

Leader
Handbook



small groups

HOPE
lives here.

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PART ONE

Getting Started

GROUPS MATTER

Now more than ever, Christians need places of refuge where we can encourage and support one another. As the world around us becomes increasingly hostile toward God and those who love him, active Christian communities have become ever more important for the perseverance of faith. Leading a group focused on mutual care, prayer, spiritual growth, and missional living is a high calling indeed. Yet, through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, you can succeed! Through your commitment, everyone in your group can grow in relationship with each other and with Jesus. Throughout the Bible, we read examples of believers gathering in groups and helping one another.

GROUP LEADERS MATTER

As a small group leader, you have three primary responsibilities: grow the group, guide the prayer, and guard the unity.

Grow the Group

The very first word of the Northwoods mission statement is “inviting,” and that is not limited to Sunday services. We can never forget this fundamental purpose Jesus gave to his followers, to go and make disciples. Group leaders champion this value and model it for the group.

Guide the Prayer

Praying together draws group members closer to God and closer to each other. Seeking God’s hand in our lives and celebrating his answers to our requests fuels our faith in extraordinary ways! Group leaders ensure order and consistency in the group’s prayer life.

Guard the Unity

Variations in perspective, differences in opinion, ranges of expectations—every group will come together with factors like these, which can be both potential pitfalls and sources of strength. Group leaders establish common ground and healthy agreement among the members.

Now let's have a detailed look at a group leader's areas of responsibility.

Practical Matters

GROW THE GROUP: MULTIPLICATION MENTALITY

Healthy groups are growing groups: growing spiritually, growing relationally, and growing numerically. As groups and members develop, we cannot forget that many people are not yet connected with others in Christian community. Our personal small group lives often feel great, meet our needs, and bring a lot of fun. Without a doubt, those are good goals to work toward and be celebrated. Yet, how do we invite more people to experience these good things without compromising our group dynamics?

- **Talk About It** — Discuss and agree as a group before someone new is invited to join an existing group so that everyone agrees, and no one is surprised. It's awkward to say, "Oh, hi. Who are you?" or to wonder why an unanticipated person is present. Talk through the aspects of confidentiality and trust that emerge in this situation. Likewise, be sure to prepare newcomers with information about what to expect, when and where you're meeting, and who makes the best snacks!
- **Study In Semesters** — Northwoods encourages groups to work in semesters: 10-13 weeks in the spring and fall, 5-7 weeks in the summer. These windows allow for great scheduling flexibility while still providing the consistency that is so important for group bonding. Invite someone

to “give it a try for the next seven weeks this summer” instead of “join my group.” This approach eases a common fear of making a long-term commitment to something not yet known. No one wants to feel trapped if things don’t work out. By inviting people to join when everyone is starting a study at the same time, newcomers won’t feel like they’re playing catch up, and everyone will have some common ground.

- **Birth New Groups** — Allow a larger existing group to divide into separate smaller groups. Typically, a thriving small group will have 8–12 members. Some succeed slightly larger or smaller, but this range has proven itself over time. Research and experience also suggest that once the “inviting culture” begins to diminish, groups become self-focused, lose sight of their purpose, and eventually fail. (We encourage the training of group leader apprentices so that new groups have leaders already in place! More on that later.)
- **Take Your Time** — Just like humans, small groups take time to grow and mature before they’re ready for reproduction. Northwoods will not pressure any group to grow. Whether to have open seats or to form new groups is entirely up to the group members. We will encourage you to pray about the possibilities and to seek God’s timing for any action, but there will be no negative consequences from the church.

Northwoods provides some tools to help groups add new members.

- **Northwoods Group Finder** — This feature on the website or in the mobile app shows interested people the information about existing small groups in the church network that are open for new members to join. Leaders can keep group details up to date using their MyNorthwoods account.
- **Group Launch Events** — Northwoods occasionally plans public events designed to spark new groups as well as allow existing groups to recruit new members.

GUIDE THE PRAYER: PRAYERFUL IS POWERFUL

Prayer is the lifeblood of every group. Seriously. It's the most important thing we can do for one another. Praying together—out loud—connects us to our Creator and brings encouragement to others in the moment. When answers come over time, faith grows in exciting ways. When answers have not yet come, we lift each other and keep praying! Praying together, we learn how to worship through prayer, too, praising our Lord and thanking him. So, how do we increase the impact of prayer in our small group?

