



## Small Groups Coaching Guide

Dear Small Groups Coach,

Our mission is to build a life-giving church that lasts! That means we value every generation and look to invest in our community by showing them the love of God in everything we do. East Coast Groups exist to bring people together and lead them toward community and freedom found in Christ. We love God, love people, and love life—together.

As the Pastor of Small Groups at East Coast Church, I want to personally welcome you to the team! Thank you for stepping up to help us care for and assist our small group leaders! Being a Coach provides you with a front-row seat to life changes in our group leaders and the people who attend their groups. The time you invest as a Coach in the lives of our leaders produces eternal fruit in the Kingdom of God.

We hope that this Coaching Guide will be a valuable resource as you lead, support, and develop group leaders at our church. We are committed to praying for you and supporting you continually!

As you begin your ministry as an East Coast Small Groups Coach, I want to say how excited I am for this next step in your walk with the Lord. If you have any questions, please contact me or Charlotte Lawrence.

Thank you for helping carry out the vision of Discipleship and Evangelism! You are making a difference!

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## **East Coast Small Groups - TEAM**

### **Pastors Matt & Jessica**

Lead Pastors / Small Group Champions

### **Pastor Christian**

Small Groups Pastor – All Locations

Freedom Groups Coordinator – Cocoa

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### **Charlotte Lawrence**

Small Groups Director – All Locations

Small Groups Coordinator - Viera

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### **Pastor Bryan**

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### **Emily Moore**

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### **Sherry Van Winkle**

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## East Coast Small Groups – LEAD Coaches

**Pastor Christian** – Freedom / Rooted Groups / Men / Marriage Groups  
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**Charlotte Lawrence** – Women's Groups  
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## Vision for Coaching at East Coast Church

*'You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.'* 2 Timothy 2:2

### Purpose

A Small Group Coach provides support to small group leaders to intentionally help them grow spiritually, build community, and develop new leaders. They do this by listening well, loving well, and leading well.

#### Listening Well:

1. The best gift you can give someone is your full attention.
2. Maintain good eye contact.
3. Respond to what you are hearing and the emotion behind it.

#### Loving Well:

1. Know their story. How did they come to know the Lord, where did they grow up, what brought them to East Coast, what made them want to lead a group, etc?
2. What are their biggest challenges or obstacles in their personal or spiritual growth? Are there areas of struggle or hurt? Offer encouragement and prayer.
3. Invite them to go deeper into their story and ask clarifying questions about their spiritual practices: What is their time with God like? What has God been speaking to them?

#### Leading Well:

1. Build self-leadership through personal integrity (lifestyle, social media, etc.); authentic and honest transparency; personal spiritual growth and development; and self-care.
2. Clearly communicate in a kind and loving manner that builds community. Have conversations that focus on encouragement.
3. Lead through conflict resolution and having difficult conversations.
  - When it comes to difficult conversations, delivery trumps the issue. Speak truth in love.
  - The goal of listening is to understand (not to validate beliefs or ideas, or to change their mind in the moment).
  - Always involve your Lead Coach/Ministry leader before confronting a situation or having a difficult conversation. If not done well, this is an area where it's easy to harm someone.
  - \*Starter lines: Help me understand . . . I need to seek understanding on something . . .
  - Everything goes UP . . . problems, venting, complaints
  - Honor by asking permission . . . may I share with you what I'm observing?

## Nuts and Bolts to being a successful Small Groups Coach

1. Pray for your leaders and with your leaders!
2. Connect one-on-one with your leader to build relationships (such as over coffee or a meal).
3. Visit your leader's small group one time per semester, if possible. Be sure to let them know ahead of time that you're coming for support and not to lead the group.
4. Connect regularly (establish a pattern – weekly, bi-monthly, etc.) through texting, emailing, or calling. Remember important dates like their birthday or anniversary.
5. **Be familiar with our Church database (Planning Center Online) and help leaders navigate it, take attendance, set up meetings, etc.**
6. Celebrate wins and support through difficulties.
7. Help meet practical needs (acts of service, meal train, etc).
8. Commit to the role of a Coach for 1 year.
9. **Raise up new leaders!!!**

## Coach's Relational Connections

### Your Relationship with Your Savior

Your relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship of all! You may already have a good plan for staying connected and keeping your relationship with Him refreshed and growing.

However, sometimes we find ourselves in desert seasons, times of discouragement, or feeling disconnected. You are not alone! If that happens, please let us know. We would love to pray with you and help you navigate that season.

### Your Relationship with Your Lead Coach

This is your most important support relationship as it relates to your role as a coach. They genuinely care about you and pray for you regularly. Please respond in a timely way to their communication with you. When you meet with them, they will be asking you how your leaders are doing personally and how their groups are going. They will want to know who potential leaders are and if there are any concerns the leaders have.

### Your Relationship with Your Small Groups Team

Your Small Groups Team is in your corner! It is our heart's desire to pastor you well and provide spiritual and leadership growth opportunities for you.

### Your Relationship with Your Group Leader (or Leaders)

This relationship is the reason you became a Coach! At the start of each group or semester, please make a personal connection with your leader(s) and introduce yourself. Communicate with clarity your plan for staying connected and reminders toward having a successful group. Please pray with them before their group starts for the semester.

## Coaching Tools

There are many tools available to you to help you Coach your leaders toward thriving groups!

### 4 Important Tools

1. **PCO Groups ([groups.planningcenteronline.com](http://groups.planningcenteronline.com))** - East Coast Church uses a church database called Planning Center Online (PCO) to keep track of groups, take attendance, maintain group rosters, etc.

Training is provided twice a year at the Small Groups Leaders Training and is also available online at: [myeastcoast.church/groups/training](http://myeastcoast.church/groups/training)

Taking attendance is **MANDATORY** as it is the only metric we have for determining how many people are connecting relationally. **(For your leaders:** If a group member misses a group for 2 or 3 meetings in a row, we are asking the leader to call or visit the member.)

2. **Your Lead Coach** - Your Lead Coach is in your corner! He or she is called and responsible for YOUR care! They are an invaluable resource to you and for you. Lean into them often. Please respond when they reach out to you and make your time with them a priority.
3. **Your Groups Team** - We are committed to praying for you and to your ongoing spiritual development. Our door is always open to you!
4. **Communication** - Communication is important in any family, including your small groups family! Please respond to texts, email, etc in a timely manner.