

Key Distinctives of Our
**SMALL GROUP
MINISTRY**

*Choosing the Small Group Model that
Works for Your Church*

Key Distinctives of Our **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

Choosing the Small Group Model that Works for Your Church.

TIM SPRINGFIELD & WAYNE PIMPTON

At Milestone, we have made strategic decisions over the years to define the type of Small Group church we are. This session will articulate the distinctives of our Small Groups ministry.

7 Key Distinctives of Milestone Church Small Groups Ministry

1

WE ARE A CHURCH *OF* GROUPS, NOT A CHURCH *WITH* GROUPS.

- Small Groups are a part of everything we do in the church, they are woven into the culture.

2

WE PRIORITIZE GROWTH TRACK ENGAGEMENT.

- Small Groups and Growth Track are not in competition, they feed into each other.

3

WE OFFER SEMESTER-BASED SMALL GROUPS.

4

WE CONDUCT CHURCHWIDE CAMPAIGNS EACH YEAR.

- Campaigns are the most effective way to boost attendance and increase small group leadership and participation in your church.

5

WE LIMIT SMALL GROUP STUDY OPTIONS.

- The benefit of limiting: maintains church DNA and values.

6

WE BUILD ON A SMALL GROUP COACHING STRUCTURE.

7

WE MAKE LEADING A SMALL GROUP EASY.

- We have requirements and leadership standards, while also providing easy on-ramps.

HOMework

We hope the seven distinctives covered at the Leaders Gathering provide clarity as you plan the type of Small Groups ministry you want to have at your church. Your next step is to turn the distinctives into practical steps to implement at your church.

NEXT STEPS

- 1** Reflect on the seven questions below. Take time to discuss them with your senior pastor. Some questions will be easy to answer; others will require deeper conversation and strategic planning. Remember, you don't have to adopt everything we do at Milestone. Your goal is to determine what will work best for your church and your culture.
- 2** Assess what needs to change in your church to implement each distinctive. Begin by clearly defining your current reality for each question. Then write your envisioned future. Finally, map out the action steps necessary to bridge the gap between the two. Use **SMART goals** to ensure your action steps are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

This process will help you develop a strategic plan for your Small Groups ministry.

QUESTION 1

Will your church be a church of groups or a church with groups?

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

QUESTION 2

What will your church prioritize throughout the year (Growth Track engagement, or Growth Track and Small Group Engagement?)

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

QUESTION 3

Will your church offer semester-based groups or year-round groups?

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

QUESTION 4

Will your church utilize annual churchwide campaigns to achieve exponential growth, or focus on linear growth one semester at a time?

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

QUESTION 5

Will your church limit Small Group study options or offer a free market system?

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

QUESTION 6

Will your church develop a coaching structure or hire additional staff to support leaders?

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

QUESTION 7

What requirements will you determine for leading a Small Group?

- Answer
- Current Reality
- Envisioned Future
- Action Steps

Question 6 – Will your church develop a coaching structure or hire additional staff to support leaders?

- Answer

We will develop a coaching structure, and hire additional staff as needed.

- Current Reality

35 groups → goal of 40 this spring

No coaches currently

We have good Small Groups, but I'm feeling stretched thin and wearing multiple hats. I'm having difficulty meeting with all my leaders, supporting them, and knowing what's happening in every group.

- Envisioned Future

We want to have our first 4 coaches by the fall semester launch.

We want every new Small Group Leader to have a Coach, who will help them launch their group strong and support them through their first two semesters of leading.

We want to provide training and equipping for our Small Group Coaches, so they know their role and expectations.

We want Small Groups Coaches to feel cared for and poured into, so that they can care for and pour into the leaders in their span of care – this is my priority!

We want to add new coaches every semester to support the growing Small Groups ministry.

- Action Steps

First 4 coaches by fall launch.

Jan-Mar: identify potential coaches; meet and get to know them

Mar-May: Meet 1:1 and cast vision/recruit; create Coaches Training/Requirements/Game Plan; bring Coaches with me as I meet with potential Small Group Leaders

May-Aug: Have 3 Coaches meetings (1/month) to connect & build the team; cover one aspect of coaches each meeting

Aug-Sept: First pre-semester Coaches Huddle to prepare for semester launch; Coaches begin meeting with leaders

Oct: Mid-Semester connection with Coaches to see how it's going

Nov: Post-Semester debrief with Coaches

Dec: Coaches Xmas Party – small "thank you" gift for each coach

Example

Question 6 – Will your church develop a coaching structure or hire additional staff to support leaders?

