



WEST HIGHLAND

BAPTIST CHURCH

**Community Group
Leader's Handbook**



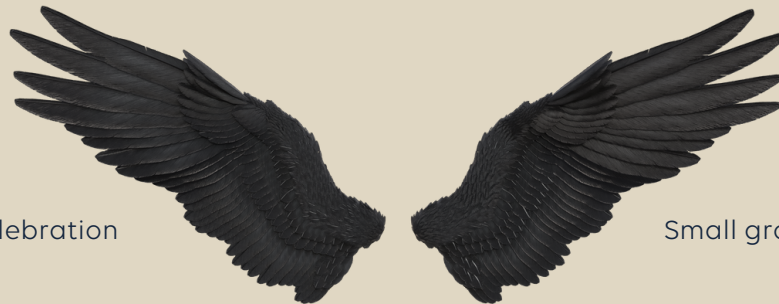
Session 1: A Vision for Small and Large Group Ministry

A Theology of Community

- Community is seen in God's nature
- God's triune nature is relational
- The Trinity is a community of mutual self-giving love and belonging
- Love desires to enlarge community

As image bearers, we are called to self-giving love in community too!

"The Creator once created a church with two wings: one wing was for large group celebration, the other wing was for small group community. Using both wings, the church could soar high into the heavens, entering His presence and doing His will all over the earth." -William A. Beckham



Large group celebration

Small group community

The Church's Two Wings

In Scripture:

- The focus of large group settings was prayer, the preaching of the Word, and corporate worship (eg. Sabbath, teaching at the synagogue, temple services).
- The focus of small group settings was community and discipleship (eg. extended family, the 12 disciples, the early church "breaking bread" together).

A Healthy Community has Four Different Spaces



An Assessment of West Highland's Wings

- Our public and social spaces are healthy and vibrant
- We need to focus on improving the health of our relational and intimate spaces

The Main Vision for Community Groups at West Highland is...

Disciple making!

What is a disciple?

A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.

What is disciple making?

Disciple making is helping people trust and follow Jesus, which includes the whole process from conversion and baptism through to maturation and multiplication.

The Three Core Values of Community Groups

Community

- Acts 2:42-47
- "A community is a group of people who share an identity-forming narrative" (Centre for Public Impact)
- The gospel is the identity-forming narrative of the church

Transformation

- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- We are transformed when we move beyond knowledge to application.

Mission

- Matthew 28:18-20
- Disciples grow in their faith when they are reaching those around them with the gospel

"Contrary to Western's evangelicalism's obsession with the individual, discipleship is and always was a group project. No one is the New Testament followed independent of other followers."

-Steve Murrell, WikiChurch

What will be similar in West Highland's Community Groups?

Values: Community,
Transformation, Mission

Use of the 4Ws for
meetings

Goal to multiply groups

Shared leadership

Coaching pod structure

Intentional disciple
making

Open and inviting
atmosphere to
newcomers

Called "Community
Groups" (a new name
for a new vision)

Demographics of group

Participation of
children

Weekly or bi-weekly
meeting (weekly
preferred)

Type of missional
outreach focus

Meals as part of the
regular meeting

One or multiple hosts
(multiple hosts
preferred)

What will be different in West Highland's Community Groups?

Session 2: Communicating Vision and Purpose through the Structure of the Meeting

The 4Ws Community Group Meeting Structure

Welcome

Worship

Word

Witness

Connecting the Structure of the Meeting to the Vision and Values

Group Meeting Time	Group Values	Definition of a Disciple
Welcome	Community	Following Jesus
Worship	Transformation	Changed by Jesus
Word	Transformation	Changed by Jesus
Witness	Mission	Committed to the mission of Jesus

The 4Ws will be provided in the weekly Facilitator's Guide provided to Community Group leaders