- **Prioritize** —Commit whatever time is required to cover everyone's needs, and don't rush just to finish on time. Don't let prayer time become an add-on at the end of group meetings. Try starting with prayer sometimes to relieve time pressure.
- **Focus** — Ask for clarifications if needed but save comments and conversation for another time. It can be helpful to redirect chatter with guidance like, "If you want to ask follow-up questions about our prayer requests, let's do so after we pray. Right now, we want to devote as much time as possible to actually praying for each other's requests."
- **Share** — Invite a group member to coordinate the group prayer component. Just like different group members will be better at organizing or communication or snacks, another could be gifted at or passionate for prayer and bring exciting enhancements to the group experience.
- **Journal** — Keep track of prayer requests. Check up on them. Celebrate answers!
- **Experiment** — Consider occasional new prayer practices, such as listening, healing, and intercession.

It's not uncommon for people to be uncomfortable or to lack confidence to pray out loud in a group, so the group leader should reinforce sincerity, authenticity, and natural language. (Fancy words don't make better prayers!)

GUARD THE UNITY: COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

Every person God created has unique characteristics, personal experiences, individual strengths & weaknesses, and distinct styles. The nearly infinite variety of possible people combinations means there is incredible potential for positive impact at the same time as real risk of negative conflict. Nonetheless, we are each created in God's image, and that grants us common ground on which to build our community.

Craft a Group Agreement

Northwoods strongly encourages small groups to document their commitment to specific principles and promises. Therefore, because we all participate in the crafting of an agreement, we are unified around the covenant we've made to each other. Every group agreement will have variations, but some factors are relevant to most, such as these three essentials:

- **Attendance and Responsibility** — I will prioritize my regular participation in meetings and will notify the leader if I will be absent or late. I will gladly carry my share of the ministry work and the needs of the group, including hosting meetings.
- **Safety, Respect, and Confidentiality** — I will be gentle and gracious, respecting differences in spiritual maturity, opinion, and temperament among members. I will refrain from critical responses, snap judgments, or oversimplification of complex circumstances to help all members feel heard and loved. I will keep to myself any conversations, prayer requests, or sensitive information shared by members.
- **Encouragement** — I will serve members with my gifts, lift them up with my words, and strive to add value to their lives.

You can find an example agreement at resources.northwoods.church/smallgroups.

Foster Safety, Respect, and Confidentiality

Our practices can reinforce a value or undermine it. For a small group, this is especially important when it comes to trust and vulnerability. The strength of our relational circle can benefit from some intentional efforts:

- **Talk About It** — It seems counter-intuitive, but it's important to talk about confidentiality. Regular reminders help us remember this principle. No conversations or information shared with the group is to be shared with people who are not in the group, even if the topic does not seem sensitive. The smallest detail shared with someone outside of the group makes it easy for us to wonder what else might get shared. This is the beginning of the end for a group.
- **Lead It** — How we respond when a group member opens up about something very private or sensitive shapes the success of a group. Listening calmly and responding kindly, regardless of the severity of what is revealed, demonstrates for group members how to reinforce the sense of safety and acceptance. On the contrary, showing shock, distaste, or any other negative response strips away safety.
- **Don't Fix It** — Many well-meaning people respond to other's pain by wanting to take away the hurt. They want to fix whatever broken thing is creating the sadness or other negative feelings. Don't. Don't try to fix group member problems yourself. Redirect the discussion when you hear others in the group heading that direction. Ask questions, and pray, but leave the fixing to God.

Facilitate Great Discussion

Few things are more awkward than sitting in a room with a group that doesn't really talk or share, except perhaps for irrelevant, confusing, or uninspired discussion questions. Thankfully, we can learn skills that overcome these uncomfortable situations. Questions that initiate healthy discussion can fall into three categories:

- **Baseline** — The starting line for good questions includes: Who? What? When? Where? Why? These establish commonality for the conversation so that we are all on the same page. Be careful to handle “why” questions with grace so that they're not misinterpreted as a challenge or interrogation.
- **Empathy** — Questions that dig deeper and uncover our feelings help to build engagement and personal connection in the discussion. Examples include: “What do you think about...?” and “How do you feel about...?”
- **Action** — Humble and curious questions can encourage action in group members' lives. “What are you going to do next?” allows the conversation to focus on each member's ideas and next steps.

