



SMALL GROUP FOUNDATIONS

RECEIVE | EQUIP | IMPACT | SEND

RockPointe Church

Small Group Foundations

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Welcome!

Small Group Leaders,

Whether you are a veteran or a newbie leader, YOU are an answer to prayer! You really are! I'm convinced there isn't a more valuable position to fill at this moment in the life of our church than the role of a small group leader. Sound a little biased? Let me explain....

I can immediately think of three hats you wear as a small group leader that validates my assertion. First, you wear the hat of "shepherd." In the way our church is designed, pastoral ministry truly happens in our small groups. Many people who enter our groups are new believers. In general, each group member shows up with his or her own set of needs (i.e....friendship, encouragement, spiritual growth, etc.). Our small group leaders help lead these "sheep" into pastures where they can be protected, fed, and nourished in their faith.

Second, you wear the hat of a "gardener." Now I realize we can't "make" another person "grow." But, we can create and foster environments where growth can naturally occur. Parents do this for their children all the time. They cultivate the environments necessary for their child's maturity and development. Likewise, small group leaders are like good gardeners who watch over their plants to make sure the soil is ready, the watering is consistent, and the sun is properly balanced for their plants to flourish. This atmosphere occurs within the group through actions like choosing the group's curriculum, coming to group prepared, and paying attention to the individual needs of each group member.

A third hat you wear is the hat of a "placement officer." Not what you were expecting me to say? Actually, a critical job for the small group leader is to help launch people into ministry, to help "place" them into opportunities where they are able to both discover and exercise various spiritual gifts and abilities that have been designed in them, by God, to build His Church! Small group leaders can mobilize members to meet needs and live missional lives. Small group leaders also help cultivate new small group leaders so that they can be launched into this vital role within the life of our church.

So, let me say a huge thank you to all of you small group leaders out there! We really appreciate and value you more than you know! Some of you are about to enter into this vital role. You are holding this notebook because God has brought you to the cusp of this AMAZING ADVENTURE! Get ready! Hold on to your hats! (As you've discovered, you have quite a few! 😊.) It's going to be an incredible journey!

Randy Riggins

Senior Associate Pastor
RockPointe Church

The Purpose of RockPointe Small Groups

The mission of RockPointe Church is “To love God with all that we are while making more and better followers of Christ.” Our small groups play a crucial role in seeing those words become a reality by intentionally creating environments that promote growth in relationship with God and others in healthy, biblical community.

In Acts 2:46, the early church met not only in **temple courts (our weekend and mid-week services and activities)**, but also in **homes (our small groups)**. Today, we meet at the church building for corporate worship, relevant teaching, and encouragement, as well as in homes as small groups where we get to live out our faith with others.

The vision of the Rockpointe Small Group Ministry is to see every person connected to a healthy small group where the small group members are doing their part to help fulfill the mission of RockPointe by living out our four-fold vision of Receive, Equip, Impact, and Send.

Receive—We welcome you, we care about you, and we want to share our fellowship with Jesus Christ with you.

Equip—We want to come alongside you and help you develop the skills and wisdom you need to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Impact—We want to make a positive impact for Jesus Christ in the life of every person who enters our doors as well as those in our sphere of influence.

Send—We want to send people out, releasing men and women to proclaim Jesus Christ in word and deed.

A Small Group is	A Small Group is <i>not</i>
Concerned with application of the Bible	Just a cognitive Bible study
A caring community	Counseling or therapy
A set of friends that gathers regularly	Just a meeting you attend
Focused on helping people grow spiritually	A social club
Welcoming and inclusive	Static and exclusive

What does Small Group “Leadership” Look Like at Rockpointe?

At Rockpointe Church, we have 2 roles of small group “*leadership*” that may be pursued.

