



Families on Mission

A City Group Primer

Leader's Guide



PROVIDENCE
CHURCH

City Group Primer

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VALUES

GOSPEL—*The good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

This good news is not just a belief system—it is the real power of God (Rom 1:16) that brings victory over sin. Through Jesus’ victory, we are brought back into a right relationship with God and live with His presence inside of us. When we embrace the gospel, it transforms every part of our lives—our worldviews, our desires, our relationships, and our eternity!

FORMATION—*Being formed, or transformed, to look more like Jesus.*

- Applying the gospel to our lives
- Learning about our identities in Christ
- Pursuing spiritual disciplines
- Actively worshiping God

COMMUNITY—*Laying our lives down for the good of each other.*

- Living out the “one another” commands in scripture
- Living with commitment and accountability to one another
- Developing relationships that lead to life together
- Considering the group’s needs above your individual needs

MISSION—*Declaring and demonstrating the good news of the gospel.*

- Living out our identities in Christ
- Spending consistent time with non-Christians
- Loving and serving our physical and figurative neighbors
- Encouraging one another to evangelize
- Holding each other accountable in mission



VISION

Meet Peter. Peter is a 35-year-old single guy who attends a weekly small group through his local church. He's a faithful member to the group. He shows up, brings food, inserts a thought or two during the sermon discussion/Bible study, and even stays after to clean up. Nothing sounds too terribly off about that does it? However, Peter struggles with severe anxiety and depression. Unfortunately, no one in his small group knows about his struggles because he's never felt like there was a space to share. It never felt right to say something at dinner as everyone was talking about the latest football game or their most recent vacation. He couldn't really bring it up during discussion since the sermon wasn't really about anxious feelings. Maybe he could've said something about it during prayer requests, but he felt nervous since no one else really shared anything personal. When asked, Peter would say his small group is good but if he were to answer honestly, he would share his longing to be truly known, actually cared for, and practically loved by his small group.

Or maybe you can relate more with Mary and Jacob's story. Mary and Jacob LOVE their small group. They feel known and seen. They're comfortable sharing their struggles in their new marriage and feel cared for and supported through their trials. They enjoy gaining knowledge about God each week and using that to help them navigate their new life stage. However, Mary and Jacob haven't actually shared or lived out any of the knowledge they're gaining with anyone else, even though they regularly notice the needs in the lives of people around them. They have non-Christian coworkers, friends, and family but aren't challenged to share their faith or engage in spiritual conversations with them. Quite frankly, they'd actually prefer if they didn't have to share because that'd be different than what they're used to and they'd much rather stick to a Bible discussion each week.

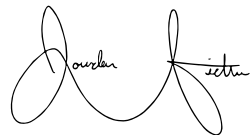
For those of us in the room who have been involved with weekly church “small groups,” we’ve probably experienced something similar to one of these stories.

Unless GOD’S HEART and MISSION is at the forefront of a City Group’s values, the group will inevitably default to a once-a-week Bible study where learning and information transfer is the goal. Don’t get us wrong, learning is great! Bible studies are great! But we believe God has given us the space of City Groups to connect deeply like a family and to spur one another toward mission.

The reality is that a biblical vision for community can’t be achieved by a weekly informational Bible discussion. There has to be a deep commitment to each other and to the mission of God.

We state that our City Groups are individual “Families on Mission,” but what does a Biblical family actually and practically look like? What does it mean to live missionally and how do we do it? How can our specific City Group commit to living as a “Family on Mission”?

Over the next few weeks, take time to unpack these questions. I pray it helps clarify and cast vision for what being a Family on Mission at Providence Church looks like.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jourdan Fichter". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a cursive script.

Jourdan Fichter
City Group Director
Providence Church

WEEK 1: FAMILY

Repeatedly throughout scripture we see a picture of community that consists of “one-anothering.” The idea is that we would love one another (John 13:34, 1 John 3:11), be hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9), forgive one another (Colossians 3:13), and confess our sins and pray for one another (James 5:16).

These aren’t simply suggestions that we are to live out when we feel like wearing our “WWJD” bracelets. These are communal commandments that God has given to us, and that we, as God’s people, are to strive and fight for within our City Groups.

Christian Community Discussion (10min)

- What have been some of your experiences with “Christian community” (positive or negative)?
- Do you relate to Peter or Mary and Jacob’s story? Explain.

