

COMMUNITY GROUP **LEADERS**

2025 - 2026



Leader Guide

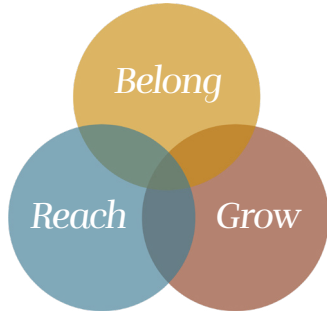
Onboarding Leader Training

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to consider becoming a Community Group Leader. This Leader Guide and the corresponding videos are aimed to equip you with what it means to be a leader so that you can assess if this is the right season to lead a group. Community Group Leaders are on the front lines of ministry. Your interest and consideration is incredibly valuable to the mission of Cypress Creek Church!

Who is Cypress Creek Church?

At Cypress Creek Church, we are a family of imperfect people following the perfect Savior, Jesus! We follow Jesus by **belonging** to Him, **growing** in Him, and **reaching** others with Him.



18 “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to **observe all** that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you **always**, to the end of the age.’”

MATTHEW 28:18-20 ESV

Consider what belonging, growing, and reaching looks like in your life right now:

- **Belong** to Him and One Another

“See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don’t recognize that we are God’s children because they don’t know him.” 1 JOHN 3:1 NLT

- How has God’s love and acceptance transformed your life?
- What does fellowship with God and others look like in your current season of life?

- **Grow** in Him

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” 2 PETER 3:18 NIV

- How are you currently growing in both knowledge (information) and grace (transformation)?
- Where can you identify growth in your life?

- **Reach** others with Him

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” MATTHEW 9:36 NIV

- What is your story?
- Who are you sharing the love of God with?

As a Partner at Cypress Creek Church:

- I have committed my life to Jesus, and I trust Him for my salvation.
- I commit to partnering with Cypress Creek Church’s mission to belong to Jesus, grow in Jesus, and reach others with Jesus.

Why Community Groups?

Community Groups are small gatherings of imperfect people that follow Jesus as they belong to Him and one another, grow to become more like Him, and reach others for Him. Community Groups are the place where somebody knows not just your name, but your story.

Who is a Community Group Leader?

2 “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are *willing*, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but *eager* to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but *being examples* to the flock.” 1 PETER 5:2-3 NIV

Community Group Leaders are those called to shepherd a group willingly and eagerly for a season(s). Leaders are committed to **facilitate** an inclusive environment that is **encouraging** and **safe** to study God’s Word and be transformed to become more like Jesus.

What does it mean to be a good facilitator, encourager, and safe leader?

Who has been a significant leader in your life? What made them significant?

Leader Expectations:

Belong:

- Attend Weekly Community Group
- Attend Sunday Gatherings
- Participate in monthly cohort
- Participate in Leader Gatherings

Grow:

- Spend daily time with God
- Grow in discipleship
- Facilitate discussion toward informational and transformational growth
- Encourage and compel others forward

Reach:

- Meet the needs of others in the group
- Gather outside of regular group time
- Invite others
- Anticipate multiplication

REFLECT -

After completing Part I of the Leader Training, send in your responses to the reflection questions online and RSVP for Part II.



Prepare.

What stood out to you from part one? Are there any questions or clarifications that came up?

Community Group Values:

We experience the culture of a community before we process or put words around it. In order for Community Groups to carry the mission forward, it's important to build clarity and alignment around our group values so that they can be communicated outwardly. Reflect on the following questions:

- **Belong** (Relationships)
 - Are we committed to gathering together and learning from each other?
 - Is our group becoming more comfortable with each other and enjoying being together?

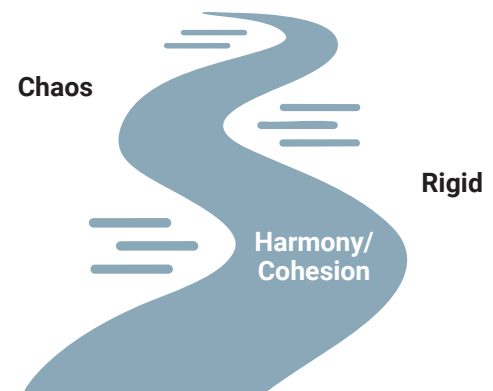
- **Grow** (Jesus)
 - Are we prioritizing our personal relationships with God?
 - Is our group transparent with each other and applying God's Word in our lives?

- **Reach** (Mission)
 - Are we showing up and praying for each other consistently to meet the needs within our group?
 - Are we planning gatherings that give us the opportunities to reach others?

