

**Ascension  
Lutheran Church**

**Small Group  
Ministry Leadership  
Training**

# Overall Vision and Purpose for Small Group Ministry

## Why is community building so important for Ascension?

- Ascension's Strategic Plan calls for us to become a church of small groups.
- The reason people come to Ascension is to connect with other people – one of the best places for that to happen is in Small Groups.

## *What ways have you connected with others at church?*

## Benefits of Small Groups:

Small Groups support and supplement the church's overall ministry. Let's consider the following benefits:

- **Lay people do the ministering:**  
Group participants minister to one another. Spiritual lives are nurtured and challenged to grow by personal attention and accountability in the group, facilitated by a trained lay leader. Special needs are given immediate and personal attention and prayer. Small group leaders assist the ordained pastor and other paid staff by extending care to more church members. Because small group leaders serve an important function, it is imperative that they be well trained and cared for continually. That's why you are here!
- **Small Groups offer mutual support:**  
Small groups provide a safe, inviting environment for participants to connect with one another and form personal relationships with other Christians. If you can connect with others and form personal relationships, the small group becomes an environment where you can offer mutual support.
- **Small Groups provide a side door into the church:**  
Small groups offer an opportunity for participants to invite and encourage unchurched people to experience our church outside of worship. Small groups can be a non-intimidating way for people to connect to the church on a personal level.

# **Biblical Foundations of Small Group Ministry**

## **“One Anothering” Scripture References:**

- John 15:12
- Ephesians 4:2-3
- Ephesians 4:32
- 1 John 1:7
- Galatians 6:2
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Ephesians 5:21
- James 5:16
- Colossians 3:16
- Romans 12:10
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- 1 Corinthians 12:25

# Organizational Structure of Small Group Ministry at Ascension

*Looking at the roles of the Small Group Coordinators and Small Group Leaders*

## Job Descriptions

### **Small Group Coordinator:**

A Small Group Coordinator will oversee a specified number of Small Group Leaders and their groups. The Coordinator's primary responsibilities are to recruit, motivate and support each Small Group Leader as well as assist in locating applicable resources for each Small Group. A Coordinator must be able to articulate the vision of Small Group Ministry and work well with other people.

### **Primary Responsibilities Include:**

- Recruit, motivate and support Small Group Leaders.
- Articulate the vision of Small Group Ministry and how this vision will impact the ministry of Ascension.
- Monitor the health of each group through personal interaction with the Group Leader.
- Assist with the training of new Group Leaders.
- Attend monthly Small Group meeting along with other Small Group Leaders on \_\_\_\_\_. At the meeting, we will meet as a group and share and grow with other small group leaders.
- Continue to grow in your personal faith through a Small Group.

### **Small Group Leader:**

A Small Group Leader's overall responsibility is to lead a small group. The person will ensure that the small group is achieving their purpose for being a group. The Group Leader will ensure that meetings start and end on time and that the group covenant is being honored.

### **Primary Responsibilities Include:**

- Ensure that the Small Group for which you are leading meets regularly and that the meetings start and stop on time.

- Promote the concept of Small Group Ministry and encourage the members of your group to invite new people. Always have an empty chair present at each of your meetings as a visual reminder of this.
- Identify the type of Small Group and implement all elements of successful Small Groups. Provide a resource for the Small Group when needed to ensure that the purpose for meeting is being met.
- Attend monthly Leadership Meetings and grow and share with other Small Group Leaders.
- Communicate regularly with your Small Group Coordinator.

***More about the expectations of Small Group Leaders:***

**Small Group Leader Expectations:**

1. All leaders will attend a Training Orientation.
2. Leaders will be expected to attend a monthly meeting. A sample agenda form is in the back of this packet.
3. Facilitate your group in a respectful manner.
4. Model the importance of inviting new people to your group. Have an empty chair present as a reminder.
5. Identify a future small group leader within your group. Help them become a leader themselves
6. As a small group, put together some kind of Group Covenant or set of ground rules for your group. This can be as in depth or as simple as your group needs.
7. Celebrate when your group is doing well. Recognize the warning signs of a group that is struggling. It is important for leaders to always be aware of the signs.

