



GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Why GROUPS?

Small groups are *where* church happens. They are communities of practice, where people are connecting, growing, and practicing their faith *in community* with one another. Our desire is that every Overlaker is connected into this kind of community.

There are three areas we'd love to see *every* group at Overlake growing in:

CONNECTION and CARE

Humans were designed to connect relationally with both God and others... we were created for community! In the New Testament, 58 times the phrase "one another" is used. *Love* one another, *care* for one another, *pray* for one another, *encourage* one another, *share* with one another, *serve* one another. This is mutual ministry of the body of Christ.

Goal as Group Leader: To cultivate a community of people who belong, feel known, and are growing in care and love toward one another in community.

Ways to Cultivate Connection & Care

1. Model Care
Build Relationships. Learn names. Ask questions. Listen intently. Meet 1 on 1 with group members. Send an encouraging text.
2. Gather
Share a meal together. Celebrate special occasions. Meet each other's families.
3. Meet Needs Together
Pray for one another. Rally resources. Serve one another. Connect people to outside resources as needed.
4. Aim for Authenticity
Create a safe place for sharing. Be real and honest. Share your story. Encourage others to do the same.
5. Invite Diversity
Embrace differences. Respect other perspectives. Value every voice. Accept discomfort. Hold space for dialogue.

GROWTH with JESUS

Our hope is that we never stop growing & being transformed more and more into the image of Christ. Transformation is a *process* and takes time and is best done in the context of community. We are not designed to walk this journey alone.

Goal as Group Leader: Help each person grow as disciples (aka learners) of Jesus, to move them along a journey of transformation by helping them take their next spiritual step and grow in intimacy with Jesus.

Ways to Cultivate Growth

1. Start with You

The heart of the leader is the heart of the ministry. Continue growing in your own intimacy with God and as a leader. Model reading the word. Prayer. Sabbath. Worship. Growing never stops.

2. Empower Members

Delegate roles/tasks. Rotate group facilitation. Identify/cultivate leaders.

3. Practice Obedience

Always ask yourself and your group the question: What is God saying to you right now? What are you doing to do about it?

4. Practice Generosity

Share resources. Meet needs. Give time to serve others. Show up for one another.

5. Encourage Next Steps

Point people toward opportunities for growth. (Point out opportunities at Overlake for this to happen, such as Let's Go, Baptism, Service-Learning Trips or a particular class.)

6. Identify & Practice Spiritual Gifts

Help members discover their natural strengths, their passions, their gifts. Help them grow in these gifts.

INVESTMENT in the MISSION

We are on a mission at Overlake, and it's the same one Jesus is on – establishing His Kingdom here on earth. We desire to see everyone, everywhere experience & be transformed by the love of God and

we believe that *everyone* has a unique role to play! God is already at work in our communities and around the world and He is inviting us to join Him.

Goal as Group Leader: Help each person discover and live into their unique role in the mission both here in the local church and to the world.

Ways to Cultivate Investment in the Mission:

1. Ministry Teams
Encourage *every* group member to serve on a team here at Overlake!
2. Practice sharing faith
Invite others to join your community. Share what God is teaching you. Practice sharing testimonies.
3. Serve Together
Encourage service. Engage in service together connected to one of OCC local or global partners!
4. Invest in Others
Teach group members to invest in others. Help others grow with Jesus. Multiply disciples.

5. Identify & live into passion & calling
Help group members discover their passions and calling and live into them.

GROUP LEADER INFORMATION

GROUPS CALENDAR

3 Semesters: Fall (Sept-Dec), Winter (Feb-mid-Mid-April) & Spring (Mid-April-June)

These will be specific on-ramps times to help people get signed up and connected to a group as well as off-ramp times if people want to exit a group.

GROUP TYPES

Grow: Gather weekly for 60-90 minutes to connect and study the Bible together using a Discovery Bible Study format that is directly connected to the weekly Sunday sermons.

