

# “Art of Neighboring” FAQ

**Question: Are we hosting a party for our neighborhood or for our summer group?**

**Answer:** The party emphasis is *primarily* for the summer group but *potentially* as a neighborhood strategy. There are two components to this project that you want to keep distinct:

- the learning component (your summer group)
- the laboratory component (your neighborhood strategy)

The summer group will be made up of new and old church friends. You'll gather together once a month (June, July, Aug) for a party, picnic or BBQ. In the context of this social gathering you'll have a 30 minute discussion time to process the Sunday messages, your devotional reading from the book "The Art of Neighboring" and to share how you're applying these ideas in your neighborhoods. But the over-all feel of the event should be like a party.

Your neighborhood strategy is a series of simple activities you do on your own that can help to create connection and community in your neighborhood. If a "block party" makes sense in your specific context- great- but there are a lot of other strategies you can employ to create connection (walks through the neighborhood, offer to help with childcare, bake cookies for neighbors, etc.)

The focus of the summer group is "to party with a purpose" and connect our church congregation. The focus of the neighborhood strategy is to love our neighbors and to connect your neighborhood.

**Question: How will the parties be funded?**

**Answer:** Use the "pot luck" method for any party that you host.

If you're considering the learning component (your summer group party) that will be held once in June, once in July, and once in August for New Community Church people going through the "Art of Neighboring", we recommend that everyone in your summer group bring food to share for the cookouts & BBQs.

If you're considering the laboratory component (reaching out to your neighbors), the study will give you simple ideas to connect with your neighbors like taking a purposeful walk through your neighborhood or baking cookies for a neighbor, that doesn't cost much money.

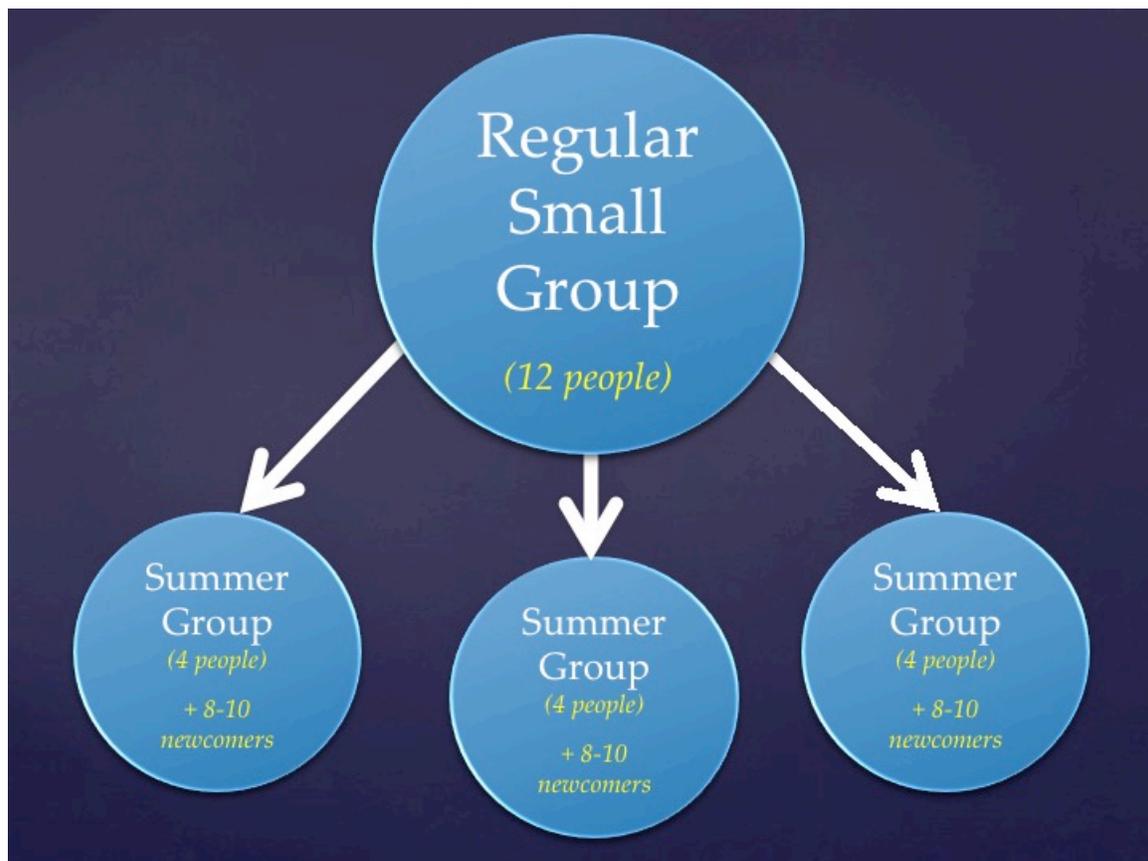
If you decide, as part of the neighborhood strategy, to have your neighbors over for dinner, or to throw a block party, we recommend the "pot luck" method in order to keep costs down. You might offer to host the neighborhood party in your yard and provide hot dogs and hamburgers, and then coordinate with the neighbors to contribute side dishes and desserts. Be creative! The neighbors will gladly join in as long as someone else is organizing it!