What values do you notice? How have you experienced these in attending a Community Group? Are there any others that have been meaningful to you?

Community Group Format:

Each Community Group continually welcomes people with all kinds of backgrounds and life seasons and has the ability to accommodate appropriately as God leads to bring others into the group. As we do so, we can lead with harmony and unity by adapting in order to stay away from either riverbank extreme: rigidity or chaos (*adapted from Daniel Siegel*).



Community Group Seasons

Every Community Group leader at Cypress Creek Church commits to lead for the academic year — two Community Group seasons: Fall & Spring.

- Fall Season: Mid-August to Mid-December
- Spring Season: Mid-January to Mid-May
- Summer Season (optional, varies by group): Early June to Early August

Example Community Group Schedule

One Day Before Group — Touch base with co-leaders/pray

Send reminder in GroupMe

20min prior — Arrive and pray as leaders

10min prior — Ready to greet individuals as they arrive

5min after — Pray and eat (meal/snacks)

30min after — Worship

40min after — CG outline discussion

1hr20min after — Prayer requests & pray together

Community Group Outline

The Community Group Outline acts as the standard to resource groups with discussion questions that follow the belong, grow, reach format based on the Sunday Morning message each week.

Belong:

- Invite involvement from everyone
- Connect to each other, engage new people
- Ease into group time

Grow:

- Shift the focus to God; spend time in worship and prayer
- Engage with God's Word directly
- Provides an opportunity for God to speak directly to our hearts with His Word
- Gives space to respond to God

Reach:

- Focus on meeting the needs inside & outside the group
- Challenge personal application and offer accountability
- Pray for one another

Healthy Facilitators

PRAY for yourself, your Community Group, and the needs of the group.

CREATE a safe and welcoming environment.

- Value confidentiality

- Practice hospitality

- Move in with compassion

ENCOURAGE others to participate by listening and responding.

LISTENING

- Active listening helps others feel heard

- Reflect - "what I heard you say was"

- Question - "tell me more about that"

- Understand - "help me understand"

- Validate - "that makes sense"

- Care - "it matters that you feel that way"

RESPONDING

- Open-ended questions (that begin with words like: why, how, when or what) allow for others to elaborate their thoughts and perspective.

- Use wisdom with self-disclosure

- Avoid giving advice. God is the best giver of advice!

- Oversharers - You can state boundaries before you ask a question (i.e. "share a brief one-sentence answer," "who hasn't shared yet?" "let's hear from others,")

- Undersharers - Notice who is not talking, be sensitive to their needs. You can make anyone more comfortable by getting to know them better individually, using icebreaker questions, sharing/praying in smaller group, and/or sending the outline ahead of time

The OIA Method (Oiamethod.com)

The OIA Method is the inductive method of studying God's Word, where we **observe** what the passage says, **interpret** what it means, and finally **apply** how we need to respond personally.

OBSERVATION • *What does the passage say?*

- After reading the passage, look back and observe what the passage is saying. Try to look for repeated words, key phrases, and cross-references. Also, think about questions that you have after reading. Allow your curiosity to lead you further in understanding.

- Who? What? When? Where? Why? What other questions arise from the passage?

INTERPRETATION • *What does the passage mean?*

- After observing what was said in the text, interpretation seeks to understand what God, or the book's author, is seeking to communicate through the passage. Context is crucial

to determining the meaning of the text. Outside resources like Bible dictionaries and commentaries also help when seeking historical context for passages.

What is the context? Why is the author bringing this up? What is God saying through this passage?

APPLICATION • *How do I need to respond?*

It's easy to breeze through passages, especially those familiar to us, without taking time to stop and think about how we can practically apply the truths we studied.

How should I live my life in light of this passage? How does this truth compel me to be transformed? What does it look like to put this into practice?

Resources for Hard Conversations

Conflict resolution is a necessary part of living in community. When a difficult conversation or conflict arises, the Community Group Team is committed to support you as a leader.

Goal is unity and peace ("If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." // Romans 12:18)

Check your own emotional state ("Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." // Ephesians 4:31)

Stay curious ("My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry," // James 1:19)

Find a solution that leads to growth and health ("Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." // Romans 14:19)

At times someone in your group will approach you with a difficult issue. You can ask these four questions during the conversation and contact the Community Group Team for next steps, if needed:

How long have you been dealing with this? You are looking for the duration of this issue. (One day? One year?) Is this an immediate need or an ongoing situation?

Who else knows? You are looking for the involvement/support of others — have you talked to anyone else about this? If so, Who? How often? When was the last time you talked to someone about it? How did they respond?

Have you received any advice or counsel on how to deal with this? Many times they already know what they need to do.