Connect: People who connect in community around a common interest such as same parish, similar hobby, or similar stage in life. This can be a one-time meet up or sometimes end up meeting for years!

Care: Geared for those who may need a little additional support in a particular area. For example, those going through divorce, struggling with addictions, in need of prayer or counseling, etc.

Serve: People who desire to serve together around a particular cause in our community or around the world.

OPEN vs CLOSED GROUPS

Some groups will be open (anyone can join), some groups will be closed (private group). Many groups have a culture of remaining open at all times and as long as the entire group is aware of this, then it's totally OK. Some groups stay closed during signups and continue meeting because they're already full, that's OK too.

IN PERSON vs ONLINE

You have the option of having your group meet either online or in-person. If you need help setting up or paying for a Zoom account, please let us know. We are happy to help! If you are not familiar with Zoom

or want some tips on how to host a GROUP on Zoom, here are some helpful videos.

- “How to host a Zoom call” by Zoom trainer – 30 min (click [HERE](#))
- “How to host a GROUP on Zoom” by Pastor Pat – 4 min (click [HERE](#))

GROUPS RECRUITMENT

All open groups will be searchable online in CCB for someone to sign up for. We will do our best to promote groups, however, whether your group is “open” or “closed,” the best way to recruit for your groups is always a personal invite! Who do you know that you can personally invite to join you?

GROUPS MANAGEMENT

CCB is our church database and the platform we will use to manage all our groups. You will receive a personal CCB login to manage your group (update roster, take attendance, update details). People will use CCB to search for groups they are interested in joining. CCB allows people to search for groups based

on area, group type, day of the week, and even if children are welcome.

GROUPS SUPPORT/TRAINING

We will provide initial guidance and coaching for all new leaders. Ongoing support will be offered through frequent email communication, periodic group leader trainings and personal check ins. Helpful information & resources for group leaders can also be found on our [Group Leader Resource Page](#).

GROUP LEADER EXPECTATIONS

1. Growing Personally with Jesus

The number one thing as a leader we can do is to be continually growing with Jesus and in our emotional/social health. Take time to care for your relationship with God and strive to live a life honoring to Him.

2. Become a Relational Leader

Care for those in your group. Pray for them. Encourage them. Help make sure they feel they belong and are valued.

3. Honor the 24 Hour Rule

When someone is interested in the group you lead, please attempt to follow up with them within 24 hours by either phone, text, or email! Relational ministry starts right away. You don't have to personally meet each person, but at the least, extend a warm welcome along with any details they need to know for the first gathering: time, location, where to park, etc.

4. Come Prepared

As the leader you should be prepared for each gathering. If there is a specific chapter in a book that will be discussed, or a passage of scripture or a topic you have agreed upon, then make sure you are ready too. Your entire group will enjoy gatherings a lot more when things are prepared.

5. Meet Consistently

Make every effort to maintain a somewhat consistent schedule, whatever that looks like for your particular group. We understand, occasionally things come up, but the more consistent you can be with group meetings, the more successful your group will be!

6. Take Attendance

After each gathering, please enter your group's attendance in CCB, the process takes <1 minute! Attendance gives insight to Overlake's pastoral team as to the level of engagement and care each individual Overlaker is receiving.

of your resources to the ministry.

7. Participate in Group Leader Training

Approximately 2-3 times a year, all leaders will be required to attend a live training. Not only is this a time to be better equipped in your role as a group leader, but it also allows our entire team to build camaraderie with one another.

8. Respond to Communication

You will periodically receive group leader emails with encouragement, maybe some equipping tools, serve opportunities and reminders on important upcoming events. You are expected to read each email (taking less than 5 minutes) and respond when necessary. Again, it is important the entire team is on the same page.

9. Commit to the Ministry of Overlake

Finally, our expectation as a group leader is that you are committed to the ministry at Overlake. That means we expect that you are faithfully attending on Sunday mornings and are stewarding