- Answer

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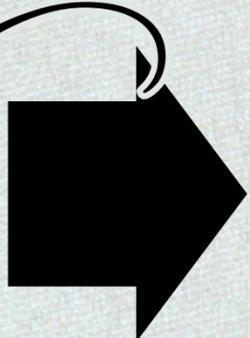
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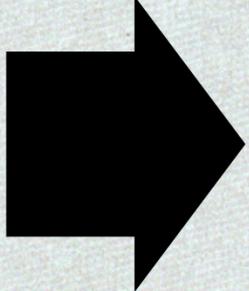
We do
**SMALL
GROUPS**
So...

- Take *care* of people's needs
- Help people *connect*
- Help people *grow*

Care, Connect, Grow



REACHING *People*  **Salvations and
Water Baptisms**

BUILDING *Lives*  **New Leaders**

What kind of

SMALL GROUPS

Church is

Milestone?

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

1 We are a church *of* groups, not a church *with* groups.

A CHURCH *WITH* GROUPS

- Many programs
- Small Groups added as another program

A CHURCH *OF* GROUPS

- Not another option
- Small Groups are the culture

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

1 We are a church *of* groups, not a church *with* groups.

- 101, 201, 301
- Financial Foundations

- Freedom
- Restore

- Kids
- Students
- MYA



QUESTION *One*

**Will you be a church *of* groups or
a church *with* groups?**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

2 We prioritize Growth Track Engagement.

Growth Track

Growth Track

Growth Track

Growth Track

Growth Track

Spring Small Groups

Financial Foundations

Freedom

Fall Small Groups

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL

AUG

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC

QUESTION *Two*

**What will your church prioritize
throughout the year?**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

3

We offer semester-based Small Groups.

- **Creates key moments to promote Small Group engagement.**
- **Provides clear on-ramps and off-ramps for easier participation.**
- **Helps prevent leader burnout by establishing manageable rhythms.**
- **Provides opportunities for groups to multiply and grow.**
- **Allows space for new groups to form and thrive.**

QUESTION *Three*

**Will your church offer semester-based groups
or year-round groups?**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

4 We conduct churchwide Small Group campaigns each year.

- The churchwide campaign is the most effective way to boost attendance and increase small group leadership and participation

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

4 We conduct churchwide Small Group campaigns each year.

Three Components of a Campaign

1 Message Series

2 Resource

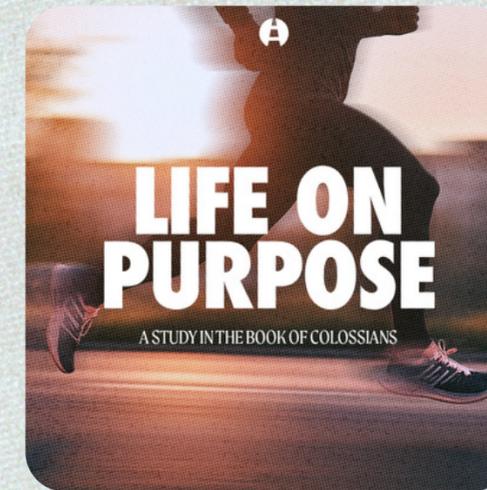
3 Small Groups

Churchwide Campaigns

1 Message Series

2 Resource

3 Small Groups



Stories

“We loved utilizing the Hearing God campaign at Bloom. This was the first time we had done a campaign in this way. We have always prioritized small groups and done churchwide small groups with the same curriculum, but never as a campaign where our sermon series, kids content, and youth content align with the small group curriculum.

“It was an amazing experience. We saw record-breaking small group sign-ups and attendance, but the great win was the amount of new believers and first-time small group attendees. Not only that but our young people were also impacted.

“One family started attending Bloom during the Hearing God series...The common ground of doing the same curriculum gave the family the confidence to have weekly discussions [about church], which has now created a new family rhythm of spiritual growth!”

