

Small Group Leadership and Formation Decisions

Below are several important leadership decisions to be made by the leader prior to group formation or with the group during group formation. These form a basis for the covenant.

What is our main purpose for gathering?

Groups can be defined in a number of different ways. Here are a few you may consider. It is helpful to decide together the focus of your group:

1. Social group – main reason for gathering is for community, friendship, and sharing life together.
2. Study group – main purpose for gathering is for spiritual growth. Usually accompanied by a curriculum or study material or Bible Study and is usually very discussion based.
3. Support group – main purpose for gathering is mutual support, encouragement, and accountability. Often very focused on prayer and personal sharing.
4. Prayer group – the main purpose for this group is to gather to pray for one another, for the church, or for some other specific purpose (community, children, etc.)
5. Serving/ Ministry group – main purpose for gathering is for doing things together in service of others or in mission together.
6. Mixed-use group – These groups are intentional about including all of the above elements into group life.

You should choose the main focus of your group either as a leader before the group gathers and invite them into the group with that focus, or decide as a group and covenant together on the main purpose for gathering.

How will this group be lead and organized?

We suggest raising up or calling out the gifts of the following types of leaders in a group (this is also dependent upon the group's main purpose). Too often groups fail because leaders fail because one leader tries to carry the whole group. That creates less ownership from the rest of the group, more work for the leader, and a greater possibility the group will fail. We recommend shared leadership. Some of these leadership roles can be combined in one person. However, healthy groups should always be multiple leaders in a variety of roles. Decide which roles are necessary and seek to have these roles filled within the group.

- ❖ Team Leader/ Point Person
 - Communicates with the South Harbor Group Coaches and Pastor
 - Communicates with other group leaders
 - Organizes meeting times and places, calendar, and communication between group members
- ❖ Facilitator/ Discussion Leader

- Has the ability to lead through questions. This is not a “teacher,” but one who is sensitive to how people are responding in the group, types of people in the group, and can draw out thoughts, ideas, and questions in a variety of people.
- ❖ Hospitality Coordinator
 - Has the gift of hospitality, and usually loves to organize food, snacks, etc.
- ❖ Host(s)
 - Has the gift of hosting the group at one’s home.
- ❖ Prayer Coordinator
 - This person has a heart for prayer and can help the group grow as a praying community, and may organize a way to communicate prayer concerns with one another and outside the group when appropriate.
- ❖ Care Coordinator
 - This person often has the gift of compassion and can help the group to respond to those in need, within and outside the group.
- ❖ Missional Engagement coordinator
 - This person has a heart to minister to those outside the church and will help coordinate service projects, organize mission opportunities, and connect with the mission of the church.

How long will this group last as a group?

Plan a purposeful duration. What we mean by this is decide as a group when you will begin and when you will end not only for each session, but for a length of time over a matter of weeks or months. We suggest meeting at least every other week and no less than every 3 weeks. We also think an “alternative meeting” every 4th meeting or so helps maintain a group’s health (service project, social event, etc.). We also suggest that your groups duration is no less than 3 months and no more than 1 year before evaluating future steps. Most of our lives change so much in a year’s time that there will likely be a change in membership in your group within a year. If you are not intentionally about allowing times for people to exit gracefully, some will exit in more difficult ways that can cause pain and damage to the group.

How do we know how things are going?

Plan regular review times. Some groups have a review after every meeting, while others wait to review until the end. Feedback is essential to strengthening the group, and we can help you process feedback in a healthy manner and appropriate learnings and changes into group life to strengthen the community. See the website for resources in group review.

How can we keep our group healthy?

Some of the best ways to keep your group healthy are listed below:

- ❖ Communicate with your coach in good times and difficult times.
- ❖ Ask for help when you need it.
- ❖ Attend training events and leader gatherings when they are offered.

- ❖ Use resources that are available. We have resources for leaders, and even a great resource to train a group! Don't hesitate to ask. We would be surprised if you hit an issue that is not similar to one that we haven't already seen.

Groups that choose to do some intentional growth through some sort of study and discussion together general do one of three things:

1. Straight Bible Study with no curriculum aids (often inductive). For help on this type of study, download the resource "Leading an inductive Bible Study" on our website.
2. Bible Study with a study guide. There are many guides available for each book of the bible as well as many topical biblical studies. If you would like help picking one out, please contact Pastor Tom Elenbaas.
3. Book Studies or DVD Curriculums are growing in popularity with groups. These are often topical and integrate biblical teaching, cultural relevance, and topical application.

If you would like to lead your group using forms 1 or 2, please talk to Pastor Tom for more resources. There are many ways to proceed with #3. Below are some suggestions you may consider for you group. If there is a particular topic you would like to study, contact Pastor Tom for suggestions.

Groups often start with one of the following short-term approaches to get to know one another and build community:

- ❖ Tell your stories. Share your faith journeys with one another – one each week. Spend time just listening to how God has been working in one another's lives and then pray over that person/ couple.
- ❖ Take AssessMe.org assessments (Grace Gifts, Leadership Style, ePersonality, Skills) and discuss your spiritual gifts as a group, how they can be used in the church or community, and how they can be helpful to this group.

