

FORMULA TWELVE

The Formula of Community



The Formula of Community

One Focus

People will not become long-term members of a local church without significant relationships. These relationships thrive best in groups that focus on loving people and God.

By utilizing the Formula of Community and structuring your church around One Focus you will achieve an expandable small group model that will ensure discipleship is growing deeper and your church is growing larger.



The Formula of Community

A Need for Community

“Today, people outside and inside the church share a common desire; community. “Americans are among the loneliest people in the world.”

- Gallup Organization



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Biblical Community

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” -Acts 2:46



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Biblical Community

Being in a deep relationship is essential to becoming a fully devoted disciple. Just consider some of the "one another's" found in Scripture:

- Be devoted to one another. (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another. (Romans 12:16)
- Love one another. (Romans 13:8)
- Be at peace with one another. (Mark 9:50)
- Wait for one another when you come together to eat.
(1 Corinthians 11:33)
- Serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)



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What is a Small Group?

A “Small Group” is any 4 or more persons getting together on a regular basis, to do an activity (Study, task, ministry, etc.) in which they interact with each other (fellowship) and have an identifiable leader.



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4 Benefits of Small Groups for People

1. Small Groups Increase Connectedness.
2. Small Groups Intensify Discipleship.
3. Small Groups Make Growing Churches Feel Personal.
4. Small Groups Provide Care.



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3 Benefits of Small Groups for the Church

1. Small Groups Increase Efficiency.
2. Small Groups Empower More People For Ministry.
3. Small Groups Expand The Church.



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There are many different small group models.

- Sunday School/ Study Groups
- Sermon Based Groups
- Free-market
- Geographically Based
- Age/Life Stage Groups



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A Free Market model allows for the greatest amount of involvement and expansion.



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Characteristics of a Free Market Small Group

- Everyday interests, hobbies, and relationships are the base of the group. These groups can be anything from a Bible study to biking, baking, or bowling, etc.
- Each group practices Prayer, Activity, & Fellowship in various amounts at each meeting.
- The group meets weekly in a semester format.
- The leader submits the idea, attends training and recruits members.
- Just like in a free market economy, it's survival of the fittest. It is expected that some groups flourish and some fail.



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Benefits of Semesters:

- People prefer a clear start and ending.
- People prefer to make short-term commitments.
- Group promotion and sign-ups are more effective.



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Utilizing Semesters

- Fall - (Launch on late Aug. or early Sept.): 12-14 weeks
- Spring - (Launch late Jan. or early Feb.) 12-14 weeks
- Optional Summer - Take a break from June to August or offer a limited number of groups for 8-10 weeks.



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Small Group Leaders

Who should be a leader?

Identify growing Christians who are relational, excited about the vision of the church and who want to help people take a step on their journey of faith.

What is required to be a leader?

Complete a Group Leader Application, attend the small group leader training, complete Connect Track, participate in weekly worship, be at least 18 years of age.



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What are the responsibilities of a leader?

- Hosting a small group of people in your home or a predetermined place.
- Extending a genuine greeting and expression of hospitality
- Facilitating the small group activity.
- Helping each group member take a step
- Reporting to the Small Group Coach.



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How should leaders be trained?

Initial Small Group Leaders should be trained using a Turbo Group.

Ongoing training for Small Group Leaders should be monthly and convenient.



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Building trust through training is essential for all small group leaders. Most problems can be traced back to a lack of training and relationship before a group launches.



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Small groups cannot be 'another ministry' your church offers. Small groups must become the primary way you disciple and must connect directly to the vision.

- Ensure that vision is communicated clearly and frequently.
- All leadership should be encouraged to lead groups.
- Assimilate new member with the expectation of being in a small group.
- Align existing ministries that are similar (SS, Men's & Women's ministry, classes, etc.) under the banner of small groups.



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Summary:

- Groups are comprised of no less than 4 people.
- Groups organize around a 'free market' of approved ideas (stage of life, interest or topic of study).
- Groups meet weekly in a home or other location. Homes are preferred.
- Groups include prayer, an activity and fellowship in various amounts.
- Groups typically meet for no more than 2 hours.
- Groups run for approx. 12-14 weeks in a semester format.



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Small groups have the ability to create church wide momentum because they deepen relationships with God and others.

Of all the things you could tweak in your church's programming nothing would be more impactful than making this your One Focus.





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White Board

Six Month Timeline for Launching Small Groups

Ongoing - Vision Cast

- Passing Comments
- Leaders & Meetings
- Sermons
- Announcements

August or Month 1 - Decide on your system's regulations & calendar.



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White Board

Six Month Timeline for Launching Small Groups

September or Month 2 - Recruit 'early adopters' as the first crop of small group leaders.

October or Month 3 - Personally Lead a 6-8 'Turbo Group'.



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White Board

Six Month Timeline for Launching Small Groups

December or Month 5 - Take a break from the Turbo Group and organize the upcoming semester.

