.
- 4) I understand that I am responsible for the care of my small group.
As a result, I will:
 - Pray for the individuals in my group.
 - Follow up with each person in my group.
 - Lead my group in providing care for one another.
 - Communicate with my coach on a regular basis.
- 5) I will strive to create an environment of growth in my group by:
 - Involving as many people as possible in group discussion.
 - Creating a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment.
 - Beginning and ending on time.

Name

Date



Opportunity: Group Leader [**Lead Volunteer**]

Time:

Various times and various places (times include preparation, communication, and actual meeting time of the group) Reports to: Group Coach (see Discipleship Pastor for info.)

Here's what groups at Oak Leaf Church do:

- **Know the Gospel** – Bible Study, Discussion, Spiritual Disciplines (protect the gospel).
- **Share the Gospel** – inviting, mission, serving, sharing the gospel (share the gospel) Groups are outward focused, just like our church is outward focused. Invest, invite and live intentionally. Groups should be continually growing in size towards multiplication.
 - o Groups get people to groups
 - o Groups participate in community outreach (see 40 ideas)
 - o The church grows the group; the group grows the church
- **Live the Gospel** – care, prayer, friendship, fellowship (live the gospel). Christianity is a personal faith, but it is not a private faith.

Responsibilities:

- Pray for group members daily and communicate with them weekly.
- Facilitate group discussion at least bi-monthly.
- Communicate weekly with coach (email, phone, or personal meetings).
- Recommend at least one new leader from current group once a year.
- Lead group in serving the community bi-yearly.
- Give group information weekly (attendance, what are you studying, what project have you picked, who's serving where, etc...)

Requirements:

- Must be a member of Oak Leaf Church.
- Must have been a member of a previous Journey Group.
- Must be willing to attend Group Leaders Training.
- Must be committed to raising new leadership by having a co-leader at all times.



Group Leader Covenant Fall 2010 – Summer 2011

Thank you for serving as a Group Leader of Oak Leaf Church. As a Group Leader you will be viewed by those in your group also as a leader in the church. As a result, we ask that you enter into covenant with the other Group Leaders by making the following commitments:

- 6) I will embody and reflect the values and principles of Oak Leaf and will follow the leadership of the Staff Team (please refer to the Oak Leaf Church Member Covenant).
- 7) I will faithfully attend Oak Leaf on a regular basis.
- 8) I will make my Group a priority by:
 - Faithfully attending group meetings.
 - Preparing before hand.
 - Welcoming others to join the group.
- 9) I understand that I am responsible for the care of my Journey Group.
As a result, I will:
 - Pray for the individuals in my group.
 - Follow up with each person in my group.
 - Lead my group in providing care for one another.
 - Communicate with my coach on a regular basis.
- 10) I will strive to create an environment of growth in my group by:
 - Involving as many people as possible in group discussion.
 - Creating a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment.
 - Beginning and ending on time.

Name

Date

