



WHBC

Small Group Leaders

Training Guide

January 2013



Index

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
Basic Time Requirements	1
How Will WHBC Train Me?	2
What Should My Small Group Look Like?	3
How Will WHBC Support Me As I Lead?	4
What Is My Role As A Group Leader?	5-7
Small Group Ministry Overview	8-9
What Tools Do I Need in My Tool Box?	10
TOOLS:	
Common Facilitation Problems	11
Small Group Attendance Record	12
Ways to Serve Sign-Up	13
Ice Breaker Questions	14
Hosting	15
What Are You Trying to Say?	16-17
Small Group Top Tips	18-21
Small Group Guidelines Sample	22
Healthy Habits Assessment	23
Recommended Resources	24-25

Basic Time Requirements for Group Leadership

Small Group Leaders

1. Attend Group Meetings (however often group meets)
2. Submit a Small Group Report (at the end of each series to your Coach)
3. Meet with your coach for care and support (e.g. one-on-one meeting)
4. Attend WHBC Small Group Leadership Events.

Small Group Apprentices

1. Attend Group Meetings (however often group meets.)
2. Attend WHBC Small Group Leadership Events.

Small Group Coaches

1. Provide support to Leader by phone, email, etc... as needed
2. Meet with Leader to provide care and support (e.g. one-on-one meeting)
3. Visit each Small Group you oversee
4. Attend WHBC Small Group Leadership Events

NOTE: *Some ministries (i.e. Families, etc.) may have additional meetings to provide additional support to their leaders. Talk to your Coach to find out.*

How Will WHBC Train Me?

The Training Process for Group Leaders & Apprentices has 3 Phases:

1. The Learning Phase
2. The Preparation Phase
3. The Reality Phase

1. The Learning Phase:

Complete the Basic Small Group Leader Training

Sessions:

1. How Will WHBC Train Me?
2. What Should My Small Group Look Like?
3. What is My Role as a Group Leader?
4. How Will WHBC Support Me as I Lead?
5. What “Tools” Do I Need in My Tool Box?

2. The Preparation Phase:

- A. Meet with your Coach to create a Timeline/Plan for launching your group.
- B. Build your 'Core Team' (Host, 2-3 committed members, and hopefully an Apprentice).
- C. Practice your Leadership Skills in an existing group or another way which your Coach will arrange for you.

3. The Reality Phase:

As You Launch Your Group:

- A. Pursue 'On-Going' Training – workshops, on-line study, etc.
- B. Read books, etc. that will help you grow as a Leader.

What Should My Small Group “Look Like”?

A Typical Meeting has 4 Components.

Using all 4 Components, enables the group to:

Share - Show - Surrender - Support - Serve

The 4 Components Are:

1. **Connecting** : A time at the beginning of the meeting to get acquainted, have refreshments, take attendance, give announcements, and help visitors ‘learn the ropes’.

2. **Studying** : A time to discuss and apply the Bible to our daily lives.
Use the following types of questions:
 - a. Ice-Breaker Questions
 - b. Discovery Questions
 - c. Application Questions

3. **Sharing** : A time to share the struggles, needs, joys, and sorrows in the journey of life.

4. **Praying** : Giving and receiving prayer, support and encouragement for the things that have been shared with the Group.

How Will WHBC Support Me as I Lead?

There Are 3 Main Ways We Support You:

1. We Provide You with a Coach
2. We Offer You Life Long Learning
3. We Connect You with Other Leaders

1. We Provide You with a Coach :

Each Small Group Leader will have a Coach who helps them.

The Coach's Role has 3 Components:

A. Lead

1. Lead by overseeing the Basic Training process for each Leader.
2. Lead by functioning as the liaison between Groups and the Church.
3. Lead by setting the example for Group Leaders:
 - a. Consistent attendance at Small Group Leadership Events.
 - b. Be or become a Member at WHBC.
 - c. Demonstrating love by prayer, actions, and attitudes.

B. Shepherd

1. Shepherd by providing care and prayer for Group Leaders & Apprentices.
2. Shepherd by helping Group Leaders set personal and group goals.

C. Manage

1. Manage by making consistent contact with each Leader for support.
2. Manage by meeting with each Leader to provide care & development.
3. Manage by visiting each group periodically to assess and advise.
4. Manage by overseeing the Group 'Multiplication Process' to help insure healthy process.

2. We Offer You Lifelong Learning:

For Example:

- A. Every Group Leader will be trained in the WHBC Statement of Core Beliefs, Covenant, and Core Values.
- B. Every Group Leader completes this BASIC Training when starting a Group
- C. Every Leader receives personal training by through their Coach.
- D. Regularly scheduled Small Group Leadership Events.

3. We Connect You with Other Leaders:

We do this in the following ways:

1. Church-wide Leadership Events each year.
2. Occasional gatherings for yourself, your Coach, and the other Leaders s/he oversees.
3. We ask you to work on a 'Team' so that no Leader is alone. Each Group should have at least a Group Leader and a Host – hopefully an Apprentice as well. This Leadership Team is a great source of support and encouragement as they work together for the good of the Group.