Three Tips for Using the Facilitator's Guide

Be prepared

Take time to read the guide before leading the meeting

Be flexible

Feel free to adapt based on your leadership style and group dynamic

Enlist others

Have different people lead different sections of the meeting

The Flow of a Meeting

Comfort Level



The First W: Welcome

- When group members arrive, they are on different pages (eg. some people have had bad days, some had good days, etc.)
- Icebreakers help group members make the transition from their day into worship
- Light & easy questions (not controversial/offensive), short group activities, and/or refreshments are ideal
- The goal is to establish a non-threatening environment and foster interaction between group members
- Wait for the proper time to minister to any needs raised during the ice breaker. Acknowledge the need, but come back to it at an appropriate time during the meeting
- Aim for this portion of the meeting to be about 10-15 minutes. However, for the first session, or the first session back after a long pause, this section should be longer

The Second W: Worship

What is worship?

- Worship does not always have to mean singing in a large group; simple and even non-musical forms of worship can lead us into praising God
- Worship is not just for professionals; it is for everyone ([Isaiah 61:3](#), [Psalm 96](#), [Judges 5:3](#), [Psalm 30:4](#), [Psalm 33:1](#))
- We can teach and admonish one another through music ([Colossians 3:16](#))
- What we hear in songs often becomes our theology

How can we include worship in our community groups?

- Click [here](#) for recommended lyric videos (As well, you can contact Becky at bbuck@westhighland.org for lyric booklets for all of those songs, plus piano/guitar music)



YouTube lyrics videos



Percussion to a Psalm



Share the history of a song/hymn



Responsive reading of Scripture



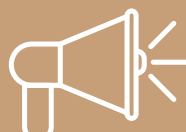
Share a testimony or story of God at work



Acapella singing



Write thank you notes to God



Call out names/attributes of God



Poetry/spoken word



Listen to worship in other languages



Drawing/visual art



Prayer books or creeds



Admire creation



Pray Scripture



Dramatic Scripture reading

Session 3: The Centrality of the Word and the “One Others”

The Third W: Word

- To be a growing disciple of Jesus, we need to know him and know his Word ([John 14:15](#))
- The Inductive Bible Study Method: Observation, Interpretation, Application
 - The focus of the sermon is observation and interpretation
 - The focus of Community Group discussion is application
- Application questions level the playing field (both mature and new believers can answer) and help us go from knowledge acquisition to application
- We must adopt the attitude of humble learners. None of us have mastered the Christian life

During the Word portion of the meeting

- Read the sermon text
- Brief summary of the sermon (included in the Facilitator's Guide)
- Discussion questions (included in the Facilitator's Guide)
- Practice the "[One Others](#)"



Practical Tips for Leading Discussion

- Be okay with silence; often the best answers come when we allow time to process
- Affirm positive contributions, especially from new members and quiet members
- Guide the discussion to make sure that the group stays on track (eg. "This is a really interesting topic, and maybe we can come back to it later, but I want to make sure we get to the rest of the questions we came to discuss")

Dealing with Difficult People

Difficult people tend to have a higher impact on the group, so leaders need to address the situation for other group members to thrive

Personality Types to Watch out for and Confront

The Dominator: pushes their thoughts first, loves to talk, interrupts frequently, not good at listening

The Topper: no matter what is shared, they have an experience or story that will top it, belittles others

The Comedian: can't ever be serious, prevents the group from going deep, distracting to others

The Emotionally Needy: wants every group to be their personal therapy session, drains the group

The Intentional/Unintentional Heretic: constantly says things that are theologically incorrect

The Combative Person: corrects people in a combative way, get defensive easily

Carefrontation (Caring Confrontation)

By lovingly confronting people, we are aiding in their discipleship and spiritual growth, and take us to a new level of community, transformation and conversation.

