



**Sermon Based Small Group**  
**1st Session**

**Each person shares their name, who makes up their family unit, how they came to Good Shepherd and what they hope to get out of being a part of this small group.**

**(READ)**

**The mission of Good Shepherd is to “Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The Discipleship path at Good Shepherd is Worship, Serve, Belong. Small Groups are a way to belong while growing in your faith.**

**Belong (Coordinator Read Aloud)**

The purpose of a small group is to actively pursue Christ through grace filled relationships, as the small groups worship, serve, and belong together.

**Why Small Groups?**

We will begin by providing a Biblical foundation on which SBSG groups have been designed. Let's begin by reading Acts 2:37-47. What do you see the early church doing together?

Acts 2:42 (NRSV): They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

**Worship God:** Acts 2:42 – Apostles' teaching in small groups. Through your prayers (both in and out of church), presence in worship, being generous and giving back to God through the ministry of the church as he has blessed us (tithe...10% of income).

**Serve:** Acts 2:45 – Serve those in the small group, in the local church and in the community (ATP...once a semester).

**Belong Together:** Acts 2:42 – Fellowship and breaking of bread in small groups.

**Prayer:** Acts 2:42 - Lifted each other up in prayer through personal prayer request.

**What will a sermon based small group do?** The purpose of our small group is to actively pursue Christ through grace filled relationships, as we worship, serve, and belong together. (This group is not about being best friends with everyone in the group; it's about spiritual growth.) It is our belief that people best grow in their faith through opening themselves up through small group relationships.

**1. Small groups will build Christ-centered relationships within the Church by:**

- a. Reading Scripture
- b. Fellowship (grace filled sharing)
- c. Service
- d. Prayer

## 2. Small Groups will be a safe place to learn about Christ.

- a. No one will ever be called on to talk or pray.
- b. All in the small group will have the opportunity to share. No one person will dominate the conversation
- c. Each person will have the opportunity to share how they feel the scriptures are speaking to them and how they will apply it.
- d. All are welcome at this group. This may mean that we may have a new person joining the group at some point. They are to be welcomed as one of our own.

## 3. Small Groups will provide a place where members can practice living for Christ.

- a. The beauty of learning about Christ is so we can live for Christ. This means this small group will be about how the sermon will be lived out in our lives by sharing about our lives with each other (good/bad/growing). Participants will also encourage each other to use their God-given gifts and talents in the church and in the community as the Holy Spirit leads each individual.
- b. Discussion facilitation will ideally rotate between members of the group. These individuals will be responsible for coming prepared to facilitate the discussion. Ideally all small group participants have listened to the sermon to be discussed. No one will be lecturing on a topic; these discussions will be stronger, and the group will gel more quickly if as many people as who feel comfortable join in on the discussions. Responses to questions **need to be personal** (this is a safe place) and related to how the sermon / scripture will be lived out in their life.
- c. One of the most important ways that you can help your Small Group is to communicate effectively. This means responding to your group communication quickly, letting your group know when and why you will have to miss.
- d. Even as individuals seek the Spirit's direction in their lives, Small Groups are encouraged to seek the Spirit's direction on their group as a whole. Some Small Groups will connect and remain a group, others may decide to multiply (12 is max), and still others may need to take a break at some point. We ask for a Labor Day through the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in December commitment to the small group.

## 4. Small Groups will serve together.

- a. To be their most effective, participants will serve their group by fulfilling several roles. These will include facilitators to lead, a coordinator to communicate, and someone to provide snacks (breaking of bread).
- b. Small Group members are encouraged to serve somewhere in the church. It is the desire of Good Shepherd that you will serve in the area where you are most passionate and gifted (i.e. gsKids, gsYouth, property team, band, vocals, sound, slides, live stream, coffee, connection desk, usher...etc.)
- c. As a Small Group we will serve at A Turning Point together at least 1x per semester.

## **Framework for Sermon Based Small Group:**

### **Roles within the Small Group:**

**Coordinator:** This is the person that takes responsibility for the group. Here is a list of what a coordinator would take responsibility for.

- Several days before each weekly small group session sends a form of communication (whatever the group decides is the best way to communicate) to everyone. This communication is to remind the small group of location (it may change, it may not), who the facilitator is for that week, food plans, and what will be discussed (content comes from the sermon / gs app).
- Records prayer requests in a group journal (one to two sentence prayer request). Prayer requests are to be personal.
- Record group attendance and communicate to Bryan after the first 3 sessions.
- This person will stay in contact with Bryan.
- Organizes the group and sets schedules for facilitators and hosts.
- Talks through small group covenant and gathers signatures.

**Facilitator:** The word teacher or leader does not create the atmosphere we're looking for. Unlike a teacher or leader, a facilitator is not expected to have all the answers or to have the final say on any issues. A facilitator will guide the conversations and welcome other people to participate in the discussion. Also, the role of facilitator is passed around, so people can take turns.

**Host:** Provides snacks, space, set-up of room for 10-12 people (when your group is able to meet in person)

### **Discuss and sign-up for either Facilitator or Host**

Set-up a calendar for 4 weeks at a time for facilitator & host sign-up. The coordinator will do the first 4 weeks to be the example for how to facilitate and host.

**Frequency and Times of Small Group:** Sermon based small groups meet weekly for one hour and fifteen minutes. There needs to be a very clear beginning and end time to the group. The 1<sup>st</sup> session of Small Groups will begin meeting after Labor Day and will end two weeks before Christmas (Sunday September 8 – Sunday December 8). The 2<sup>nd</sup> session of small groups will begin on Sunday January 5 and run through Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup>). Small Groups will break during the holidays, and the summer (June, July, and August).

**Covenant Form (pass out, discuss and sign form) – turn into Small Group Coordinator**

Week of 09-06-2020

## **The Purpose of a Sermon Based Small Group (to be read at the beginning of each gathering)**

The purpose of our small group is to actively pursue Christ through relationships, as we worship, serve, and belong together.

### **READ ALOUD BY ALL (allow this prayer to shape your time together)**

**Dear God, help me in this dialogue to be humble & suspend judgment. I recognize that we are all created in your image. Give me courage to stay curious about each other by asking questions. Thank you, God, for this opportunity to meet together and in so doing grow closer to you. AMEN \*(discuss prayer and how it will be lived out within the small group)**

**Sermon Series:** n/a

**Opening question:** What recent news headlines have bothered you the most?

**Sermon Synopsis:** If a newspaper were to create a story of your past 24 hours or week or even month, what would the headlines say? The reality is you get to choose, despite what circumstances surround you. Paul, in the letter to the Philippians that he wrote from prison, offers us sound advice and a hope to live into as we get to choose our headlines. We have an opportunity each and every day to write the story of a life that pursues Christ!

### **Bible Reading**

Reading the Bible is about reading for practice and spiritual formation – spiritual formation, in which the reader seeks to be formed by the Spirit of God.

**Passage(s) from the sermon:** Philippians 4:4-9 (NRSV)

What questions do you have about the passages/sermon?

What do you feel God is saying to you through this passage?

**Discipleship Point:** Because of Christ you have a story worth following

How might you rewrite your headline to look more like that of the Apostle Paul?

### **Personal Prayer Request**

Share a one or two sentence prayer request with the Small Group for this next week.

Remember these prayer requests are about your life not someone else's.

### **(Sample Prayer)**

God, we thank you for your presence with us. We lift up these requests to you knowing that you care deeply about us...we pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and (fill in prayer requests) ... God we know that you have heard our request and we release all outcomes to you and your glory. It's in your Son's name Jesus that we pray...**AMEN.**