

Stepping into Small Group Leadership

A Vision for a Transformational Small Group

Why Small Groups?

What small group is: In InterVarsity, small groups are Christians and non-Christians who have gathered together to discover God's Word through Scripture and apply it to their lives. So why do small group?

1. God made us for community.
2. Small groups give us a place to belong. See **Acts 2:42-47**.

What Small Groups Are About

- Encountering God
- Exploring what God is doing
- Empowering people
- Establishing rhythms of community

What Small Groups Aren't

- A replacement for church
- A seminary course
- A therapy session
- Only for Christians
- Just for serious conversations

Community on a Journey – The Stages of a Small Group



Growing as a Leader

Personal Development as a Leader

Step 1: Hear the Call, and Respond – God might be calling you to lead a small group. It's okay to feel nervous but spend time praying about God's calling for you and discuss your feelings with others.

Step 2: Self-Care – Make spending time on your own with Jesus a priority. You can't "fake" deep spiritual growth, and it's hard to teach and guide others through something you haven't experienced yourself. Create a self-care plan and use the Psalm 23 Self-Care Reflection to reflect.

Step 3: Develop Spiritual Practices – Making a habit of spiritual practices will help you weather the storms of life and model it for your small group. Focus on one and remember the goal is not perfection.

The Different Facets of Your Role

HOST
Create a welcoming space

- Provide food
- Arrange the location
- Lead intro & icebreakers

FACILITATOR
Guide discussions & group processes

- Keep the group moving along toward its goal
- Manage toward healthy discussions

SHEPHERD
Offer spiritual leadership

- Gather people to encounter Jesus
- Foster vulnerability
- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit

Overcoming Challenges, Embracing Failure, Celebrating Successes

Perseverance:

The Key to Overcoming Challenges

Hebrews 12:1-2 – The testimony of heroes of the Bible can inspire us as we fix our eyes on Jesus, who provides rest and strength and all we need to overcome challenges and finish well.

Practical Tips:

- Follow Jesus' example of regular rhythms of rest and prayer
- Follow your self-care plan
- Never lose sight that doing ministry on this campus and caring for this group of people isn't all up to you

Prayerful Lament:

Meeting God in Failure

2 Corinthians 12:9 – When you feel like you've "failed," remember God defines success and failure differently than we do. Take time to grieve what went wrong by honestly bringing your frustrations to God.

Practical Tips:

- Use a Lament Psalm to guide your prayers (e.g. Ps 12 or 13)
- Journal honestly and offer your thoughts to God
- Share with a trusted friend or mentor and invite them to pray for you

Celebration:

Learning to Savor Success

Don't forget to celebrate! We need to practice the spiritual discipline of celebration, of not just jumping onto the next goal on the to-do list and instead of acknowledging before God and others that something good just happened. It can help us to persevere.

Practical Tips:

- Be on the lookout for things you can celebrate
- Thank God and thank others for helping. Remember by recording answered prayers and key moments
- Things to celebrate: birthdays, holidays, key times in the school calendar, development's in small group or individuals, the end of small group

Small Group Resources from Start to Finish

Small Group Development Plan

Use the [Small Group Development Plan](#) to create a plan for self-care, leadership, and your small group!

All the Rest

Here are some key resources to make sure you're all set from the first time you meet your small group to the last meeting of the weekend, semester, school year, etc.

- **Ministry Library** – InterVarsity has a whole range of free resources: from videos and Bible studies to training guides and social media graphics (intervarsity.org/library).
- **Local Church** – Seek people out in the local church, who've gone before you leading others, and pursue them as mentors.
- **The Holy Spirit** – By far, the Holy Spirit is the best resource, the best mentor, and the best guide of all. With him indwelling us, we can carry out the ministry that God's already prepared for us (Eph 2:10). He will grant us wisdom and the words we need when we need them (Lk 12:11–12).

Course Worksheet

- [Small Group Development Plan Template](#)

Related Resources

- [Psalm 23 Self-Care Reflection](#)
- [Small Group Development Plan Example](#)
- [Spiritual Practices Handout](#)
- [Spiritual Practice of Silence](#)
- [Weekly Small Group Schedule Examples](#)
- [Weekly Small Group Schedule Template](#)

Recommended Courses

- Grow as a Host: [Launching Your Small Group](#)
- Grow as a Facilitator: [Facilitating Great Discussions](#)
- Grow as a Shepherd: [Growing Authentic Community](#)

Visit the Ministry Playbook to learn more about leading, planting, and building Kingdom movements on college campuses: <https://www.theministryplaybook.com/>