1. **Small Group H.O.S.T.** – If a person desires to be connected to biblical community quickly, this is the path to pursue. Do you have a couple of friends that you could invite to join you? If so, then you can be a Small Group H.O.S.T.
 - a. Requirements – Have a couple of friends and:
 - H** - Have a heart for God and people
 - O** - Open your place (meet in a home, coffeehouse, restaurant or workplace)
 - S** - Serve a snack
 - T** - Turn on a DVD or type in a website
 - b. Prerequisites:
 - i. Must be a born-again believer of Jesus Christ
 - ii. Must use Small Group Ministry approved material
 - iii. Agree to “check-in” with Rockpointe Small Group Ministry periodically
 - c. Advantages:
 - i. Immediately “joined” to a group of people you already know
 - ii. Ability to try out the role of H.O.S.T before pursuing the small group leader role
2. **Small Group Leader** – If a person desires to be a small group leader, then they are asked to pursue a more formal application and interview process in order to be sanctioned as a leader of a Rockpointe small group.

What Does a Small Group Leader Do?

The overarching goal of a small group leader is *to help a community of adults live out the mission of RockPointe Church*. As a leader grows in their role, they should begin to emphasize the following:

Responsibilities

1. **Greet One Another by setting a welcoming tone for members and guests alike during group gatherings.** If we are a receiving church, we need to also always be receiving new people into our small groups and go out of our way to include others.
2. **Pray for and care for group members during group gatherings and during the week.** You are the front-line of pastoral care for your group members. Demonstrate encouragement, accountability, and patience.
3. **Prepare and facilitate application-oriented Bible discussions during gatherings.** You don’t have to be a Bible scholar or seminary graduate; just make a solid effort to be prepared to have a discussion of substance. Facilitate the discussion, don’t dominate it.
4. **Facilitate relationships that extend beyond regular gathering times.** A small group is a network of friends that just happens to meet regularly. Sometimes the best moments happen just hanging out. Invite another family to dinner or to go on an outing.
5. **Encourage and equip each group member to find a place of regular ministry at RockPointe or in the community.** The beauty of being the Body of Christ is that we all play a part. Help your group members discover theirs!
6. **Share these responsibilities with the members of your group!** Yikes, this sounds like a lot. Don't worry, take it one day at a time...and remember you are part of a group, not the Lone Ranger.

Personal Affirmation

We ask each of our leaders to affirm the following statements:

- I confess that Jesus Christ is my Savior and Lord.
- I believe the Bible is God's Word and that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness."
- I am a faithful member of Rockpointe Church.

Small Group Leader Expectations

Small groups are a vital part of RockPointe Church. As a small group leader, you are often the first person responsible for providing care, encouragement, counsel, and comfort to your group members. Since this is such a vital ministry, we appreciate each leader seeking to be faithful, available and teachable.

Faithful

1. Live out the vision of RockPointe (Receiving, Impacting, Sending, Equipping) in your own life.
2. Ensure that your group meets regularly as scheduled. Use "myRPC" to report attendance and meeting notes.
3. Proactively shepherd your group members. Pray for them regularly and get to know them outside of your regular gatherings.
4. Devote appropriate time to planning group gatherings and discussions.

Available

1. Respond promptly to requests from guests to visit your group.
2. Communicate regularly with your pastor or group coach, including timely response to email and voicemail. Use "myRPC" as appropriate.
3. Let your pastor or group coach know about significant issues that may affect member's lives or group health as these may require additional pastoral care or counseling.
4. Attend meetings and ministry events for small group leaders.

Teachable

1. Seek God's wisdom for leading your group.
2. Seek counsel and feedback from group members.
3. Follow the guidelines set by the small group ministry.
4. Graciously receive coaching and feedback from pastors or group coaches regarding your small group.

Small Group Ministry Objectives

Here are some benchmarks to teach, pray, encourage, and model into each of your group members, patterned after RockPointe's vision to Receive, Equip, Impact, and Send. Proactively look for ways to help your group members grow in these areas.

Receive— We welcome you, we care about you, and we want to share our fellowship with Jesus Christ with you.

- Group members reach out to include others who need a place to belong.
- Group gatherings are a comfortable environment for guests and members alike.
- Group members demonstrate care and interest for others.

