



# Servants Ministry

Small Group Coordinator's Handbook

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## Preface

It is of utmost importance for you to know that the following handbook is not simply a “how to” manual, nor is it meant for you to rely on man’s wisdom to create a “picture perfect” ministry. We pray that this handbook will first and foremost prompt you to seek the Lord and His will in your life and your fellowship. This is a reference tool to give encouragement as well as insight and to be helpful about the little things so that we can better focus on the bigger, more important vision that God has placed before us.

This handbook is the first of its kind; it only begins to offer experiences from a portion of Servants’ Ministry. We hope it will be an ongoing project with expanding contributions and testimonies of His goodness for years to come. Lastly, we pray that this would point to Him *“who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to His power at work within us.”* (Eph. 3:20).

### ***I. Vision of Servants Ministry***

The body of Christ is still here on earth because the Kingdom harvest is still plentiful. Matthew 24:14 tells us that when the gospel is preached to the whole world, then the end will come. Accordingly, Servants Ministry exists

*To reach our campus and to touch the world for Jesus Christ.*

His great mandate for our life time is to win souls and make them into His disciples. The vision of Servants Ministry is three-fold:

#### **SOUL-WINNING**

First, we need to win more souls of this generation and the next one. Any nations and regions that live off only the past revivals become stagnant and decay quickly. We pray that God will use us to see more people become eternal sons and daughters of His.

#### **DISCIPLE-MAKING**

Second, we want to see more dedicated disciples of Christ. We hear and see of many crowds of Christians, but how many of them are willing to lay down their life or willing go overseas and into our inner-cities? May God raise more disciple-makers.



## CAMPUS REVIVAL

Third, our focus of this Kingdom work involves campus ministry. Students make crucial life decisions during their college years -- major, vocation, life-goals, life-long friendship, etc. We desire to introduce Christ at the core of their life-decision process. Without Jesus, we end up with nothing. With Jesus, we have eternity.

### ***FIVE SIGNS OF REVIVAL***

We can discern that God is doing something real and enduring when these fruits are manifested amongst His people:

1. Changed holy life
2. Obedience to the Word
3. Passionate worship to God
4. Joyful & powerful service to God
5. Love for and reaching out to the lost

## ***II. Living Set Apart***

It is important to recognize that people, methods, technologies, and organizations themselves do not and cannot really change this world. Only God can bring about His lasting spiritual changes to this world -- and He does so through ordinary people who are willing and available. Campus ministry is a training ground in which to fulfill the call of God as we engage in learning, developing our God-given gifts, and growing through various experiences. Will you say "Yes" to His call this day?

*"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect."*

*II Samuel 22:31-33*

What sets us apart from the rest of the world? Lately, many non-believers have been known to do good things by giving away their millions to the poor. Are we falling into the trap of busying our lives with things that appear to be right or good? The passage above tells us that if we will make God our refuge and live in utter dependence on Him rather than upon ourselves, we will be living the perfect way our Father has set before us. Will we actively believe Him and make Him our Rock, so that we can take part in ushering in His Glory?



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 *Purpose of the Document*

Multiple fellowships in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington DC make up Servants Ministry. Each fellowship has a different size, style of leadership, and general methods of practice. This handbook is designed to establish a general standard procedure for the small group coordinator.

## 1.2 *Targeted Audience*

Small group coordinators within Servants Ministry.



## 2 The Role of the Small Group Coordinator

### 2.1 Purpose of Position

*“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”*

– 1 Peter 5:2-4

Your role as small group coordinator involves forming small groups, finding and supporting leaders, and serving the Body of Christ through prayer and encouragement.

### 2.2 How You Fit In the Leadership Team

While your primary focus will be the small groups of your fellowship, it is extremely important to remember that you are still part of a team. Not everyone has the same job within the Body of Christ, but they all work towards the same end: to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known. In this light, you and other members of the team will learn to push forward together—helping where help is needed, and shouldering one another’s burdens after the Biblical pattern of servanthood and love. Keeping a wise view of your own priorities and commitments, don’t be afraid to step in and offer help to your co-servants when needed. On the flip side, don’t be reluctant to ask for help either! When we serve, the glory of our work goes to God alone, so we are free to put our point-charts aside and help each other wherever and whenever we can in order to accomplish His will.