What Is My Role as a Group Leader?

A Group Leader's Role has 3 Components:

1. LEAD
2. Shepherd
3. Manage

LEAD by:

1. Casting Vision for the Group
2. Planning & Facilitating Meeting
3. Setting the Example
4. Empowering others in the Group

Shepherd by:

1. Guiding the Group through 4 Developmental Stages
2. Providing Care and Prayer for Group Members
3. Insuring that each Group creates Personal and Group Goals

Manage by:

1. Making sure the Group provides Hospitality
2. Making sure Visitors receive Follow-Up
3. Making sure you Communicate with Church

***Note: The Role of the Apprentice is to HELP the Leader accomplish this and learn how to do the same himself/herself**

1. The Leading Component:

A. Lead by Casting Vision for the Group:

B. Lead by Planning & Facilitating Meetings

Planning:

Prior to the Meeting:

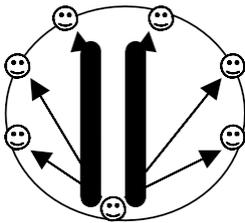
- a. Create the Agenda
- b. Prepare the Lesson
- c. Use 3 types of Questions:
 1. Ice-Breaker Questions: "Prime the Conversation Pump"
 2. Discovery Questions: What Does It Say and Mean
 3. Application Questions: How Can You Apply this to your life?

Facilitating:

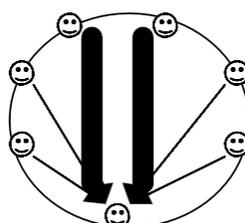
During the Meeting: Make Sure 3 Things Happen:

- a. Utilize the 3 Types of Questions
- b. Properly Deal with Discussion **Obstacles:**
 1. The Conversation Hog
 2. Inappropriate Comments
 3. Bad Time Management
- c. Guide the Group Discussion to Look Like:

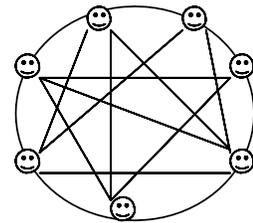
Not This



Not This



But This



C. Lead by Setting the Example for Others:

1. Prayerfully view your role as a calling from God and give yourself wholly to it.
2. Be Consistent in your Attendance at Group meetings
3. Be or Become a Member of WHBC

D. Lead by Empowering Others in the Group:

1. Empower Your Apprentice
2. Empower Each Participant
3. Empower Group Members into Outreach
4. Empower Group Members to organize Social events

2. The Shepherding Component:

A. Shepherd by Guiding the Group through the 4 Developmental Stages

1. Form: When the group starts
2. Navigate: When conflict or annoyances begin
3. Equip: Begin to be used of God
4. Deploy: to the work of the Kingdom

B. Shepherd by Providing Care & Prayer for Group Members

C. Shepherd by Insuring that Group Members create Personal Goals

3. The Managing Component:

A. Manage by Making sure the Group Provides Hospitality

B. Manage by Making sure that Visitors receive Follow-up

C. Manage by Making sure you Communicate with the Church:

1. Communicate your Small Group Report at the end of each session (Attendance Record)
2. Communicate/Meet with Your Coach on a Consistent Basis

Small Group Ministry Overview

The following is a list of the key components of Small Group Ministry and a summary explanation of each.

1. Why are Small Groups valued? They are the ‘building blocks’ of the church for fellowship, care, prayer, spiritual growth, and outreach.

2. What does a Small Group “Look like”?

Basically, the Small Group meeting has 4 components:

- a. **Connecting:** With each other and with God. A time at the beginning of the meeting to talk and get acquainted, which can be followed by a time for praise & worship to prepare our hearts for His Word.
- b. **Studying:** Discussion and application of the Bible to our daily lives.
- c. **Sharing:** Talking about our struggles, needs, joys, and sorrows in the journey of life.
- d. **Praying:** Giving and receiving prayer, support, and encouragement for the things that have been shared with the group.

3. What is the Group Leader’s Role?

The Group Leader’s Role has 3 Components:

a. Leading:

1. Casting vision
2. Planning and facilitating meetings
3. Insure Group Development: Fellowship, care/prayer, growth, & outreach.
4. Attend Small Group Leadership Events.

b. Shepherding:

1. Providing care and prayer for Group members
2. Insure Group Members set personal and Group goals.

c. Managing:

1. Insure refreshments are provided for each meeting.
2. Visitor Follow-up: Call between meetings to encourage and assimilate.
3. Reporting: Take attendance at each meeting and submit a Small Group Report at the end of each series.

***NOTE: It is recommended that the Leader utilize others appropriately gifted within the group to help accomplish the above list of tasks.**

4. What is the Coach’s Role?

The Coach’s Role has 3 Components:

a. Leading:

1. Lead by overseeing Basic Training Process for each leader
2. Lead by functioning as the liaison between Church and Groups
3. Lead by setting the example of Group Leaders.

b. Shepherding:

1. Providing Care and Prayer for Group Leaders & Apprentices.
2. Help Group Leaders set personal and Group goals.

c. Managing:

1. Make Regular Contact by phone/email with each Leader to inquire about praises, concerns, and reporting.
2. Visit each Group periodically to assess the health and needs of Leader & Group.
3. Oversee Group ‘Multiplication Process’ to insure healthy transition.

