

■ Small Groups :: Purpose

Our goal is to develop a discipleship program at Emmanuel that meets the needs of as many people as possible, and gives everyone an opportunity to grow as Christians.

■ Small Groups :: Covenant

As we begin our small groups, it is vital to make commitments to each other. All Christian small groups should develop a clear sense of purpose, which their members should understand and promise to work toward achieving. This promise to each other is sometimes called a covenant.

Affirmation (unconditional love, agape love): There is nothing you have done or will do that will make me stop loving you. I may not agree with your actions, but I will love you as a person and do all I can to hold you up in God's affirming love.

Availability: Anything I have—time, energy, insight, possessions—is at your disposal if you need it, to the limit of my resources. I pledge my time on a regular basis, whether in prayer or at an agreed-on meeting time.

Prayer: I covenant to pray for you in some regular fashion, believing that our caring Father wishes His children to pray for one another and to ask Him for the blessings they need.

Openness: I promise to strive to become a more open person, disclosing my feelings, my struggles, my joys, and my hurts to you as I am able.

Honesty: I will try to mirror back to you what I hear you say and feel. If this means risking pain for either of us, I will trust our relationship enough to take that risk, realizing that "speaking the truth in a spirit of love," we grow up in every way into Christ who is the head (Eph. 4:15). I will try to express this honesty in a sensitive and controlled manner and to meter it according to what I perceive the circumstances to be.

Sensitivity: Even as I desire to be known and understood by you, I covenant to be sensitive to you and to your needs to the best of my ability. I will try to hear you, see you, and feel where you are.

Confidentiality: I will promise to keep safe whatever is shared within the confines of the group in order to provide the atmosphere of openness. This is absolutely necessary to a healthy small group. This discipline assumes that anything shared in the group will not be mentioned outside, even to close friends or spouses. The only exception would be if permission were explicitly given by the person sharing. Breaking confidentiality destroys trust.

Accountability: I will seek to use the gifts God has given me for the common good of my small group partners. I am accountable to you to become what God has designed me to be in His loving creation. I will make attending and praying for our small group a high priority in my life for the agreed duration after which we will evaluate our direction.



Emmanuel Baptist Church

2 Corey St., Bloomfield, Ont., K0K 2G0
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■ Small Groups :: Suggested Format

7:00 p.m. People gather with refreshments

7:15 p.m. Ice Breakers

7:30 p.m. Word (Bible Study)

8:15 p.m. Share the blessings/needs

8:30 p.m. Prayer and praise

9:00 p.m. Wrap up, informal chat

■ Small Groups :: Ice Breakers

Icebreakers are a great way to get a group reconnected and talking after a week apart. These opening questions are designed to facilitate discussion about members' personal lives and to help them open up more freely.

1. What was the happiest moment of your life?
2. Tell us about your first date?
3. What is the greatest regret of your life?
4. The hardest thing I have ever done...
5. The greatest compliment I ever received.
6. Let me tell you about my best earthly friend...
7. What room in your house do you like best?
8. What is the one thing you want to accomplish next week?
9. Where did you feel warmest and safest as a child?
10. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
11. When was the last time you did something for the first time?
12. Which of the following restrictions could you best tolerate:
leaving the country permanently, or never leaving the state in which you now live?
13. At a meal, your friends start belittling a common friend. What do you do?
14. If you could take a pill that would enable you to live until you reach 1000 years, would you do it? Why?
15. When you do something dumb, how much does it bother you to have other people notice it and laugh?
16. Would you like to know the exact date of your death?
17. If you could change two things about the way you were raised, what would they be? If you came from a divorced family, how did it affect you?
18. Who is your favorite relative? Why?
19. What is your favorite memory time spent, as a child, with your father? Your mother?
20. Who did God use to bring you to the point where you knew you needed Jesus?
21. If you could change places with a Bible character, who would you choose? Why?
22. What is your favorite book of the Bible? Why?
23. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
24. What is your favorite movie or TV show?
25. Who has had the greatest influence on your life since we last gathered?
26. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
27. Recall a time when you failed recently
28. Name someone you admire who had to overcome great obstacles to get where they are now.
29. What do you value most in a human relationship? In your relationship with Christ? Your parents?
30. How do you react when you aren't thanked for going out of your way for someone?
31. What is your favorite time of day?
32. Singles: The girl/boy I want to marry. Couples: What caused me to marry my spouse.
33. My greatest disappointment...
34. The gift I will never forget (apart from my conversion)...
35. What was the most important event in your life this past week?
36. If you could chose to go anywhere in the world for 3 days, where would you go, and why?



