**Checklist for Starting New Groups**

Groups that have been together for two years or more generally find it more difficult to attract and assimilate new people due to the relationships they develop over time. This is a good thing for discipleship, but also makes it hard for most newcomers to feel they can become friends, regardless of how friendly a group may think it is. The best way to assimilate new people is through regularly starting new groups. These ideas will be helpful as you begin new groups.

* **Build awareness of the value of new groups**
* Pray for God’s leadership throughout the process
* Pastor emphasizes value from the pulpit
* Tell stories of individuals reached and discipled through other new groups
* Celebrate success of new groups (What “channels” do you have to do this?)
* Show statistically the difference new groups have made
* **Look for indicators a new group is needed**
* Groups that exceed suggested enrollment ceilings
* Age or stage of life groups not currently being reached (newly married, recently divorced, widowed, college students, etc.)
* Demographics with a significant number of prospects but little attendance
* Groups that consistently max out their space (80% capacity is “maxed out”)
* Special demographics you hope to reach–mentally handicapped, physically handicapped, homebound, shift workers, or others in your community
* Multiple people desire off campus locations–homes, apartments, offices, recreational sites, residential institutions
* Following big events or emphases that will involve new people not already in a group (Vacation Bible School, fall festival, community event, etc.)
* **Enlist and Build the Core Leadership Team (see Ministry Circles Model)**
* Group Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Care Leader (Community) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Fellowship Leader (Community) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Outreach Leader (Mission) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Mission Projects Leader (Mission) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Bible Teacher (Discipleship) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Prayer Leader (Discipleship) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Provide Needed Space, Equipment, and Resources to the Leadership Team**
* Determine meeting location and room
* Secure any needed equipment
* Provide curriculum resources for teacher and members
* Set up the room and prepare for the first session
* **Promote the Start Date and Location to the Target Group**
* Start date determined \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Location determined \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Promotion actions planned
* Promotion actions carried out
* **Visit, Invite, and Enroll Members**
* Names of prospects gathered
* Prospective members assigned for contact
* Prospective members contacted
* Prospective members invited to enroll in class
* Other forms of contact made with prospective members:
  + calls, notecards, texts, emails, fellowships, dinners, Informal gatherings
* **Plan and Conduct the Prelaunch and First Session**
* Plan early – create a detailed plan for a prelaunch session well in advance to pray and make sure everyone is prepared for their role (may choose to have multiple prelaunch sessions)
* Focus on relationships in your first open session– plan a brief time of fellowship and introductions
* Purpose – clearly state the reaching, teaching, and ministering purposes of the group
* Prayer – Prayer time can be a vital group-building experience as well as a meaningful time of worship
* Bible study – Introduce the plan for Bible study going forward
* Delegate – Set the pattern and expectation that others will help lead parts of the session, including greeters who arrive early
* Materials – Provide registration forms, name tags, and member curriculum
* **Continue to Support the New Group**
* Pray for the new group
* Sponsoring group continues to help build the new one by supporting it in contacting prospects, enrolling people, and doing ministry work
* Continue to mentor and support new group leaders
* Plan next steps with group leaders
* Communicate with the church about the progress of the new group