5. What Is the Training Process?

There are 3 Phases to Training Process for Group Leaders/Apprentices:

Basic Training - LEARNING

Sessions:

1. How Will WHBC Train Me?
2. What Should My Small Group Look Like?
3. What is My Role as a Group Leader?
4. How Will WHBC Support Me as I Lead?
5. What "Tools" Do I Need in My Tool Box?

b. Meeting with a Coach - PREPARATION

1. Confirm Leader's understanding of the training
2. Create Small Group Leadership Team (Leader, Host, and hopefully an Apprentice)
3. Create launching plan/timeline for the Group.

c. On the Job Training (OJT) – REALITY

1. Practice Skills in existing Group or another way which your Coach will arrange for you before launching.
2. Start Group and 'Learn as you go'.

What 'Tools' Do I Need in My Tool Box?

There Are 10 Main 'Tools' A Group Leader Needs:

1. An Explanation of how to handle **Common Facilitation Problems**.

This sheet helps the Leader know how to handle certain communication types that can be disruptive to good discussion.

2. An **Attendance** Record (Small Group Report)

This Report is part of the managing responsibility of Group Leaders. This sheet is to be filled out the first week the Group meets and attendance at each following meeting. This will allow you to answer your Coaches questions like:

- a. Did any NEW people visit your Group this month? If so, what are their names?
- b. Has any Group Member been missing for 2 or more weeks? If so, Who?

A copy of this is turned into the Coach at the end of the series; it serves as your Small Group Report.

3. A '**Ways to Serve**' Chart

This chart may help the Leader, **once the group is established**, find out what areas of serving each member of the Group is able/willing to help accomplish. It is important that the Leader help each member find a way to serve the Group so that the load is distributed and the Leader doesn't get overwhelmed and the members feel connected. The Leader will have each person who joins the Group write their name on the chart and check the areas they in which they will serve.

4. A 'Discussion Starter Kit': **Ice Breaker Questions**

This is a List of Questions the Leader can use to 'prime the conversation pump' each week during the Group Study time. There are many books available that give lots more ideas.

5. A '**Hosting**' Explanation pg. 15

This is an overview of the most common Hosting questions.

6. A "What Are You Trying to Say Chart": **Body Language** pg.16-17

This is a practical chart to help you keep track of the body language in your Small Group.

7. Small Group **Top Tips** pg. 18-21

What about this? What about that? How do I? These are answers to the most commonly asked questions about Small Group leading and hosting.

8. Sample Small Group **Guidelines** pg. 22

This page has simple guidelines to share with your Small Group to help you become an effective, committed and caring group.

9. **Healthy Habits Assessment** pg. 23

This assessment may be used by you or recommended by your Coach for helping to assess where your Small Group is at in key areas of importance.

10. **Recommended Resources** pg. 24-25

A list of books and resources that might be helpful for your further development in Small Group ministry. Some of them are available in the WHBC Library

Common Facilitation Problems

***NOTE:** It is recommended that in the first few weeks of the Group's life cycle, the Leader should briefly explain the following 4 'communication types' to the entire Group. This can be done in a humorous and light-hearted way. The Leader can explain that it is important for the success of the whole group that each person try not to fall into these habits and to be open to gentle correction if they do so. The Leader can create fun and non-threatening 'signals or words' to say during the meeting if one of the following is happening that will inform the guilty party without shaming them. By doing this in the beginning, you can avoid a lot of frustration later on.

A. The Talker: (Key Issue: A Lack of Sensitivity)

Every group will typically have one or more 'Talkers'. These people have good intentions but lack sensitivity to be aware when they are talking TOO much. If this is not dealt with effectively, the result over time is that other people in the group become very frustrated and some even leave the group.

B. The Blaster: (Key Issue: A Lack of Tact)

Sometimes, a group will have a 'Blaster'. The Blaster tend to lack tact and have a tendency to blast or hose down people with advice and scripture references right after the poor soul has just shared their heart about some struggle in their life. Blasters will sometimes 'unload' on someone who has questions about God or says something in the group that is not theologically sound. This discourages others from sharing and is disrespectful to the individual who got 'blasted'.

C. The Bleeder: (Key Issue: A Lack of Support)

The 'Bleeder' is a person who is in great distress and needs lots of extra care and attention. The reasons for the distress vary from severe relational pain such as a divorce, depression, anxiety disorders, or some other type of dysfunction that requires a long period of time for healing. Most people go through a time of 'Bleeding' at some point in their lives. The severity of the pain is best helped by multiple levels of support such as the small group, Deacon Care and even a professional counselor for a period of time. While Bleeders are normal people, their needs require more than the Group can provide by themselves and the Leader will need to help the Bleeder find additional support.

