



Greetings! We are so excited that you are stepping into leadership with our Small Group Ministry here at Soul City Church. As you step into leadership, we want to make sure you are encouraged, equipped and inspired. In order to set you up for success, we have created a few resources for you.

First, we ask that you listen to our two part podcast. Part 1 is a conversation with Sean DelBeccaro, our Small Groups Pastor, and Kelly Skiles, our Executive Pastor, about our Small Group structure at Soul City as well as some practical tips for leading.

Part 2 is a conversation between Jarrett and Jeanne Stevens, our Co-Lead Pastors, concerning Spiritual Leadership.

As you listen to the podcast and prepare for the session, this document also has a number of helpful resources.

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a Small Group Leader here at Soul City Church!

New Leader Resources

- 1. Small Group Leader Job Description**
- 2. Soul City Church Leadership Covenant**
- 3. Soul City Church Leadership Code**
- 4. Apprenticeship Resource**
- 5. Small Groups Guidelines**
- 6. Facilitation Skills**
- 7. Ministering to Difficult Group Members**



Small Group Leader

MISSION AND VISION

Small Groups are the primary way that we lead people into a transforming relationship with Jesus at Soul City Church.

Our mission is to cultivate safe and welcoming group environments where people can grow in their relationships with Jesus and others.

Our vision is a healthy and thriving Small Groups Ministry that grows both **deep and wide**.

ONE SENTENCE JOB DESCRIPTION

A Small Group Leader's role is to **facilitate meaningful conversations** in a safe and welcoming environment where people are inspired to grow in their relationships with Jesus and others and **raise up new leaders** through apprenticeship.

YOUR PRIMARY WINS

At the end of the session your small group members view their experience as positive and transformational and you identify and develop an apprentice.

YOU ARE

- In a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ
- Submitted to the Bible as an authority for your life
- Agreeing to limit your liberty so as not to be a liability to others as you step into spiritual leadership
- Serious about your own spiritual growth and taking responsibility to pursue transformation
- Choosing to live by purity as a standard, not a suggestion
- Experienced in leading groups
- Abiding by the Leadership Code and Leader Covenant
- Committed to the mission, strategy, and values of Soul City Church
- Available with your time, emotional capacity, and moral discernment to lead a group

YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR

- **Shepherding**
 1. Meet with your group 12 times during the 3-month session to facilitate meaningful discussion, encourage, lead and pray with your group members.
 2. Walk your group members through the Small Group Guidelines, customize as you see fit, and have all leaders and members sign it.
- **Enlisting Leaders**
 1. Identify potential new leaders in your group.
 2. Develop an apprentice (leader-in-training) from within the group.
- **Administration**
 1. Contact new people who sign up for your group within 24 hours to welcome them and provide them with meeting dates, location(s), and what to bring.
 2. Communicate important group updates and Small Group Ministry information with your members and your coach in an effective and timely fashion.
 3. Track measurable data for your area of leadership and report back as requested by your Staff Leader.
 4. Respond to all communication from your Coach promptly and in a timely fashion.
- **Attending**
 1. Small Group Leader Training
 2. Sunday Sign-Ups, which happen after all gatherings
 3. 2 group ReFuel's with your Coach, where you will be cared for and developed
 4. Meet with your Coach one time individually or with your Co-Leader

YOU CAN EXPECT

- A Coach to care for and develop you, walk with and pray for you as you lead
- Soul City Church to assimilate all interested people into your area of ministry in a timely matter
- Soul City Church to advertise and promote your group in our gatherings and on the website, and anywhere else that is appropriate

S O U L
C I T Y
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/LEADERSHIP COVENANT

I will *promote the mission* of Soul City Church:

- By inviting and welcoming everyone to the table (Luke 14:23)
- By attending regularly & giving consistently (Hebrews 10:23-25, Malachi 3:6-10)
- By taking radical responsibility for my own transformation (1 Peter 1:14-16)

I will *protect the unity* of Soul City Church:

- By refusing to gossip or grumble (Exodus 16:6-8, Ephesians 4:29-32)
- By submitting to those serving with spiritual authority (Hebrews 13:17)
- By believing that everyone is accepted and everyone is expected to grow (Romans 15:5-7, Luke 5:31-32)

I will *pursue a life of integrity*:

- By choosing to limit my liberties so as not to be a liability (Galatians 5:13-21)
- By committing to purity as a standard, not a suggestion (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)
- By imitating Christ's humility and commitment to service (Philippians 2:3-8)

I commit to all of the above and to supporting the beliefs of Soul City Church (Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed) and values (www.soulcitychurch/about/mission).

If I decide to step out of the way of living described above, I will let my leader know, and I will accept the resulting processes and consequences. I understand that leadership is a privilege, and I will do my best to honor that privilege.

