



SMALLGROUPS

Guide to Getting Started

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Our Vision

At Manna Church, our mission is to glorify God by equipping His people to change their world and by planting churches with the same world-changing vision.

We Plan to Accomplish This By:

- Helping God's people discover their individual gifts and callings, creating an environment where these gifts and callings may be developed, and deploying the people to be salt and light in their world. **Our Small Groups are designed to help accomplish this goal.**
- Helping God's people build strong families and by creating a community where individuals may find fulfillment and expression regardless of age or marital status.
- Planting churches with the same vision both domestically and abroad.

I: OVERVIEW OF LEADING MANNA CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

WHAT IS A SMALL GROUP?

A Manna Church Small Group consists of three or more people who gather to build community, to grow, and to serve together. Small Groups provide an environment where people can discover and develop their God-given passions, gifts, and talents. Life-Change happens in Small Groups!

They can take place in homes, at the beach, coffee shops, local restaurants, online, etc. A small group can relate to any area of interest: from fitness to Bible study; from sewing to prayer; from young adults to parenting; from discussing the weekend message to serving on a SERVE Team.

WHY LEAD A SMALL GROUP?

Small Groups are the life-blood of Manna Church, because that is where change takes place. A vital part of your journey with Christ is by growing together with other people that are on the same journey.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO LEADING A SMALL GROUP?

Perceived Barrier: I'm unqualified to lead. I don't know enough, I'm not gifted enough, I don't pray/ read the word enough, I've messed up too much, etc. to lead a Small Group.

Reality: "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called." Leading is not about being perfect, it's about saying yes to God, and being willing to share your imperfect journey with Jesus with other imperfect people.

Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God...

2 Corinthians 3:5

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6a

Perceived Barrier: I'm not really the leader type.

Reality: Every believer is a leader, because every believer has the capacity to influence others towards Jesus. While some leaders may be born, every leader can be developed (LeaderStep Week 1).

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5: 14-16 (NIV)

Potential Barrier: I don't have enough time or margin to lead a Small Group.

Reality: While this may not be the season for you to lead a Small Group; if God calls, then God will make a way. Begin with first asking God if this is the season for you to lead. If the answer is yes, then take the step of faith in obedience.

For everything there is an appointed time, and an appropriate time for every activity on earth.

Ecc 3:1 (NET)

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

Eccl 11:4 (TLB)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

SMALL GROUP CYCLES

Three Small Group Cycles

Winter/Spring (15-17 Weeks) Summer (8-10 Weeks) Fall (12-14 Weeks)

Why three cycles?

Simple; to create an easy on-ramp and off-ramp for leaders and participants.

People operate in seasons and we want our Small Groups to be a place where people can find belonging in every season of their lives.

SMALL GROUP CATEGORIES

- Arts
- Bible Study
- Book Study
- Community
- Family
- Finance
- Growth Track
- Health and Fitness
- Interests
- Manna Students
- Marriage
- Military
- Online
- Outreach/Missions
- Parenting
- Prayer
- Seniors
- SERVE Teams
- Weekend Message
- Young Adults

CONTINUAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- **Small Group Leader Huddles:** One of our operational principles in LeaderStep is that The Church is not just a teaching center; it's a training center. As a Small Group leader you will have opportunities for additional training. You will be invited to take part in Small Group Leader Huddles three times a year. Huddles are designed to further equip, encourage, and connect Small Group leaders to one another.

- **Mentoring:** As a Small Group leader, you will not be alone. You'll have a great support team committed to helping you grow and succeed: Small Groups Coordinators and Directors
- **Resources:** The Small Group Resources webpage has a variety of resources that can help you lead more effectively to include Growth Track resources.