D. The Bouncer: (Key Issue: A Lack of Focus)

The 'Bouncer' is a person who has a tendency to take the Group on 'wild goose chases' during the discussion time. They can be very outgoing and fun or they can be very 'philosophical' in nature and like to look at things from various angles. While both of these traits can be a plus for the Group overall this 'bouncing around from topic to topic is frustrating to most and needs to be closely managed.

E. The Distractions: (Key Issue: Lack of Engagement)

The 'Distractions' person has the tendency to not be paying attention. This can manifest itself in looking at things not associated with the study, checking the phone frequently, getting up and leaving periodically, as well as a number of other nonverbal behaviors. Many times their interaction with the group will be disjointed and sometimes off topic. The reasons for this behavior can vary from being "bored" to having issues which create stress. If it is "boredome", this may need to be addressed individually and encouraging a different level of involvement may help.

F. The Quiet: (Key Issue: Lack of Confidence)

The Quiet person is reluctant to share their thoughts; usually for fear that they will "get it wrong" and "look foolish". It is important to encourage and edify the Quiet person when they do share, most of the time when the Quiet person does speak it is very appropriate and beneficial to all. You do not want to let the Quiet person remain quiet all the time because it will create a feeling of detachment from the group. One way of facilitating the Quiet person to share is to say, after asking a question of the group, "Let's here from the quiet people."

Small Group Attendance Record

Leader: _____ Email: _____

Apprentice: _____ Email: _____

Host: _____

Host Address: _____

Day and Time of Meeting: _____

Is Childcare provided? _____

Group Coach: _____

Month _____

No.#	Name (Adult/Child)	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						

‘Ways To Serve’ In Our Group Chart

Names of People in Your Group																	
Put a Check Mark under each person’s name for EVERY area in which they are willing to serve.																	
Hospitality																	
-- Organize Refreshment																	
-- Help with Refreshments																	
-- Help Visitors: Greet/Follow-up																	
-- Help With Childcare for Group																	
-- Take Attendance at Meetings																	
Crisis Care																	
-- Hospital Visits																	
-- Take a Meal to Someone																	
-- Provide Childcare in Crisis																	
Socials																	
-- Organize the Socials Team																	
-- Help with Socials																	
Outreach																	
-- Organize Outreach Project																	
-- Help with Outreach Project																	
Leadership																	
-- Be Trained as a Group Leader																	
-- Be Trained as an Apprentice																	

A 'Discussion Starter Kit': Ice Breaker Questions

*It is recommended that the Group Leader use one Ice Breaker each meeting. By doing this, the Leader is able to 'prime the discussion pump'. This list is not exhaustive but will help for a while. There are numerous books, etc. available to give you more creative ideas. Enjoy!

Ice-Breaker Question List:

1. Describe your most embarrassing moment?
2. If you had a million dollars, what are the first 3 things you would do?
3. When you are 70 years old, what do you want to be doing?
4. The fastest I ever drove was ...!
5. My favorite dessert is....!
6. My idea of a perfect evening is...!
7. Who was your best friend growing up and why?
8. What is the best job you've ever had and why?
9. What is the luckiest thing that ever happened to you?
10. What is the best place you've ever lived and why?
11. What is the worst place you've ever lived and why?
12. What is your favorite College basketball/football team?
13. What is the dumbest thing you've ever done?
14. Who is the 'wackiest' person in your family tree and why?
15. Who is the most interesting person in your family tree and why?
16. Who is your favorite cartoon character and why?
17. What is your favorite style of music?
18. If you were on a long trip in a car with your family, what would they hear you complain about?
19. If you had all the money you needed, what would you want to do for the rest of your life?
20. What would be your dream vacation?
21. If you could live in another time period – past or future—what would you pick?
22. What is the best movie you've seen in the last year and why?
23. If you were forced to leave the USA, where would you want to go live?
24. What was the worst date you ever had?
25. Which do you prefer the most for a social setting: a large crowd, a small group of friends, or one to one with a friend?
26. What is the best gift you ever received for Christmas or your Birthday?
27. If you had to give up your 3 favorite foods, what would they be?
28. Do you tend to be early, right on time, or a little late when you go somewhere?
29. If you could relive any part in your life, what part would you relive and why?
30. If God appeared to you and said that you could ask Him any question and He would answer it, what would you ask Him?

Hosting

How do I host my small group?

You may be asking, “What do I need to do to host my small group”?

Is it hard to host?

Absolutely not! If you have a warm heart and an open door, you are most of the way there! Hosting means you are allowing your small group to meet at your home where they can sit and talk while the children are in another room playing (if applicable for your group). The host provides a place (but not necessarily the actual snacks) for folks to have some refreshments (like soda and cookies) but doesn't have to provide these each week.

Do I have to host every meeting?

No! Your group can share this responsibility. Different members can sign-up to host for each meeting. Of course, be sure everyone has directions to the next host location! Having said this, if possible, it is best to limit the number of different hosting homes when a group is first starting to meet. This makes it easier for members to know where to go for your group meetings and to know how logistics like childcare will be handled.

