

CONNECT GROUP LEADER TRAINING



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO A GROWING
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST



CONNECTION
CHURCH DUBLIN



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Welcome to Connect Group Leader Training! We are so excited that you've decided to take this next step in your spiritual journey! Our purpose for this training experience is to teach you how to lead an effective Connect Group. Our Connect Groups are small group communities made up of 8-12 people that are focused on spiritual growth, caring for one another, and living life on mission. We truly believe real life change happens in these small group gatherings. We see in the Gospel that God has a rescue mission. In the Gospel we see that God desires for people to come to know Him all over the world. The Church which is made up of everyday people like you and me is the means to accomplish this mission. In the passage below we receive our marching orders from God in what we call the "Great Commission" where we are called to go and make disciples. At Connection, Connect Groups play a pivotal role in accomplishing this mission of making disciples through our local church. As a leader, you are embarking on an incredible mission. We believe we were created to worship God and accomplish this mission. Here at Connection we have a vision to reach 500 people with the Gospel by 2024. We will accomplish this vision by relentlessly developing Connect Group leaders and sending them out into contexts that need a Gospel influence. Know that we are so encouraged that you've decided to become partners with us on this journey. We are here to train you, pray for you and send you out to make an incredible impact for the Kingdom of God!

"To equip the saints for the work of ministry . . . so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine . . ." -Ephesians 4:12-14

". . . All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." -Matthew 28:18-20

CG Leader Training

Session 1

- **The Mission and Vision of Connection Church Dublin**

“Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.” -Proverbs 29:18

- **Mission:** Connecting People to a Growing Relationship with Jesus (Why we exist)
- **Vision:** By the end of 2024, we will see Laurens County saturated with Gospel centered, life changing small group communities we call Connect Groups. We will catalyze this Gospel centered small group movement by relentlessly developing small group leaders to be trained, equipped and sent into contexts that need a Gospel influence. These small group communities will all gather together for passionate corporate worship on Sunday mornings displaying the Christian unity and racial diversity we believe God wants and this community is desperate to see. We will measure effectiveness by life change in response to the Gospel. We will see 50 groups sent and 500 people gathering together for corporate worship on Sundays. We anticipate this movement to multiply through church planting and revolutionize church growth in middle Georgia. (Where we’re headed)
- **Core Values:** (Health of our Church)
 - Evangelism - “We believe saved people live sent”
 - Community - “We believe real life change happens in community”
 - Serving - “We believe every person has a purpose”
 - Generosity - “We believe the Gospel produces generous people”
 - Discipleship - “We believe we were saved to multiply”
- **Strategies:** (How we’ll get there)
 - Sunday Services
 - Kids and Student Ministry
 - **Connect Groups** and Disciple Groups
 - Missions and Church Planting

- **The Discipleship Pipeline**

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” -Ephesians 4:11-13

- _____ is meeting people where they are and helping them get where God wants them to be. The end goal is to help someone grow to maturity in Christ.

How do we do that?

- **Salvation** (New life in Christ) → **Heart & Soul** (Foundations of the Faith) → **Personal Disciplines** (Worship, Bible Reading, Prayer) → **Joins a Connect Group** (Experiences Biblical Community, practices corporate disciplines of serving, giving, evangelizing) → **Disciple Group/CG Leader Training** (Growing deeper in relationship with Jesus, equipped for ministry) → **Multiplying Disciple** (Sent out to lead a Connect Group)

- **Structure of a Connect Group**

*“They **devoted** themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were **together** and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions **to give to anyone who had need**. Every day they **continued to meet together** in the temple courts. They **broke bread in their homes** and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and **enjoying the favor of all the people**. And **the Lord added to their number daily** those who were being saved.” -Acts 2:42-47*

- **Meal Time** (30-45 min) → The purpose is to make people feel welcome, connect with them, and build relationships.
 - Tips:
 - Soon get the group on a rotation for meals. This takes the pressure off of one person and creates ownership for the members in the group.
 - Also, select the type of meals that work best for your group. We’ve learned that good food makes group special, but for young married couples or teenagers, it may not be the best choice.
 - Feel free to do coffee/dessert, etc. if that’s what works best for the group.
- _____ **Time** (Roughly an hour) → Purpose is to read Scripture and facilitate discussion about what the Scripture means and how we can apply it to our lives
 - Tips:
 - See yourself as the one that steers the ship, guiding the conversation forward and keeping everyone on track.
 - There will no doubt be times people will begin to veer off into things that are pertinent to the discussion. Gently lead the group back on track.