- Begin with prayer
- Ask for their permission to share what you noticed
- Have a personal conversation, don't involve the group
- Be direct, but kind
- Follow up and celebrate progress
- Review the rules of the Community Group Covenant
- If a personal conversation about a sin issue does not convict them, bring one or two others with you, and if that still doesn't work, then bring it to the Community Group Advisory Committee or a Pastor (following the process in [Matthew 18:15-17](#))

For more information, watch "[Mastering The Art of Crucial Conversations](#)" (Joseph Grenny)

Practicing the "One Anothers"

Pray for one another

Consider how we can practically support one another's needs

Meet outside of the group meeting
(eg. at a coffeeshop)

Send an encouraging text

Bring a meal to a busy group member

The "One Anothers" of the New Testament

1. "...Be at peace with each other." (Mark 9:50)
2. "...Wash one another's feet." (John 13:14)
3. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34)
4. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34)
5. "...Love one another..." (John 13:35)
6. "...Love one another..." (John 15:12)
7. "...Love one another" (John 15:17)
8. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love..." (Romans 12:10)
9. "...Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
10. "Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16)
11. "...Love one another..." (Romans 13:8)
12. "...Stop passing judgment on one another." (Romans 14:13)
13. "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7)
14. "...Instruct one another." (Romans 15:14)
15. "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Romans 16:16)
16. "...When you come together to eat, wait for each other." (I Cor. 11:33)
17. "...Have equal concern for each other." (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. "...Greet one another with a holy kiss." (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. "Greet one another with a holy kiss." (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. "...Serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)
21. "If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other." (Galatians 5:15)
22. "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." (Galatians 5:26)
23. "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2)
24. "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)
25. "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32)
26. "...Forgiving each other..." (Ephesians 4:32)
27. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Ephesians 5:19)
28. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21)
29. "...In humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)
30. "Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:9)
31. "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13)
32. "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another." (Colossians 3:13)
33. "Teach...[one another]" (Colossians 3:16)
34. "...Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
35. "...Make your love increase and overflow for each other." (I Thessalonians 3:12)
36. "...Love each other." (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. "...Encourage each other..." (I Thessalonians 4:18)
38. "...Encourage each other..." I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. "...Build each other up..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. "Encourage one another daily..." Hebrews 3:13)
41. "...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)
42. "...Encourage one another." (Hebrews 10:25)
43. "...Do not slander one another." (James 4:11)
44. "Don't grumble against each other..." (James 5:9)
45. "Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16)
46. "...Pray for each other." (James 5:16)
47. "...Love one another deeply, from the heart." (I Peter 3:8)
48. "...Live in harmony with one another..." (I Peter 3:8)
49. "...Love each other deeply..." (I Peter 4:8)
50. "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." (I Peter 4:9)
51. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (I Peter 4:10)
52. "...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." (I Peter 5:5)
53. "Greet one another with a kiss of love." (I Peter 5:14)
54. "...Love one another." (I John 3:11)
55. "...Love one another." (I John 3:23)
56. "...Love one another." (I John 4:7)
57. "...Love one another." (I John 4:11)
58. "...Love one another." (I John 4:12)
59. "...Love one another." (II John 5)