What if I can't host one meeting?

If you have to miss a group meeting, simply ask someone else in your group to host that evening. If that doesn't work out there is no problem with pushing back a meeting.

Do I need toys/activities for the children (if applicable for your group)?

No! Each child should bring their own age appropriate toys, books, and a video for themselves. This way no matter what the host home has in terms of child friendly toys, each child will already have what they need (“toys come with the kid”).

What happens if I have an emergency and can't host a meeting?

It is always a good idea to have a “plan B” host home available just in case an emergency arises. This won't likely happen, but just in case, it is good to have this in place. Also, make sure you have a list of your group members with contact info so you can contact the “plan B” host and confirm with them. Then contact the other members in your group to let them know as well (you can often divide up the list with the “plan B” host to make this easier...e.g. “you take the first 3 families on the list and I'll take the last 3 families on the list”).

How many people should I be expecting to accommodate?

Your group will range from 6 to 12 members typically. The number of children (if applicable for your group) will vary but typically 4 to 10 is normal. Remember that the more kids, the more likely you will also have a couple of the adults doing childcare on any given night so that all the small group adults won't need chairs for the meeting time (e.g. a group of 12 adults with young kids will likely have 10 adults meeting for discussions and 2 adults watching the kids).

What if I have a special situation I need to address if I am to host?

If you have a dog or other special situation, simply inform your small group so they are aware of it. Typically it is best to have pets put away and your phone ringer turned off once your group meeting begins so that you won't have any interruptions.

Will I be asked to continue hosting when our agreed to series completes?

We are SO grateful for your willingness to host during this series. When your commitment is over, each host needs to personally decide what his or her role will be with the group. It is our hope that some hosts will choose to continue with their groups. If that ends up not being your plan, know that we (and your group!) are VERY grateful for you having hosted but that we know you must do what is best for you and your family going forward. You can hand the hosting baton to another in your group so they can continue...be sure to let them know how easy (but fulfilling) it was to host :o).

What Are You Trying to Say?

A practical chart to help you keep track of body language in your small group

Matthew 6:22

	GESTURE	WHAT IT CONVEYS	IF YOU'RE DOING IT
E Y E S	Avoiding Eye Contact	May mean she's shy. Or lying or trying to provoke you. May also be a nonverbal sign to cue someone to stop talking. May also be a cultural issue—in some cultures, avoiding eye contact is a sign of respect.	Unless you know of a cultural issue, always strive to maintain comfortable and gracious eye contact. Too much can make the listener feel under scrutiny, and too little may indicate a lack of interest on your part.
	Darting Eyes	Usually perceived as a sign of lying or hiding the truth.	Don't. Make comfortable eye contact.
	Rolling Eyes	Usually perceived as a sign of disrespect, condescension, disagreement, or frustration. Almost always an aggressive action.	Don't!
	Staring At You	Could be intense concentration, or could be rude and aggressive.	Be sure to break your gaze at comfortable intervals, or when the listener breaks. You don't have to win the stare-down.
	Staring Into Space	Could be intense concentration, or could indicate disagreement or disinterest. May be a "dissing" action or a nonverbal stop sign.	Don't. Train yourself to maintain comfortable eye contact.
F A C E	Furrowing the Brow	May be a sign of thinking, disagreement, or questioning; or perhaps the listener can't hear or understand you.	Relax your face while talking. Clarify using words rather than gestures.
	Frowning	May mean the listener is unhappy or uncomfortable with the discussion. Or it might just indicate concentration or trying to figure something out.	Relax while talking. Smile and/or nod while listening. Clarify using words rather than gestures. Explain why you are frowning.
	Grimacing	Usually a sign of displeasure or discomfort. But it may just be a normal expression.	Relax your face and smile if appropriate. If something caught you off guard, explain your reaction.
	Lip Biting	May feel confused, perplexed, or uncomfortable. Or may be trying to come up with an answer—real or phony.	Relax and smile. Admit your discomfort.
	Lip Pursing	Pursing or twisting lips to the side may indicate thinking or an attempt to hold back an angry comment.	Relax and smile. Admit your discomfort.
		Pg. 16	

