

# CONNECTION GROUP

*Leader Guide*

**“AND HE GAVE  
THE APOSTLES, THE PROPHETS,  
THE *EVANGELISTS*,  
THE *SHEPHERDS* AND *TEACHERS*,  
TO EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR  
THE WORK OF MINISTRY,  
FOR BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST...”**

**EPHESIANS 4:11-12**

## **OLIVE BAPTIST EXISTS TO DEVELOP FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST.**

Every believer has been given spiritual giftings for the building of the church and should be exercised in the church. Every connection member should be equipped to exercise their giftings. Connection Groups are not a passive activity but a group where everyone is involved to work out their own personal spiritual giftings for God's glory in the church.

For the last 150 years, Sunday morning small groups have been the primary growth engine of the church. As society increasingly desires a place to belong, it is absolutely necessary that our groups remain open and outward facing. We agree with J. Warren Wallace that hospitality will be our strongest apologetic in years to come. Connection Groups should be the place where hospitality flourishes, leadership is multiplied, and the Kingdom expands.

## **CONNECTION GROUPS EXIST TO DEVELOP FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST BY EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.**

**WE SEEK TO KNOW GOD**

**WE CONNECT PEOPLE WITH THE  
MESSAGE OF CHRIST**

**WE EQUIP PEOPLE TO WALK WITH CHRIST**

**WE SHARE GOD'S LOVE BY SERVING OTHERS**

## CONNECTION GROUPS DEFINED

Connection Groups are open, evangelistic groups. Together in community, we reach the lost, teach God's Word precept upon precept, and care for one another by modeling biblical hospitality.

Connection Groups are the heartbeat of Olive. Connection Groups at Olive are uniquely designed environments to create discipleship, evangelism, and community in the lives of our members. It is our prayer for every member of Olive to be equipped to engage Pensacola with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 4:11-16) We achieve this when every member plays their part in the life of Olive. *Reach + Teach + Care* has been designed as a guide to come alongside and equip, develop, and lead your Connection Group in fulfilling the mission that God has given us in developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Paul writes to the Ephesian church instructing them how to develop one another to *Reach + Teach + Care*. Looking at this passage, we learn God's vision to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We want to invite you to join us in achieving this vision of *developing people to follow Jesus* and reach people with the gospel from our neighbors to the nations. Olive's most valuable resource is her people. The best place to develop her people is in community. We desire this to be a guide that will train Connection Group leaders into a ministry of equipping those people so the gospel of Jesus will go out from a place called Olive.



# OLIVE BAPTIST DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

Every member at Olive needs to be equipped to take their next step towards Christ. As they take that step, it is our prayer every member would grow in Christ through discipleship. (Eph. 4:15) Discipleship is helping others follow Jesus Christ. Olive's discipleship pathway is there to equip each member to follow Jesus. As our members take their next step towards Christ, our Discipleship Pathway helps provide structure as everyone seeks to follow Jesus.



## PEW

The Pew is the Sunday gathering where we come together as the Body of Christ to celebrate what Christ has done for us.

## GROWTH TRACK

The Growth Track is a guide to help you discover your redemptive purpose and live the life God created for you at Olive.

## CONNECTION GROUP

Connection Groups are uniquely designed environments to create discipleship, evangelism, and community in the lives of our members.

## SERVE TEAM

Serve Teams are strategically gifted individuals put together to encourage and bless the body of Christ and engage a lost world.

## DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

A Discipleship Group is a group of 3 - 9 believers committed to each other to regularly meet, study scripture, and pray together.

## LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

The Leadership Pipeline develops leaders to disciple others and live on mission. (Modeling and Multiplying)

# SAMPLE CONNECTION GROUP

**60 MINUTES TOTAL**

## GOALS

Evangelism, Discipleship, & Multiplication

## COMMUNITY (15 MINUTES)

Beginning at 8:00AM, 9:30AM, or a pre-determined time, groups will intentionally gather to know one another.

## CELEBRATE (5 MINUTES)

Weekly, group members will challenge one another to share their faith by collectively celebrating gospel opportunities from the previous week. This would be an appropriate time to share salvation testimonies.

## PRAY (5 MINUTES)

Pray for these gospel opportunities and class needs.

## TEACH (25-35 MINUTES)

Lead the class in lecture and intentional questions in order to facilitate conversational community.

