

Small Groups



They grow you...

A Guide to
Small Groups
At
Webster Assembly of God

Love the Lord

Love Others

Serve the World



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Introduction

In supporting our values as a church, Love the Lord, Love Others, and Serve the World, we are starting a small groups program to build and strengthen relationships among people in and out side the church. Our program is designed to be simple and flexible. For our small group hosts the work is also designed to be minimal and simple. Notes from the pastor's messages will be available to serve as a guide to informal, unprepared discussions in a small group setting.

A sample format might consist of a time of informal conversation as group members arrive, followed by an opening prayer (perhaps lifting up any needs shared during the previous conversations), discussion on the notes from the pastor's message, and of course some light refreshments. Refreshments should be simple as well, with the responsibility of bringing them being shared across the group. A sign up sheet will help with this. (see the forms section at the end of this guide)

A simple recipe for small groups can be found in God's word, in Act chapter 2, verse 42-47

^{2:42}They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The format is up to each group, and can change at the discretion of the group. Again, the primary goal is not a bible study, but more a time of building and strengthening relationships. To help build relationships we would also like our small groups to plan to "play together" once per session, and also to "serve together" once per session, but more on that later...

Overview...

The format of your group is up to you as is the day of the week, the time of your meeting, the location, and type (couples, men, women, kid friendly, etc). One point on times, we are asking that small groups meet for an hour and a half. This seems to be about the right amount of time for every one to get comfortable, have time for discussion and refreshments. If your group meets on a work or school night, please be sensitive to that by setting starting and stopping times accordingly.

In terms of content for the discussion portion of the meetings, for the first session (as we work out the “bugs”) all of the groups will be provided with discussion questions based on 1 John. These questions will parallel the pastor’s Sunday Sermons and provide a common reference point for all of our small groups. Again, the format of the group meeting is open and you can be creative in how you tie in the discussion questions.

From a size perspective, most small groups range in size from six to twelve people. Our recommendation is to limit your initial group to 10 people, leaving room for a couple of additional people to join during the session. If your meeting location accommodates fewer people more comfortably, don’t worry we can limit your group size accordingly.

Play Opportunities

During the ten week session perhaps once a month, we would like your group to take a week and do something together as a group. There are a variety of options for play days and they are really only limited by your imagination and the demographics of your group. Family oriented small groups might plan a night at Chuckie Cheese, or the museum, just skipping stones at Webster Park. A couples group might want to meet for coffee, a movie, or a trip to Barnes & Noble. Again, just have fun and enjoy each others company in Christ.



Service Opportunities

Another component of small groups that we are recommending is that your small group takes part in at least one service based opportunity together. This could be in place of one of your regular meetings, it could be another day and time, or it could be a church wide service opportunity. A few examples would be Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas shoe boxes, helping a fellow small group member with a project, or visiting those unable to come to church. This will not only bless you and your group but also fulfills our value of Serving the World...



Group Dynamics and Growth

Small groups should be an open, warm, welcome and supportive environment. The goals are deeper and richer relationships in the body of Christ. As your group meets make every effort to encourage all in the discussions. Most people will be comfortable sharing in a small group format, but it may take some time for everyone to feel comfortable. Conversely, some people are very comfortable sharing their views especially when discussing a topic about which they are passionate. Should an individual or subset of the group dominate the discussion, politely ask for input from others.

The size of your group will be set by you and can be up to ten people. The ideal maximum size of any small group will be twelve. With this in mind, sign up sheets will be sized with two less slots than the maximum, typically ten, but less if you asked for a smaller group size. It is hoped that your group members will encourage a friend, neighbor, or family member to join the group to “max” it out.

As your group meets and grows, take note of others in your group who may be interested in hosting their own small group. Being a small group host is simple and also, more importantly fulfilling. Through your encouragement and assistance new small group hosts will be ready to host their own small group in the future.



Schedules...

Our small groups schedule is designed to work with the calendar and the natural rhythm of school schedules. Even for those with no children, the “school” schedule still anchors many of life’s events – such as summer vacation. Using an academic approach to scheduling we have three (3) sessions in a year’s time, each lasting ten (10) weeks. During the off times, our small groups will break; these align with Christmas, Easter and of course, summer... After each session or season, small groups will restart and group members may choose to sign up with the same small group again, or perhaps try a new one for the next session.

Sessions always begin on Sunday’s and end on Saturday’s, however each group decides what day of the week they wish to meet. For added flexibility, small groups have the option of meeting weekly or every-other-week. In either case, the 10 week sessions are the same, and all of the groups will start the same week.

