

GROUP LEADERSHIP

2014

North Way Christian Community

One Church.
Multiple Locations.
All Generations.

freeing people to follow Jesus

Wexford
Oakland
Sewickley Valley
East End
Dormont

724.935.6800
www.northway.org



Community to be Created | to be Changed

At North Way, we believe that being a church of small groups is absolutely vital to our journey of faith, and to our growth as a church family.

The Christian life was intended to be lived in community, and we have seen that small groups are where life change happens best. As we share what it means to live as a follower of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to encourage, challenge, support and celebrate each other.

Small groups allow the church to continue to grow in number, yet still maintain the intimacy of a small setting. Small groups allow us to experience authentic community as Christ intended, no matter what the physical size of our church home.

Our pastoral team holds each small group leader accountable to providing a predictable, optimal and authentic environment where life change can happen best.

Because of the importance of our small groups, we have a high standard for our leaders to carefully lead within North Way's theological boundaries and come fully under the umbrella of our pastoral team.

Our pastors put an emphasis on each group being **internally healthy**, which includes creating authentic community, fostering accountability, delivering a high level of care, and working within North Way's curriculum & group experience guidelines.

At the same time we look for each group to be **externally focused**, influencing people distant from God through serving outside our church walls and cultivating relationships with people in our lives who don't know Christ.

This is why we make it a priority to be:
a church of small groups.

the MISSION

to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ

the STRATEGY

through environments where people are encouraged and equipped to pursue intimacy with God

Leadership Structure

your small group support system

Neighborhood Groups

Small groups meeting throughout the city for men, women, married couples and families.

Study Groups

Topical and Bible studies with a significant small group dynamic.

Care Groups

Groups with a special focus on marriage, family dynamics, addiction recovery, loss, adoption support and other care-related needs.

A solid support structure provides unity and strength while assuring the health of any ministry. It is the privilege of the leadership network to stand with and pray for each small group leader and members regularly. This network includes small group leaders, community leaders, and North Way's pastoral team.

Pastoral Team

Your campus' pastoral teams are responsible for the overall health and development of North Way's small groups. They provide training, support and guidance to the small group leadership community through direct relationships with community leaders. It is our hope that all small group leaders are supported well and constantly growing, by taking advantage of such elements as:

- consistent prayer
- guidance and encouragement through one-on-one relationships
- periodic connections with leadership teams
- workshops and training events throughout the year

Community Leaders

Your community leaders serve as spiritual and practical overseers of smaller communities of small groups and their leaders. This role can be assumed by your campus pastor, your small group ministry leader or seasoned small group leaders and elders when applicable. Community Leaders provide support, care and encouragement to group leaders and are available

to help work through any issues that small group leaders may face.

A key component for a community leader's success is building a meaningful relationship with each of their small group leaders by:

- praying regularly
- touching base in person (at least quarterly)
- making themselves available to minister and serve through encouragement, communication and support
- monitoring the health, effectiveness and upcoming transitions within groups and leadership
- participating in necessary community leader and small group leader meetings and events
- helping group leaders to stay externally focused, to organize and lead externally focused projects among groups
- resourcing leaders with practical tips & techniques
- acting as a liaison for North Way by communicating vision, values, information and group members' needs that may require pastoral support, such as hospitalization, counseling, etc.

Small Group Leaders

Small group leaders facilitate group meetings and guide group members along in their spiritual journey through navigating and monitoring group health. Continue to the following page for a more detailed outline of a small group leader's responsibilities.

the RELATIONSHIP

Am I growing in relationship with the people I'm responsible to and for whom I'm responsible?



He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

And he will be their peace. Micah 5:4-5

Small Group Leader essentials

Small group leaders are responsible in personal character by modeling a life that pursues Christ, as well as practical commitment by participating in small group leader events, advocating group consistency and meeting periodically with a community leader.

Specific 'wins' for a leader include personal growth in three vital relationships: with Jesus Christ, with each other and with people who are far from God; and creating a predictable environment by successfully facilitating these six leadership essentials.

Thinking Life Change Are we actively developing and participating in each other's spiritual journeys and...

- becoming more like Jesus through our time together?
- actually changing, or just gathering regularly, then scattering until we meet again?
- celebrating changes that occur in one another's lives?
- envisioning what God wants us to become, and praying and working together to that end?

Cultivating Relationships Are we actively building relationships with each other both in and out of the group setting and...

- bonding and growing together?
- willing to do a service project or weekend retreat to deepen in relationship?
- being honest about our relationships with Jesus?



- planning fun, fellowship-oriented times?
- helping the men of our group, and the women of our group, to connect to each other frequently to become more open, transparent and accountable?

Promoting Participation Are the group meetings full of life and energy, something that group members look forward to, and am I as the leader...

- championing our relationship with Christ and with the church as an example to the group?
- finding ways for every member to personally share when we meet?
- leading in a way that encourages members to open up and share?
- asking open-ended questions?

Your primary job as a leader is to **facilitate discussion** by:

- creating an environment where people feel comfortable,
- keeping the meeting on track
- and encouraging people to share their thoughts, questions and ideas.

Providing Care Are we fostering a safe place where all members may willingly share their thoughts and feelings, and...

- aware that one of the best ways to be cared for in times of need is from one another?
- encouraging each other to approach the leader with any potential group issues?
- understanding of the depth of resources through North Way's Care Network?

Duplicating Disciples Are we valuing the need to multiply to ensure that healthy groups are available in the future, and...

- identifying and developing an apprentice leader?
- mindful of the group changes that will eventually occur in the life of the group when it multiplies?

Motivating Outreach Are we focusing outside of ourselves and the group, and...

- intentionally building relationships with people who are far from God?
- planning activities and organizing opportunities to serve our church and unchurched communities?