- **Share and Prayer Time** (5-10 min) → Opportunity to share what God's doing in their life and how the group can be praying for them. Also it's a good time to pray for others to come to know Christ or join the group.

- **Tips:**

- This is a great time to pray for the needs of those in the group.
 - Also this is a chance to keep the mission on the forefront of everyone's mind by praying for people that the group desires to come or to come to know Jesus.

- **3 Core Values of a Healthy Connect Group**

- _____ - Are the members of my group growing in their faith?

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” -Ephesians 4:15

- _____ - Are the members of my group loving and caring for one another?

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” -Galatians 6:2

- _____ - Do the members of my group desire others to come to know Christ?

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”” -Matthew 28:18-20

Connect Group Leader Training

Session 2

- **Recap of Last Week**

- What is our mission at Connection Church Dublin?

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- What are the 3 core values of a Connect Group?

- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Connect Group Leadership Tip:** Continually remind people of Mission, Vision and Values. The tendency is that people forget or drift from the purpose and focus of Connect Groups. Our job as leaders is to remind everyone why Connect Group is so important and what we're here to do.

- **Facilitating a culture of _____ and _____.**

- Most groups start out in that awkward phase where people are trying to figure out what group is about and honestly what to do.
- Most people new to Connect Group are usually very quiet and guarded in the beginning. Part of our responsibility is to create an environment where they feel welcomed. This is why we intentionally lead with a meal. Communication and fellowship just seems easier over a meal.

- **Facilitating a culture of _____.**

“People would rather follow a leader who’s always real than one who’s always right.”

-Craig Groeschel

- We’ve found that groups that can foster a sense of transparency about where people are in their walk with Christ and what’s really going on in their lives seem to grow the most.
- Leaders should be intentional in leading this. Once the group sees that you’re real, you’re not perfect, and you have real struggles, they will be much more open to discussing where they are in their walk and what’s going on in their lives.

- **Connect Group Leader Tip**

- If the group feels stale, or you feel like no one is opening up, you may want to take time for everyone to share their testimony. There’s something powerful that happens when people begin to hear what God has done or is doing in their life and in the lives of the group. This may take a couple of

weeks but the results are definitely worth it. Members will feel much more connected.

- Service Projects - These are serving opportunities for the group to meet a need somewhere around us or in our community. (Usually once a quarter) Groups can do projects as much as they'd like. We've learned these projects really helps bond the group together.
 - Missional Hangouts - These are community get-togethers that are focused on inviting new people into the group. These gatherings are focused on doing something fun together and inviting people in. (Going out to eat, bowling, a movie, etc.)
- What are some of the fears/hesitations you have when it comes to leading a group?

- **3 Encouragements from the Bible:**

- _____

- This call to make disciples isn't for a select few, but for all who know Jesus.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” -Matthew 28:19

- _____

“and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” -Matthew 28:20

- _____

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.” -2 Corinthians 12:9

Connect Group Leader Training

Session 3

- **Recap of Last Week**

- Why should I know the mission and vision of the church and the cultures of a healthy Connect Group and communicate them often?
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- If the group feels awkward and quiet, what are some ways I can help foster a sense of fellowship, community and transparency?
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- What verses can I remember when I'm struggling with leading a Connect Group?
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- **The Qualities of an effective Connect Group Leader**

- **Personally** _____ - The best groups are led by people pursuing Jesus.
 - We can't give away what we are not getting from God.
 - We can't take people to places we aren't going ourselves.
 - Great group leadership is an overflow of our personal relationship with God.
- **Provides Good Leadership** - Leader serves and leads in a way that's worth repeating.
 - The best group leaders value leadership, leading by example.
 - The picture of leadership in the Bible is servanthood.
- **Values** _____ - Leader wants to grow as a disciple and make disciples
 - The best group leaders value members of their group growing in their relationship with God and taking next steps.
 - The leader understands the Great Commission (to go and make disciples) and has a desire to be a part of fulfilling it.
- **Being a Facilitator** - Leader doesn't dominate discussion but facilitates among the group
 - The best group leaders don't do all the talking but have the ability to get others talking.

