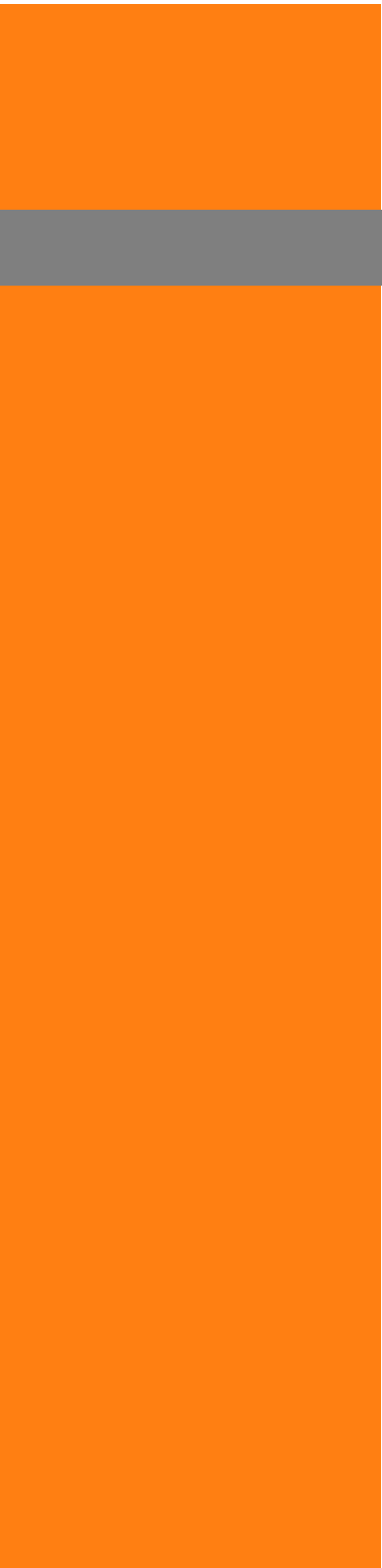


GROUPS

PLAYBOOK



FAITH 2023 - 2024



“AND LET US CONSIDER HOW TO STIR UP ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE AND GOOD WORKS, NOT NEGLECTING TO MEET TOGETHER, AS IN THE HAVIT OF SOME, BUT ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER, AND ALL THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY DRAWING NEAR.”

- HEBREWS 10:24-25

“AS IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO ONE PERSON SHARPENS ANOTHER.”

- PROVERBS 27:17



GROUPS

This Groups Playbook is intended to serve you as a current or upcoming group leader. We have designed it with you in mind and the many questions you may have regarding leading a Faith Group. Every sports team has a playbook where they learn their team's plays, understand their strategy, and implement their plan. This is ours. It's not comprehensive; in other words, it doesn't answer all the questions, but it will help you along your journey.

A Faith Group's purpose is to create a place for anyone to belong, be known, and be loved. And when they do, people grow. They grow to love God, and they grow to love one another. We didn't create groups; God did. He has uniquely designed each of us to do life together. None of us were created to be an island. We are better together and when God started the Church in Acts 2, He called us to be "devoted to one another." That's what a group is called to do and become.

Whether you are a seasoned group leader or a newbie, remember, our role isn't to change people. It's to help people find and follow Him. It's never about how much you know or how gifted you are. It's not about how skilled you lead or the content of your study. It's never about how long you meet or the environment that you are in.