Beyond good starter questions, healthy discussions benefit from skillful guidance. Many resources are available for group leaders to grow in this area, including these five tips:

- **Prepare in Advance** — The Northwoods Spiritual Health Assessment can give leaders insights into group members' needs and highlights resources to address them as we develop plans for the group.
- **Start With Guiding Statements** — Including guardrails in questions can keep the session heading in the right direction by curtailing more talkative participants and coaxing more out of reserved members. For example: “What does this verse say to you? Boil your response down to one sentence.” Leaders set the standard, encouraging answers under two minutes and guiding chatty members to “land the plane.”

- **Rephrase the Question** — When conversation seem slow or appears to be drifting off topic, consider how you can re-word a question in a fresh way.
- **Use Redirecting Statements** —Discussion can easily drift off topic, especially when members enjoy each other! Extend grace in these situations but consider bringing the conversation back to center with something like, “That sounds like something we should discuss another time.”
- **Celebrate Progress** — Affirm members when they take risks or make progress on their spiritual journey. Sometimes it’s as simple as, “That’s great! Thank you for sharing!”

PART TWO

Group Leader Level Up

PEOPLE MATTER

Most groups encounter circumstances that fall into common areas of experience. Leaders can grow skills and wisdom to help navigate the typical twists and turns, especially when we draw on the wisdom of other small group leaders. Building on the foundation we've built for our group using the practices in the previous section, we can "level up" as leaders to face more complex challenges and, in fact, transform them into opportunities for ourselves and our group members to become more like Jesus.

PEOPLE PRACTICES MATTER

Although the pace for every group is different, many will need to address these situations sometime in the first 6–18 months. While each area will stretch leaders with new experience, none should be seen as unsolvable problems, leader weaknesses, or group dysfunction. All are normal components of growing groups and imperfect people.

Conflict Resolution

Community includes conflict. Plain and simple. It happens. How we handle conflict can bring us closer to God's intent for our unity in Christ—or further from it.

Spiritual Formation

Deliberately weaving spiritual disciplines into our group life models the early church described in Acts 2. Relational connection in Christian community is the ideal fertilizer for spiritual growth.

Gracious Interaction

Every group member needs a little grace from time to time; some need more than others. Modeling boundaries for “extra grace required” people helps not only that person but also the group as a whole.

Leader Multiplication

Group leaders were not always group leaders. We were invited, coached, and equipped by others. Likewise, the Holy Spirit stirs in the hearts of our group members, and we can give them opportunities to respond to him.

Now, let’s level up our skills for each of these group and leader lessons.

Practical Matters

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: WE CAN WORK IT OUT

In the unofficial NQR (Not Quite Right) translation of Scripture, we read, “Where two or more are gathered, there conflict will be.” Joking aside, we might as well count on conflicts happening in our group, and we had better prepare to resolve them well. So, what steps are needed?

- **Evaluate** — It’s not uncommon to be disappointed by someone’s actions or attitude. A couple of simple questions can help us know what to do when someone doesn’t meet our expectations. The first question is for us: “Why am I holding this person to this standard?” The second question is for God: “Father, is this issue important?” Listen to what the book of James has to say about it.

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take

it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

JAMES 4:1–3 NLT

- **Reconcile** — Jesus teaches us what to do when we discover that a group member is upset with us or has something against us: seek to make things right with the person. The validity of the complaint does not matter. The relationship does.
 - *So if you [learn] that someone has something against you, ... Go and be reconciled to that person.*

MATTHEW 5:23–24 NLT

- **Restore** — God's Word also gives instruction for situations where we have something against another person. First, Jesus tells us to examine our own motives and mindset. (See Matthew 7:5) If offense remains, Scripture gives three steps:
 - Go to the person — Conflict between two people should be resolved between those two people.
 - Take someone along — If this issue cannot be resolved by the two, ask a third person to help work things out.
 - Consult the church — If the issue remains unresolved, seek the counsel of a pastor or church leader.
- **Forgive** — True reconciliation requires Biblical forgiveness. Forgiveness is not a feeling, nor does it excuse an offense. Forgiveness is an act of will, a decision to release the person from the penalty of being separated from us.

Take Action! Talk with other small group leaders and learn from each other's stories about conflict resolution.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION: SUPERNATURAL FITNESS

Our group's relational connections and Christian community are fertile soil for spiritual growth. Deliberate engagement in spiritual disciplines opens us to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and strengthens our readiness to become more like Jesus. What exactly are these beneficial exercises?