A last word on your position and the team: any servant who loses sight of Jesus’ commission to His disciples, particularly the small group coordinator, stands in danger of nurturing an overfed, in-grown ministry. Evangelism—or, to put it simply, making God’s salvation known to others—is not a task relegated to the outreach coordinator, just as the spiritual growth of the fellowship is not a duty given solely to you. As you go about your work this semester, give thanks often for your co-laborers and ask God to remind the team often of the countless numbers of empty and lost souls who have yet to know Him and be made glad in Him.

### 2.3 Typical Roles

Below are some typical roles for small group coordinators:

- Find faithful small group leaders for the upcoming school year
- Pair small group leaders and assistants
- Create small groups for retreats
- Create small groups for the fellowship
- Collect feedback on small groups at the end of each semester
- Prepare and plan small group leaders’ meetings and events



- Encourage and pray for small group leaders
- Meet and share with the small group leaders

## 3 Spiritual Matters

### 3.1 *“Drink from a running stream rather than a stagnant pool”*

When I (Jane) was a college student, during the week of finals I would wake up at 5:30 AM to study for my tests, and every morning I would pass by the office of one of my professors and always see the light on at his desk. I would study late at the library and return home around 11 o'clock, and again I would see his desk light on. My professor was always poring over his books. One day I stopped by his office to ask him a question about one of my material science questions, and I asked him, “What keeps you studying for so long? I see you in your office from 5 AM to sometimes 11PM. You have a Masters and PhD in material science; why do you keep studying? You know everything there is to know about material science.” And he answered “Jane, I would rather have my students drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool.”

He was one of the best professors I ever had- and a man who marked my way of teaching. In that same way, we need to be a running stream for our small group members. We need to be constantly in the Word of God, in prayer, reading books, and growing, so that small group members will drink from a running stream.

*Luke 6:40 -“Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”*

### 3.2 *Lines of Prayer*

If you want to minister to others, ask God to first minister to you. As a “servant of servants” in the fellowship, one of the best things you can do for the small group leaders is to look after your own spiritual health. Make it your top priority to spend time being still before the Lord, receiving His instruction and searching to know His heart as revealed in Scripture.

Another wise practice, which the Apostle Paul certainly didn't neglect, is asking others to pray for you. You may have spiritual mentors, parents or friends to intercede on your behalf; don't hesitate to ask for their prayers. Your very presence in God's Kingdom is threatening to our enemy, and the prayers lifted up on your behalf will always be heard—and sometimes answered just in time.



## 4 Methods and Tips

### 4.1 *Finding Small Group Leaders*

Years ago, a cartoon showed two frames, each with a Mr. Brown talking to a young woman in the office.

In the first frame he's a public school superintendent, and he says, "I'm awfully sorry, Miss Smith, but after reviewing your application for a teaching position, we've decided we can't sue you. We must have someone with at least five years' experience in teaching and preferable with a master's degree in education."

In the second frame Mr. Brown is a Sunday school superintendent, and he says, "You'd make a wonderful teacher, Miss Smith. I realized you haven't been a Christian very long, and you feel you don't know much about the Bible-but there's no finer way to learn the Bible than to teach it. And you say you have no experience working with kids in this age group- but I'm convinced you'll grow to understand and love them. Really, Miss Smith, all we're looking for is a willing heart."

What a sad but true commentary on our low regard for the teaching of God's Word. To teach children that two plus two equals four, you need a minimum of four years of higher education. To teach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, anything is good enough... and that's why it too often degenerates into a ministry of mediocrity.