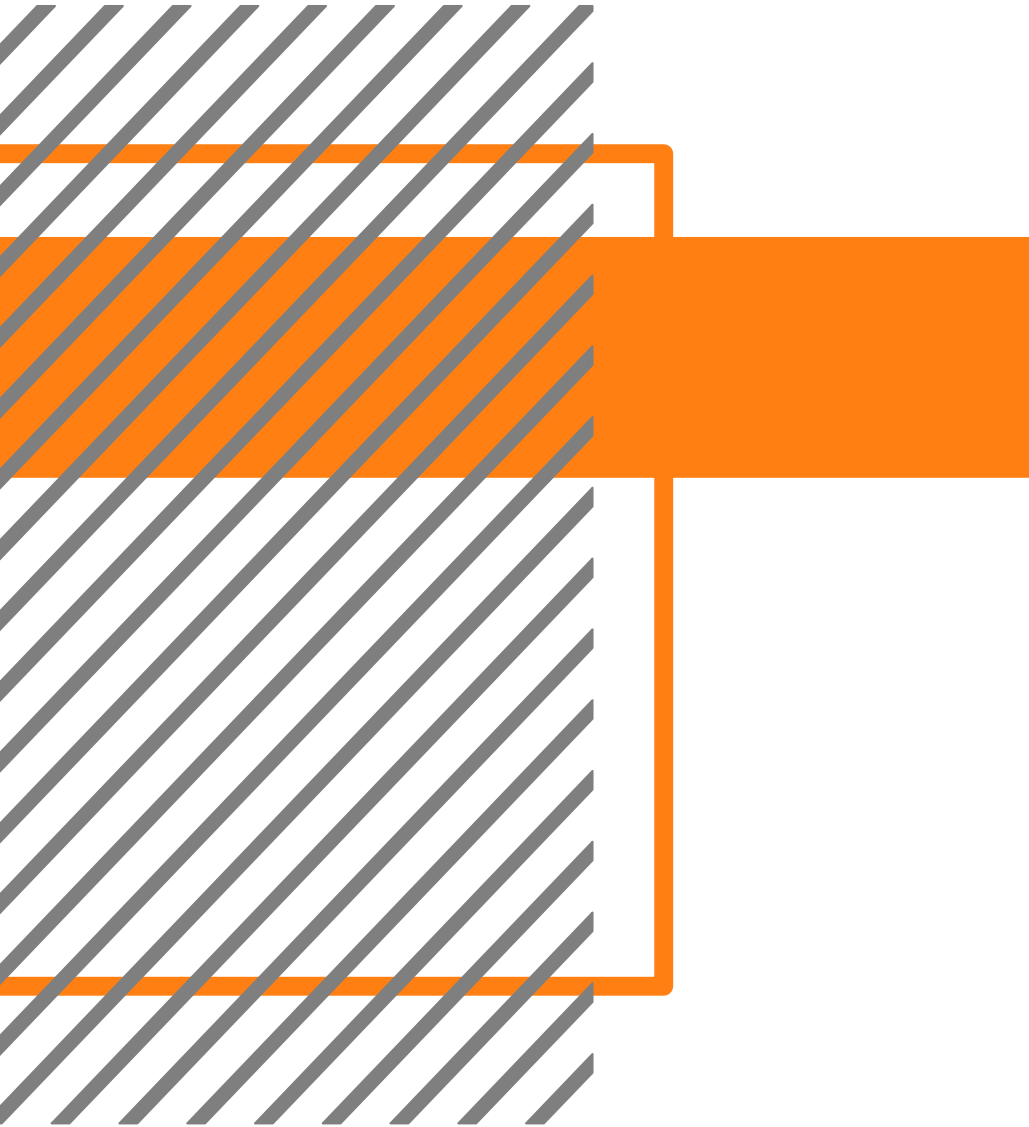
It's only about the work God is doing in people's lives. All we do is create an environment (group) for them to listen to God's voice and help them follow it. We don't have the answers, but we know Who does, and we point people to Him in an environment that reflects His character. He was the first to know us, love us, and show us that we belong. Now, He asks that we do that for one another.

We hope this playbook helps you understand the fundamentals of a group and the mechanics of how they work. Thank you for stepping out in faith to lead this group and love people. We know God will do great things, and we will give Him all the credit!

GROUPS PLAYBOOK

- 1.0** Why Groups Exist
- 2.0** Groups Set Up
 - 2.1** Your Role as a Group Leader
 - 2.2** Steps to Become a Group Leader
 - 2.3** How to Start Your Group
- 3.0** Groups Agreement
- 4.0** Resources







GROUPS 1.0

WHY GROUPS EXIST



WHY GROUPS EXIST

Faith Groups have one, simple purpose – to bring people together.

We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the life He intends for us.

Faith Groups are designed with a free market approach to create a place for everyone to belong, be known, and be loved. And when they do, people grow.

They grow to love God, and they grow to love one another. We didn't create groups; God did. He has uniquely designed each of us to do life together.

None of us were created to be on an island alone. We are better together and when God started the Church in Acts 2, He called us to be “devoted to one another.” That's what a group is called to do and become.