- **Study Scripture** — Scripture is God's living Word that invites us into his work in the world building his Kingdom. When we read Scripture, we learn about the mighty acts of God, and we also learn about us. Small group leaders should read Scripture for personal devotional purposes, to grow in familiarity with the larger story of Scripture, and as preparation for lively discussion and truth-seeking.
- **Practice Prayer** — Through prayer, we intentionally place ourselves in the presence of God. Our prayer can assume any number of postures depending on our emotional state and needs, such as standing in boldness, kneeling in submission, or lying in humility. No matter the form, prayer places us in a position to be changed by God's grace. As group leaders, we should pray regularly for growth—for ourselves, our groups, and our group members.
- **Cultivate Communion** — The sacrament of communion presents an opportunity for confession of known sins and conviction regarding sins not-yet-known. Small groups can read relevant Scripture regarding communion together and request guidance from pastors or church leaders about it.
- **Foster Fasting** — When we fast, we demonstrate our trust that God will provide for our physical and spiritual needs. We humble ourselves before God in order to grow in relationship with him. Many resources are available for groups to explore the discipline of fasting, including participation in all-church times of fasting.

Take Action! Implement spiritual disciplines as a non-negotiable personal practice and model them for group members.

GRACIOUS INTERACTION: EXTRA GRACE REQUIRED

As the joke goes, if we don't know who the "extra grace required" person is in the group, then it's probably us! Ha! Managing awkward, needy, or rude group members is hard work, but the payoff is worth it.

- **Model behaviors** — Demonstrate what's desired: show up on time, be prepared, engage in conversation, ask good questions. When sharing needs, be specific; avoid general or "unspoken" requests.
- **Communicate expectations** — A Group Agreement as described earlier allows members to discuss and decide on the group priorities, boundaries, and expectations. Once agreed upon and in place, the agreement serves to reinforce a healthy, safe, and predictable environment. It also gives guardrails and guidelines to bring members back to expectations when drift occurs.
- **Address situations** — Certain tactics can help overcome some common situations.
 - Oblivious over-talker — Ask questions to a specific person rather than to the whole group. This not only curtails someone who talks too much, it engages those who are usually more reserved.
 - Chronically needy — Connect with a chronically needy member outside of group time to talk about the agreed-upon boundaries. A common characteristic of extra-needy behavior often shows up as reliance on others to solve problems versus self-help. Invest your time cautiously and with discernment, and don't hesitate to refer the member to a pastor or counseling center.
 - Late and lacking — Everyone runs behind schedule sometimes or has a hard day. Give lots of grace when out-of-the-ordinary things happen. However, for those who are regularly tardy or who rarely join discussion, point to the group agreement which calls for a commitment to punctuality and participation.

Take Action! Consult with a pastor when these measures aren't working; do not allow one person to break the group.

LEADER MULTIPLICATION: CO-HOST FOR THE WIN

When a group elects not to accept new members, experience shows that the group will weaken and close within six months. Although not universally the case, this decline results from the group losing sight of connection and growth goals, and tension can grow among those in favor and those opposed. Designating a co-host can help this situation on three levels:

- **Assistant** — A group co-host can help the leader with administration such as scheduling and communication and can stand in when the leader is unable to attend.
- **Apprentice** — A group co-host can facilitate separate discussion and prayer for half of a larger group during gatherings, and the additional leadership can help overcome disconnectedness in larger groups.
- **Associate** — A group co-host can increase the group's capacity to care for members well and can develop leadership skills in preparation for leading if a larger group chooses to multiply.

Northwoods will not force any group to be open to new members, to split into multiple groups, or function in any particular way. Pastors and church leaders will, though, encourage and equip group leaders for the purposes of mutual care, prayer, spiritual growth, and missional living.

Take Action! Invite a group member to partner in the leadership of the group, increase the care capacity of the group, or initiate a new group with open seats.

PART THREE

Group Leader Gold

PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE

After a couple of years leading a small group, we've heard or been asked just about everything. Basic leadership fitness feels comfortable, and now it's time to go for the gold, developing into a community and growth champion! Because the stakes are so high, it's worth the effort to advance in the nuances and artistry of skillfully leading people.

PEOPLE LEAD PEOPLE

A vast assortment of resources can be borrowed from the Small Groups Resource Library, and for your quick access, five areas of development are outlined here:

Navigating Changes

Changes in many areas of life can present challenges, not only for group dynamics but also individual member's success in life.

Practical Evangelism

It's the first of Northwoods' core values: evangelistic heartbeat. And it's an area of Christian living that intimidates many believers.

