

## FAITH GROUP FAQ'S

### *What makes a faith group a faith group?*

Any church-based group, whether it is called faith group or not, should have a relational and formational purpose that differs from a group one could join outside of the church. Faith groups should enable people to explore the faith, grow in the faith, and build community. But what does that look like practically when groups can take many forms?

The most common types of Faith Groups are as follows:

- Affinity (Shared activity or hobby)
- Support (Shared life circumstance)
- Bible Study
- Missional (Shared calling or passion)
- Serve Team (Shared service at the church, like hospitality)
- Sermon Discussion

To live into their purpose, each group will be asked to incorporate two essential elements into the rhythm of their gatherings:

- Reflection on Scripture
- Communal Prayer

We believe strongly that scripture and prayer are two regular rhythms that do more than any other spiritual activity to help people explore and grow in faith as well as build community. This can take many forms and will look different, for example, in a Bible Study versus a serve team. These don't have to be extensive by any means, but even a short devotional time can plant deep seeds in the heart and deepen the meaning of a shared activity.

### *How many people can be in a faith group?*

Faith Groups may take different forms but are consistently made up of three or more individuals who are led by an approved group leader (see training).

### *Where do groups meet?*

Groups typically meet on campus, in homes, or in public settings. Experience has taught us that the most intimate groups typically occur outside of the church building. Groups needing childcare may be able to meet on campus on a Wednesday night depending on available space in the building. Some space is also available on Sunday morning with childcare. But most groups will be encouraged to find a space in the community to meet.

### *When, how often, and how long do groups meet?*

Faith groups ideally meet every week. Although every other week or monthly meetings are possible, it is seldom that consistent and deep faith growth and community building happen without adopting the group as part of our regular weekly rhythm.

Faith groups will have the opportunity to form and meet during four, 8-10-week semesters each year. This is for several reasons:

- It provides multiple on-ramps and exits for groups throughout the year. If a group isn't a good fit, there is a graceful way to leave and try something else.

- It gives every group and leader a break in the few weeks between each semester.
- A set period brings focus and tightens attendance in our groups.

One of our goals is to encourage group multiplication. Group leaders should always be on the lookout for potential emerging leaders in their groups. They should also be aware that groups go through seasons. It is completely normal, after some time, for a healthy group to split and become two groups or for it to disband with members finding or starting new groups. To multiply is to share the grace and love developed in a group with more people. It also enables people to grow in leadership roles within the faith group community.

*What is the proposed semester schedule for Fall 2019 – Summer 2020?*

- *Fall Semester:* September – November or early December (10 weeks)
- *Winter Semester:* January/Feb – March/April
- *Summer Semester:* June – August

## **CONCLUSION**

By rebranding from small groups to faith groups as well as having a more intentional approach to group formation, we hope to create fertile ground for our people to grow as disciples of Christ. Because we have come to see discipleship as consisting of responding to Jesus, embracing Jesus, becoming present, cultivating hospitality, growing in generosity, and discovering purpose, there is no better vehicle than the faith group to make us more like Jesus. If we ensure that our church has strong groups where people can grow in our faith, there's no telling what God can do with us!