Session 4: Looking Beyond Ourselves

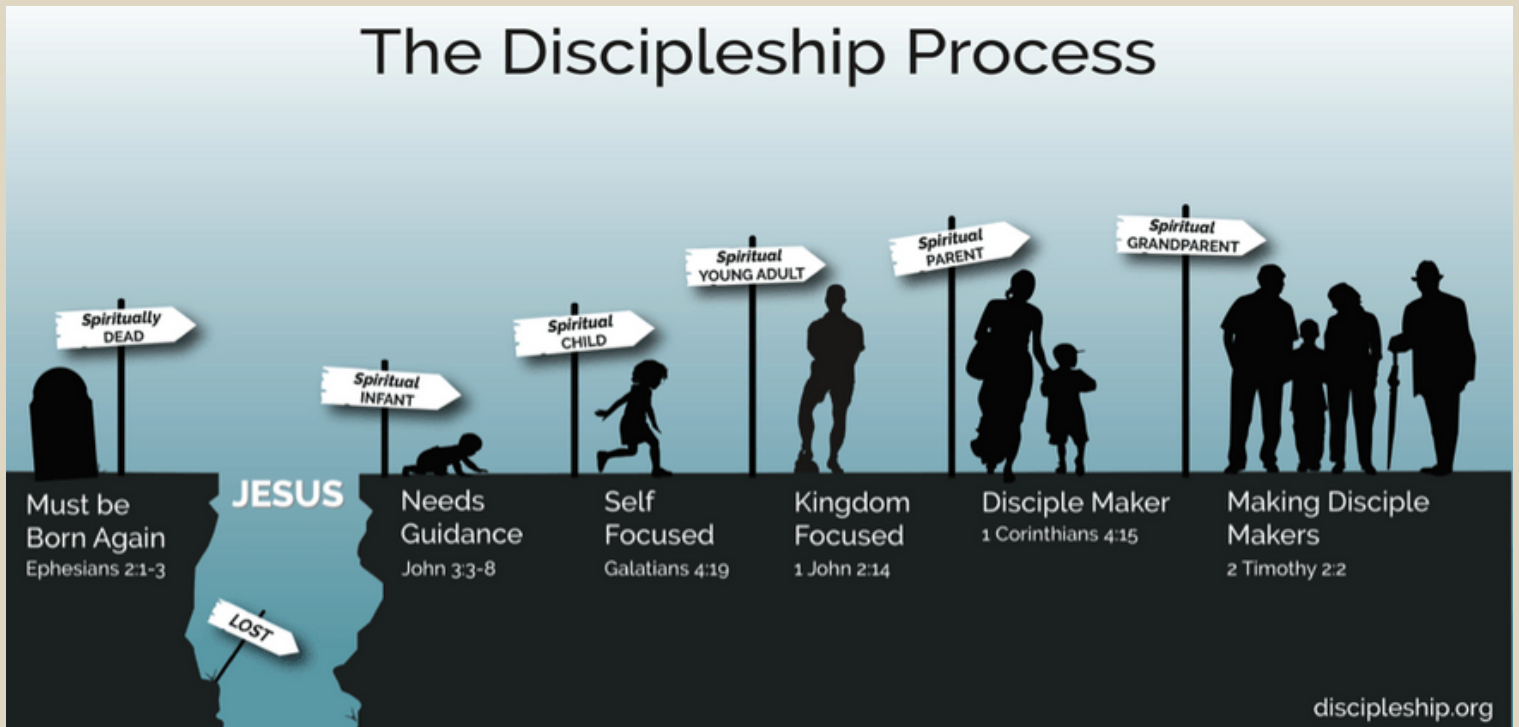
Outreach and Multiplication

The Fourth W: Witness

What is the goal of disciple-making?

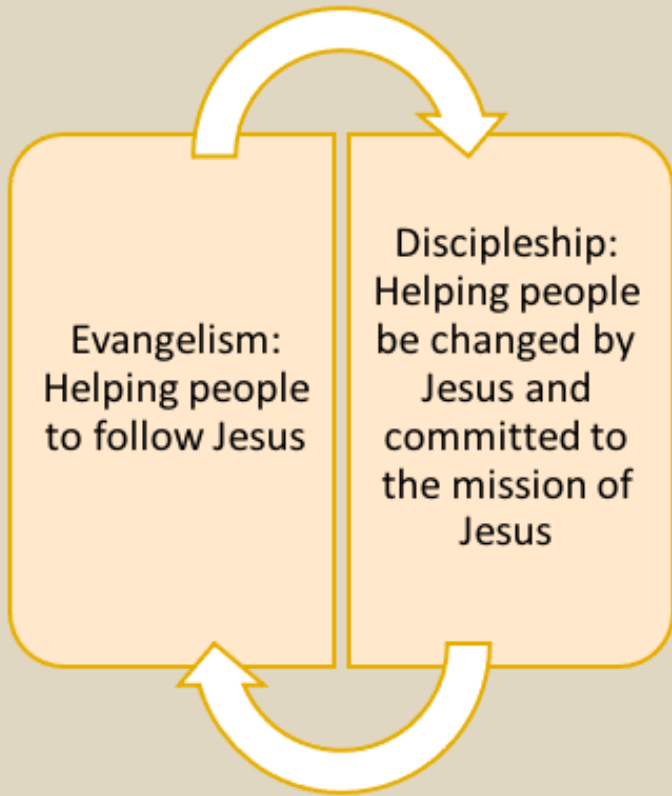
Leading people into a relationship with God (accomplished through evangelism) and having His image restored within them (accomplished through discipleship/sanctification).