Crisis Situations

A healthy group can be a source of encouragement and support for members during challenging life situations, transforming weaknesses into strengths.

Service Projects

Groups that serve together discover a higher level of bond with each other, one that is fueled by their impact and influence, both earthly and eternal.

Communication Skills

Good communication only matters when we're with other people, which, in group life, is always.

Practical Matters

NAVIGATING CHANGES: THE THREE C's

People face change differently from one another. Some people thrive with change while others set anchor against it. No response to change is inherently wrong, though some styles require greater skill to lead. Research shows that people generally fall into one of five categories. Recognizing these tendencies and the needs of members will help leaders lead better.

- Innovators (2.5%): Will accept change if something is new. Take no convincing.
- Early Adopters (13.5%): Will change when they perceive a personal benefit.
- Early Majority (34%): Will change when there is a productivity gain.
- Late Majority (34%): Will change if they are convinced of the benefit.
- Laggards: (16%): Will change only when they are forced to.

When the leader understands the mix of types represented, coaching the “Three C’s of Change” can be tailored to best fit the needs of the group. Mastery of this coaching skill and the guidance offered will benefit members not only in the group dynamic but also in many general life situations.

- **Communicate** — The most powerful and effective pattern among successful leaders of change is that they provide clear communication that connects the change to values and purpose, creating stronger buy-in and shared urgency. This is a focus on the “why” behind the change rather than merely the “what” of the change.
- **Collaborate** — Bringing people together to plan and execute change is critical. Successful leaders work across boundaries, encourage members to not remain isolated, and refuse to tolerate poor attitudes. They also include members in decision-making early on, strengthening commitments to change. Unsuccessful leaders fail to engage members early and often in the change process.
- **Commit** — Successful leaders make sure their own beliefs and behaviors support change, too. Change is difficult, but leaders who navigate it successfully are resilient, persistent, and willing to step outside their comfort zone. They devote their own time to the change effort and stay focused on the big picture. Unsuccessful leaders don’t adapt to challenges, express negativity, or demonstrate impatience with slow results.

The most effective leaders devote considerable effort to engage everyone in the process of change, and they allow each member whatever time is needed to adapt to change.

PRACTICAL EVANGELISM: KEEP IT SIMPLE AND EASY

Say the word “evangelism” and watch the group shudder. Most Christians seem to struggle with finding ways to share their faith, and few groups thrive in this area. Satan capitalizes on our fears to work against us, trying to make us think we will offend people or be marked as radical. He is wrong. When group members help people meet Jesus by praying, sharing stories, and inviting, that is evangelism. Here are four simple ideas to strengthen any group’s evangelistic heartbeat.

- **Pray Names** — God knows everyone by name, so be specific when talking with him about people. Naming specific people in our prayers has the effect of personalizing the priority in our hearts of helping them encounter the hope and healing of Jesus.
- **Share Stories** — Group members can inspire one another with stories about spiritual conversations. Surveys indicate that 74% of people have fewer than 10 spiritual conversations in a year, yet a “spiritual conversation” can be as simple as talking about last Sunday’s sermon with a spouse or as profound as introducing a non-Christian friend to Jesus by praying for a healing need. Hearing other members’ stories helps embolden and inspire us to take a chance.
- **Refresh Passion** — Groups that talk and study regularly about reaching those who are still far from Christ find a greater level of passion and evangelistic heartbeat evident in their lives. Northwoods encourages at least one study excursion into evangelism each year. Options are listed in the Resources section at the end of this guide.
- **Have Fun** — People unfamiliar with the gospel are not usually unfamiliar with ice cream! Hospitality is the secret weapon of evangelists everywhere, and it has been so since the days of the New Testament. See Matthew 9:9–13 for example. While the gifts of teaching and preaching proclaim the words of the gospel, hospitality demonstrates that the gospel is real, authentic, believable, attractive, and livable. For some non-Christians, the gospel sounds unbelievable, but making Christian friends can change that. Social events and interactions provide fertile ground for familiarity to grow, for hesitation to fade, and for authenticity to make faith-filled life very inviting indeed.

CRISIS SITUATIONS: CARE WITH CARE

A group that supports and strengthens each other is a group that is doing the right things, demonstrating love, compassion, and service in Jesus' name. A caveat: bearing one another's burdens does not mean other's burdens become our own. Chronic neediness is addressed elsewhere in this guide, but healthy help looks like love.

