

GROWTH GROUPS BOOKLET



**HEART CRY
CHURCH**

WHY WE ARE DOING GROWTH GROUPS

[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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTORS

“God has naturally equipped Heart Cry Church to reach lost people but we don’t just want to be a birthing center. We are also called to keep our people and teach them to walk with Christ.” - Pastor Billy

“It is our desire to teach the people of our church through the ministry of growth groups. We believe this is where God has grown our ministry the last few years and we can’t wait to see what is next.”
- Pastor Trey

BASIC PURPOSE OF GROWTH GROUPS

Growth Groups exist to promote the growth of meaningful Christian relationships centered around the study of God's Word.

SLAMMING THE BACK DOOR SHUT

The back door of a church is the reference to when people come to the church, get saved and then move on to another church. It is our desire to do everything we can to ensure we are nourishing our people to the point of where they never want to leave.

The problem is that our back door is wider than it ought to be.

- As we increase in new believers coming in, we don't have a system to nurture and grow them for a long period of time.
- We will keep the back door shut when we serve our people so well that they will not want to leave.
- We believe this door will be shut when we get 70% of our people plugged into a growth group.

We need 7 out of every 10 people to plug into a Growth Group.

We also need 100% of our team leaders to be involved in our Growth Groups.

**THIS DOOR WILL BE
SHUT WHEN WE GET
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SCALABILITY OF GROWTH GROUPS

As God continues to grow the Heart Cry network, we want to instill a system that will be able to handle the growth God gives us. We believe that small group method is the the most effective tool that will only increase in strength as our church increases in number.

WHY SERMON-BASED GROWTH GROUPS ARE EFFECTIVE

Growth Groups debunk the Holy Man myth:

- Result of Holy Man Myth: members of the church do not look for ministry opportunities but ask the pastors to do them.
- Holy Man Myth: the pastors and staff have a more direct line to God.
- Growth group leaders learn that they are able to minister to their group without deferring to the pastor.

Growth Groups debunk the Holy Place myth:

- Holy Place Myth: the Lord is only present in the church building.
- When people see God working in their homes, they begin to genuinely see that God is at work everywhere at all times.

Growth Groups Empower People

- Growth groups offer a lot more opportunities to do face-to-face ministry. Instead of one teacher teaching 45 people, we have 4 couples actively involved in the lives of 10-12 people.
- In every group, 4 leaders will have the opportunity to teach, counsel, disciple, pray, and visit hospitals.
- When people are put into spiritual leadership positions, they are motivated to live holier lives that are marked by continual growth in the Lord.

Growth Groups give more opportunities for honesty and transparency

- People are broken and find freedom in confession.
- Our people are more willing to open up in a living room with twelve people who they have grown to know and love.

A key part of our growth groups are the sermon-based approach. Every week, our growth groups will be reviewing Sunday's message and digging deeper into the text. This brings deeper knowledge in God's word and also brings unity across all ages since we are all learning the same thing.

Growth Groups create the best children's program ever

- Throughout our history of ministry, we have noticed how hard it is to keep our children in the path of righteousness when they are exposed to the path of unrighteousness all week. Each week, we are only given roughly two hours (at max) to influence all of the other days of their week.
- When we care for our adults, they are empowered to become godly parents.
Godly parents are the best formula for a successful upbringing.
- This does not negate a children's ministry but it definitely strengthens our children's ministry.

Growth Groups make the sermon memorable

- Since growth groups simply dig deeper into the Sunday sermon, people will be more attentive to the message. Nobody wants to be the guy who has nothing to offer in the discussion because they don't remember the message.
- There is an increase of note-taking in the congregation.

Growth Groups move people from head knowledge to experiential knowledge

- When we hear something initially we usually think, "I learned something today!" If we do not continue to think about it later in the week, it does not stick as experienced knowledge. It quickly leaves our brains and it doesn't let us wrestle with the deeper meaning.

Growth Groups are more accessible

- Sermon-based studies are not as intimidating as a bible study. Men aren't as afraid to join the group since they know that they already know the material that the group will be discussing.
- Sermon-based studies are extremely helpful for new Christians. They aren't intimidated by their lack of knowledge because they feel like they have some knowledge to contribute from what they heard on Sunday. In other words, people feel like experts on subjects that they have personally experienced.

Growth Groups will create a “better-prepared” environment

- In a book study, the chances are highly slim that a lot of them read the selected chapters for that week. This leads people to either not show up at all or stay quiet throughout the study.
- In a sermon-based study, people feel better prepared since they heard the Sunday message. If they weren't there Sunday, they are probably more likely to listen to the message online than to read a chapter of a book.

THE NUTS & BOLTS OF GROWTH GROUPS

GROWTH GROUP LEADERSHIP

GROWTH GROUP

LEAD PASTOR BILLY VANCAMP

Casting a clear and compelling vision, inspiring the Growth Guide material based on weekly sermons. Maintains clear communications with Growth Group Director.