SMALL GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

As I Small Group Leader, I agree to:

- Passionately live out Manna's three core values: Love God, Love Each Other and Love the World.
- Understand and comply with the Statement of Faith of Manna Church.
- Support Manna's leadership, vision, and Small Group philosophy in what I say and do.
- Model a lifestyle of personal and spiritual growth.
- Be open to counsel from the Small Group leadership and provide them with highlights and concerns about my group regularly. *(This includes, but is not limited to: responding in a timely manner to all requests for information and surveys that you receive from Manna Church's Small Group leadership team.)*
- Respond within 2 days to prospective Small Group members.
- Strive to achieve the three goals of Small Groups (**Meet, Mentor, Multiply**) and follow the other Traffic Laws provided by the Small Group leadership team.
- Shoulder-tap potential members *(starting with my sphere of influence or oikos)* for my Small Group.
- Pray for and coordinate Small Group meetings to include fellowship, a topic or activity, and a spiritual component.
- Pray regularly for everyone in my Small Group.
- Care for the needs of the people in my group to the best of my ability. *(If a need is beyond your ability to help, reach out to your Small Group Coordinator)*

SMALL GROUP TRAFFIC LAWS

GREEN - Actions that are REQUIRED

Each Small Group exists to accomplish three goals:

Meet (Quality time with other Christians)

- The Small Group should be a grace-filled environment place where members can find a place of belonging and form friendships.
- Regular meetings build trust within the group and increase its effectiveness. Ideally, groups should meet weekly. (Please see Frequency under the Yellow traffic law for more).
- Create healthy group dynamics by ensuring all participants have the opportunity to provide input. A Small Group leader is there to facilitate ministry and help things go in the right direction.

Mentor (Help grow disciples of Jesus)

- The Small Group leader helps group members take at least one step in their walk with God by providing mentorship (Read LeaderStep week 7).
- Help group members discover and develop in their God-given talents, gifts, and callings by:
 - Share ownership: Share group responsibilities in your group by shoulder-tapping someone to co-lead, lead a discussion, organize meals, coordinate outreaches, etc.
 - Pray that God will show you what He put into your group members and encourage those thing to come out. Have more faith in people than they have for themselves. Leverage the Growth Track (FirstStep, NextStep and LeaderStep) in your mentoring of others.

Multiply

- **Disciples:** The Small Group should inspire the members to do their part in helping the lost come to know Jesus. Each cycle, plan at least one outreach.
- **Leaders:** In every Small Group, there is at least one person whose next step is leading a group of their own. The Small Group leader should identify them, encourage them, and empower them to lead. Encourage the Growth Track.
- **Groups:** If possible, reproduce your group.

YELLOW - Areas open to interpretation and/or requiring caution

Use discretion when handling sensitive or controversial subjects

Controversial or sensitive issues can quickly become sticky. If you are planning to teach on or discuss a subject like this, it may be wise to:

- Talk to your leadership beforehand.
- If someone in your group brings up something difficult, listen to the Holy Spirit and end the discussion when it's appropriate.
- Keep the goal in mind. The goal of Small Groups is to help others grow in Christ. If the discussion is not meeting the goal, then it may be best not to do it.

Operate within the Yearly Small Group cycles

- Not every Small Group will be able to stop for two weeks after the cycle (accountability groups and some Care groups need to continue for the health of the group members), but those that can should.

- Cycles provide an easy on-ramp and off-ramp for leaders and participants.
- Cycles allow for natural rest periods.

Group frequency

- Ideally, groups should meet weekly, however, bi-monthly meetings are permitted.
- Groups meeting once a month should receive prior approval from their Small Group Director and Site Pastor.

Having & handling differences of opinions

- Differences of opinion between the leader and group members are acceptable, as long they don't cause disruption.
- If the dynamic is going in a negative direction, the leader will need to address the situation appropriately.
- Practice biblical conflict resolution as appropriate.
- If situations arise that are outside of the leader's ability to handle, raise concern with site leadership (Small Group Mentor, Small Group Site Director, Site Pastor).
- Guard against dominating or participants frequently dominating groups.

Group Size

- A small Group should be three or more people.
- If only one other person shows up for the small group meeting and is the same sex as you, you can use that time for personal mentoring or to build the friendship.
- Groups that are larger than 12 should ensure that they have co-leaders in place and consider multiplying their group.