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37. If you could choose to meet anyone who ever lived in America, who would that be, and why would you like to meet him/her?
38. If you could choose to live anywhere in the world, where would you live, and why?
39. What gift (spiritual, emotional, mental, etc.) do you believe you are bringing to this meeting? (In other words, what do you think you are bringing that will-or may-contribute to the encouragement of others- or the building-up of the "church"?)
40. Describe a significant experience in your life that changed your value system completely.
41. What are some of your goals for the year ahead?
42. Who are your parents, what did they do and what would you like to change about them?
43. If I could choose my career over again I would ...
44. What is your position in your family - first second etc. What would you have liked to swap about this position?
45. If you became the leader of any country in the world, which would it be and why?
46. Share the best and worst experience of your week
47. If you could take a free 2 week trip to any place in the world where would it be and why?
48. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
49. Give every one a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of their jobs or whatever they do on a daily basis. Explain your sketches.
50. Ask each person to say why they are glad to be a cell group tonight.
51. Briefly describe some strong and some weak points in your relationship with your eldest child or your parents-in-law or your husband.
52. Inform everyone that they have just been given \$1 000 000. Let each share how they would use their newly gained fortune.
53. Do you have a nickname and if so what is it? What nicknames do you have for your husband and children?
54. Is there an era in time that you would have liked to have lived in, if so, why?
55. Has the cell group been a help to you? Spend time talking about it and thanking each other.
56. Tell the cell group 3 things you appreciate about your family and 3 ways in which you find them difficult at times.
57. What is the best thing that has ever happened in my family?...my cell group? ...the world?
58. One thing I would really like see happen at the moment in my family? ... my church? ... my cell group? ... the world?
59. Who is the best friend you have at this point in your life?
60. Have you had an answered prayer recently - share the story
61. What is your occupation? What do you enjoy about it?
62. Who has been the greatest influence on your Christian life and why?
63. What book, movie, video have you seen/read and why would you recommend it?
64. What do you think delights God above everything else in your life?
65. What is the most encouraging thing said to you this week?
66. What encouraging action have you done to someone this week?
67. What made you decide to attend this church.
68. What made you decide to live in ...<insert your city>?
69. What do you still want to accomplish with your life?
70. What is your most embarrassing experience?
71. For what are you thankful?
72. What is the most memorable event of your life and why?
73. Share the most meaningful scripture to you and why is it so meaningful?
74. How did you and your partner meet and what made to start going out together or what kind of person would you like to have as your partner?
75. How would your life be different if you knew Jesus was returning on 24/5/97
76. Who is the most interesting person you have met?
77. Talk about your favourite holiday spot and why you enjoy it there?
78. Share about a spiritual experience you have had...
79. What annoys you about your spouse/friend?
80. Have you ever experienced healing in your body – share
81. How do you relax?
82. What is your favourite type of music / song etc?
83. What has happened to you during this week which you would like to tell the rest of the group.
84. The last time I got really angry was
85. If you could not fail, what would you like to do?
86. If you had to live your life over what would you change?
87. What do you want written on your tombstone?
88. What do you want said at your funeral?
89. What don't you want said at your funeral?
90. If you were to go and live on the moon and could carry only one thing, what would it be?
91. What would you do if you were to see ...
 - a person being robbed
 - a person drowning
 - a house on fire
92. One thing which has stressed me out this week
93. One thing which makes me feel guilty
94. One thing which I do not understand about the opposite sex is.....
95. If you had this week / ... over again what would you do differently?
96. Describe another small group that you were a member of outside of your church, and tell us why you thought the group worked(or didn't work). You're not limited to "religious" groups (most of us meet in small groups at work).
97. What is the most memorable Bible you have received (ie from Baptism, wedding, conversion, etc.)? Tell us about why it's meaningful to you.
98. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
99. What are the biggest questions that you have about your relationship with God?
100. Under what circumstances do you feel most lonely? Least lonely? Why?
101. In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust God? Other people? Yourself?
102. Why do you get up in the morning? The purpose is to find out what the motivating forces are in this person's life. It is a simple question, but, it takes a good deal of thought to answer honestly.
103. When was the last time you admitted you were wrong?