Do you have any plans for your next steps? This prompts them to begin to make a plan. If they have no plans, you might ask: Would you like me to check on some other resources? (Do not make calls for them but find referrals and let them make the calls.)

Prepare for Multiplication

As Community Groups grow, both in size and depth, we can make room for others to join in and be empowered through multiplication! Multiplication is a natural result of groups that are on mission for those around them.

Key Signs for Multiplication:

(Adapted from Joel Comiskey, "Signs That a Group is Ready to Multiply,")

Sign #1: Is Community Taking Place? Your group is experiencing genuine, life-giving community. People feel known, cared for, and connected as the family of God. Multiplying from this kind of healthy environment and connection helps the new group start strong and flourish.

Sign #2: Is Everyone Participating? Group members are engaged – ministering to one another, applying God's Word to their daily lives, and using their spiritual gifts. This active participation equips future leaders to model the same vibrant, engaged culture in the new group.

Sign #3: Is the Group Evangelizing? Your group regularly practices hospitality, invites others in, and looks for ways to share the hope of Jesus. Multiplication flows naturally when a group has a growing outward-focus and heart to share the Gospel with those who don't know Jesus.

Sign #4: Are New Disciples Growing? You see clear signs of spiritual growth and leadership potential in group members. People are stepping up, taking ownership, and ready to invest in others. This is a key sign that God is raising up disciple-makers prepared to lead and multiply out of the group.

How to Begin Multiplication Process:

- Keep the vision of multiplication regularly at the forefront of the group so it feels like a natural, exciting next step – not a surprise or burden.
- Look for opportunities to empower those who are committed, faithful, available, and teachable by inviting them into planning, facilitating discussions, and caring for group members.
- Pray regularly for potential new leaders, asking God for wisdom, discernment, and the right timing.
- **Connect with the Community Group Team before beginning conversations with potential leaders to talk through options and next steps together, including Leader Trainings.**

REFLECT -

After attending Part II of the Leader Training, send in your responses to the reflection questions online before moving on to Part III.



You Are Incredibly Valuable!

As a Community Group Leader, you'd be answering God's call to serve others and lead on the front lines of ministry at Cypress Creek Church.

³⁷ "Then [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'" MATTHEW 9:37-38 ESV

⁶ "For this reason I remind you to *fan into flame the gift of God*, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."

1 TIMOTHY 1:6-7 NIV

Prioritize Your Personal Growth

God wants us to be healthy, whole, and the best version of who He created us to be! As we prioritize personal growth, we become better leaders, spouses, parents, family members, etc.

What spiritual disciplines make you feel connected to God?

What activities, relationships, or experiences increase your joy?

How are your daily and weekly rhythms shaping your walk with God?

Who do you allow to speak into your life spiritually — and how often do you connect with them?

Don't Go It Alone

Cohorts are groups of fellow Community Group Leaders that meet once a month to share praises, puzzles, priorities, and pray together. Cohorts provide care, facilitate content and resources, and offer accountability for all leaders as we work together towards the mission.

"For we are *co-workers* in God's service;
you are God's field, God's building.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:9 NIV

What kind of encouragement or support do you think you'll need as you lead a group?

What would you consider "success" as a Community Group Leader? How does that relate to the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:18-20*)?

You Matter and the Team Desires to Support You!

Recognize when extra help is needed:

- There is talk of self-harm, abuse, or addiction
- You sense you are not trained or equipped on the issues
- Your own compassion and empathy is depleted towards the individual or family

When conflict arises:

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." Matthew 18:15-17

- First, meet with the person one-on-one
- If no change, meet with the person and another safe witness (ex. Community Group Team)
- If no change, seek help from the Pastoral Team to address the issue at hand

Cohorts

As issues arise, cohort gatherings are a safe place to brainstorm solutions while maintaining confidentiality.

Community Group Team

The Community Group Team are here to support you as you lead your Community Group. Reach out anytime, especially if there is a repeated need(s) that isn't able to be met by the group or a challenge that requires broader support.

Prayer Ministry

The Prayer Ministry Team is a safe and confidential group that meets every Monday night to pray for submitted prayer requests and offer prayer counsel. You can share a prayer request (with permission) or receive prayer by emailing: prayer@cypresscreekchurch.com.

Counseling Resources

Center for Relational Care: relationalcare.org — (512) 249-6200

The Timothy Center: timothycenter.com — (512) 331-2700

What's Next?

Is this the right season for you to lead a Community Group?

After completing Part III of the Leader Training, send in your responses to the reflection questions the final reflection questions online before meeting with the Community Group Team.