Equip— We want to come alongside you and help you develop the skills and wisdom you need to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Group members demonstrate vibrant spiritual lives of Bible study, prayer, and other spiritual disciplines.
- Group members are prepared and/or engaged for study and discussion during gatherings.
- Group members give and receive counsel in a manner that is humble and sincere.

Impact— We want to make a positive impact for Jesus Christ in the life of every person who enters our doors as well as those in our sphere of influence.

- Group members sacrificially use their time, talent, and financial resources to serve each other.
- Group members have an awareness of their spiritual gifts and use their gifts to edify the body.
- Group members seek out opportunities to minister to the needs of those in their sphere of influence.

Send— We want to send people out, releasing men and women to proclaim Jesus Christ in word and deed.

- Group members can explain salvation using key Bible texts as well as their own salvation experience.
- Group members use their resources to help send others out to doministry.
- Group members are willing to explore prayerfully ways God may be calling them to be sent across the street or across the globe.

Small Group Leader Affirmation

As a small group leader of RockPointe Church I affirm the following statements:

- I am a faithful member of RockPointe Church.
- I accept the responsibilities of a small group leader as outlined in the section ***“What Do Small Group Leaders Do?”***
- I understand and agree with the ***Small Group Leader Expectations.***
- I will support the ***Small Group Ministry Objectives*** in leading my small group.

X

Small Group Leader, Date

Getting Started

The start of a new small group can be exciting, and your new group members will usually be eager to jump right in. Use this energy and excitement to forge strong relationships in the beginning that will be the foundation for life-changing community.

Where do I find group members?

So, where are you going to find all these excited, eager people? Great question! Here are a few common places to look.

- **Your neighborhood.** Step out! Ask a neighbor or friend. What's the worst that will happen? They'll know you love Jesus and that you would like to hang out with them more.
- **Ministries where you serve.** Maybe you're serving regularly in a ministry here with someone who may not be in a group. I bet they'd be thrilled if you invite them!
- **Classes you attend.** Have you been to a Wednesday night class on parenting or finances? At least a few of those people are looking for a group.
- **Your current small group.** Are you birthing a new group from your existing group? Talk with your current leader about prayerfully challenging a couple or two to join you on your new venture.
- **Palooza.** Twice per year the church will host an event called Palooza. Yep, it's a party! Focused on identifying people interested in connecting to group life.
- **Taste of Community.** Small group facilitated experience designed to introduce people to small group life. Two 1.5 hour meetings scheduled on child care Sundays in the month following Palooza.
- **They may just find you!** After your group launches, the church will help you get the word out for a while. Don't be surprised to get a call or email from someone interested in your group.

When do we meet?

Pick a regular day and time of the week that your group will meet. Pick a communication medium that works for your group members and keeps them in the loop (i.e. myRPC). Some groups meet weekly, while others may meet bi-weekly, or the first three weeks of the month and take the fourth off. We recommend meeting weekly, at least for the first two months, to jumpstart relationships forming.

The first few meetings

The foundation for your group is the relationships that will be formed in these first few gatherings. You don't want your small group to feel like a class, you want to focus on creating an atmosphere of genuine community and friendship.

- Do things that you would normally do when you have friends over—share a meal, ask about the others' families and hobbies, play an icebreaker game.
- We would encourage you to pray at the outset of your group, and then have a time to gather and share prayer requests with one another before heading home.
- By about the second or third meeting, you want to begin to go to introduce your study. For new leaders, we recommend the Starting Pointe curriculum followed by the Connections Study. After the Connections Study, pick a Right Now Media study with facilitated discussion questions.

Small Group Rhythms

After a couple of months of getting to know each other, your group will begin to develop into an established community. This is when the real-life transformation begins! Our desire is to build groups whose DNA, even down to the weekly gathering, reflects RockPointe's vision. Here is a suggested meeting schedule that shows how that could take place.