Curriculum Ideas and Suggestions

Below are a number of good ideas and suggestions from Pastor Tom for starting curriculums. You may begin in one of the following ways, or just jump into one of the following curriculum ideas. Also, having overseen Small Groups at Fair Haven for almost 6 years, Tom has had a lot of interaction with a number of differing curriculums. Many of these are available for use, as well (particularly DVD's). Don't hesitate to ask if you are looking into a particular topic or type.

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How do I order curriculum?

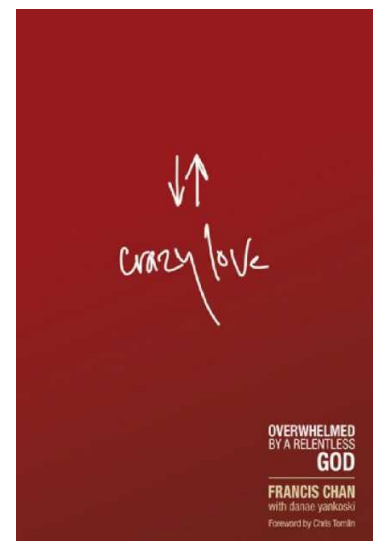
You can order curriculum on your own (try Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble), or you can order it through the church with free shipping. Talk to Jacki Boeve about ordering.

Crazy Love

By Francis Chan

10 Chapters, No Study Guide, DVD available but hard to get

God is love. Crazy, relentless, all-powerful love. Have you ever wondered if we're missing it? It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe—the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor—loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss. Whether you've verbalized it yet or not...we all know something's wrong. Does something deep inside your heart long to break free from the status quo? Are you hungry for an authentic faith that addresses the problems of our world with tangible, even radical, solutions? God is calling you to a passionate love relationship with Himself. Because the answer to religious complacency isn't working harder at a list of do's and don'ts—it's falling in love with God. And once you encounter His love, as Francis describes it, you will never be the same. Because when you're wildly in love with someone, it changes everything.

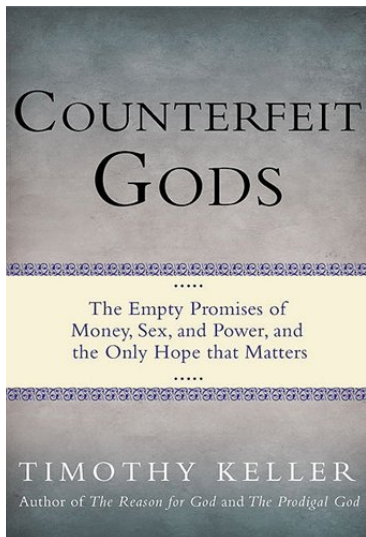
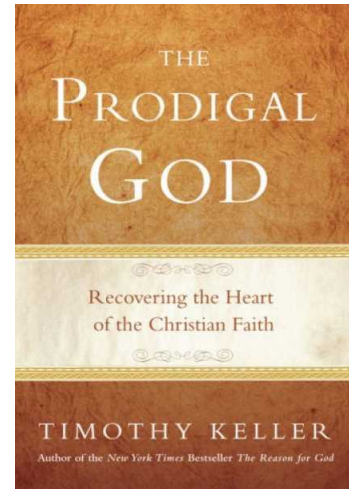


The Prodigal God: recovering the heart of the Christian Faith

By Tim Keller

7 Chapters, Study Guide for Six Sessions, short DVD Available.

Newsweek called renowned minister Timothy Keller “a C. S. Lewis for the twenty-first century.” In *The Prodigal God*, he uses one of the best-known Christian parables to reveal an unexpected message of hope and salvation. Taking his trademark thoughtful approach to understanding Christianity, Keller uncovers the essential message of Jesus, locked inside his most familiar parable. Within that parable Jesus reveals God's prodigal grace toward both the irreligious and the moralistic. This book will challenge both the devout and skeptics to see Christianity in a whole new way.

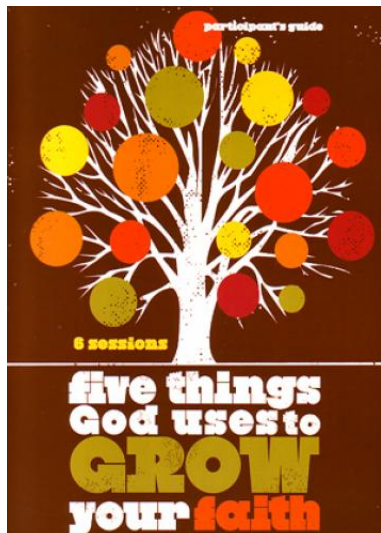


Counterfeit Gods

By Tim Keller

7 Sessions

Success, true love, and the life you've always wanted. Many of us placed our faith in these things, believing they held the key to happiness, but with a sneaking suspicion they might not deliver. The truth is that we made lesser gods of these good things -gods that can't give us what we really need. There is only one God who can wholly satisfy our cravings- and now is the perfect time to meet him again, or for the first time. The Bible tells us that the human heart is an "idol- factory," taking good things and making them into idols that drive us. In *Counterfeit Gods*, Keller shows us how a proper understanding of the Bible reveals the unvarnished truth about societal ideals and our own hearts.



Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith

By Andy Stanley

DVD Study Guide for Six Sessions

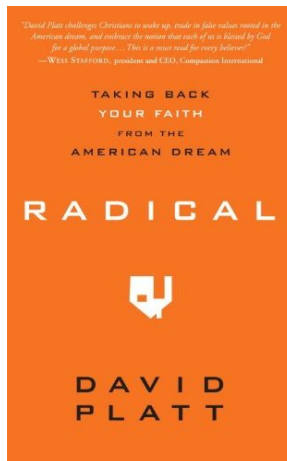
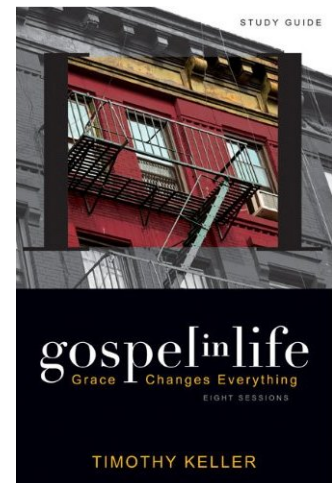
Your faith in God matters to God. In fact, God is most honored through your living, active, death-defying, out-of-the-box faith. Imagine how different your outlook on life would be if you had absolute confidence that God was with you. Imagine how differently you would respond to difficulties, temptations, and even good things if you knew with certainty that God was in all of it and was planning to leverage it for good. In other words, imagine what it would be like to have PERFECT faith.

Gospel in Life: grace changes everything

By Tim Keller

Eight Sessions DVD and Study Guide

Timothy Keller presents an eight-week video-based study of the gospel and how to live it out in everyday life. In week one you and your group will study the city, your home now, the world that is. Week eight closes with the theme of the eternal city, your heavenly home, the world that is to come. In between you'll learn how the gospel can change your heart, your community, and how you live in this world.



Radical – taking back your faith from the American Dream

By David Platt

9 Chapters

In *Radical – taking back your faith from the American Dream*, David Platt challenges you to consider with an open heart how we have manipulated the gospel to fit our cultural preferences. He shows what Jesus actually said about being his disciple--then invites you to *believe* and *obey* what you have heard. And he tells the dramatic story of what is happening as a "successful" suburban church decides to get serious about the gospel according to Jesus.

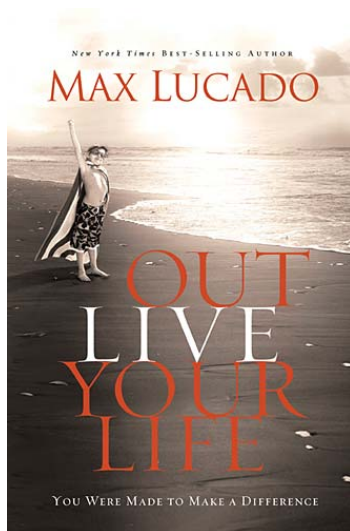


BASIC: Who is God?

By Francis Chan

6 Sessions, DVD and Study Guide

This interactive small group experience with 4 DVDs and 6 follower's guides takes on the weighty topic of the Trinity, distilling the reality of the nature of God into foundational truths in a way that will benefit everyone. *BASIC Fear God* DVD. *BASIC Follow Jesus* DVD. *BASIC Holy Spirit* DVD. Six *Who Is God? Follower's Guides* for group study.



Outlive Your Life

By Max Lucado

DVD and 4 Session Study Guide

These are difficult days in our world's history. 1.75 billion people are desperately poor, natural disasters are gouging entire nations, and economic uncertainty still reigns across the globe. But you and I have been given an opportunity to make a big difference. What if we did? What if we rocked the world with hope? Infiltrated all corners with God's love and life? We are created by a great God to do great works. He invites us to outlive our lives, not just in heaven, but here on earth. Let's live our lives in such a way that the world will be glad we did.

The Me I Want to Be

By John Ortberg

7 Chapters, 5 Session Study Guide

Ortberg urges you to recognize your brokenness, understand that God is the project manager, and follow His directions. The author first helps gauge your spiritual health and measure the gap between where you are now and where God intends you to be. Then he provides detailed tasks and exercises to help you live in the flow of the Spirit, circumventing real-world barriers---pain and sorrow, temptations, self-doubt, sin – to flourish even in a dark and broken world. As you start living in the flow, you will feel: a deeper connection with God, a growing sense of joy, an honest recognition of your brokenness, less fear, more trust, a growing sense of being 'rooted in love,' a deeper sense of purpose God invites you to join Him in crafting an abundant and joy-filled life. The Me I Want to Be shows you how to graciously accept His invitation.