Schedule @ a Glance

Session 1 - Fall

- ◆ Starts Sunday September 13th, 2009 and ends Saturday, November 13th, 2009

Session 2 ~ Winter

- ◆ Starts Sunday January 3rd, 2010 and ends Saturday, March 13th, 2010.

Session 3 - Spring

- ◆ Starts Sunday April 4th, 2010 and ends Saturday, June 12th, 2010.

The specific meeting dates will depend on what day of the week your small group starts, but the session “start” and “stop” dates are common across all groups. This allows for church wide events to be more easily scheduled.

Questions You May Be Asked As A Small Groups Host.

Q- How will scheduling work?

A- Many church events will align closely with the small group's calendar format. An effort to make use of off time in small groups will be made to reduce potential scheduling conflicts across ministries. Some event schedules are outside of Webster AG's control.

Q- Will small groups replace other ministries?

A- Some ministries will likely adopt the small group format, yet others will continue as they are today. For example, Men's and Women's ministries will adopt the small group format, and Sunday school will remain in its current format.

Q- How will small groups work with service ministries?

A- Similar to Sunday school, other groups and ministries are not considered small groups. Specific examples include the ushers, sound, worship & praise teams, tellers, etc. Some over time may be augmented by small groups. Again, by way of example meal preparations for those in need may likely be better taken care of by small groups.

Q- It seems like we are adding another program to an already busy schedule?

A- As our church adopts a small group model, many activities, programs and events will become a part of our small group ministry. For example, rather than have a separate program to prepare Thanksgiving baskets, each small group could prepare a basket as their service project for that session. Some church wide events may be replaced by small group events as well. If a member of a small group became ill or suffered a loss, the other members of the group might prepare a meal or meals for them.



Forms you might find useful...

Small Group Host Covenant

Session 1 – Fall 2009

Thank you for serving as a small group host at Webster Assembly of God. As a small group host you will be viewed by those in your group as a leader in the church. As a result we ask that you enter into a covenant with other small group hosts by making the following commitments:

- 1) I will embody and reflect the values and principles of Webster Assembly of God and will follow its leadership.
- 2) I will faithfully attend and support Webster Assembly of God on Sundays.
- 3) I will make my small group a priority by:
 - a. Faithfully attending my growth group
 - b. Preparing beforehand for my group each week
 - c. Inviting and welcoming others to join my group
- 4) I understand that I am responsible for the care of my small group, and as a result I will:
 - a. Pray for the individuals in my group
 - b. Follow up meticulously with each person in my group
 - c. Lead my group in providing care for one another
- 5) I will strive to create an environment of growth in my group by:
 - a. Involving as many people as possible in group discussion
 - b. Creating a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment
 - c. Beginning and ending on time

Name

Date



Small Group Covenant

Session 1 – Fall 2009

Welcome to Webster Assembly of God's Session 1 - Fall 2009 small groups. Congratulations on your desire to grow deeper in your relationship with the Lord and with others as you meet together in your small group.

As a member of this group, you will be asked to enter into a covenant with the other members to make your small group a priority. As a member of your small group you are asked to make the following commitments;

- 1) I will make this group a priority by attending each meeting, keeping up with assignments, and participating openly in discussions.
- 2) I will strive to build authentic relationships with those in my group by sharing care, providing encouragement and praying for one another.
- 3) I will play together with my group during small group play days, and I will serve together with my small group at least once in each session.
- 4) I will honestly explore my next step for spiritual growth.

Name

Date



Small Group Sign Up Sheet ~ Luke 5:27 "Follow Me"

Name ~ one name per line please	Phone number	Email address
1) Host(s)		
2) Host(s)		
3)		
4)		
5)		
6)		
7)		
8)		
9)		
10)		
Full) Please select a different group!		



Small Group Final Roster

Name	Phone number	Email address
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		
6)		
7)		
8)		
9)		
10)		
11)		
12)		



Small Groups Snack Signup Sheet ~ Meeting Weekly

Name	Date	Bringing
Week 1) Thank your host!		
Week 2)		
Week 3)		
Week 4)		
Week 5)		
Week 6)		
Week 7)		
Week 8)		
Week 9)		
Week 10)		



Small Groups Snack Signup Sheet ~ Meeting Bi-weekly

Name	Date	Bringing
Week 1) Thank your host!		
Week 2)		
Week 3)		
Week 4)		
Week 5)		