RED – Actions that are NOT permitted

No alone time with a member of the opposite sex

- Be wise and above reproach. One-on-one time with a Small Group member of the opposite sex who is not your spouse is greatly discouraged.

Don't teach contrary to the beliefs of Manna Church

- Group leaders should be familiar with the beliefs of Manna Church (*View website for an overview of Manna's beliefs. With more specific questions, contact the Small Groups Director*).
- Manna has intentionally limited their “official” theological stances to foundational evangelical Christian beliefs (to include baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Charismatic gifts).
- Group leaders may hold other opinions, but may not teach contrary to the beliefs of Manna Church. This breeds confusion and division.

Profiting from Small Group Members

- Leaders are prohibited from selling or advertising items they sell during the Small Group meeting.
- Small Group leaders are prohibited from leveraging their Small Group for their own profit. For example:
 - Fitness Trainers leading a fitness Small Group and charging participants.
 - Multi-level marketers starting Small Groups for the sole purpose of gaining clientele.

How to get “benched” as a Small Group Leader

- Rebellion: A habit of conducting the not permitted actions of the Small Group traffic laws; unrepentant sin, choosing to live outside of Manna’s Membership Handbook.
 - Remedy: Stay faithful, humble, and teachable.
- Concerns about your relationships, specifically your marriage (if applicable)
- Bad fruit: reputation of gossip, divisiveness, anger, quarreling.
 - Attitudes are contagious - you will reproduce who you are

All three of these symptoms are typically a result of a lack of intimacy with God - which is the most important qualification for a spiritual leader.

II: LET'S GET STARTED

REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A SMALL GROUP LEADER

1. Be a consistent attender of Manna Church
2. Complete FirstStep (Essentials of the faith)
3. Complete NextStep (Manna culture and discovering your part).
4. Complete LeaderStep (More Manna culture and leadership).
5. Register your Small Group at hawaii.manna.church

SMALL GROUP DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Here at Manna Church we have an interest-based Small Group system designed to capitalize on WHO you are, WHERE you are, and WHY you are. This Development Plan will help you move forward in starting your Small Group.

I. Personal Inventory Worksheet

1. Identify your top three interests or passions (Bible study? fitness? board games?).

2. Identify your top three gifts and skills. If you would like to take a spiritual gifts test, visit: <http://buildingchurch.net/g2s-i.htm>

3. What chapters in your life story has God used to develop you into the person you are today?

II. Group Focus

Use your answers from Part I to help yourself identify the type of group that you would like to lead.

1. Ideally, I would like my group to be based on (Check one or more):

- Interest/Passion Gift/Skill Burden (Social or Injustice issue)
 Service (Serving one another and the onlooking world)
 Ministry/theme (Bible Study, marriage, parenting, new believers, etc.)
 Community/Neighborhood (all about relationships from start to finish)

The answers to question 2 and 3 below can be used to input your Small Group description when you register your group. These questions may help you determine: What will relationships look like in your group? How do you hope to see people grow because of your group? How will your group impact the community?

2. The purpose of this group is to:

3. I will accomplish this purpose by (key content I would like my group to go through; i.e books, Bible passages, videos, journals, activities, etc.)

4. Goals of Small Groups: Meet (Quality Time with Other Christians)

a. Shoulder Tapping: Personally inviting others to your Small Group. Write the names of up to 9 people you can invite.

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
4) _____ 5) _____ 6) _____
7) _____ 8) _____ 9) _____

b. Steps to expand your reach:

_____ Ensure my group's info is updated on my.manna.church/smallgroups

_____ I'm representing my group at Small Group Weekend.

_____ I'm connecting with and inviting people who attend the same Weekend Experience that I attend.

c. My Pitch—what I will say when inviting people to my group:

d. First Meeting:

When: _____

Where: _____

Who: _____

What we will do: _____

e. My goals for contacting group members are:

- I will contact _____ members per week.
- I will spend _____ mins/hrs contacting group members weekly (be practical).
- The best time(s) for me to contact group members is _____.
- My primary means for contacting will be _____ (phone, texting, email, etc.).
- I will pray for _____ of my group members each week.