Name

Signature



Soul City Church Leadership Code

Dependence

Depend on God, not yourself. Your identity is not what you do - it is who you are, so don't define yourself by your role.

Team

We will build our team around our common calling, our deep character, chemistry, healthy competitive spirits, trust, and mutual submission. We will **NOT** be about complaining, cynicism, gossip, suspicion or unhealthy comparisons.

Flexibility

We think wet cement is better than hardened cement - we are a team that is willing to change. We do not repeat things because they worked. We do not believe "cut and paste" are methods that promote innovation and creativity.

Generosity

We should be the most generous people in the church. Giving brings us joy!

Leadership Development

Doing less is Doing more! Always look for someone that you can develop into leadership by giving away appropriate authority instead of developing a follower by giving away a task.

BE

BE with God. BE with People. DO the work of God out of the fullness of your BEing.

Growth

NEVER stop growing. We do not tolerate stagnancy, because it's the first sign of death. We don't play the victim and make excuses. We take transformation seriously because that's what we were designed to do.

Honesty

Always tell the truth.

Loyalty

We are loyal to our mission and to one another.

Excellence

Work with excellence and wisdom knowing that you represent God and Soul City Church

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HOW TO INVEST & GIVE LEADERSHIP AWAY

The diagram below describes **5 steps for intentional apprenticing** with transformation as the ultimate goal. Make it personal, customize it to each situation, and ask your apprentice how they are growing spiritually throughout the process.

When you begin this process, you will likely fall into one of two scenarios:

1. You did not start group with an apprentice: Begin in the Current Session
2. You started group with an apprentice: Begin in the Next Session



WHAT IS AN APPRENTICE?

An apprentice is a Small Group Leader-in-training. They are someone that you think has the potential to become a great small group leader in the future. They are someone that you intentionally invest in by giving them opportunities to practice leading and then debriefing those experiences together to help them grow.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF INVESTING IN AN APPRENTICE?

- To give others an opportunity to discover and use their spiritual gifts
- To grow your own leadership: developing and teaching others refines your skills and character
- To raise up new group leaders in order to realize **our vision of growing wide to provide a seat in a circle for everyone who wants to join a group**

MODELS OF APPRENTICESHIP

- Jesus trains his apprentice disciples (Mark 6:1-30)
- Paul trains Timothy (1 & 2 Timothy)

And the things that you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.
2 Timothy 2:2

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN APPRENTICE

- **Growing in their relationship with Jesus** – this is the best indicator of an individual who will make a great Small Group Leader
- Asks good questions
- Gives thoughtful responses that spark deep conversation
- Active listener
- Connects well with and cares for others in the group
- Shows initiative and leadership
- Committed to the group and fully present during group time

HOW DO I INVITE SOMEONE TO BE MY APPRENTICE?

Take them out to coffee and tell them what you see in them.

- Let them know you think they might make a great Small Group Leader in the future and why. Affirm their leadership qualities with specific examples

Explain the role of a Small Group Leader at Soul City Church.

- Small Group Leaders **facilitate meaningful conversations** in a safe and welcoming environment where people are inspired to grow in their relationships with Jesus and others and **raise up new leaders** through apprenticeship
- We raise up new leaders to realize our vision of being a healthy and thriving Small Groups Ministry that grows both **deep and wide**

Invite them to partner with you in leading the group.

- Start by asking them to participate in planning group meetings
- Then, gradually give them opportunities to practice leading
- Provide honest feedback and recommended next steps before the session ends



Small Groups Guidelines

- 1. Be on Time.** To the best of your ability please come on time each week. We commit to you that we will begin and end on time.
- 2. Be Considerate.** If you must be absent, please inform your leaders. You will be missed when you're not here.
- 3. Be Open.** We realize that trust grows over time. In our small group we invite you to share openly about yourselves. If opening up in a group setting is risky, be confident that you don't have to share or participate more than what you're comfortable with.
- 4. Be Trustworthy.** Confidentiality is extremely important. What is said in the group is considered confidential and will not be discussed outside the group unless specific permission is given to do so. Share with your friends and family what you are learning, but do not share the content of other people's issues!
- 5. Be Attentive.** Listen attentively when group members talk. We will all learn from each other's insights. Whenever possible, link what you say to the comments of others so the group stays on the topic. Please avoid side conversations.
- 6. Be Accepting.** Practice acceptance with one another. Avoid being shocked if someone shares startling information. Be sensitive to one another. Remember, every one of us is at a different place on the journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth. Let's respect that.
- 7. Be Gracious.** Be careful not to dominate the discussion. We are sometimes so eager to share what we have learned or experienced that we do not leave opportunities for others to respond. By all means participate, but allow others to do so as well.
- 8. Be a Student.** Please come with a teachable heart and open attitude to learn and grow. EXPECT to learn and grow through the material being discussed and through the other members in the group.
- 9. Be personal.** Talk about yourself and your own situation, avoiding conversation about other people. Use "I" statements, rather than using "we" or "you".
- 10. Be Careful.** Be very cautious about giving advice. Ask the person if they'd like some feedback. Or, ask them what they need from the group right now.
- 11. Be Present.** Please silence your cell phones, unless there is an important exception. Make a pact with yourself that you can and will give this time to yourself and others and not be a slave to those not present/your phone.