#### **Look for FAT people- those that are Faithful, Available, and Teachable.**

On a practical level, then, look for people who have and are continuing to be faithful—faithful as members in the fellowship, faithful with even the small gifts and duties God has given them for the time being. You'll also want to look out for those who are available; students taking over 18 credits in a semester might to think hard about how they will be able to allocate their time wisely (we study for God's glory too!). Lastly, look for people with "soft hearts"—those whose hearts are not hardened to words of wisdom from peers or authorities, and above all whose eyes and ears are not closed to the constant instruction of the Holy Spirit through prayer and the continual reading of the Word of God.

Ask for His wisdom. ☺ None of us is perfect, and the most imperfect of us who depend on God will actually show the sufficiency of His grace most fully, so pray that *God* will send workers into the harvest, and ask for His discernment. He will do it.



## 4.2 *Creating Small Groups*

The way small groups are coordinated vary from fellowship to fellowship. Some fellowships have co-ed small groups, freshmen specific small groups, topical small groups, etc. Usually, it is wise to have older small group leaders teach the upperclass small groups and 3<sup>rd</sup> years lead the freshmen small groups. Ideally, every small group leader should have assisted a small group prior to leading.

A few weeks before Harvest, begin praying and asking God whom you should pair as small group leaders. Once, God really pressed upon my (Jane's) heart to have 2 particular girls serve a small group together even though they had beef with each other. He used this opportunity to bring the sisters together to reconcile any bitterness they had towards each other, and it was a time of renewal for their relationship. Pray and seek God to see which people are compatible. Ask God for the wisdom to see whom He wants to lead small group together.

After receiving a list from the officers of all the newcomers and people interested in small groups, try to evenly distribute members into each small group. Some fellowships may choose to leave the choice of upperclass groups up to the members; if this is the case, you will still probably want to keep tabs on attendance in the first few weeks, just to ensure that the distribution of people is not too lopsided. Ensure that there are at least 2 leaders (including an assistant-leader) for each small group. If at all possible, keep the number of people in each small group between 6 and 10 (including leaders); any larger, and the objective of fostering bonds in a small group can be very difficult to achieve.

Make sure that the days the small groups meet will work with everyone's schedule. You may need to help schedule specific small groups on different days of the week; for instance, women's upperclass groups may need to meet on different days to accommodate the schedules of their members. However, schedule accommodation has its limits; sometimes even the best schedule can inconvenience a few people. A third-year may end up attending a mostly fourth-year small group. In general, once the group meeting-times are set, conflicts should be treated on a case-by-case basis. Also, remember that in the second semester people have new schedules, so some small groups may have to change their meeting times.

Throughout the year, make a concerted effort to plug newcomers into small groups as soon as they are referred to you. Time is of the essence in making others feel welcome.

As small group coordinator, you may be the prime candidate for coordinating small groups at retreats or other meetings. Once again, the way you want to create small groups will vary from fellowship to fellowship. Generally, you will want to put the same amount of people in each group and have both a male and female small group leader.



### 4.3 Supporting Small Group Leaders

*“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today...”*

*Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)*

Because small group leaders are constantly pouring themselves out to their members, they need to be “poured into”. One of the most important things you can do in serving the small group leaders is to encourage them. Use the ideas and abilities God has given you! Leave them IMs of encouragement, e-cards, take them out to eat and share... LOVE on them deeply.

Meeting and sharing how your small group leaders are doing is really important. Through these meetings, you’ll get a better feel for the personal needs and condition of each person. A word of caution: these aren’t personal lecture sessions. If you are worried about a particular small group leader, use the opportunity to help yourself see through their eyes rather than prematurely confront the problem head-on.

While one-on-one meetings are important, so are gatherings where the small group leaders can get together to share and pray. Using your own discretion, you may want to hold meetings for specific groups of small group leaders to facilitate discussion—guy and girl group leaders separately, for instance, or first-year and upper-class leaders. Schedule these meetings early in the semester so that everyone can look ahead and schedule other events accordingly.