Biblical Community Activity (20min)

READ ACTS 2:42-47

As a whole group, write down on slips of paper EVERY observation you can make about how the church in Acts represented living as a “Family on Mission.”

READ 1 PETER 4:8-11

What markers of a Biblical family/community do you see?
Write those down and add them to your collection.

if time allows

READ ROMANS 12:9-21

Observe all you can about what marks a true Christian.
Write them down and add them to your collection.

PRAY! (15min)

Pray that these characteristics would be true of your City Group (CG) and its members.

Have each CG member pick a slip or two of paper, then break into smaller groups of three to four to specifically pray over the various characteristics. Be sure to save your slips of paper for future weeks!

WEEK 2: ON MISSION

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Once we place our faith in Jesus, we are given a new identity in Christ! John Piper puts it this way:

“At the heart of what it means to be a Christian is to receive a new identity. In Jesus, we do not lose our true selves, but we become our true selves, only in him.”

There are so many different characteristics or attributes that go along with this new identity. We are beloved, adopted, forgiven, free, a temple, co-heirs, righteous, new, set apart, a saint, whole, chosen, called, witnesses, sent, ambassadors, disciple makers... the list goes on and on!

But what would it look like if we didn't just gain a bunch of head knowledge about God and the way He has changed our lives but we *actually lived changed*! Imagine what our lives would look like if we “talked the talk” and told our friends, coworkers, and family members about Jesus, *and* we “walked the walk” by loving and serving them along the way.

We want to live on mission because our God is worthy! He has and will continue to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). We've seen His unending love and unmatched power displayed throughout the course of history, experienced that in our own lives, and expect to see Him continue to move and work. That alone should spur us toward learning to live out our identities in Christ for His name's sake and for His glory!

When we look at the life of Jesus, a simple definition for living on mission could be, “Bringing God’s kingdom through words and deeds,” but the question is... how?

Mission Discussion/Activity (30min)

- What first comes to mind when you hear “living on mission”?
- With those things in mind (along with what we see in scripture), what are various ways to live on mission we can identify? Write down the ideas your CG comes up with on slips of paper

Don’t just give them these categories. Prompt/guide discussion toward them. (Sharing the Gospel, serving/loving your neighbor, mission trips, serving the poor, etc.)

- What hurdles or barriers currently prevent you from living on mission?

PRAY! (15min)

Pray that your CG would be faithful to move towards living on mission. Ask God to break down barriers and hurdles that prevent us from living missionally and that your CG would bring God’s kingdom through words and deeds.

As a whole group, have CG members pick a slip of paper to specifically pray over. Be sure to save your slips of paper! You’ll need them for future weeks.

WEEK 3: FAMILY COVENANT

Families are bound together by their integrated lifestyles. In other words, they do life together! Each family is unique; it's shaped by its own cultural norms and traditions. But, the glue that holds families together is their commitment to one another—this commitment is practically worked out through shared responsibilities and consistent accountability.

As a CG, we want to make a covenant by committing and promising to one another as a family to be hearers and doers of the word (James 1:22). Our commitments to one another make up our covenant and are designed to align our CG around a common vision for life together.

Let's take time tonight to discuss our commitments to one another.

Pull out your slips of paper from the previous weeks for your CG members to refer to during discussion.

FAMILY (20min)

How will we commit to love one another like family?

Identify comprehensive categories and then practical practices.

Some categories are:

- City Group Meetings/Huddles
- Hangouts/Traditions
- Celebrations/Holidays
- Prayer
- Finances
- In Crises
- Speech (how will we talk about each other)

ON MISSION (20min)

How will we commit to living on mission?

Identify comprehensive categories and then practical practices.

Some categories are:

- In our neighborhoods
- Personal Evangelism
- 3rd Spaces/Being Regulars
- Local Partnerships
- Global Missions

COMMITTING TOGETHER (15min)

List out the promises and commitments your group would like in your one-year covenant on the following page.

If someone is new to the CG, please explain to them that they are invited and welcome to join the CG family covenant, however, there is no pressure or expectation that they would sign and commit tonight.

Also, if there are members from your CG missing tonight, please reach out and meet with them to review and discuss your CG family covenant.

PRAY! (15min)

Pray for power and guidance from the Spirit to uphold this covenant with one another.

FAMILY COVENANT

I, _____, commit, with Holy Spirit's power,
NAME

from _____ to _____ to live in these ways with my
START DATE END DATE

City Group to create and sustain a Family on Mission.



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