

Thanks for Leading!

Thank you so much for attending our group leader orientation! Schedules are busy, lives are hectic, and sometimes there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in a day. Yet you have made time to answer the call to lead and to attend this meeting, and we are so thankful.

We believe you are a world-changer. During our time together we will talk through the "why" behind groups, how groups work, and how to lead a group everyone wants to be a part of. Life change happens in the context of relationships. That's what small groups are all about.

Sometimes the loneliest place is a crowded room. Groups enable us to get smaller as we grow larger as a church. Connection is key to building a life-giving church that lasts.

Thanks for being willing to lead at East Coast Christian Center as we serve together to Love God, Love the Church, and Love People.

Sincerely,

Pastor Mark

THE “WHY” BEHIND OUR GROUPS

Show me your friends and I will show you your future. When God wants to do something incredible in your life, He will surround you with the right kind of people. That’s what our small groups are all about.

Small Groups are relational:

- God builds His kingdom relationally.
- Groups are a key place to build relationships.
- Relationships are the foundation of everything that we do.

Small Groups Provide Three Things:

1. A place to **Connect**. “...yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.” (I Corinthians 9:22)
 - At ECCC we believe that since we are growing larger, we must also grow smaller.
 - We are designed for relationships.
2. A place to **Care**. “We know what real love is because Christ gave up His life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters.” (I John 3:16)
 - Small Groups are a place where you can be protected and cared for.
 - Small Groups is the place where pastoral care begins.
3. A place to **Grow**. “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)
 - Our culture devalues relationships. Scripture encourages relationships.
 - We believe that every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference.
 - We want to see you grow, flourish, and become all that God has called you to be!

TEMPTATION ALWAYS BEGINS WITH ISOLATION

Mark it down, we are always better together! We are stronger together! No one of us is as great as all of us. Never do life alone.

When God wants to do something incredible in your life, He will begin linking you up with the right people. When Hell wants to destroy what God is doing in your life, you'll become isolated from those people. Remember, temptation begins with isolation. James 1:14 says, "Each man is tempted when he is **drawn away** by his own desire and enticed." When everyone else went out to battle, King David was left alone, living in isolation. Then, he was tempted and fell. Peter was away from the other disciples, warming himself by the fire when he was tempted to deny the Lord. Jesus was in the wilderness (isolated) when He was tempted.

Temptation begins with isolation. When we group together, something incredible happens. We need each other dearly. Teamwork makes the dream work!

Ask yourself, who has played a role in my spiritual journey? _____

How did that relationship impact my life? What were some things that person or group of people did that made the difference?

How could I use those same acts of kindness to strengthen those around me, those in my group?

4 KEYS TO LEADING A GREAT GROUP

Make it fun! Anything we celebrate and you make fun will grow!

1. _____.

Avoid all last minute communication. This gives the appearance of being ill-prepared and does not communicate a spirit of excellence.

2. Keep it _____.

Avoid changing times, dates and locations all the time. Pick one and stay with it. You will never have a date, times and location work for everyone every week so get a plan and stick with it.

3. _____. The first rule of pastoring is to simply “be there.”

4. _____ memories.

People love having fun with friends. Adults need this almost as much as they need their next breath. Whatever you make fun, and we celebrate, will grow!

KEY “DON'TS” FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

1. Don't take up offerings – it's just safer and better for everyone if money is never a question.
2. Don't involve alcoholic beverages in small group gatherings.
3. Don't publicize your members' contact information – respect privacy.
4. Don't promote business.

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

Remembering that it's about them

See yourself as a shepherding person in the lives of your small group participants. Each leader is helping to pastor their team members. Our "win" is when people take the next step in their walk with their Savior. You are in place to be part of those steps and see life change happen!

- 1. CONNECT** – does your group know what it means to be part of a life-giving church?
 - ECCC's vision – what we believe and why
 - Spiritual gifts assessment – knowing what God has put in them
 - Maturing – learning keys to growing in their relationship with God
- 2. Freedom Group and Retreat** – ECCC's primary discipleship track
- 3. Serving** – encouraging group members to connect to a serving ministry
- 4. Leadership Duplication** – identify and develop new leaders

3 THINGS PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW BUT NEVER ASK:

1. Do you love me?

If the only time someone hears from us is when we want something from them then they automatically assume the answer to this question is "no."