GROWTH GROUP

DIRECTOR / GARY POWER

Providing ongoing, clear communication with Growth Group leaders, tracking attendance, and oversight of the health and wellbeing of all Growth Groups.

GROWTH GROUP

LEADER

The responsibilities of a leader include: prepare and lead the meeting, attend all training, track the needs of group members, complete attendant sheets and visit members in the hospital.

GROWTH GROUP

HOST

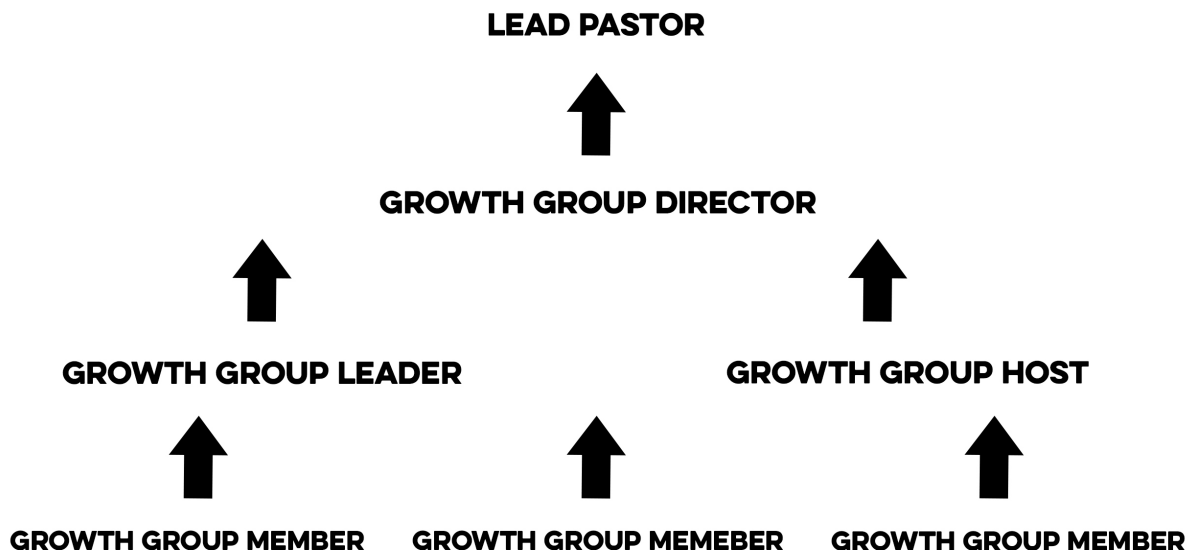
The responsibilities of a host include provide a clean, comfortable, warm and friendly home environment. Provide feedback and support for the leader , organize refreshments and organize meals for members in the hospital.

GROWTH GROUP STRUCTURE

The hierarchy of communication for needs within the growth group community.

We are developing a structure of communication so that nobody gets left behind.

The Growth Group Leader and Host carry a lot of the responsibility in shepherding the growth group members. However, if something arises that seems too big to handle, the Growth Group Leaders and Hosts are to contact the Growth Group Director for wisdom and advice. This will also be relayed to the Lead Pastor when necessary. It is also worth noting that the Growth Group Director will communicate to the Growth Group Leaders and Hosts on a weekly basis for encouragement and direction. For now, we have one Growth Group Director that receives your weekly attendance and takes care of details that are needed along the way.



The perfect dynamic is to have a group small enough to make people feel like they can open up but large enough to where no one feels like they are forced to speak up.

RIGHT SIZE RIGHT PEOPLE

In order for Growth Groups to be successful, we must carefully pick the right size and the right people for each group.

RIGHT SIZE:

- Married couples group: 12-14 people.
- Singles groups: 8-12 people.
- Why the difference between the two? Six couples have a radically different dynamic than 12 singles.
- When the group gets too large, attendance becomes a lot more inconsistent. Perhaps it is because they don't feel as responsible to make it every time since it will be a crowded room regardless of them coming or not.

**WE WANT TO CREATE LASTING RELATIONSHIPS.
WE WANT OUR PEOPLE TO STAY TOGETHER
THROUGH THE WALK OF LIFE.**

RIGHT PEOPLE:

- We are building our groups on strong commonality.
- It is more important for people to know who is in their group than where and when it meets.
- We have groups for singles, newlyweds, families, parents of teens and several other specific groups.
- It is our desire for the group to love being together and we will not separate them. It is our desire for long-lasting friendships be established and nurtured in our growth groups.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” **Hebrews 10:24-25**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A GROWTH GROUP MEETS

REFRESHMENTS: 15
MINUTES

SHARING: 15-30
MINUTES

**STUDY &
DISCUSSION:** 45
MINUTES

PRAYER: 15-30
MINUTES

REFRESHMENTS

- Spend the first 15 or so minutes (before the official start) to socialize and enjoy the refreshments.
- Refreshments upon arrival give a sense of comfort to those coming in.
- It creates a better social atmosphere.
- How you start each night is critical to the success of the rest of the night.

