

LEADING A GROUP

Small Group Leader Handbook.

"Shepherd the flock of God that is among you...not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you."

1 PETER 5:2 · ESV

BEFORE YOU START

You don't have to be an expert.

Here's the most freeing thing we can tell you as a new group leader: your job is not to be the smartest person in the room. It's not to teach a flawless lesson. It's to open your home, point people to Jesus, and care about them. If you can do that, you can lead a group.

A small group is where the church gets personal — where the rows of Sunday become a circle, and strangers become family. It's where the Bible stops being theory and starts being life, where people get prayed for by name, and where nobody slips through the cracks.

This handbook is your companion. Keep it close, especially in the first few months, and come back to it whenever you're unsure. And remember: you're not doing this alone — we're behind you the whole way.

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works."

HEBREWS 10:24 · ESV

THE GOAL

What a healthy group does.

The first church in Acts 2 gives us the simplest picture of what we're after. Build your group around these four, and you're on solid ground.

01 The Word

Open the Bible together every time. Not a lecture — a conversation that helps people meet God in Scripture.

ACTS 2:42

02 Fellowship

Real relationships where people are actually known. This takes time and honesty, and it's worth all of it.

ACTS 2:44–46

03 Prayer

Pray for one another by name and for real needs. This is often where the deepest moments happen.

ACTS 2:42

04 The table

Eat together. Don't skip it. Community has always happened over food, and it lowers everyone's guard.

ACTS 2:46

A SIMPLE FLOW

Leading the meeting.

You don't need a complicated agenda. A good group night usually breathes in this rhythm:

Welcome & food	Start with margin. Let people arrive, eat, and settle. The meeting before the meeting matters.
Catch up	A round of how-was-your-week. Listen for what's really going on.
Into the Word	Read a passage and discuss it — ask questions more than you give answers.
Application	So what? Land on something real and personal before you move on.
Prayer	Share needs and pray for each other out loud. Close here.

Aim for a clear start and end time — people give more when they trust you'll respect their evening.

BEYOND THE MEETING

Caring for your people.

The best leading happens between the meetings. A group becomes a family when people feel pursued.

- **Follow up.** A quick text mid-week — “praying for that thing you mentioned” — means more than you know.

- **Notice who’s missing.** Reach out before someone quietly drifts away.

- **Share the load.** Hand off pieces — food, prayer, hosting — so people own it and you don’t burn out.

- **Raise up an apprentice.** Always be developing the next leader. That’s how groups multiply.

- **Know when to call us.** For crises, grief, or anything heavy or pastoral, loop in the church. You don’t carry that alone.

WHEN IT GETS HARD

Handling the tricky moments.

Someone dominates every conversation.

Gently redirect: “Great — let’s hear from someone who hasn’t shared yet.” If needed, have a kind, private word outside the meeting.

Nobody talks.

Let silence breathe — count to ten before rescuing it. Ask better, more personal questions, and consider calling on people by name who you know have something to add.

Someone shares something heavy.

Don’t rush to fix it. Listen, thank them, pray right then, and follow up privately. Bring in pastoral help when it’s beyond you.

There’s conflict or a hard personality.

Address it early, privately, and with grace. Don’t let one tension poison the group. Ask us for help if it persists.

You don’t know the answer.

Say so — “Great question, let’s find out.” Honesty builds more trust than pretending ever will.

GETTING STARTED

Your first steps.

1

Pray and invite.

Ask God for your people, then invite them. Start with whoever's already around you.

2

Set a rhythm.

Pick a night, a place, and how often. Consistency builds a group faster than anything.

3

Keep it simple.

For the first few weeks, just eat, share stories, and read a little Scripture. Depth comes with time.

TAKE A MINUTE

When and where will your group meet, and who are the first three people you'll invite?

WE'RE BEHIND YOU

You're not leading alone.

Every leader needs support, coaching, and prayer. Reach out anytime — for a question, a hard situation, or just to be encouraged. Leading a group is one of the most important things you'll ever do.

GET SUPPORT

connect@valiantchurch.com

USE WITH

Our Acts 2 Group Study

GATHER

Sundays · 10:00 AM