As a member of this group I acknowledge that I fall under the leadership and care of Soul City Church and agree to abide by the above guidelines.

Group Member Signature

Date

Group Leader Signature

Date



Facilitation Skills

The following facilitation skills serve to improve understanding among group members, build open communication channels, and encourage the development of trust and vulnerability so that all members are willing to participate. As you practice these skills you will begin to be able to notice and name what is happening both in the group process and in your members.

1. Involving All Members

- Involving all members is essential for building group cohesiveness, developing a sense of mutual support and encouraging leadership in others.
- Invite participation, but do not demand it. Allowing everyone to be in control of their own story creates safety as people can choose how to tell their story or how much of their story to tell.
- Limit or block a group member's communications, encourage another member to speak, or link one group member's communication to those of another.

2. Asking Good Questions

- Ask questions about thoughts and feelings vs. facts to help members express what's going on inside.
- Help members express their thoughts and feelings about important problems, tasks, or issues facing the group and to reiterate and summarize them when necessary.

3. Active Listening

- Non-verbal behaviors such as eye contact and body position, and verbal behavior that convey empathy, respect, warmth, trust, genuineness, and honesty.
- Listen to the member who is talking and don't interrupt.
- Use statements or question that show genuine interest and invite more communication.

4. Focusing, Clarifying and Reframing

- Ask a member to clarify or elaborate, repeat a particular communication or sequence of communications, or suggest that members limit their discussion to a particular topic.
- Check that a particular message was understood by members of the group and help members express themselves more clearly.
- Reframe someone's statement to help group members examine something from a new perspective.

5. Inviting the Holy Spirit

- Start by praying and asking the Holy Spirit to interact with you during group and declare in prayer that you are open to whatever the Holy Spirit wants to do in you and among you.
- As people in your group share, you may choose to silently pray that they might be guided toward whatever God wants them to notice.
- Offering your focused attention and a silent prayer for God to meet a person in an emotional or difficult moment can be more helpful than getting them a tissue, etc.

6. No fixing, advising, teaching or rescuing

- **Advice, suggestions and instructions are appropriate only when people ask for them. Withhold the urge to offer advice, even advice cloaked in a Bible verse, unless it is specifically asked for.**
- **Attempts to fix a person or a situation pushes the soul into hiding and leaves a person feeling less capable of handling life than the others in the group. Most of the time people just want to be heard- not fixed.**
- **Your role is to facilitate discussion, not be the authority as a teacher. Even when asked, seek to promote discussion through meaningful questions rather than providing an answer.**
- **When a person feels sadness, pain or frustration, let them feel it. Even offering seemingly kind gestures like offering a tissue is a signal that the person's emotion is too much for you or the group to handle.**

7. Listen to The Silence

- **Resist the strong urge to break uncomfortable silence and encourage your group members to do the same.**
- **Silence allows the people speaking time to listen to themselves, make decisions about what to say next, and allows the Holy Spirit space to do whatever he has in mind to accomplish. Silence is very often a gateway to a deeper level of honesty and openness to learning. Even though it can feel uncomfortable, stay with it and use active listening to let the speaker know you are listening.**



Ministering to Difficult Group Members

Make sure you use the tips below that are in line with the group's purpose, agreements, expectations, and openness. Always trust your instincts and do not be afraid to bring in outside help.

The Non-Talker

I may fear being vulnerable, may seek to call attention to myself via the silence, may be waiting for a leader to draw me out or ask a question directly to me.

Effect on the Group:

Participation is essential for group cohesiveness. Members rarely benefit when they are silent, despite their insistence that they are learning vicariously through others.

What the Leader Can Do:

- Look to include the silent member with non-verbal gestures or demeanor.
- Encourage other members to share their fears about being vulnerable by way of example to the quiet member.
- Meet with the member privately to explore the meaning of the behavior and ensure the best approach with member.

The Over-Talker

I am anxious when there is silence. I interrupt others, rush to fill silence, respond to every statement within group, describe in endless detail topics that are irrelevant to group issues or topics, use compulsive speech for self-concealment. I am holding the group at arms length and preventing the group from relating in a meaningful way.