Mike Carlton
BLOOM *Church*

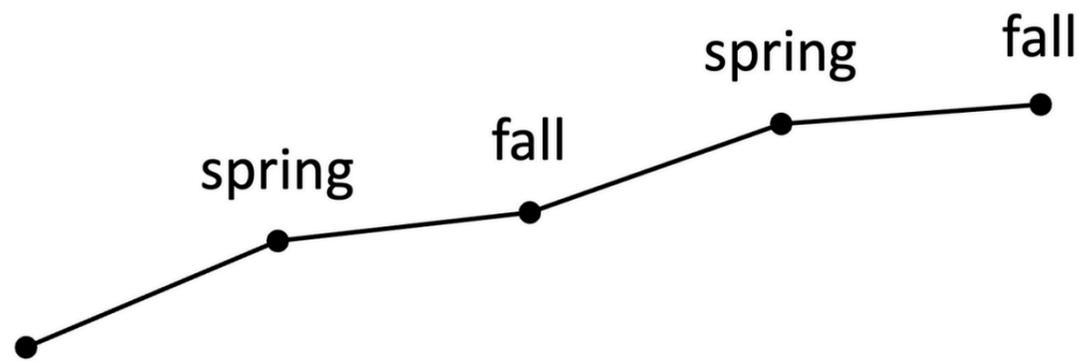
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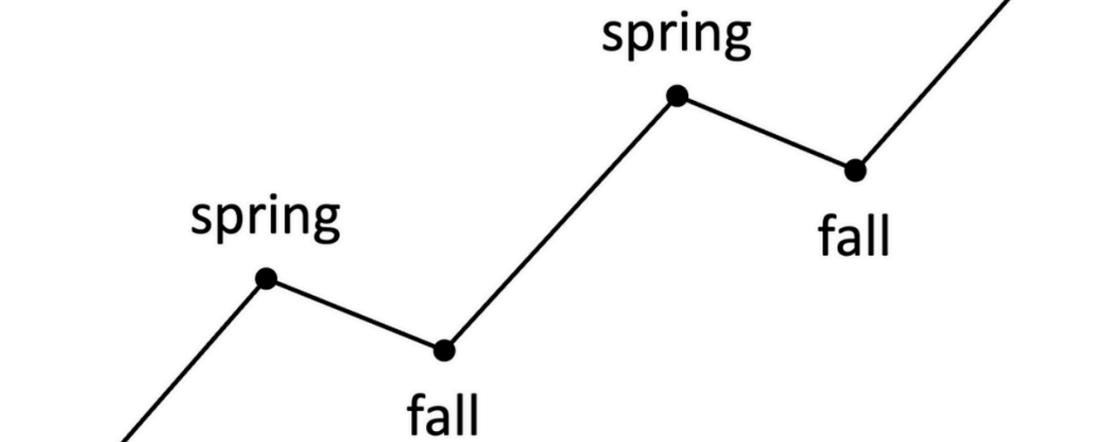
Growth Trends

- **Potential to double the number of groups and participants.**
- **Campaign growth follows an exponential curve.**
- **Then focus on sustaining and retaining growth throughout the year.**

Incremental Small Group Growth



Churchwide Campaign Growth



DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

4

We conduct churchwide Small Group campaigns each year.

Why do campaigns?

- **Produce Exponential Growth**

Expand the number of groups, leaders, and participants.

- **Unify the Church**

Align every age group, from children to adults, in shared purpose and vision.

- **Build Momentum**

Inspire deeper church engagement and sustained spiritual growth.

QUESTION *Four*

Will your church utilize annual churchwide campaigns to achieve exponential growth, or focus on linear growth one semester at a time?

QUESTION *Five*

**Will your church choose a guided-study approach
or a free-market system?**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

6 We build on a Small Group Coaching structure.

COACHING MODEL

- **Volunteer coaches help pastor and support Small Group Leaders**

STAFF MODEL

- **One paid staff member cares for X number of Small Groups**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

6 We build on a Small Group Coaching structure.

The Jethro Principle – Exodus 18

- **10's - Small Group Leaders**
- **50's - Small Group Coaches**
- **100's - Small Group Lead Coaches**
- **1000's - Small Group Pastors**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

6 We build on a Small Group Coaching structure.

Coaches

- **Help launch new groups**
- **Provide every leader with a point of contact**
- **Update leaders with important Small Group information**
- **Develop a pipeline of future leaders and coaches**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

6 We build on a Small Group Coaching structure.

Start developing a coaching infrastructure around 20-30 groups.

QUESTION *Six*

**Will your church develop a coaching structure
or hire additional staff to support leaders?**

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

7 We make leading a Small Group easy.

DIFFICULT

Requires months of training, classes, mentoring, and co-leading before leading a group

LESS LEADERS

HIGH QUALITY LEADERS

EASY

Requires a minimum level of leadership requirements

MORE LEADERS

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DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

7 We make leading a Small Group easy.

Our Requirements to Lead

1

- Complete Growth Track
- Sign Church Membership Agreement

2

Complete Small Group Leader Training

3

Meet with a Small Group Coach

DISTINCTIVES of Small Groups *Ministry*

7 We make leading a Small Group easy.

Disqualifications:

- **Promoting personal products, businesses, or ministries**
- **Causing division or disunity in the church**
- **Practicing obvious, unrepentant sin**

QUESTION *Seven*

**What requirements will you determine
for leading a Small Group?**

CONTACT US

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