

## **SKILL 1: HOW TO START A GROUP**

### **1. Prayer.**

**Pray for your self:** God help me to follow through on my commitment to You to be a group leader and give me the heart to be a good leader

**Pray for your future group members:** God you put this group together. May this group be a place where people are cared for, and become fully functioning disciples of Christ.

**Ask your Coach to pray for you and the start of your group.**

### **2. Make immediate contact while the interest is hot.**

#### **Process:**

People will indicate their interest in a group via Group Table Sign ups, Weekend Communication Cards, Web sign ups, etc.

Groups admin will send you name(s) of potential people for your group and their contact information

#### **Expectations:**

- Make initial attempt at contact within 2 business days of receiving the name(s) and contact information
- Make two contact attempts; one by phone and one by email. If they do not respond to your two contact attempts within a week; notify us and we will delete their names from our data. If only phone or email contact information is given, then attempt two contacts with that same information.
- Contact the Groups admin and notify of either: a) attempted two contacts with no response, please delete potential contact; or b) made contact and invited to next group meeting, they plan to come; and c) contact came to group meeting, plans on returning

**By Phone:** Make first contact attempt by phone. Although email is easier, it is less personal and less effective than phone.

*If leaving a message by phone:*

Hi (name of potential member). This is (your name) from Grace Community Church. I'm calling about your interest in our groups. I'd love to invite you to a (singles, couples, etc.) group we're starting in (city) and have you try it out, and see if it is right for you. Can you please call me back at (your phone number). Thanks and have a great day.

*If able to reach them by phone:*

Hi (name of potential member). This is (your name) from Grace Community Church. How are you today? I'm calling about your interest in our groups. We are starting a (singles, couples, etc.) group in (city) and we wanted to personally invite you to a kick off party. We'll meet for a short hour, have some refreshments, introduce ourselves to one another and work out all the details about our group meetings like what we will study, when we will meet, where, how often, etc. We'd love for you (and your spouse if they are married) to come and check it out. There's no obligation to join the group, just come and see if you like it. If so, keep coming, if not, you don't have to come back, we won't take it personally, we promise. Would you like to come?

If Yes: Great! The party is scheduled for (date, time, place). Let me give you directions to our place: Where do you live exactly? Give directions. Fantastic. Look forward to seeing you on (date, time).

If No: Ok. Is there anything else we can do to serve you? Well, thanks for your time. Goodbye. Contact Groups team and let them know.

**By Email:** Make second contact attempt by email.

Hi (name of potential member). This is (your name) from Grace Community Church. Hope you are doing well. I'm emailing about your interest in our groups. We are starting a (singles, couples, etc.) group in (city) and we wanted to personally invite you to a kick off party. We'll meet for a short hour, have some refreshments, introduce ourselves to one another and work out all the details about our group meetings like what we will study, when we will meet, where, how often, etc. We'd love for you (and your spouse if they are married) to come and check it out. There's no obligation to join the group, just come and see if you like it. If so, keep coming, if not, you don't have to come back, we won't take it personally, we promise. Would you like to come?

**3. Send out reminder** via email and or phone to your kick off party a few days before the party. All of us are busy, and as much as we want people to remember, we all forget. So remind folks, they appreciate the reminder.

**4. Pick out a couple of possible studies** in advanced (See Skill 9: How to Select a Study) and have sample(s) there for them to browse.

**5. Prepare for the kick off party.** (See Skill 2: Group Preparation)

**6. As a group, decide on all the details** (but as the leader you will probably need suggestions ready or decide for the group):

- Discuss and select a study for the group. Facilitate discussion on what the study will be (a particular study, topic such as finances, marriage, prayer, or specific book of the Bible). Have some sample studies on hand to browse. **Be prepared to suggest a study for the group and have it on hand.** Share what the cost of the study is.
- Tell how long the study will be (usually around 8-12 week study)
- Discuss and select as a group how frequently you will meet (**we suggest steering folks to meet every week for the first study to develop relationships. Once relationships are developed you can begin meeting every other week, esp. if you meet in someone's home**).
- Stress how we all are busy, but that committing to a regular time of community is something we all need and have to make priority for.

Also stress that it's for a short period and that you recognize that things may come up in life that prevent them from coming and that, that is ok as long as they call and let you know in advance.

- Stress the benefits of group:
  - Developing relationships
  - Caring for one another
  - Praying for one another
  - Growing spiritually together
- Discuss and select when the group will meet. Typically, a week night such as T, W, Th or Fri or even a weekend night, Sat or Sun evening, **when it's convenient for most or majority**.
- Discuss and select a meeting place. Typically someone's home, a central location, where one is willing to host. (**we suggest initially it be at your house. After the first study and relationships are developed, you can also discuss rotating homes so no one person or couple is taxed, having it at their place all the time**).
- Discuss and select a starting time. **Typically 7:00PM** for weeknights and any where between 5 and 7 PM for weekends. Groups meeting on Sunday nights usually meet from 4-6PM due to flowing school day.
- Discuss and select a starting date for the group to begin the new study (**we suggest the sooner the better, don't let a lot of time go between kick off party and first study; try for next week**)
- Recruit members for various roles for greater group ownership:

Hosts: Who would be willing to have one or more study at their home?

Refreshment coordinator: Who would like to coordinate all of us taking a particular meeting to provide refreshments?

Communications coordinator: Who would like to receive and communicate church wide information to the group as well as send group updates to the Groups Admin (see Groups Feedback Form)?

Contact coordinator: Who would like to coordinate our group contact information and keep it up to date?

Prayer coordinator: Who would be willing to record and update prayer requests and distribute them out to the group?

Meals coordinator: Who would be willing to coordinate meals among the group in the event one of us needs meals to be provided?

Missions coordinator: Who would be willing to coordinate a possible missions or service project the group can work on together?

Group discussion facilitator: Who would be willing to facilitate a future group study discussion?

Social coordinator: Who would be willing to plan and organize social events for the group, like parties, dinners, cookouts, bowling night, game night, video, night, etc.?

**7. Make follow up phone and email contacts to remind folks** of all the selected details and directions to meeting place for group's first study, and how to pick up their studies in advance.

**8. Have your first study**