1. Receiving (15-20 Minutes)
 - Establish a comfortable setting
 - A time for refreshments and socializing
 - Have members reach out and welcome new guests
2. Equipping (30 Minutes)
 - Open with prayer
 - Lead a discussion that focuses on the Bible and life application
 - Choose resources that meet the needs of your group—ask a pastor or coach for ideas
3. Impacting (30 Minutes)
 - Time to share prayer requests and praises, and pray as a big group or in *smaller* groups
 - Look for ways to care for and serve each other
 - Discuss ways to impact others in the community with the Gospel
4. Sending (10-15 Minutes)
 - Encourage prayer for lost friends and relational evangelism
 - Discuss volunteering in various ministries through the church
 - Build awareness of needs to support various causes and missions

In addition, you could consider a four-meeting rotation that emphasizes Bible Study in meeting 1, Bible Study in meeting 2, prayer in meeting 3 and fellowship in meeting 4 and then starts over. Be flexible to include fellowship get togethers around special events such as Super Bowl, birthdays or anniversaries.

The Change-up

Established rhythms are good, stagnating is not. It's like working out. Call it cross-training, muscle confusion, or stretching yourself, a change of pace is healthy for your body—and your soul. While most of your group gatherings will look similar to the above outline, it would be bad if all of them did.

Consider adding the following variety at least quarterly to push beyond your comfort zone:

- Serve at a local charity or through a RockPointe ministry (i.e. Hands Across the Community, CCA, Cornerstone Church, Men of Nehemiah)
- Invite a missionary that is home on furlough to come share with your group about his or her ministry
- Have a men's campout or women's weekend
- Spend an extended time in prayer for lost friends and neighbors
- A party now and then is okay too!

Tackling Common Issues

When you put imperfect people into a group, you get imperfect groups. Your group will inevitably have some issues, and that is completely normal! Here are a few common issues that might arise and some foundational Bible passages to help you address them. If you need more help, check with your pastor or coach.

Issue	Examples	Resolution
Conflict	Disagreement about group direction	Address conflicts biblically (Mt. 18:15-20).
	Backbiting	Urge reconciliation (Phil. 4:1-3).
	Legalism vs. license	Consider your influence (Ro. 14)
Difficult Group Members	Dominate discussion	Follow the humble example of Christ (Phil. 2:1-11)
	Self-centered	Demonstrate love (1 Co. 13)
	Socially inappropriate	
Lack of Interaction	Superficial relationships	Elevate true fellowship (1 Jn. 1)
	Dull discussions	Exhort others in Great Commandment (Mt. 22:37-40)
	Rote answers	

Group Pledge

We, the members of the _____ Group, in order to help fulfill the mission of RockPointe Church, agree to uphold the following promises to each other:

Regarding vision:

I will help our group create a **receiving** atmosphere by being welcoming and friendly to group members and guests alike. I will be sensitive to the needs and interests of others and respectful of information shared in confidence.

I will participate in **impacting** the lives of others. I recognize that my time, talents, financial resources, and spiritual gifts are not intended solely for my own benefit but also for the benefit of others.

I will foster a **sending** culture in our group. I will commit to developing an evangelistic outlook in my sphere of influence and encourage others to give and to go into their respective mission fields.

I will help create an environment conducive to **equipping** myself and others in the group. I will be prepared for group discussions, as well as humble in sharing my opinions, and gracious in listening to others.

Other commitments:

I will share responsibility for the ministry of my group. The success or failure of our group is not solely dependent on our leader. It rests on me too.

I will participate regularly and faithfully in the life of my group, including regular group attendance.

Sharing Responsibility

Every group member has an important role to play. **EVERY MEMBER IS A MINISTER** so don't lead alone. Contact your small group associate or coach for a Spiritual Gift Assessment that can help your group members better understand how God has gifted them for services. The following are some suggested ways to include others in the leadership of your group.

Apprentice Leader

An apprentice leader is someone who may be starting their own group sometime in the next year. An apprentice is mentored by their small group leader and takes turns leading group meetings and overseeing other aspects of the group in preparation for leading their own group someday.

Receiving Coordinator

A Receiving Coordinator takes responsibility for the hosting responsibilities, coordinates refreshments and meals for group gatherings, and ensures that all group guests receive prompt, friendly follow-up.