At Faith Assembly, we believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus.

We gather in Groups to build community and care for people.

Faith Assembly is a church of Groups, not a church with Groups!



A place to belong. Successful Faith Groups find ways to create an atmosphere of safety and trust. Members grow to trust one another enough to be real, vulnerable, and support each other's growth.

A place to grow closer to God. Healthy groups point each other to God and His truth. When situations, problems, and questions arise and life happens, groups focus on God because he has the answers. With support, accountability, grace, and truth, God will direct the steps.

A place to feel loved. Successful groups practice acceptance, good listening, and compassion to help group members feel like they are loved.

We believe life change happens in the context of REALTIONSIPS!

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Faith Groups exist to make lifechanging relationships relevant and accessible to you.

" The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him".

Genesis 2:18





GROUPS 2.0



GROUPS SET UP

GROUP SET UP

At Faith, we use a free market approach to our groups. This means we want people to gather based on the things they enjoy and are important to them. So that means, the things you are already doing in life are the things that can make a FAITH GROUP!

Free market leaders form their groups around their **gifts** and **interests**.

From fitness groups to coffee groups, mom groups to student groups, Bible study groups to creative arts group, outdoors group to sudoku group, memory verse groups to video game groups, we want to offer a variety to meet people in their daily lives.

All groups fall into eight categories:

- Men
- Women
- Singles
- Families & Marriage
- Students & Young Adults
- Freedom
- Outreach
- Prayer

GROUP LEADER vs APPRENTICE

A GROUP LEADER is an individual who cultivates a welcoming and safe environment where people can grow in their relationships with others and with Jesus.

A GROUP APPRENTICE serves, learns from, and is developed by a group leader. A group apprentice's long-term goal should be to gain ministry experience in order to serve as a group leader in the future.

GROUP STRUCTURE

Groups meet throughout the year in three semesters:

- **Winter/Spring** February-April
- **Summer** June – July
- **Fall** September – November

Groups meet weekly during each semester.

Groups meet in a variety of places! Examples are homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops, office buildings, garages, golf courses and more.

New groups start every semester making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.

Each group no matter the type, should consist of four essential pieces:

- 1. Fellowship Time** - Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.
- 2. Activity or Discussion** – This will vary based on group, topic, and overall setup of the group. Activity could include a Frisbee, or a feed the homeless outreach, discussion on Sunday message etc.
- 3. Prayer** – Prayer is the lifeblood of faith. Prayer is a time we can connect with God and confront the enemy. Prayer overcomes anxiety and fear, connects us to God, and reveals His purpose for our lives.

Group leaders will pray for every member of the group daily!

- 4. Spiritual Component** – This is what separates a Faith Group from your neighborhood book club. Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of Faith Assembly to help care for people.

“ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ”.

- Ephesians 4: 11-13

The primary role of a Faith Group Leader is to help group members take one step forward in their faith journey!

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide to help:

- Start attending Sunday services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Be water baptized
- Complete Culture Course
- Join a Faith serve team
- Start tithing
- Start attending Wednesday services
- Invite a friend or neighbor to join a group or come to church
- Attend a Faith Group Leaders training to become a group leader

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL GROUP LEADER

1. **Pray daily for group members** – you may be the only person in their lives that is praying for them.
2. Partner partnering with a **co-leader or apprentice** to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
3. **Connect during the week with group members** – This can be through phone call, text, social media, or face-to-face. Encourage group members to connect throughout the week as well.
4. **Have FUN!** Laughter is some of the best medicine and it creates an enjoyable environment.
5. **Respect people's time.** Have a beginning and end to your group meeting. If people want to mingle after the assigned times that is up to the participants but it is crucial to have a start and finish time.
6. **Invite group members to other church events.** Invite them to Wednesday service, serve opportunities, conferences and other outreach opportunities.
7. **Rally the Group around crisis.** Use wisdom and seek pastoral care when needed but leverage the group to provide care.

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Prayer is a foundation of our church, and it is important for your Faith Group!

“If my people, who are called by name, will humble themselves and and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

- 2 Chronicles 7:14

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray the God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

CONFIDENCE AS A GROUP LEADER

If you only do what you feel comfortable doing, you don't need God. God's best is often found outside your comfort zone.