The Stages of Spiritual Growth



Most Christians stop growing at the spiritual "young adult" stage, and do not get to the "parent" or "grandparent" stage.

The Western church has divided evangelism from discipleship, but in the Bible, they are very interconnected!



“Discipleship without a healthy element of reaching lost people is not discipleship; it is training for stunted growth Christianity. And what is often thought of as evangelism isn’t really evangelism without discipleship; it’s head hunting, getting people to make a transaction with God. Essentially, it’s simply trying to sell an insurance policy rather than trying to help individuals cross the threshold of faith into a redemptive and growing relationship with God in Christ.”

-Bobby Harrington &
Greg Wiens

Becoming a Disciple Maker

What’s needed for a person to move from spiritual death to new life?

1. The word of God ([Romans 10:17](#))
2. The Spirit of God ([John 3:5](#))
3. A messenger of God* ([Romans 10:14](#))

*we are called to be the messengers!

The two environments needed for this transformation

1. The individual’s environment (where you work, live, and play)
2. The community (eg. your Community Group)



The B.L.E.S.S. Model: An Approach to Evangelism

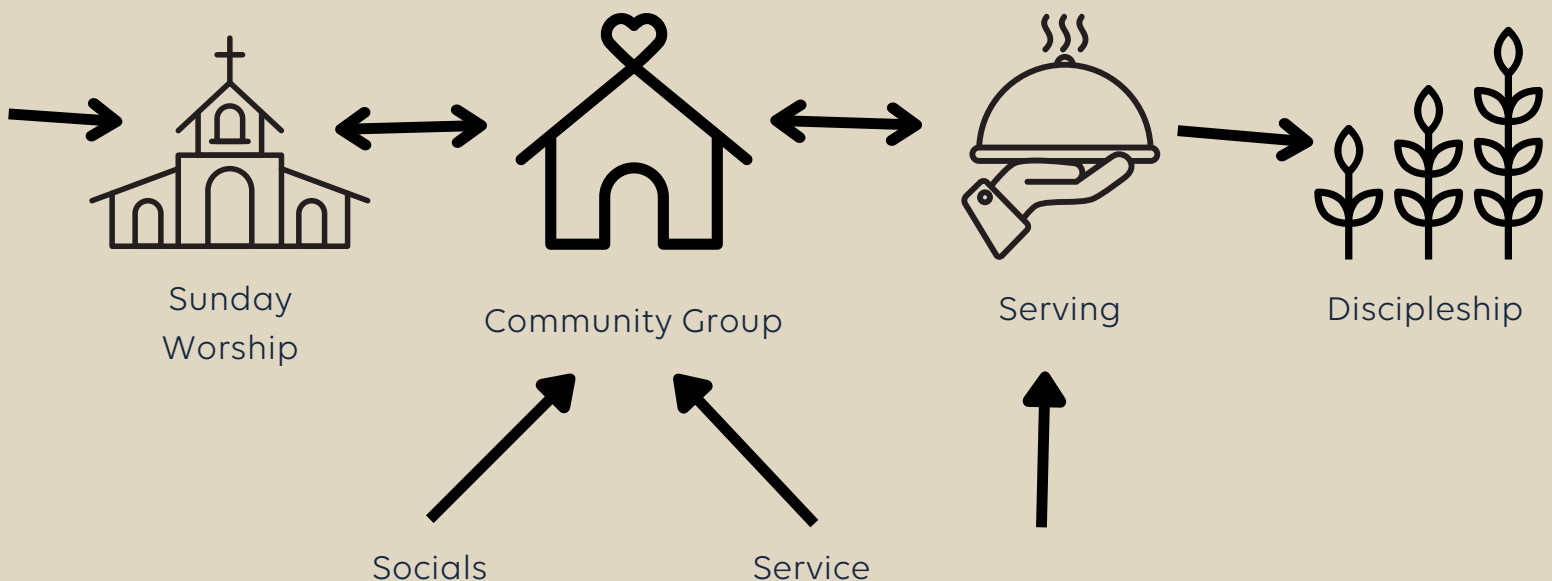


Click [here](#) for more information about the B.L.E.S.S. Model

The Benefits of Groups in Evangelism

- Groups make the invisible reality of the Kingdom of God visible
- Groups make use of all of the spiritual gifts
- Groups provide support, encouragement, and accountability

What are the entry points for an unchurched person?



Session 5: Multiplication of Groups

West Highland's Vision

- Beyond just being a church WITH small groups, we want to become a church OF small groups
- We want small groups to be the primary nurturing, fellowship, caring, and discipling ministry of our church

Why Multiply?

- Growth is a sign of a healthy community group
- Multiplication reflects the early church
 - If the Lord adds new people, we will frequently need new groups
- It's hard for new people to integrate into existing groups, where relationships are already strongly established
- Multiplication allows more people to use their spiritual gifts
- The best leaders to lead new groups come from a positive group experience
- The healthiest groups are the ones that have been birthed from another healthy, reproducing group