Equipping Coordinator

An Equipping Coordinator can help lead the discipleship efforts of the group and connect group members to outside discipleship opportunities.

Impacting Coordinator

The Impact Coordinator looks for opportunities for the group to serve within the church or local missions opportunities and coordinates serving group members in time of need.

Sending Coordinator

The Sending Coordinator helps keep the group outwardly focused in terms of personal evangelism as well as sending opportunities within the church (i.e. missionary care, mission trips, financial support)

Coach

Not actually a member of your group, a Coach is an experienced small group leader who helps mentor 2-4 other leaders. A coach is someone you can turn to for prayer, counsel, and encouragement. Try to connect with your coach at least monthly.

Another approach is to organize your group members to lead out in Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry or Evangelism.

When People Need Help

While your small group is a caring community, there may be times when people's needs exceed your capacity and capability. Praise God that we have additional resources as part of our church to serve you and your group members.

Examples of times to seek additional help include:

- Extreme financial hardship
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Suspected physical or emotional abuse
- Chronic depression or hopelessness
- Chronic anxiety or hysteria
- Psychotic episodes or delusions
- Couples considering divorce
- Suicidal/homicidal thoughts and feelings

If you suspect any imminent danger call 911 immediately.

Where to go for help:

Abuse & Violence	Brian & Edie Sanders	brian@rpcstaff.org/marriage@rpcstaff.org
Financial Needs	Brian Sanders	brian@rpcstaff.org
Grief Support	Destin Garner	destin@rpcstaff.org
Marriage Issues	Brian & Edie Sanders	brian@rpcstaff.org/marriage@rpcstaff.org
Substance Abuse	Brandon Graham	brandon@rpcstaff.org
Troubled Teen	Destin Garner or Randy Riggins	destin@rpcstaff.org/randy@rpcstaff.org

For all other issues contact **Senior Associate Pastor, Randy Riggins** to get additional help.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is the primary emphasis of a small group: discipling or caring?

A1: Both! It is our desire to emphasize each appropriately, and this will vary from group to group. We want to disciple people- teach them the Scriptures, help them develop spiritual disciplines, understand the Christian faith, and become disciple makers. We also want to care for people—to pray for them, encourage them, and hold them accountable. Thus, we fulfill both the Great Commission (to make disciples) and the Great Commandment (love one another).

Q2: How many people make up a small group?

A2: We aim for groups to be between 6 and 16 members. When a group grows larger than 12, it becomes more difficult to adequately care for everyone. It also becomes easier for some members to get lost. In addition, group discussion occurs more openly in smaller groups. If you have a large group, look at sub-dividing based on gender or some other appropriate method to increase participation. If you have people that are not talking, you may need to subdivide or divide into a smaller group.

Q3: How do we handle childcare for our group meetings?

A3: There is even an issue that lies below this question; to what extent do we include children in our gatherings? We would encourage you to include your kids regularly as appropriate. When you do need childcare, there are many options including having members rotate watching kids, or hiring sitters as a group. Also consider asking a responsible youth to help your group with childcare as a way of serving. The church offers small group childcare for the 2nd and 4th Sundays from 4:00p to 7:00p.

Q4: What should we use for our discussion material?

A4: Consider the needs and spiritual composition of your group. Discussing each week's sermon is a great place to start applying what is being taught in church. For new groups, Starting Pointe and Connections are great ways to kickstart a group. RightNow MEDIA is also available at no cost to the leaders and offers a large collection of streaming bible based content. Discuss other ideas for study guides and curriculum with your coach or pastor.

Q5: When should our group meet?

A5: Pick a day of the week and time that your members can make consistently. Some groups meet weekly, some bi-weekly, and some might meet on the 2nd and 4th week of the month with an additional social or service gathering each month.

Q6: Who is our immediate contact at RockPointe for most questions, comments, etc. that are related to small group ministry?

A6: Mike and Mary Davis, Small Groups Associates, miked@rpcstaff.org and maryd@rpcstaff.org