# LEADERSHIP ROLES/ RESPONSIBILITIES/EXPECTATIONS

## DIRECTOR

The Director leads the Connection Group to *Reach + Teach + Care*. The Director casts vision and develops members into leadership positions in the life of Olive.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Set direction and framework of the class
- Develop People: Evaluate and affirm class members giftings to ensure all members of the body are active and growing

- Ensure admin task and the health of the group (ie: roll, getting the box, and turning it in)
- Cast Vision
- Lead in planning and administering the total work of the department
- Recruit and develop directors, *Reach + Teach + Care* for the class and prepare them for future multiplication
- Weekly - ensure class needs are met
- Monthly - organize class leadership meetings
- Annually - evaluate the class and attend pertinent training
- Celebrate what needs to be multiplied
- Encourage members and guests to take their next spiritual step (i.e. church attendance, regular prayer and reading habits, baptism, tithing, evangelism, hospitality, service within the church, and outreach)

## REACH COORDINATOR

The Reach Coordinator develops the class to live out the Gospel.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Weekly Celebrate Gospel Conversations
- Challenge the class in evangelism
- Train the class to invite people to church and into their community
- Remind the class they are an open and multiplying group
- Plan local outreach in conjunction with the Missions Department for local and international gospel opportunities  
[Sam Schwanke](mailto:sschwanke@olivebaptist.org) | 850-529-4501 | [sschwanke@olivebaptist.org](mailto:sschwanke@olivebaptist.org)
- Weekly coordinate follow-up efforts for the class
- Plan quarterly dates to invite the lost to your Connection Group
- Help identify new missionaries and support current partners

## **TEACHER**

The Teacher teaches God's Word, aiming at obedience and life change.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Keep the Gospel as the central theme of everyday life
- Involve learners in meaningful Bible Study
- Study throughout the week
- Prepare discussion questions for meaningful Biblical conversations
- Help the class internalize truth
- Equip the class to apply truth
- Continually cast the vision of evangelism and discipleship

## **CARE COORDINATOR**

The Care Coordinator connects and cares through fellowships, follow-up, and facilitating connections.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

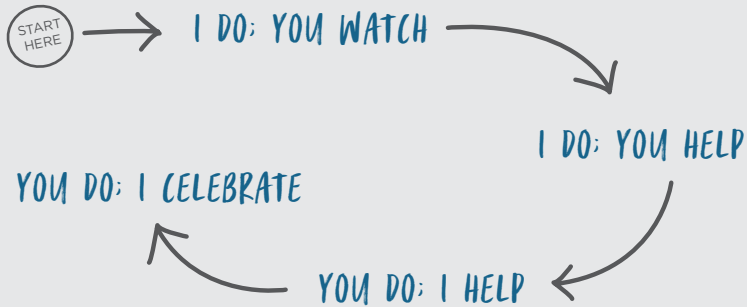
- Lead guests to complete a Connection Group enrollment form
- Ensure prospects and leadership feel the love of Jesus
- Enroll and follow up with visitors
- Assimilate and connect members and visitors into community
- Ensure an environment of Biblical Hospitality
- Weekly delegate follow-up with the Prospect sheet sent out in Education Newsletter
- Delegate follow-up as necessary to members (i.e. home visits, coffee appointments)
- Recruit Care Group Leaders to lead care groups (classes 20+)
- Gather prayer requests and praises and distribute the information to the class
- Work with class leadership and formulate a plan to meet needs (i.e. birth, sickness, death)
- Report major ministry needs to Pastoral Staff



# HOW TO MULTIPLY LEADERS

## 4 STAGES OF DISCIPLESHIP

(Adapted from *Building a Discipling Culture*)



### I DO; YOU WATCH

- John 1:39
- Opportunities
  - › High Enthusiasm/Confidence
- Tensions
  - › Low Experience/Competence
- Oversight
  - › More Directive
    - Direction/Model

### I DO; YOU HELP

- John 1:43
- Opportunities
  - › High Commitment
- Tensions
  - › Low Enthusiasm/Confidence/Experience/Competence
- Oversight
  - › Coach
    - Direction, Example, Discussion, Accessibility

## YOU DO; I HELP

- Matthew 4:19
- Opportunities
  - › Increasing Enthusiasm, Growing Experience
- Tensions
  - › Intermittent Confidence
- Oversight
  - › More Pastoral
    - Lower Direction, Higher Consensus, High Discussion, High Accessibility

## YOU DO; I CELEBRATE

- John 15:16
- Opportunities
  - › High Enthusiasm, High Confidence, High Experience, High Competence
- Tensions
  - › Complacency
- Oversight
  - › More Delegation
    - Low Direction, High Consensus, Low Example, High Explanation,
    - Require Multiplication

# CONNECTION GROUP HEALTH ASSESSMENT

In order to stay on Mission and continue to grow our Obedience and Effectiveness to fulfill the Great Commission it is essential we intentionally take time to evaluate and celebrate the health of our group.

Are we equipping, are we growing, and are we multiplying? Use these three gauges and check the health of your group.

## DIRECTOR

- Are people leaving your group to serve in other areas of the church?

- Are you casting the vision and challenging your group to start a new Connection Group?
- Is the number of Christians joining your group increasing?
- Are unbelievers common and welcome into your group?

## **REACH**

- Are you following up with prospects and connecting them to group members?
- How is your group participating in National and International Missions at Olive?
- Have you scheduled annual local outreach projects?
- Are you leading your group to do acts of love to unbelievers?
- Each week, are you
  - 1) Praying for the lost by name?
  - 2) Celebrating Gospel conversations?