When you serve God and people by leading a Faith Group, He will equip you and give you the strength and wisdom to lead well.

"For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength".

- Philippians 4:13 NLT

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline". - 2 Timothy 1:7 NLT

When you feel uncertain about leading a group, use Scripture to overcome the lies of the enemy:

1. When you feel like you don't have the time, remember **God has created you for this**, and His timing is perfect.

"If you wait for the perfect conditions, you will never get anything done". - Ecclesiastes 11:4 TLB

2. When you feel unqualified, remember **God has equipped**.

"It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant." - 2 Corinthians 3: 5-6 NLT

3. When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember **God uses imperfect people.**

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” - 2 Corinthians 1: 3-4

When you feel like you don’t know how to help someone in your group, just remember **ESPN:**

E: Encourage

S: Share Scripture

P: Pray

N: Next Steps

As a Faith Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community.

We have pastors, staff, and the Groups Team who are all working alongside you to invest in great Groups at Faith Assembly.

As a Faith Groups Leader, you have a Group’s Coach paired with you as you need support throughout the semester.

Your Coach’s number one priority is to **pray for you** daily. Reach out to your Group’s Coach if you have a need, prayer request, or concern.



CREATING GOOD GROUP DYNAMICS

- **Set Expectations** – A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. Utilize the Faith Groups Agreement as a template to set the foundation. You can discuss the times the group will start and finish, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.
- **Follow the 80-20 Rule** – About 80% of the talking should come from group members and 20% from the group leader. Give members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself.
- **Keep the Discussion Positive** – If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your coach to help you respond well.
- **Keep the Relevant to Everyone** – Remember that people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about church terms and concepts.
- **Respect Boundaries** – Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Faith Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

STEPS TO BECOME A GROUP LEADERS

- Complete Faith's Culture Course
- Become a member of Faith Assembly
- Attend a Group Leaders Training
- Group Leadership Application
- Complete a Group Leadership one-on-one interviews
- Sign Faith's Group Leadership Commitment and Honor Code

HOW TO START YOUR GROUPS

1. Ask God for direction about what group to lead and who to invite.
2. Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time to meet.
3. Register your group in the online Groups at faithnfm.com.
4. Invite people you know or meet to come check out your group.
5. Pray for God to do great things through your Faith Group.



GROUPS 3.0

FAITH GROUPS AGREEMENT

PURPOSE

To provide a group environment where people pursue authentic community and spiritual growth.

LEADER ESSENTIALS

SUCCESSFUL GROUPS:

- **STAY CONNECTED**

While prayer and discussion of curriculum are key elements, the main emphasis of the group is the building of relationships to foster connection with Jesus and one another.

- **CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS**

Group members demonstrate the priority of relationships as they intentionally invest in each other inside and outside of regular group meetings.

- **SHARE OWNERSHIP**

Group members agree to encourage one another to participate in broad ownership of the group

- **PROVIDE CARE**

Group members choose to be fully present and provide care and support for one another.

GROUP ESSENTIALS

SUCCESSFUL GROUPS:

- **FOSTER AUTHENTICITY**

The atmosphere should encourage openness and transparency among members. This is an environment where people should feel free to be themselves.

- **PROVIDE CONFIDENTIALITY**

For authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

- **DEMONSTRATE RESPECT**

Group members should never say anything that will embarrass their spouses or other members of the group.

GROUP DETAILS

The group will meet from _____(MM/DD) through _____(MM/DD).

The group will meet on _____(day of week)

and begin at _____(am/pm) & end at _____(am/pm).

Group members will attend and participate on a regular basis.

SIGNATURE

GROUPS 4.0



RESOURCES

RESOURCES

A group leader can access all the content (i.e. Bible studies, curriculum and miscellaneous works) that Faith currently owns. Contact your groups coach and set up a time to review the available content.

Faith holds a commitment to group leaders and chooses to invest in groups by being willing to purchase select curriculum. There is an approval process, and the material is designated for the groups leader, not the entirety of the group.

CHOOSING A STUDY

Remember that every group is led from a vision. The question is, “What is the vision for the group?” Don’t just randomly pick a study.