# The “Keys” to Successful Small Group Ministry

**There are 4 keys to successful Small Group Ministry.  
These keys are as follows:**

1. Caring Conversation
2. Devotions
3. Service
4. Rituals and Traditions

Below are a few examples of how the keys relate to small group ministry.

**Caring Conversation:** Support Groups, Relationship Building Groups, Marriage Enrichment Groups

**Devotions:** Bible Studies, Prayer Teams

**Service:** Ushers Small Group, Faith Chest Small Group, Choirs

**Rituals and Traditions:** The intentionality of Small Group Ministry  
- More details about this on the next page

One of the first steps as a Small Group Leader is to establish what kind of small group you would like to start and to set up clear objectives for your small group from the beginning. You will need to establish how you will incorporate all of the keys into your ministry.

Let’s take a few moments and walk through how we could do this.

What type of small group do you want to start?

Which key does it focus on?

Even though the group is focused on that key, all of the keys need to be included in some way. How could we incorporate each of the keys into your group?

# **Rituals and Traditions of Small Group Ministry at Ascension:**

The rituals and traditions key is the same for all small groups started at Ascension. It is Ascension's tradition of Small Group Ministry. Rituals and traditions help us be disciplined and intentional about this ministry. Without them, Small Group Ministry will not grow to be a part of our church.

1. Groups will be approximately 6 – 8 people, no larger than 12.
2. Each small group meets regularly.
3. All Small Groups will have an empty chair present as a reminder that inviting new people is imperative for all groups.
  - What will happen when a group has 12 or more people meeting on an ongoing basis?
  - Identify someone in your group that could be a small group leader. Groom and encourage that person in leading another small group like yours down the road, or starting a new small group.
  - Who joins the new group and who stays? This is flexible, but the expectation should be set at the beginning of your group.

## **How do we get people for our small group?**

There are four different ways that new people may join your group:

1. You recruit them – by asking people that you know to join your group.
2. A Sign up Sheet – you can put a message in the Update / Insight about your small group and have a sign up sheet in the Narthex;
3. A Pastor or other Leader – someone may say that they want to get involved in the church, the pastor or other leader may refer someone to your small group;
4. Transforming an existing group into an intentional Small Group.

## **Establishing a Group Covenant or Set of Ground Rules**

A Group Covenant or set of ground rules is imperative for a group to remain healthy. Why do you think this is so important for a Small Group?

- People need to know why they are meeting.
- People need to know how long they are meeting: when will they start and stop. People are busy!
- Will this group remain confidential? People need to feel they can share!

# Small Group Covenant Worksheet

## Identify Your Group's Purpose:

Some examples may be:

- To get to know one another and become a caring community;
- To support one another through listening, sharing, praying, and being present to one another;
- To discover meaning in God's word and apply it to our lives;
- To enjoy one another's uniqueness and take responsibility for our own adventure in Christian growth;
- To share ideas about how we can minister together in Jesus' name.

## Identify your Group's Ground Rules:

Some examples may be:

- We agree to make our meetings a top priority and will attend regularly;
- We will keep personal things that are spoken about in our group completely confidential in order to provide an atmosphere of openness and trust;
- We will welcome new members into our group.

## Outline Your Group's Arrangements:

We will meet every \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ sessions. Our beginning time will be \_\_\_\_\_ and the ending time will be \_\_\_\_\_. Our meetings will take place \_\_\_\_\_. My turn for refreshments will be \_\_\_\_\_.

Child Care arrangements are:

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Group Participants:

Name	Phone Number	e-mail address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

# Small Group Organizational Worksheet

What is the name of your Small Group? \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group topic or purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Leader's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # and/or email: \_\_\_\_\_

This Small Group will meet:

How often? \_\_\_\_\_

What day of week and time of day? \_\_\_\_\_

Each session will be how long? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like printed on Ascension's website and in the monthly Insight about your Small Group?

The Four Keys will be implemented into this group as follows:

\*Circle the primary Key for your group.

1. Caring Conversation:

2. Devotions:

3. Service:

4. Rituals/Traditions:

When will this Small Group Begin?

How will you enlist people into this Small Group?

What resources will you need for your group?

What costs will be incurred in starting up and continuing this Small Group?

If your group has a foreseeable ending, what will you do at the end of the time commitment?

How will you handle multiplying your group when you have 12 or more people?