**Question: When we talk about summer groups are we to think of our regular small group or is this something else?**

**Answer:** This is different from your regular small group.

Remember, we are trying to launch 40-50 groups that could conceivably connect 400-500 people. If we perpetuated our regular small groups there would be no room for newcomers, who we are hoping to connect.

Having said that, it would be a wise strategy to keep parts of your regular small group together. For instance, if you had 12 people in your regular small group you could create 3 different sub-groups of 4 people who would now be able to absorb 8-10 newcomers. It would look something like the following diagram:



***Instead of your regular small group of 12, you will have multiplied into 3 groups totaling 36 people, a 200% growth rate! Remember this is just for the 3 parties over the course of the summer.***

**Question: Do we recruit newcomers or are they assigned to us?**

**Answer:** The best practice is always “relational” over “programmatic.”

In other words, it's best if you recruit your own newcomers through existing relationships, of unconnected people. Of course, there will always be unconnected people who are unknown, so Vicki and Hollis will work with you, to help connect you to those looking for a summer group. We also hope there will be several who want to open their group to mostly new people, although we think it's always good to have at least one couple/single you know, to share it with.

**Question: Where will these groups meet?**

**Answer:** That depends on you, your group, and the size of your meeting location(s).

Some leaders with large back yards, patio areas, etc., could conceivably keep all 3 sub-groups and 36 people (from the earlier example above) at their home. It would make for one fun party and you would simply break into 3 different gathering spaces with a different leader for each sub-group, when it came time for the 30 minute discussion of “The Art of Neighboring.”

Other leaders may prefer a more intimate “dinner party feel” and have each sub-group meet at different times and locations. Do whatever works best for your context and comfort level.

**Question: What are the benefits of this summer strategy?**

**Answer:** There are several potential benefits:

- ***It’s an opportunity to connect a lot of unconnected people.*** We’ve welcomed many newcomers to our church over the past 1-2 years who are still unconnected. Summer parties are a great way to connect people.
- ***It creates an environment for renewal.*** One of our group life axioms is “the key to ReNEWal is new...new strategies, new relationships, new curriculums, new leaders. We want to put ourselves in an environment of continual self-reNEWal.
- ***It raises up new leaders.*** This is an opportunity for someone who has thought about being a small group leader to test the waters with no long term commitment or to begin building a group for the fall if they want to.
- ***It’s a fun way to maximize “The Art of Neighboring.”*** Remember, these summer groups meet only once each month as the learning component to our neighborhood strategies. These “parties with a purpose” will keep the vision of loving your neighbor fresh and growing as we come together with fellow NCC’ers to discuss what we’re learning and applying back in our neighborhoods.