ANSWER THESE THREE QUESTIONS:

- Where is the group spiritually right now? This is when the groupleader assesses the reality of the group.
- Where does the group need to be a year from now? This is the vision -- what you are dreaming, hoping for, wanting to grow in when it comes to the group and group members?
- What book/study/series will help the group move one step closer to this vision?

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO IDENTIFY THE GROUP’S NEXT STUDY:

- What is the spiritual maturity of the group? (Is it better to go through a lighter study or is it time for the group to go a little deeper?)
- How many weeks will the group have to do the study?
- How long should the content be each week? (15 minutes? 40 minutes? Somewhere in between?) You can always discuss this with your groups coach for suggestion.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT ISSUES

Refer group members to your groups coach for help with:

- Death and grief
- Food, rental and utility assistance or emergency housing referral
- Marriage or one-on-one counseling
- Help with divorce care
- Hurts, habits, hang-ups or addiction
- Memorial, funeral and wedding services

GROUP SET-UP ONLINE

Email us (matt@faithnfm.com) the following information to create the group:

- Group Category (*Study Groups: Couples, Singles, Men's, Women's, Young Adults, Seniors, etc. AND if this is an Open Group, Outreach Groups or Interests Groups*)
- Day/time the group meets and how often
- Location the group meets, including address (*the address will not be displayed publicly*)
- Group leader/apprentice names
- Are children welcome?
- Is the group open to accepting new members from the web?
- Existing group roster

JOINING A GROUP ONLINE

- Go to **faithnfm.com/groups**
- Browse groups and follow the instructions on that webpage.

MANAGE YOUR GROUP



Church Center App



- Download the Church Center App
- Manage group on app or **groups.planningcenteronline.com**
- **We ask that you do not change your photo or title of your group.**
- Add Events
(when your group meets)
- Set Up Reminders
- Contact Group Members
- Add/Remove Members
- Upload Resources
- Take Attendance





faithnfm.com

Faith Groups Honor Code

As an essential part of the Faith Assembly Leadership family, you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior. This should be the heart of your desire to serve in a leadership position here at Faith Assembly.

While serving the Body of Christ as a Faith Group Leader at Faith Assembly, you pledge to always present a good appearance. In both attire and behavior, you should strive to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations.

As Christians, the way we present ourselves can influence the way others perceive Christ. Our conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ but should exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer and servant-leader.

Exemplifying the highest moral commitment, Faith Group leaders are to maintain a disciplined life of Bible reading, prayer, and fasting. You must also refrain from such things as:

- Profanity
- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Gambling
- Indulging in much wine or other alcoholic beverages
- Dishonest gain
- Illicit drugs
- Pornography
- Sexual immorality, and all behaviors which might cause Christ to grieve and others to stumble

By providing an example in speech and action, we encourage others to grow in Christ and become servant-leaders themselves. This is a way of life measured by the heart and commitment of each leader in the Faith Assembly family. We should regard it as an essential part of our development, not as an imposition or restriction.

Leadership Commitment

The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith. - 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10 MSG

Qualifications

- Sincere, worthy of respect, and of a good reputation.
- Have a genuine desire to serve and minister to other people.
- Able to lead, motivate, and teach other people.
- Able to create positive group dynamics, and deal with conflict resolution within the group.



Abuse Policy Acknowledgement

I understand that Faith Assembly is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults and that Faith complies with all Federal and State laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse. As a Group Leader, I understand that suspected abuse is to be reported to the staff member who oversees the area in which I serve. I also understand the 4 types of abuse defined below:

Physical: A physical act directed at a child or vulnerable adult that causes injury;

Sexual: Contact or interactions between a child and an adult, or another child, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. This includes exploitation through photographs, videos, or other communication methods;

Emotional: Acts or omissions by the parent or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders;

Neglect: Failure to provide for the child or vulnerable adult's basic needs. This includes adequate adult supervision, medical attention, housing, food, and clothing. Most cases of physical neglect involve inadequate adult supervision that has caused harm to the child or vulnerable adult, or places them in danger of such harm.

I understand it is not my responsibility to investigate and in no instance will I confront a parent or care giver if abuse is suspected. As a Faith Group Leader, I agree to comply with this policy and report any suspected abuse to the staff person who oversees the area in which I serve.

PRINTED NAME

_____/_____/_____
TODAY'S DATE

SIGNATURE