Telling Your Story

Where did you grow up?

What is one of your favorite childhood memories?

Do you have any family traditions?

If you could do anything for work, what would it be?

What are your hobbies?

How did you meet your spouse?



What have you never done that you wish you could?

What was your view of God growing up?

What is one of your favorite things about your hometown?

What are some of your expectations for our small group?

Small Group Meeting fundamental philosophy

Small groups provide many shepherds for our church rather than a handful, environments to experience Biblical community and spiritual growth, space for 8-12 individuals to connect, grow in God's word and pray for one another, and places from which to partner in sharing God's love and serving our communities.

Small groups are not social clubs, meditation groups, a teacher's classroom or support groups, but they are places where Godly discussions are cultivated and facilitated.

The small group meeting should be consistent, with a decided upon date,

time, place and curriculum (see Small Group Covenant). Each meeting typically includes connection, discussion and prayer keeping in mind that it's beneficial to start and end light. Check out some fun get-to-know-you questions on the left.

Motivate group members to pray for and support one another throughout the week, and make it a point to reflect on previous weeks' lessons. Both of these activities will begin to build authentic community and spur on spiritual growth.

Don't forget to have fun! Small groups should be enjoyable and encouraging experiences. Incorporate laughter as a part of each week!



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, US Anthropologist



Starting a Small Group

for newly forming or reconnecting groups

We are so excited for you and your group to experience the blessing of being in community! Your first few weeks of getting to know one another are especially important, and we've included the following planning tools to help you get started growing in relationship with each other and with Christ.

Before your small group, always make sure you are prepared by previewing the study material, making sure your DVD player works, and assuring that there will be enough seats for your group members.

During your small group, we would suggest using the following meeting format:

- 15 minutes for fellowship & refreshments
- 5 minutes to gather everyone and pray
- 60 minutes for curriculum and discussion
- 10 minutes for prayer & next week's details

Most importantly when you're beginning a brand new small group, it is absolutely vital that you spend time getting to know one another - this often happens best with food! We recommend spending one or two gatherings simply finding out how everyone got to the place they are now. Example questions are listed under "Telling Your Story" on this and the previous page.

After spending some quality time together, small groups can now begin to study curriculum.

Small Group Leaders will want to consult their Community Leader in this decision, as North Way often organizes a church-wide study or may have specific recommendations for a new group.

If your small group began as a "formative" group - one that emerged out of a Small Group Connect without a specific leader - a leader that is best qualified should be nominated to potentially lead the group. Small Group Leaders must be able to facilitate discussion, monitor group health, model a life that pursues Christ, and commit to their role in doing so.

Once a leader has been selected, that person must be interviewed and approved by a North Way pastor or staff member while you continue meeting.

After your small group, continue to pray for your small group members' prayer requests, encourage group members to socialize outside of your small group to continue to build upon the foundations of friendship that have already been established, stay on the lookout for and invite those within your circles of influence that might need a small group to call home.

Most importantly, remember that your Community Leader and pastoral team are always available to answer questions, help deal with issues and encourage spiritual growth within your

Telling Your Story

What is your relationship with your parents & siblings like?

Where did you go to school?

What is your ideal date night?

Where do you work and what does your job consist of?

What is your all-time favorite movie, and how many times have you watched it?

In what church, if any, were you raised?

What has been your most significant encounter with God?

If you could change one thing about the culture you live in, what would it be?

How would you describe your relationship with God now?

What would you like your relationship with God to look like in one or two years from now?

Small Group Check-In

for individual growth progress and meetings with your community leader

Details:

Leader: _____ Date: _____

Apprentice Leader 1: _____ Community Leader: _____

Apprentice Leader 2: _____ Staff Contact: _____

Meeting Day: M T W Th F Sat Sun Time: _____

Location: _____

Group Type (please circle): Men's Women's Married Couples Family Mixed

Group Category (please circle): Neighborhood Study Care

Group Curriculum: _____

Average age range of members: _____ Average number of regular attenders: _____

Current Progress and Next-Steps:

Summarize this past month, including in-group activities, externally focused opportunities and one-on-one leader to member involvement.

Summarize next month's steps, including changes to activities above, opportunities for growth and potential apprentice leaders.

Overall Progress and Plans for Life-Change:

Use the following evaluation scale and comment areas to assess how your small group is doing.

- [3]** Doing well and pleased with results
- [2]** Going in the right direction and see areas for improvement
- [1]** Struggling and need help

Thinking Life Change []

Group members are spiritual self-starters and are actively developing their relationship with God. They are participating in the church through the use of their spiritual gifts and material resources as able. The group is growing & maturing through our time together.

Comments: _____

Small Group Check-In [continued]

for individual growth progress and meetings with your community leader

Overall Progress and Plans for Life-Change [continued]:

Use the following evaluation scale and comment areas to assess how your small group is doing.

[3] Doing well and pleased with results

[2] Going in the right direction and see areas for improvement

[1] Struggling and need help

Cultivating Relationships []

Group members are actively building relationships with each other both inside and outside of the group setting.

Comments: _____

Promoting Participation []

Group meetings are full of life and energy. Most, if not all of our members participate in the discussion. Members look forward to coming and consistently mention how the group meetings are one of the highlights of their week.

Comments: _____

Providing Care []

The group is a safe place where all members willingly share their thoughts and feelings in a straight forward and transparent manner.

Comments: _____

Duplicating Disciples []

Group members embrace the value of needing to multiply, and new leaders (apprentices) are being recruited and developed to ensure healthy new groups are available in the future.

Comments: _____

Motivating Outreach []

Group members turn their focus to the external impact they can have outside their group by serving their community, inviting unconnected people to join the small group and building relationships with others in our lives who are far away from God.

Comments: _____