5. Time Investment:

I will spend _____ hours/minutes each week preparing for my Small Group (be realistic).

6. Childcare:

My primary childcare arrangement will be to:

- _____ Provide a babysitter and set out a donation cup
- _____ Have group members cover their own childcare
- _____ Allow children at parents' discretion

7. Goals of Small Groups: Mentor (Discipleship = Relationships + Intentionality).

What are some ways you can help your group members reach their next level of faith?

8. Goals of Small Groups: Multiply (Disciples, Leaders, & Groups)

a. My outreach/community service goals are:

- I would like to hold _____ group outreaches per quarter
- I would like my group to participate in _____ outreaches organized by Manna Church

b. I will develop group members' leadership capacities by:

_____ Encouraging them to attend the Growth Track

_____ Encouraging them to lead a Small Group

_____ Training and delegating responsibilities

_____ Inviting them to more intensive mentoring

_____ Identifying and encouraging them in using their gifts/skills

Other: _____

c. If applicable, I will plan to multiply my group by:

(Example: intentionally raising two leaders who will lead this same type of group)

STARTING A SMALL GROUP: CHECKLIST

- Small Group Cycle Begins ___/___/___
- Small Group Cycle Ends ___/___/___
- Decide on the group you would like to lead and the content you will use. Use the Small Group Development Plan and/or speak with the Small Groups Director
- Register your Small Group online at hawaii.manna.church
 - Registration will be available 4-6 weeks prior to Small Group Cycle starting.
 - Submit-your-small-group/ by Due Date: ___/___/___.
- If any issues arise, you will be contacted by the Small Groups Director.
- Shoulder-tap people to attend. Begin with your sphere of influence. The idea is to have a core group prior to Connect Sunday.
- Continue shoulder-tapping.
- Attend Connect Sunday on ___/___/___.
- Contact all potential participants who signed up during Connect Sunday within 2 days of the event.
- Plan your first meeting.

GROWING THROUGH SHOULDER-TAPPING

What is Shoulder-tapping?

Shoulder-tapping is the method by which we invite people to an opportunity for growth in community.

Three Essential Steps & Characteristics of a Shoulder-Tapping Leader

- A Shoulder-tapping leader is confident in who God called them be and what He called them to do.

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and self-discipline.

2 Tim 1:7 (NASB)

- Shoulder-tapping leader has a heart for discipleship.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matt 28:18-20 (ESV)

For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Cor 5:14-15 (NIV)

- A shoulder-tapping leader is ALL IN— fully committed.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Cor 5:14-15 (NIV)

THREE STEPS TO SHOULDER-TAPPING PEOPLE

1. Pray for God to connect you with the right people.
2. Connect—get in proximity of people.
 - Consider joining a weekend experience team (Welcome, Host, Production, Manna Kids, etc).
 - Arrive at service earlier to connect with people.
 - Use social media.
3. Ask—invite people to your Small Group.

PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING

Communicate.

Call or email everyone whom you have invited or who signed up during a Connect event and confirm if they plan on attending. You will want to get into a rhythm of communicating weekly with your Small Group.

Food

If meeting in a home, it would be a good idea to provide snacks or arrange a potluck. Food draws people in.

Focus on relationships

Remember, relationships are not grown overnight. Your focus in your first few meetings is to create an environment where relationships can develop.

Come prepared

Regardless of the type of group that you are leading, prepare for your group beforehand.

Share ownership

You may be perfectly capable of opening up your home, bringing the food, and leading the discussion each time you meet, but when you allow others to help, you give them an opportunity to grow. Think through how you will delegate responsibilities in your group. Consider asking someone to assist you in leading; asking people to organize food for the meeting; selecting people to coordinate outreaches for the group; etc.