## **TEACH**

- Is your group systematically growing in their knowledge of Scripture?
- Does everyone in your group know that one of the primary purposes of your group is to evangelize, disciple, and multiply?
- Do you spend time each week talking about outreach?
- How are you equipping the class to internalize and apply truth?
- How are you as a teacher guarding your own spiritual health?

## **CARE**

- Are you following up with prospects and connecting them to group members?
- Is your group a place that non-members immediately feel welcome and part of the group?
- Has your group followed up with all drifting visitors/ members?
- Who are you delegating follow-up to?
- Is your group growing in Biblical Hospitality?

## **WHO ARE YOU WALKING THROUGH THE 4 STAGES OF DISCIPLESHIP?**

Take time to list names who should be added...

### **SAMPLE CALENDAR**

**WEEKLY GOSPEL CELEBRATIONS**

**MONTHLY / BIWEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES**

**QUARTERLY FELLOWSHIPS**

**ANNUAL OFF CAMPUS OUTREACH**

### **COMMUNICATION PATHWAY**

Communication with the Office of the Minister of Education is essential for the success of Connection Groups. Groups should communicate closely in the following areas.

#### **CURRICULUM CHOICES**

Olive Baptist Church uses a curriculum which offers stand alone lessons which build truth precept upon precept.

- Stand Alone lessons that offer appropriate context and review so that the unbeliever and visitors will not feel lost
- Precept upon Precept with specific goals and learning objectives.
  - › According to Ken Braddy, budgeting for curriculum is an effective long term strategy for the following reasons:
    - › Curriculum creates a healthy balance
      - Group leaders are busy people. Group leaders must make the time to prepare but often to do not have the time to create outstanding lessons each week
      - Group leaders are not always trained theologians
      - Protecting doctrine is key to the health of the church. Curriculum is a tremendous tool for the oversight of 50+ Connection Groups

- Curriculum is an investment in people's growth and discipleship
- New group leaders are more easily recruited when you provide curriculum.

## **LEADERSHIP CHANGES OR GROWTH**

- Before any substitute teachers are enrolled they must first be submitted to a background check. Communicate closely any substitute needs or plans to prevent unneeded strain on the teacher or gaps.
- Communicate rising leaders within the group to the Education Office. Resources have been allocated for their development and encouragement.

## **GROUP NEEDS**

At times, member/prospect needs will arise that require further support from the pastoral staff. Please communicate those needs to the Education Office

## **EDUCATION NEWSLETTER**

- Each week the Education Office sends a newsletter with upcoming churchwide events, personal development, and lesson development tools.
- Consistently check the Education Newsletter for new members and prospects. Each prospect should be contacted and invited by the age appropriate Connection Group.

## **TRAINING**

Only 25% of churches offer quarterly or more frequent training. Training matters—churches with group training are 13x more likely to grow than those who do not. Please make every effort to attend trainings when they are offered.



**SCAN THIS CODE FOR MORE  
RESOURCES**

**OR VISIT [OLIVEBAPTIST.ORG/LEADERS](https://olivebaptist.org/leaders)**

## **CONCLUSION**

**“FOR THIS REASON I REMIND YOU  
TO FAN INTO FLAME THE GIFT OF GOD,  
WHICH IS IN YOU THROUGH  
THE LAYING ON OF MY HANDS,”**

### **2 TIMOTHY 1:6**

As ministers at Olive our primary responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

The Lord has gifted each member of the body to operate within their gifting for God’s glory and the growth of the body. Connection Groups provide a place where everyone can be known. Known not for their own pleasure, but for the body! Known so many can come to know Jesus. Known so gifts can be identified and affirmed. Known so those gifts can be fanned into a flame that brings warmth and light into our community and the uttermost parts of the earth.

Jon Huff

# CONNECTION GROUP GUEST FORM

The Connection Group Guest Form is essential to the health of groups. Without these forms prospects and new members will be missing from the church database and your group app. Make every effort to return these completed forms each week! Pastor personally messages each visitor!!



**GUEST INFORMATION**

**ENROLL**

- NEW TO PENSACOLA
- CLASS MEMBER
- LOOKING FOR A CHURCH HOME
- CLASS PROSPECT
- I LIVE OUT OF TOWN, JUST VISITING FOR TODAY
- NOT AT THIS TIME
- SPECIAL OCCASION, VISITING \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_  8:00AM  9:30AM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- MR  MRS  MS  MISS  DR
- MARRIED  SINGLE  DIVORCED

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Stay in Touch! Check box to receive emails from Olive and its ministries!

SPOUSE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Stay in Touch! Check box to receive emails from Olive and its ministries!

CHILD'S NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	GRADE	CLASS ASSIGNED	ROOM #

**COMPLETED BY CONNECTION GROUP SECRETARY:**

CLASS # \_\_\_\_\_

**RECORD CORRECTIONS:**

Transfer from Class \_\_\_\_\_ to Class \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Change Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_



OLIVE  
BAPTIST  
CHURCH