

HOPE COVENANT CHURCH
SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR GUIDELINES

Thank you for becoming a small group facilitator at Hope Covenant Church. It is important to note that the term “facilitator” is being used instead of “leader.” A facilitator serves as both a group catalyst and as the voice of accountability. As a catalyst, the facilitator will be the force that starts a given small group, and sets the initial dates. As a voice of accountability, the facilitator will make sure that the group conforms to the guidelines of all other small groups at Hope. If a group is excited about meeting together, the facilitator’s job should require very little effort, and in fact, may be quite enjoyable.

Following are some basic guidelines for facilitators. Any questions about these guidelines should be addressed to Pastor Evan or Nathan Kelly (Chair, Christian Formation Committee).

STARTING A SMALL GROUP

1. Gather together a group of people based on location, interest in a topic, interest in support, etc.
2. Set up an initial meeting time for organizational purposes

At that meeting, discuss and decide on:

- a. The weekly (or bi-weekly) meeting time and place (location may rotate)
 - b. The topic(s) for study or discussion
 - c. Who will lead the each meeting (leadership may rotate — **the facilitator is not required to lead**)
 - d. If food will be involved and how that will be handled on a weekly basis
 - e. Create a contact list and decide on the primary means of communication you would like to use (phone, e-mail, facebook, etc.)
 - f. Discuss the expectations of your groups’ dynamics
3. As you are selecting material, bear in mind that you may pick and choose chapters in books that you’d like to cover (for instance, if there are twelve chapters in a book and you only have an eight week study, pick the most pertinent eight chapters of the book or double up on some chapters)

MAINTAINING A SMALL GROUP

1. If schedule changes need to be made, the facilitator is responsible for beginning the chain of contact
2. If the group exceed the size limits (approx. twelve members), the facilitator should initiate the conversation about dividing and the group should decide on a facilitator for the new group
3. As a particular study/support series comes to a close, the facilitator should make sure that a date for a service project or fun night is on the schedule
4. Of utmost importance, the facilitator should try to make sure that the group series schedule matches with the rest of the groups and that the group is always looking for new members
5. If you need a break as facilitator, pass the torch — but stay connected with a small group