- Assist leaders in choosing an activity.
- Print groups guides.
- Most essential quality: Recruitment



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White Board

Six Month Timeline for Launching Small Groups

January or Month 6 - The whole month will lead to a Launch Day.

Allow for 4 weeks of promotion.

Distribute Groups Guides 2 weeks before the launch.

Launch day should include:

- Special decor.
- Every Leader at a designated area.
- Sermon response should be to sign up.





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Lab

Checklist:

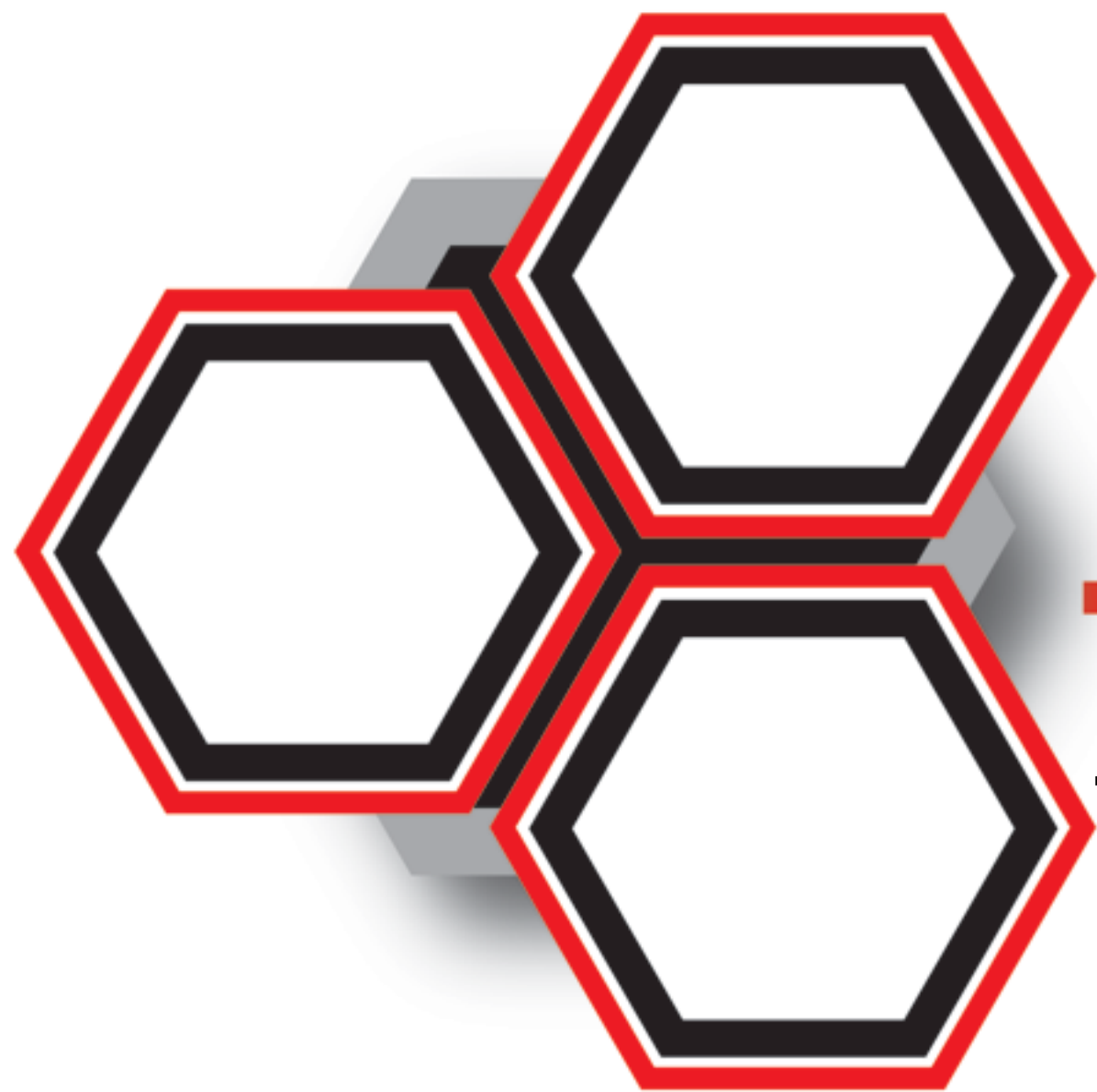
- ✓ **Schedule** A time to pray about and discuss a future small group ministry at your church.
- ✓ **Read** *Dog Training, Fly Fishing, and Sharing Christ in the 21st Century* by Ted Haggard or *Small Groups on Purpose* by Steve Gladen
- ✓ **Meet** to begin organizing your small group regulations. Also, brainstorm a recruitment list of potential turbo group participants.

Discussion Questions:

- ? Does our current structure help people find community? Why or why not?
- ? Could our discipleship strategy benefit from reorganizing around relationships?
- ? What competing structures or ministries would need to be addressed in order to launch small groups?
- ? What is a reasonable time line to organize and launch our first turbo group?

Tools: Small Group Materials





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