- **Listen** — Responding to a member's need simply by listening well can go as far or further than a lot of chatter. Issues can feel more manageable when we are able to share with friends.
- **Validate** — People in crisis need to know that others understand how they feel and that their emotions are legitimate. Without validation, members can feel diminished, lose trust, express more, or even hide altogether. Validation also prepares us to begin stepping back from emotions to gain a more reasonable outlook.
- **Assess** — Group members can help each other determine the facts about a situation, which can be difficult for the person embroiled in emotions. An emotion-biased perspective often perceives things are worse than they are, but careful assessment helps us move past the crisis.
- **Support** — When we receive support from outside of ourselves for the brokenness inside of us, encouragement, motivation, and healing rise up. Much like a cast provides reinforcement for a broken bone, crisis support from our small group helps us return to strength and, in turn, become support for someone else's future situation.
- **Identify** — Truly helping a member recover strength comes from facing failure as a part of the growth process. Through grace-filled identification of missteps, we are able to build resilience, be released from fear of failure, and become prepared to minister similarly to others.
- **Care** — Even though we know as Christians that it is through trials that we grow, few of us enjoy the process. Wanting to provide relief when we see others in pain, we can be tempted as leaders to take on more than we are qualified or prepared to counsel. Often the best help we can provide is referral to a professional.

SERVICE PROJECTS: VOLUNTEER FOR IMPACT

Groups can demonstrate Christian principles to the world around them by giving time and talent toward worthy work. Doing so together in unity builds faith and friendships at the same time. We can model servant leadership by unconditionally and tangibly ministering to our members, with no expectations. What are some ways to serve together?

- **In the Group** — Give away group responsibilities, perhaps based on the discovery of spiritual gifts among the members.
 - Hosting meetings
 - Preparing snacks
 - Facilitating discussion
 - Coordinating prayer
 - Planning socials
 - Developing missions
- **Through the Church** — Some groups serve together during church services. Some take on special projects together. Others encourage one another toward fulfillment in separate roles. Reach out to a pastor or church leader to explore ways the group can serve at church.
- **Across the Community** — Similarly, groups can serve together through the wide variety of Northwoods local partner organizations, making a difference for under-resourced neighborhoods, schools, and people groups. Alternatively, groups can meet private needs learned by word-of-mouth or brainstorming.
- **Around the World** — Although admittedly more challenging to coordinate, Northwoods short-term mission trips can be wonderful ways to discover that giving oneself away usually leads to gaining far more.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: CLARITY, NOT CONFUSION

Group leaders have a remarkable venue for growing their own communication capabilities as well as inspiring members to grow in theirs. Here are five quick tips for communication competence:

- **Listen Completely** — Listen to understand, not to respond. One cannot provide meaningful feedback without first listening completely. Brief periods of silence show greater care than rapid responses.
- **Speak Appropriately** — Communicate with group members using relevant language and style. Honor the group with appropriate words and body language that fit the circumstances, familiarity, and formality of the group.
- **Choose Carefully** — Extra words are not usually better. No one is impressed or improved by blather. Be brief. Be concise. Be clear.
- **Repeat Repeatedly** — Remind. Remind. Remind. For example, make an announcement during a gathering, follow up with an email, and send a reminder via text message. Same information, stated clearly, over and over again, on different platforms.
- **Nuance Non-verbally** — Convey confidence and openness with your body language. Sit up straight, don't cross one's arms, be relaxed, and look people in the eyes.

APPENDIX

More Help

RESOURCES SITE

Northwoods provides a variety of resources, guidance, and suggestions to help groups and group leaders succeed.

resources.northwoods.church/smallgroups

- **Video Lessons** — A wide variety of brief video lessons for group leaders that cover many common topics, such as planning social time, handling difficult people, increasing participation, and more
- **Examples** — Starting points to build a customized group plan or group agreement
- **Next Steps** — Guides to help groups align with Northwoods mission, values, and recommended growth paths
- **Tools** — Spiritual health assessment, administration instructions, and other practical helps

LENDING LIBRARY

- The Small Groups Lending Library contains hundreds of short-term studies that groups can borrow. It is located in the Peoria Campus Lobby. Workbooks to accompany many of the studies can be ordered through Connections Bookstore.

FACEBOOK GROUP

- The Northwoods groups ministry hosts a Facebook group for leaders, to encourage and equip one another.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nwoods>



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COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hope lives here.

northwoods.church/smallgroups