At the meetings themselves, do all you can to create a positive and HOPE-ful environment. A prayer meeting isn’t meant to be a gripe session, and even dwelling on legitimate concerns or complaints for too long will be discouraging for all. The upside about sharing is that leaders are often encouraged to see that others are fighting the same battles they are. Realize that the leaders are human—some will be mentally comparing their groups to others, some will find it difficult to describe where they or their groups are spiritually, and some will be unable to detach themselves from thinking about specific problems in their personal lives or groups. That’s okay—this is why it’s a prayer meeting. ☺ Sometimes you can swing the tone from discouraging to encouraging just by acknowledging the power and presence of God in the midst of the meeting. Take the time to remember and to remind your fellow servants of what the Word says:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” – Phil. 4:6-8, NIV.



## 4.4 A Better Grasp of Your Prayers

*“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*

*(2 Cor. 10:3-4)*

This year, what you see with your eyes may often be different from the things you observe with the eyes of your heart. Any number of “problems” may crop up within and between small groups: heavy depression and discouragement among leaders, bitterness between leaders and assistants, dissatisfaction among the members, or even individuals who seem to cause pain and trouble for specific small groups. Humanly speaking, it may seem that these problems arise from miscommunication, failures in leadership, or psychological causes. But the greater reality is that we are simply “in the business” of saving and nurturing souls in God’s Kingdom. That very act locks and engages us in spiritual warfare, and the devil will do anything he can to plant doubt, dissension and trouble to scatter God’s troops.

When such problems arise, ask God to open your eyes. Pray in times of desperation and in times of confidence, and remember Moses as he stood on a hill above the battle between Joshua and the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-15). When his hands were lifted in prayer, Israel prevailed in battle; when his hands dropped, Israel suffered drawbacks. James 5:16 assures us that the same thing goes on today, but “the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” No matter what you or others with you are tempted to believe, harness your faith and stand tall in courage. There is no situation too overwhelming for God, no circumstance so appalling it will take Him by surprise. If you ask, He will answer. His heart and eyes are always with His beloved, His church.

## 4.5 Wrapping Up the Semester

Towards the end of each semester, hand out an evaluation form that each of the small group leaders can distribute to their members. Ideally, members should complete the evaluations **at** the last or second-to-last small group meeting. Give the leaders enough time to review and discuss the evaluations before handing them back to you.

The evaluations themselves should be geared towards making better teachers of the leaders. Now is a good time to review your priorities and purposes for the small groups; on the evaluations, ask questions about

- Timeliness of the meetings
- What the small group leaders did well
- Specific suggestions on how the leaders could improve
- Suggestions for the future—for the small group leaders and for the ministry as a whole

In writing the questions, try to avoid vague wording. When you ask for the strengths of the Bible studies or the leaders, include as many specific criterion as you can, so that the members may understand how they can measure strengths and weaknesses. Otherwise, you may have a



member who says “Bible study was great because we got to eat a lot,” another one who says “Bible study wasn’t so good because we didn’t cry as much as the other groups do,” and yet another member who thinks “Bible study was great! My leaders are great! Everything’s great!” 😊

The purpose of the evaluations is to provide positive feedback to the leaders, and to give you an idea of where each small group stands. As you read the evaluations, take them with a grain of salt; things are not always the way each member sees them, and ultimately God is the judge of His servants and teachers. At best, the evaluations provide you with specific and personalized prayer topics—particular targets where you can point the spiritual weapons you hold. 😊

Every end of the semester you may want to host a potluck or some kind of meeting where you can debrief about the semester. Talk about lessons learned, pros and cons of small group that year, etc.

## 4.6 Training Your Successor

As your term comes to an end, be sure to meet with the next small group coordinator once or twice. **This is particularly important.** You will be able to pass on nuggets of experience and wisdom that will otherwise take your successor a few months to learn—and that’s a few months too many, considering the Harvest of souls who have yet to know Christ more intimately.

Pass on to your successor any handouts and resources (such as the evaluations), this handbook, and take the time to pray with and for them. In many ways, this handbook is insufficient. 😊 You will have specific lessons you gleaned from your time of service, and short testimonies to the grace and sovereignty of God that only you can tell. Just as you encouraged the small group leader, you can encourage this brother or sister as he or she steps up to serve.

*So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”*

*--Luke 17:10*