SHARING

- Spend 15-30 minutes sharing prayer requests and updating each other on their lives.
- This will get easier and easier as the group connects more and more.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

- This portion is designed to last around 45 minutes.
- People will be asked the questions that were provided on the Growth Guide that was handed out on Sunday morning. At times, leaders may ask people to read what they've written down. Other times, they will just have an open dialogue.

THREE KINDS OF QUESTIONS ON THE GROWTH GUIDE

Each week, the questions will be in three categories:

1) Getting to Know Me 2) Into the Bible and 3) Application.

PRAYER

- Spend about 15-30 minutes praying at the end.
- Some groups find it helpful to break it into smaller groups – possibly by gender. This creates an even more intimate environment.
- We ask everyone to use sentence prayers (one person praying for just one item at a time)

FREEDOM TO DIGRESS

- Some groups will use this time line a little bit different according to the needs of the group.
- Some groups will be such mature Christians that they feel the need to go over the 45 minutes on the study and discussion. Other groups may feel the need to spend a little more time with refreshments so that people can get to know each other some more.

SERVICE PROJECTS AND SOCIALS

- We ask every group to take on at least two service projects a year and at least one social event per year.
- At our church, we have a lot of service projects throughout the year. A growth group can volunteer to take care of a portion of our projects. Groups can also come up with their own service project entirely.

HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR A GROWTH GROUP?

Check out different Growth Groups via heartcrychurch.com or at the welcome center.



Sign up for a group via heartcrychurch.com or at the welcome center.



Meet on first scheduled night.



Attend weekly Sunday service, take sermon notes and complete the Growth Guide Before coming to Growth Group each week.



Grow closer relationships with Christians around the study of God's word for 6 weeks.



At the end of 6 weeks, let us know if you are either staying in the same group, going to try a new group or take a break.



Enjoy the few weeks off and then continue in your group, find that other group or take the break you requested.

HOW DOES THE GROWTH GUIDE WORK?

Attend the Sunday service and take notes on the front page of the guide that is handed to you with the bulletin every Sunday. You can find it on the Heart Cry Church app.



Take your Growth Guide home and read the assigned scriptures and write out your answers to the questions.



Bring your Growth Guide to Growth Group. The group will go through the guide during the Scripture and Discussion portion of the gathering.

THE TIME CRUNCH OF LIFE

We understand that our people are busy and can only give so much time to the church. Therefore, we have set up some healthy breaks to ensure the people aren't burnt out.

OUR PEOPLE WILL REALLY ONLY GIVE US TWO TIME SLOTS A WEEK

- Hopefully, our people are busy and living productive lives. Therefore, they don't have all the time in the world to do every thing our church offers
- For Growth Groups to be effective, we must not add a ton of ministries to drown out the availability of growth groups. Less is more. Our primary tool for disciple- ship is a growth group. We ought not make it hard for them to choose between a group and something else.
- We will occasionally offer "foundations" classes that are offered on Sunday mornings. This will not replace growth groups. This is supplemental for already enrolled in a growth group.

SUMMER BREAKS

- Just like every other in- stitution, we believe it is important to take a break.
- We run the risk of burning out our congregation if we never give them breaks.
- We run the risk of keeping people from signing up if they see there will never be a break.

FOUR QUARTERS

- We will offer our groups 6 weeks at a time. After 6 weeks, there will be a small break before we start again.
- 6 weeks is enough time to create deep relationships but short enough to make the members feel like they aren't trapped in something they can't ever leave.

EASY IN EASY OUT

Sometimes a specific group isn't the right fit. That is why we are making it easy to get in a group and get out of a group after 6 weeks of gathering as a Growth Group.

EASY IN

- We do not want to punish someone for giving growth groups a try.
- Therefore, we have set up the groups to be just six weeks long.
- It will be as easy as signing up for a group, receiving information about the group and attending it when it begins

EASY OUT

- At the end of six weeks, we will give everyone an evaluation form to let us know how to improve. In this form, you can mark that you are staying in the group, trying a new group or taking a break.

MULTIPLYING NEW GROWTH GROUPS

HOW TO RECRUIT NEW GROWTH GROUP LEADERS:

- Look for signs of faithfulness among your group attendees.
- Should someone stand out as a potential Growth Group leader, first submit their name to your Growth Group Director prior to asking them if they want to be a Growth Group Leader.
- If they are a viable candidate, we will contact you as a reference and for more information.
- The Growth Group Director will then contact the person (s) you referenced and will work with them on training, etc.
- Thank you for always looking out for who could help us multiply our Growth Groups!

MAKING DISCIPLES NEXT STEPS

We would like Growth Group Leaders to help those who attend their Growth Group to walk through their Next Steps of their walk with God. If someone in your Growth Group is ready to take a Next Step, please guide them.