- Leader focuses on asking good questions as much as giving good information.
 - **Being** _____ - Leader knows how to welcome people into new environments and make them feel comfortable
 - Leader has the ability to make new people feel comfortable and welcome in a Connect Group gathering.
 - Leader facilitates an environment that people want to be a part of.
 - Leader has a heart to invite lost people into their home.
 - **Having Grit** - Community is messy, there will no doubt be difficulty and conflict.
 - Leader knows it will take GRIT to keep going when it'll be easy to quit.
 - Leader understands that people can be difficult and is prepared to lead through difficult situations with their group members.
 - Leader is all in and isn't swayed by difficult circumstances.
- **The Content used for Connect Group**
 - We desire for every group to use the Connect Group guide that will go along with the passage preached on Sunday, which can be found on our website (connectiondublin.com).
 - However, we want group leaders to **think like a shepherd** and we empower group leaders to lead as needed.
 - With that being said, if groups aren't using the Connect Group guide, we would like for each group to study a book of the Bible together.
 - Any other content should be approved by the Discipleship Pastor.
- **Preparation: How do I prepare and execute well for my group?**
 - Prayer/Personal Study
 - Spend time praying for the Connect Group gathering and praying for each member that God would show up and move. This is hands down the most important.
 - Also, personally come prepared to discuss the material. We've found that these two things are most important background preparation for a Connect Group leader to effectively lead a good group.
 - _____
 - We've learned that sometimes the most important thing is to come ready to lead a great discussion instead of teaching a great lesson.
 - We want these environments to be where everyone is involved in the discussion and growing together.
 - Be aware of time
 - Groups that begin to foster a really good community can have trouble staying on time for group. This is a good problem because it

means the group is enjoying the fellowship. In time if the group continues to get out late it can begin to turn people off. Our suggestion is to help keep everything moving on time with starting and ending on time.

- These transitions can be hard as people are enjoying good conversation. Remember, the goal is to help people grow in their relationship with Jesus. As leaders we make sure we get quality time in the Word.

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- Community takes time, don't get frustrated if it doesn't seem great at first. People take steps and grow at different rates. Hang in there, it's worth it!

Connect Group Leader Training

Session 4

- Recap of Last Week
 - What's one quality of an effective Connect Group leader?

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- What are some ways I can prepare well for group?
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The 3 Goals for a Connect Group (made simple):

1. Grow a group to 10 people
2. Create solid biblical community
3. Identify a leader to raise up and multiply

- **Growing the Group**

- As the leader, consistently ask your members who they are inviting to come. This helps facilitate a culture of mission within the group.
- One idea is to have the group create a list of people they want to invite to the group or pray as a group that they would come.
- Remember, missional hangouts are great ideas to meet new people in an environment where they are more relaxed then invite them to group.

- **Recruiting your next group leader**

1. Selecting the **right leader** (This is critical and the most important part)
 - Who's hungry to grow in their relationship with Jesus?
 - Who has leadership potential?
 - Would I want this person to be my Connect Group Leader?

- **Getting vision for planting a new group**

- Begin to give responsibility to the emerging leader by letting them help you lead the group then ultimately allow them to lead at some point.
- Encourage them to take their next step in the discipleship pipeline.
 - Ask them to join a disciple group or begin one with them
 - Ask them to go through Connect Group Leader training
- Begin to think about the best way for your group to multiply
 - Group multiplication is really hard. Good groups do not want to break up. This is the delicate part as a leader, we have to lead this change by sharing the WHY behind multiplication. We do it so that more people can come to know Jesus.
 - It's usually good for new leaders to either begin leading the existing group and you as the leader plant a new group.

- Another option when you raise up a leader is to have a couple to go out and plant the new group with them. We've learned that sending in pairs is better.
 - If you're having a hard time multiplying, consider going through Activate
 - Activate was created to help groups multiply that are having difficulty multiplying.
 - Activate is a 5 week small group meeting led by a staff member that goes through the first 8 chapters of the book of Acts and helps
- **How do I know if I'm doing a good job?**
 - *"Culture eats strategy for breakfast."* -Peter Drucker
 - Evaluation of the culture of the group (we call them health checks):
 - **Growth:** Is the group reading the Bible?
 - **Care:** Does the group feel cared for? Do we love each other?
 - **Mission:** Does the group understand the purpose of our meetings is to grow and reach more people?
 - **Evangelism:** Are we intentional about inviting new people to the group?
 - **Community:** Is there an atmosphere of good Gospel centered community? Do we love Jesus and each other?
 - **Serving:** Is the group serving inside and outside the church?
 - **Generosity:** Does the group understand how the Gospel rearranges our time, talent and treasure?
 - **Discipleship:** Are the members of the group growing and taking next steps?

THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO
EQUIP GOD'S PEOPLE TO DO HIS
WORK AND BUILD UP THE
CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST.

EPHESIANS 4:12

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