	GESTURE	WHAT IT CONVEYS	IF YOU'RE DOING IT
H E A D	Tilted Head	When gently tilted to either side, this indicates friendliness or receptivity. When lifted high, it may indicate aloofness, disagreement, or resistance to your authority.	Watch your head position. Tilt slightly right or left, and slightly forward, indicating your interest in what the person has to say.
A R M S &	Shoulder Shrug	May signal resignation, uncertainty, or surrender.	Try to be more definitive in your communication.
	Squared Shoulders	Usually a sign of confidence and certainty, but may also be a sign of resistance.	Relax and smile. Don't use your body to force your point.
	Hunched Shoulders	May signal uncertainty or a cringing spirit.	Try to remain relaxed and confident. Remember that you are a child of God.
H A N D S	Crossed Arms	May be a conscious or subconscious effort to put distance or an emotional barrier between the speaker and listener. May indicate rejection of the speaker or idea. Or may just be the most comfortable position.	Consciously relax your arms and lean forward slightly. Try for an open position with arms at your side or behind your back.
L E G S	Crossed Legs	May be a conscious or subconscious effort to put distance or an emotional barrier between the speaker and listener. May indicate rejection of the speaker or idea. Or may just be the most comfortable position.	Consciously relax your legs and lean forward slightly.
	Tapping Feet or Legs	Probably indicates nervousness at a conscious or subconscious level.	Try to keep your feet and legs still. Your tapping will make other participants nervous.
P O S T U R E	Angle	People tend to angle toward those they like or agree with and away from those they dislike or disagree with.	Be sure you aren't distancing yourself from the one to which you're speaking.
	Comfort Zone	Each culture has a comfort zone—the distance we place between ourselves. Pay attention to how the person responds and how close they are comfortable being.	Stay alert. If the other person backs up, you are too close; if they keep moving forward, they may want more closeness.
	Slouching	May indicate disrespect or a lack of interest. Or it may simply be an adapted position.	Stand or sit using good posture. Slouching can collapse the chest and make breathing more difficult, resulting in a feeling of nervousness.

Small Groups

Top Tips

How do I handle typical issues that arise in my group?

You may be asking, “What about this? What about that? I don’t know how to handle _____ (you fill in the blank!)?”

Read-on to get some ideas on how to address these issues.

1. Our group doesn’t have a leader.

How can we establish a leader for our group?”

There are two primary reasons to have a leader for your group. First, it provides one person to facilitate and help the group move through making decisions. Sometimes a group cannot come to consensus on a decision. When everyone agrees to turn to the leader and let him or her moderate the group through such times (whether they like the ultimate decision or not), the group will run much effectively. Second, our small groups work under the assumption that each group is supported and supervised by the church. A single point of contact for the group is needed to allow this to work effectively. Often someone is concerned about the commitment required to lead. Our small groups actually share the responsibilities of the group so the leader is primarily the person that simply keeps the group on track and communicates with the church when needed. He or she does NOT do all the work in keeping the group running. Finally, if your group is trying to select a leader, here are three good questions you can ask everyone in the group and then submit your responses to your coach to help identify a possible leader for your group from your existing members:

1. What prior small group experience do you have within a Christian organization?
2. What other prior volunteer experience do you have within a Christian organization?
3. Would you be willing to serve your group as the leader if asked to do so?

Have members write answers on a piece of paper, fold these up, and give them to your coach.

Ask your coach to evaluate the responses, contact anyone if necessary to confirm their experience or willingness to serve, and then recommend a leader to the group.

2. Someone doesn’t like their group assignment.

How do I respond to group members when they ask, “How did I end up in this group?”

The groups were put together by the Elder Ministry and the Small Group Ministry Team based on the information provided on your Registration Card. Childcare, handicapped access, allergies and frequency were the first consideration. A request to change groups can be given to a Small Group Coach. LEADER – please do not take this personally; help everyone to get to a Small Group where they will best grow in Christ and relationships.

3. Someone can’t participate in the group.

If our group decides to do something, but someone can’t (or won’t) go along, what do I do?

Small groups have to make decisions to function. Typically not everyone will like the final decision because it might not work for them. An example would be, “What night should we meet on?” Ultimately one or two people may not be able to meet on the night chosen. This IS uncomfortable but not abnormal. This is a reality. Inevitably not every individual in a group will be accommodated by the group’s decisions. In a situation like this, encourage the individual and let them know if things change for them in the future that they should attend at any time (communicates acceptance) but encourage them to contact the Small Group Ministry Team Leader or Coach to see if there is another option that works better for them.

4. We can't find a host.

We are having a hard time getting a host home to commit, how can I approach this?

Talk to your Small Group Coach as soon as the problem arises. The goal of this ministry is to have other homes ready and waiting to serve the needs of a Small Group.

5. No one wants to do childcare (but it's needed).

Everyone keeps asking, "Why can't we just meet at the church and use the childcare there?"

What should I do?

Knowing what to do with the kids can be a challenge for small groups. It's critical for groups to decide up front how they will handle childcare. Here are some ideas that you can discuss with your group.

Meet when the kids are busy. Get together at local coffee shops, bookstores, or the park when the kids are in school. (If this is a daytime group)

Coordinate help from teens. Check with your youth group for volunteers for evening meetings.

Use two homes. If one home doesn't have enough room for you to meet and have the children in a separate space, use two. Drop the kids off at one group member's house with a sitter or volunteer from the group and have the group gathering at another home a few blocks away.

Bring them with you. This is a wonderful way for children to see their parents living their faith. Have a signup sheet so that group members can take turns watching the kids during your group. Here are some ideas for having kids present with your small group. Have a sign-up sheet so that group members can take turns watching the kids during your group.