Welcome
to Emmanuellife

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Why is it so hard to do?

104.What have you learned recently from another believer?

■ Small Groups :: The Facilitator

Leader **A-C-T-S** to facilitate discussions by:

Acknowledge everyone who speaks during a discussion...with laughter, a nod, a groan, a sigh,...as appropriate.

Clarify what is being said and felt. "Let me see if I understand what you are saying..."

Turn it back to the Group! As a means of generating discussion, you do not need to give the answers.

Summarize what is being said. "So far it seems that we have been saying..."

■ Small Groups :: Troubleshooting Tips

Creating a safe place where life changing moments can occur is not always easy. Here are some common tips gathered from some seasoned small group leaders:

Issue #1: The Overly Talkative Member

Possible Actions:

- > Set ground rule that no one can speak a second time until everyone has had a chance to speak
- > Set ground rule that there should be no interrupting while someone is talking
- > Try going systemically around the group allowing, with sensitivity, each person a chance to speak
- > Assure the Talker privately that you appreciate their comments but that you wish to hear others as well
- > Agree at the beginning of the meeting to save some issues to the end
- > During the discussion, interject with sensitivity by directing a question to someone else
- > Privately ask the Talker for help in drawing others out
- > Escalate issue to Discipleship Team Leader for assistance, direction and prayer

Issue #2: The Answer Person

"Fruit" for the believer is defined by what you do and by who you are....know by how much you know.

Possible Actions:

- > Backtrack to the original idea, rephrasing the question or re-introducing the thought
- > Collect more information from the group; then summarize
- > Lovingly redirect the discussion to others in the group, "What do the rest of you think..."
- > Affirm Answer Person but look for other points of view
- > Avoid arguing about who is right or wrong
- > Set ground rule beforehand regarding not giving "pat" answers, then remind Answer person
- > Direct the group to prayer
- > If it's continuing, talk to the person privately and describe, with love, how the group is being affected
- > Ask the person to share more feelings rather than thoughts
- > Escalate issue to Discipleship Team Leader for assistance, direction and prayer



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Issue#3: The Member with an Agenda

Can be a dangerous issue to the group dynamics. Often this person is critical, "Yes, but...", "Well, I think..."

Possible Actions:

- > Reaffirm, reestablish, clearly remind everyone of any ground rules and their covenant
- > Confront the person privately and discern the underlying problem to take action
- > Suggest the person work with other members to find a solution that doesn't violate the group rules
- > Escalate issue to Discipleship Team Leader for assistance, direction and prayer

Issue#4: Superficial Discussions

OK early on while a group is getting established but when the goal is for the group to grow to a deeper level watch for reasons that's not and adjust. Some suggestions:

Possible Actions:

- > Improve your questions as a Leader
- > Lead by example "Speed of the Leader = Speed of the Team". Speak as deeply and openly as you would like others to share
- > Have specific applications and questions. Don't be afraid to challenge the group.
- > Ask "feeling" questions rather than just "opinion" or "fact" questions
- > Restate and rephrase the question. Often silence means group are unsure about what was asked.
- > Create a safer climate by taking time to review confidentially agreement
- > If group is too large, break into small groups
- > Survey the members privately outside the group to see if they have ideas

Issue#5: The Debate Champion

So what about capital punishment, eternal security, pre-destination? Great topics for discussion, right? No. While it would be wonderful to solve these Century old questions, the reality is that Hebrew Theologians don't always agree and the creation of entire denominations have been the fallout of many such discussions. Never waiver on the truths of the Gospel but here are some ideas to address these challenges:

Possible Actions:

- > Avoid arguing about who is right or wrong
- > Defer question to a future meeting or study and bring the group back on subject
- > Admit that it's a hard subject to understand and ask that the group focus on subjects that will build each other up instead of tear people apart (the devil's goal in your study)
- > Suggest that you get that person a book from the church library on the subject to study
- > Direct the group to prayer
- > If it's continuing, talk to the person privately and describe, with love, how the group is being affected, how new Christian's faith might be hurt
- > Admit you don't know the answer and that you'd love to research it a bit and get back to the person...NEVER guess at something you are unsure about. You are a facilitator and not expected to have all the answers.
- > Escalate issue to Discipleship Team Leader for assistance, direction and prayer



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