- Our goal is to make disciples. If, over time, we are not growing and multiplying, we are not truly making disciples



Multiplying groups means multiplying leaders!

Steps to Multiply a Community Group leader

1. Identify a potential leader to be an apprentice
 - a. Affirm their gifts
 - b. Meet with them one-on-one
2. Gradually release responsibility

3. Group Multiplication: Three Pathways

- a. Send the apprentice(s) out to be "Community Group planters"
- b. The original leader becomes the "Community Group planter"
- c. Divide the group into 2-3 Community Groups and add new people

Whichever way you multiply, continue to meet with the new leader to coach them as they lead

How do I gradually release responsibility?



Questions to ask in the "We Talk" section include:

What did you observe?

How did it make you feel?

Is there anything that you would do differently next time?

What can I do to help you lead the next step?

How can I pray for you?

A Biblical Example of Sacrificial Sending (Acts 13:1-3)

- The Church in Antioch had five leaders: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Mandaen, and Paul
- When the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Paul to be sent out on mission, don't you think it would have been easier for the church to keep their leaders?
- Multiplication of groups and leaders means sacrifice, but it is a sacrifice that the church is called to make in order to make disciples

When should we end a Community Group instead of multiplying?



- Group members are no longer growing spiritually
- Group attendance has dwindled
- The leader is burning out and needs to take a season to recover spiritually and emotionally
- The group dynamic is becoming toxic

Other Important Information

How to Share Community Group Leadership

- Share the 4Ws across the group
- Appoint various coordinators (eg. prayer, outreach, social/community, etc.)
- Take turns hosting the group

Support for Community Group Leaders

- Each community group is connected to a coaching pod
- The coaching pod's role is encouragement, vision, and prayer

Kids in Community Groups: Two Approaches

**Fully included in group meetings
(with their own Word portion)**

**Included in Community Group
social events, but not regular
meetings**

A Closing Vision

“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

May our Community Groups live this out!



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