- Encourage children to participate in a short time of singing and a scriptural thought or question specifically for them. Then take their prayer requests and pray with them before dismissing them to play or do another activity.
- Have a designated play area, have children bring a toy or game from home.
- Provide them with snacks.
- Show a short movie or a TV show in another room.
- Give children a craft to do during your meeting.

6. My group doesn't like the study.

What should I do if my group doesn't like the "packaged" study we are using?

Explain to the group that the study is just for 6 weeks. After that the group will have another study. Ask your group to focus on getting to know one another and leveraging whatever they can from the study to help them do this. If the group can "bear with" the study in the short term, it will actually allow them to focus their energies on building friendships at the start of their group. Using the packaged study also allows the leader to not have to spend a lot of time preparing content (just put in the DVD and press play!) so they can spend the hour or so they have each week to get ready for the group by praying for the members, contacting them, etc....

7. We have a disruptive person in our group.

What can I do to address someone in my group that is disruptive (e.g. late all the time, talks to much, gives advice, etc...)?

Review the “Common Facilitation Problems” with your group again. (This is in your Tools section of your Small Group Leaders Training Guide). This addresses the typical “disruptive” types of behaviors that can cause a group to fail...just because of one person! If the individual persists with the disruptive behavior even after you’ve reviewed the above with the group, pull the individual aside and ask them to help you with something. Focus on something that will address their disruptive behavior as they help you.

Here is an example:

Let’s say someone talks too much. After reviewing the guide, they continue to dominate the discussion. Do this...prior to the next meeting, pull them aside and have a conversation something like this with them, “Joe, I appreciate your openness with the group. Your willingness to participate in the discussion keeps things lively. I wanted to ask you to help me at our next meeting with something. Could you do this? I’m trying to get other folks to build their confidence so they will share more. I know they want to share but they just don’t have the confidence. To help me, could you wait for me to ask you directly to share your thoughts on a question so that I can draw others out in the discussion? I might say something like this after I’ve asked you to respond to a question and you’ve answered it, “Everyone, Joe was willing to share a response to that question, now would someone else be willing to also share what they are thinking”? Ultimately, if a person won’t stop being disruptive and you think it could hurt the group over the long run, ask your Coach to intervene and the Coach working with the Small Group Ministry Team can address this with the individual.

8. We have a disruptive child in our group.

What can I do to address a disruptive child?

This is a difficult issue to address but it is addressable! First, make sure the group knows how the group is handling childcare. Don’t assume everyone knows. If you decide that everyone will sign-up and rotate through each week doing childcare, make sure you pass the sign-up sheet around and if someone hasn’t signed up, ask them to pick a day that works for them so that everyone helps support the group in this way. Second, when a child comes into the “adult group meeting” and disrupts the discussion (this WILL happen), make sure you have told the group upfront that when this occurs, one of the parents will get up and take the child out of the meeting space to address the child’s concern. This keeps the disruption to a minimum for the actual group and takes the disruption “off-line”. Worst case is the parent can’t calm the child and they end up in the hall all evening with the child (hopefully not). If the child can’t be calmed, it is better that the one parent “miss the meeting time” vs. the entire group “missing the meeting” by default because a crying/loud child is the center of attention in the middle of the group meeting all evening.

Again, if you agree upfront with your group that this is how you will handle child interruptions, then the group won’t be put on the spot of having to ask the parent later to please leave the room with the child which can generate hurt feelings. You can emphasize with couples that they need to decide BEFORE they get to the meeting which one of them will get up and leave the room with the child if there is a problem. This is important because confusion between the mother and father when the child disrupts the meeting simply adds to the confusion (and frustration) of both the parents and the group members.

9. People's expectations for the group are different.

**Different folks want different things for the group, e.g. more study, more social time, etc...
How should I handle this?**

A group's character will vary by group just like it does with various individuals. As your group starts up, the leader will primarily set the "starting character" for the group. As a new group begins, the biggest character focus is going to be on fellowship, sharing each other's stories, and getting to know one another. There will intentionally be less focus on Bible study (though there will be some). This is because people need time to start "belonging" in the group before they will really be able to start "believing" and then ultimately "behaving" as God desires.

10. Some people want to invite their friends to the group.

People want to invite their friends to our group, but some are saying we should be "closed", what should I do?

Our groups at WHBC are open groups. This means we are always open to God intersecting our lives with others and inviting them into our group. However, there is a time or a season that a group might "close" for a period. Examples of this include when a group is newly formed or if someone in the group is in crisis. In general, all groups should have a default of being open. They should only close in these special circumstances. Remember to explain to your group that the early church had over 3000 new believers join their church and their small groups in ONE day! Do you think they had a challenge trusting that God would take care of them and help both their groups and the individuals in those groups experience good small group life? Yes they did I'm sure! Your group members can trust God to bring the right folks along people's path and then invite them into your group whenever possible. If your group ever has over 14 adults in a circle for a meeting, you should contact your Coach to begin the Multiplication Process.

11. I feel like I'm doing all the work!

How do I get my group members to share in the responsibilities of the group?