2. Can I trust you?

If the people in my group or on my team hear me talking negative about someone else in our church then the answer is, "no." People know, if I talk bad about someone to them, chances are at some point I will be talking bad about them to someone as well. Remember the old saying, "If they will talk to you, they will talk about you."

3. Can you help me?

You don't have to have the Bible memorized to offer someone pastoral help. You're not a counselor so don't wear that pressure; just be a friend, have a listening ear and speak the truth in love when needed.

THINGS THAT COMMUNICATE, “I DON’T CARE ABOUT YOU.”

- Don’t return calls or texts
- I say I’ll do something but I don’t follow through
- What would a few others be?

A FEW THOUGHTS BEFORE YOU LAUNCH YOUR GROUP

- Recruit and stack your group before group sign-up begins. Don’t wait or rely on Sunday Sign-Ups to stack your group. Remember, Jesus recruited His twelve. Be like Jesus!
- Leave a couple empty spaces for people you might not know yet.
- If you want to keep your group from hating you, learn text etiquettes. Whether you are an apple user or android, if you turn off your group texting, you can text multiple people at once and when they reply, you are the only one who gets their reply. For apple users, go to your settings, then to messaging, turn off your group texting option. If you are an android user, each provider is different so you might have to ask someone for further instructions.

THE COMMON GOAL OF EACH SMALL GROUP

The goal of leading a group is part informational and part relational. One common set-back for group leaders is to feel discouraged if their group numbers are not super high. The goal is not to have a large group but a small group. People get lost in a crowd but not in a small group. Groups should be just as relational as they are informational.

During discussions, remember the 30/70 guideline. The group leader should only speak about 30% of the time, while the remaining group members should carry about 70% of the discussion. This helps build relationship, helps participants grow, and helps group leaders identify other potential leaders.

NEGATIVE UP, POSITIVE DOWN - SPEAK HIGHLY OF ONE ANOTHER

As leaders we must always speak highly of the other leaders within the church. At ECCC, we live by the principle: negative up - positive down. In other words, when I want to say something negative I take it up the leadership chain. Anything spoken down the chain is positive.

Romans 12 – HOLMAN TRANSLATION.

⁹ Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit; serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. ¹³ Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be in agreement with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Try to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. ¹⁸ If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone.

LEADERSHIP HONOR CODE

As an essential part of the Leadership family of East Coast Christian Center, you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior. This should be the basic premise of your desire to participate in a Servant/Leader position. While serving the Body of Christ as a leader at East Coast, you pledge to present a good appearance at all times. In both attire and behavior, you should strive to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations (including social media).

As leaders we all agree to strive for a lifestyle that lines up with the charge given by Paul to all leaders in 1 Timothy 3.

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. ² A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ⁴ one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence ⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); ⁶ not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (NKJ).

Leader Safeguards

As Christian leaders, we need to be above reproach.

Paul wrote, *“Don’t be so naive and self-confident. You’re not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it’s useless. Cultivate God-confidence.”* (1 Corinthians 10:12 Message)

The following safeguards are suggestions for your protection. The devil would love nothing more than to destroy your credibility as a leader.

Leader Safeguards

- (If you are married) Don’t go to lunch alone with the opposite sex.
- (If you are married) Don’t have the opposite sex pick you up or drive you places when it is just the two of you.
- Be careful of showing affection with the opposite sex that could be misinterpreted.
- Avoid visiting the opposite sex alone at home.
- Avoid counseling the opposite sex alone, and do not counsel the opposite sex more than once without that person’s spouse.
- Don’t discuss detailed sexual problems with the opposite sex in counseling. Refer them.
- Don’t discuss your marriage problems with a member of your group who is of the opposite sex.
- Be careful in answering emails, instant messages, chatrooms, cards, or letters from the opposite sex.
- Have a protective ally; for example, your spouse or administrative assistant.
- Pray for the integrity of other group leaders.

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” (Eph. 5:3)

Group Leadership Commitment

Name: _____ Campus: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Marital Status (circle one):

Single

Engaged

Married

Divorced

Widowed

I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and acknowledge that He is my Lord and Savior

I have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

I commit to faithfulness as a leader in the following areas:

- Regular personal time in prayer, worship, and the Word
- Regular attendance at East Coast Christian Center
- Consistently praying for my participants
- Being prepared for each group gathering (leading with excellence)
- Understanding and communicating East Coast's Growth Track for next steps

I commit to the Leader Safeguards

I understand the expectations of Group leadership in the area of integrity and commit to a lifestyle above reproach.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please sign and return to your small group coordinator or Pastor Mark.