Effect on the Group:

Frustrate and anger other members. Resentment will build and prevent cohesiveness in the group- resulting in conflict, absentee members, drop-outs, and subgrouping. If this person is behaving this way in the group, then they are likely doing it outside the group.

What the Leader Can Do:

- Creatively cut the member off with a statements like: "I wonder who else feels this way", "I can see that you are very passionate about this topic. Who else has thoughts about this?", "I'd like to hear from some of you who haven't shared yet."
- Offer the member opportunities to engage more fully by asking direct questions about their thoughts and feelings (vs. facts) that will encourage them to share what's really going on inside.
- Walk through the Group Guidelines during the first group meeting and revisit them often. Ask your group to give feedback about which guidelines the group is adhering well to and which guidelines the group needs to grow in and brainstorm how to do it.

- Meet with the member privately to confront the individual about what they are doing and how they can help you make the group a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

The Narcissist

I think I am superior without issues or problems. I want all the attention, wish to be ideal or seen as ideal by the group, and I hide my real self because of shame or pride.

Effect on the Group:

It is essential that people offer their “real selves” for the group to grow and thrive, and growth only takes place in the context of humility. If this person does not seem capable of empathy or vulnerability, they could begin to take over the group, acting as a god-figure or spokesman for God to the group.

What the Leader Can Do:

- Set the tone for vulnerability and personal growth- make it part of the culture of the group to be humble and to examine yourself.
- Guard the group and address or at least contain the situation.
- In group you could address it by saying, “I notice that something happens when Joe shares. What is going on here?” This allows the group to engage in the healthy process of dealing with the issue. If you aren’t comfortable confronting each other in group, then facilitate by saying something like: “Thanks, Joe, but it is not that great for everyone. How do some of the rest of you feel?”
- If the group is not one where process or feedback are appropriate, offer the person feedback privately.

The Spiritualizer

I give unhelpful and lofty spiritual explanations, ill-timed Bible verses or “religious” input

Effect on the Group:

It stops a person from going through the experience of processing pain or uncomfortable topics. Ill-timed spiritual advice could stop an emotional process that is underway. “It is a way of bailing out of the process and cutting the person off from experiencing God in the depth of the problem. The Bible is a book about real life, and when we use it to avoid real life, we are no longer doing what it says.” (*Making Your Small Group Work*, Cloud and Townsend)

What the Leader Can Do:

- Evaluate the person’s language. Does it shut the others down? Does it help others feel loved? Does it give a timely truth or correction, or does it punish? Look at the fruit of the saying in the moment.
- Timing is important. Consider intervening in the moment and asking the person to hold their feedback and give the floor back to the person with the issue.
- Intervene in group to the level your group can handle given the Group Guidelines, group purpose and culture. Confront the issue within the group or privately.

The Needy Member or “Help-Rejecting Complainer”

I take up too much group time. I create constant problems that never get resolved, emotional dependency that the group can't meet, inability to be comforted, not taking group advice - preventing growth.

Effect on the Group:

Certain neediness can serve growth, and certain kinds can prevent growth. Individual has an inability to connect with the group. May frustrate, irritate and confuse other members.

What the Leader Can Do:

- Avoid fueling the cycle by offering encouragement or optimism that will likely be rejected.
- Make it a group issue by directly addressing the person's refusal or inability to value, experience, and receive the group's love and care. Additionally, redirect the conversation away from the person and remind them that others would like to share and that they have something to offer in the way of support to others.
- Consider the possibility that the person's needs are more than the group is intended to provide and contact your coach or Small Groups Director for resources and ideas.

The Non-Compliant Member

I am chronically late, have irregular attendance and/or leave early. I do not end my talking when the group time is over. I break confidentiality, not engaging with the group during the meeting, and I am constantly disruption within the group.

Effect on the Group:

Lack of growth, respect, cohesiveness, predictability for the group.

What the Leader Can Do:

- If this is about lack of awareness: address it directly by acknowledging their behavior either privately or when it happens in the group.
- Lack of structure: while they are aware they are perpetually late, they may feel helpless to change the issue. Offer them support from the group in the form prayer, problem-solving, and stricter rules with consequences.
- Entitlement/self-centeredness: since it is likely the person is not aware of the effects of their behavior, allow the group to offer feedback about how it feels when the person does these things.

In General

What the Leader Can Do:

- Walk through the Group Guidelines with your group and revisit them often. Ask your group how the group is going and to give feedback about which guidelines the group is adhering well to and which guidelines the group needs to grow in.

What the Leader Should Not Do:

- Wait for the member to self-correct. It's the leader's responsibility to protect the group from being monopolized, disrupted, etc. and to protect the difficult group member from ruining any chance for connection by irritating everyone.
- Shout the member down or aggressively silence or shame the member. Instead, find about ways to leverage the group dynamic to help the person (see above).