Remind folks that everyone has a role to play.
Have folks sign-up for different roles (if they don't, indicate the role won't take place, e.g. no refreshments that night if no one signs up).

12. My group needs to develop better healthy interaction.

How do I get my group members to promote an environment that is caring, safe, authentic, growing, and helpful to one another?

Use the Healthy Habits assessment tool to help your group determine how well the group is doing in these areas and how they would like to contribute themselves personally to making the group more healthy. (This is found in the Tools section of your Small Group Leader Training Guide)

Small Group Guidelines

Our Small Group exists to provide an environment where we can develop relationships, provide mutual care, give to others in need and mature in our walk with Christ.

Commitments - Each member in our small group commits to:

- Make the group a **Priority** with each family represented.
- Take **Ownership** and share responsibility for the group and its goals.
- Prepare for and **Participate** in the study and discussion during small group meetings.
- Provide a safe, **Confidential** environment. What is said in the group stays in the group.
- Regularly assess our own **Personal Growth** goals and encourage one another in our pursuit of Christ-likeness.
- Share personal areas of our lives with other members in the group for support and **Accountability**.
- Call upon each other at any time for **Care & Support**. Provide care to every member of the group.
- **Pray** for members regularly.
- Support those **Adopted** by our group and participate in caring for them.
- Be **Intentional** about participating in family activities outside of the normal meeting time.

Care– Contribute to your group’s health with these guidelines

- **Don’t Advise** – Don’t give advice, offer fixes, point-out problems/solutions for others in the group unless specifically asked to do so by the individual.
- **Keep Confidence** – Keep things shared strictly confidential and within the group.
- **Foster Safety** – Help create a place where people feel heard and loved. Listen, empathize, and encourage. Don’t point fingers or be derogatory.
- **Stay on Topic** – Don’t talk too much or get off topic, follow the facilitator’s guidance. Give everyone a chance to share and discuss the questions.
- **Be Timely** – Be on time to your meetings and don’t dominate the discussion time.

Recommended Resources for Further Exploration

Books and resources to grow small groups

Smallgroups.com.

Small-groups training resources from Christianity Today International

LeadershipJournal.net.

This website offers practical advice and articles for church leaders.

***Creating Community** by *Andy Stanley and Bill Willits*. Stanley and Willits unveil the principles that have connected more than 8,000 people in small groups (Multnomah Publishers, 2004; ISBN 978-1590523962).

Listening Ministry by *Susan K. Hedahl*. A highly practical book that presents a unique blend of theological reflection, new research, and suggested forms of education on listening (Fortress Press, 2001; ISBN 978-0800631749).

Why Didn't You Warn Me? by *Pat J. Sikora*. This focused guide trains the novice or experienced small-group leader to deal effectively with the obstacles of group life (Standard Publishing, 2007; ISBN 978-0784720752).

***Coach: Empower Others to Effectively Lead a Small Group** by *Joel Comiskey*. Influential small-groups author Joel Comiskey brings trusted research and practical advice to discuss coaching group leaders (CCS Publishing, 2007; ISBN 0979067914).

Destination: Community by *Rick Howerton*. A ministry manual to help you lead a dynamic and redemptive small group (Serendipity House, 2007; ISBN 978-1-5749-4352-8).

I'm a Leader...Now What? by *Michael Mack*. Practical advice on how to guide and maintain an effective small group (Standard Publishing, 2007; ISBN 978-0784720769).

***Making Small Groups Work** by *Henry Cloud and John Townsend*. This book provides small-group leaders with valuable guidance and information on how they can help their groups to grow spiritually, emotionally, and relationally (Zondervan; ISBN 978-0310255123).

Finding the Flow by Jenn Peppers and Tara Miller. Find a fresh take on leading small groups from two women who have collaborated to bring together their experiences in small-group ministry from their Denver-area church (InterVarsity Press, 2008; ISBN 978-0830810949).

Go Big with Small Groups by *Bill Easum and John Atkinson*. This book offers step-by-step advice for beginning and developing a small-groups ministry (Abingdon Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0687491353).

Let's Get Started: How to begin your small-groups ministry by Dan Lentz. A Help-Guide for churches who want to start, or re-start, a small-groups ministry (Standard Publishing, 2007; ISBN 978-0784720738).

Successful Small Groups: From Concept to Practice by Teena M. Stewart. A solid and practical book that covers all the bases (Beacon Hill Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0834122373).

***ReGroup DVD** with Henry Cloud, John Townsend and Bill Donahue
This two disc DVD set covers a wide variety of topics to assist your group in going deeper and staying healthy. Disc One has four one hour sessions. Disc Two has 13 sessions that are 5-10 minutes in length and bonus material too!

*Available in the WHBC Library

Your Training Team:

Pastor Andy Gibson	517.930.1176	andrewgibson@gmail.com
Bob Bunn	810.632.5044	bigotis09@yahoo.com
Jim Schepper	248.431.0589	jgscounsel@msn.com
Sue Gibson	248.982.5303	marksuegib@yahoo.com
Pastor Tom Roberts	586.530.6882	troberts1116@comcast.net