

Deployment Planning Package For Small Group Leaders

A large part of starting a group involves good planning. The following exercises are designed to help you think through plans for your new group and the steps you need to take to get it “launched.”

I. Knowing Yourself

This exercise is to help you understand some of the deep longings of your heart. What things are you passionate about? What do you love to do? The things you have passion for can point to the things the Lord has gifted you in. Take some time to think about these questions:

1. List 15 things you'd like to do or experience in your lifetime.
2. If I could have any dream job, with no limits what would it be? (list 3-4)
3. If you could bring change to one thing on earth, what would you change?
4. List a time in your life when you were doing what really made you happy.

This exercise is to help you identify some of your own personal strengths and weaknesses and how they may affect your leadership style as well as your group. Consider the following leadership characteristics and spiritual gifts. Rate yourself accordingly:

1. I am quite strong in this area
2. I am adequate in this area
3. I am working on this area
4. I am really struggling in this area
5. I am rather weak in this area

- Ability to teach and communicate in front of a group
- Ability to plan ahead and develop a course of action
- Ability to lead and facilitate a group discussion
- Willingness to take the time and energy to build relationships with others
- Ability to sense God's leading and discern His will in a given situation
- Ability to pray effectively for others in the power of the Holy Spirit
- Capacity for showing compassion and empathizing with others
- Willingness to confront sin or negative behavior firmly yet with grace
- Ability to set clear, healthy boundaries with others
- Capacity for welcoming and embracing new people
- Consistency in being on time, following through with commitments, etc.
- Ability to organize and administrate the details of a meeting (set up, snacks, assign jobs, etc.)

1. What strengths/gifts do you now have that will benefit you as a leader and why?
2. What are your weaknesses and how might they hinder your ability to lead effectively? Knowing this ahead of time, how might you compensate for your weaknesses?
3. What practical things do you think you can begin to do to strengthen those areas in which you are the weakest?

II. Forming a Vision

This exercise is to help you form a vision for your new group. Vision is being able to “see” where something is going and what it could become. Vision is all about the future and possibilities for the future. It is meant to be exciting and inspiring and motivating!

Good leaders have vision. They are able to see the future and “paint a picture” of what that future looks like, motivating those around them to work together with them towards that vision. Without vision, people lose interest in a cause, lag in commitment and eventually drift away towards something that is exciting enough to capture their attention.

We want our vision to be more than just our good ideas—we want our vision to come from God. As a future leader, take some time now to seek the Lord and develop a vision for your group in partnership with Him. You don’t want a vision that is too small (something not worth getting that excited over) or too big (literally beyond reach). God will, however, often give a vision that *seems* beyond our ability to accomplish so that we are forced to rely on Him and His unlimited resources.

Take some time to pray and meditate on one or two passages from the bible (e.g. John 15:1-17; Eph. 1:3-23; 1 John 3:11-24). Then answer the following questions:

1. Who do you feel you have a “burden” for? In other words, who would you like to be a part of your group? How would you like to see your group impact those who participate? What specific changes would you like to see happen in their lives as a result of your group?
2. If all things were perfect and you had unlimited time, energy and resources, what would your group look like in one year? What kind of things would you like to be said about your group by others?
3. What would be your group’s most important contributions—in each other’s lives, to the larger church, to the outside community? What would be lost in terms of meaningful, practical service to others if your group didn’t exist?
4. Describe the perfect group meeting. (What kind of group would you forsake your favorite activity in order to attend?) What would happen? How would it “feel” for a new person to visit your group?

Use your answers to write a vision statement. It ought to be concise and easy to understand yet exciting and inspiring. It should be both a stretch from present reality but remain (with God’s grace) in the realm of possibility. Keep in mind that you are forming a vision for a small group, not an entire church! So for example, a vision might be to see a group of professional women who are resisting the pressure to conform to worldly values, growing in Christ and having an impact for His kingdom on those around them.

III. Determining Your Mission

This exercise is to help you determine the mission for you and your group. Mission is fundamentally to answer the question, “why are we here?” While vision is all about who we hope to become in the future, mission is all about what our job is today. It defines the purpose for your group’s existence. It is a commitment to act upon the vision you feel God has given you.

The mission for a small group at Vineyard Church of Columbus must fit under the mission of the larger church. The mission of Vineyard Columbus is “to develop a community of passionate, mature, reproducing disciples; to plant passionate, mature, reproducing churches; and to transform the world by love and good deeds to the glory of God.” The purpose for our small groups is to be communities where our mission can be accomplished and where people are made mature in Christ, reflecting Him in every area of life. By maturity we mean a disciple who worships the person of Christ, does the works of Christ, proclaims the words of Christ and resembles the character of Christ.”

Taking this into account, along with the vision you have for your new group, write a mission statement. Answer the question, “Why does our group exist?” While your mission ought to fit under the mission of the church, it shouldn’t be as broad as either of those.

For example, in answer to the question, “Why does our group exist”, you might say:

- *To instruct and train individuals in the basic disciplines of the Christian life (bible reading, prayer and fellowship) so that they will have a solid foundation from which to grow and mature as disciples;*
- *To help individuals discover their God-given gifts and to prepare them to fulfill their God-given calling.*

You may feel God has called you to a specific group of women, so your mission statement should reflect that:

- *Our mission is to help young single parents mature in their relationship with God, their relationships with each other and as mothers.*
- *Our mission is to help individuals process through the pain of separation and/or divorce in a biblical manner and get to a place of wholeness in the Lord.*

IV. Writing Smart Goals

Goals are the specific steps you need to take to accomplishment your mission and thus fulfill your vision. Goals must be S-M-A-R-T!

S – specific

M – measurable

A – attainable

R – realistic

T – tangible

So for example, you have a **vision** to see married couples with young children grow and mature as Christians.

Your **mission**, then, would be to help them grow in their personal relationship with Christ, help them grow in their relationships with each other, and help them grow into effective parents.

Your **goals**, therefore, might be to form a group with about 6 parents and for the first 6 months:

1. have each of them begin the habit of a daily devotional life
2. help them learn how to read the bible on their own
3. pair them up as “prayer partners” in order to develop closer relationships
4. do one practical teaching a month on some aspect of parenting and follow up each teaching with a “sharing time” about how each mom is doing.