

Faith Identity

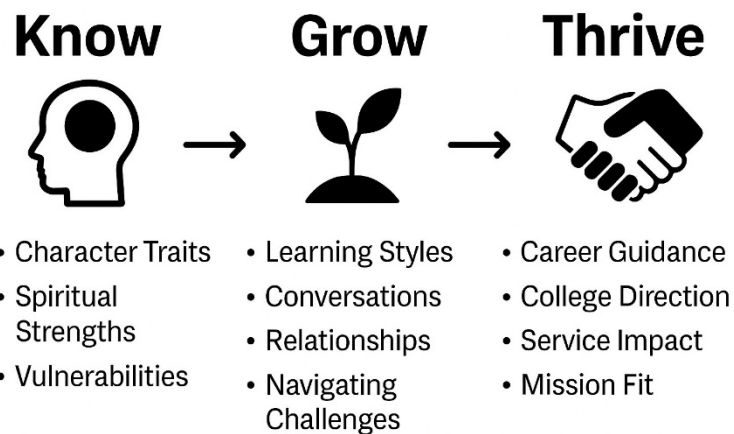
SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Equipping Leaders to Help People Discover Who They Are and Why They Matter

Every person asks big questions: *Who am I? Why do I struggle? How do I grow? What's next for me?* As a small group leader, you are in a unique position to walk alongside participants as they search for clarity in a complex world. This manual equips you with practical tools, conversation starters, and activities that connect faith to the real issues people face today - identity, relationships, challenges, career, calling, service, and mission.

At the heart of this guide is the pathway of **Know > Grow > Thrive**. Participants first **Know** who they are by exploring their character, strengths, and challenges. They then **Grow** by learning how to apply their identity in relationships, communication, and navigating challenges. Finally, they **Thrive** by discovering their purpose through career, education, service, and mission impact.

Organized around the questions people are already asking, this guide helps you engage them where they are, point them toward who God created them to be, and inspire them to live out their purpose with confidence and faith.



Guide Summary

Part 1: Who Am I? (Identity)

- **What's good about me?** → Discovering My Strengths
- **Why do I struggle so much?** → Understanding My Vulnerabilities

Part 2: How Do I Grow? (Applying Identity)

- **How do I best learn and apply God's Word?** → Learning Styles & Scripture Engagement
- **Why don't people get me?** → Communication Strengths & Building Relationships
- **What do I do when life feels overwhelming?** → Navigating Challenges in My Own Way
- **How can I build stronger community?** → Developing My Relational Strengths

Part 3: What's Next for Me? (Purpose)

- **What should I do with my life?** → Career & Calling Guidance
 - Best Fit Careers
 - Social Impact / Service-Oriented Careers
 - No-Degree Careers (vocational pathways)
 - Ministry Careers (serving God full-time)
 - Resume Strengths & Interview Prep
- **What should I study or pursue further?** → College Majors & Graduate Degrees That Fit Me
- **How can I make a difference now?** → Best Fit Service Opportunities
- **Am I called to missions?** → Team Roles, Adventurousness, and Key Considerations

Part 1: To Know (Identity)

Strengths & Vulnerabilities

Leader Overview:

People often only see one side of themselves—either boasting about strengths or dwelling on weaknesses. Helping participants recognize both builds confidence, resilience, and dependence on God.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults compare themselves to peers.
- Mid-career adults wrestle with burnout or underuse of their gifts.
- Older adults may question their continued purpose.
- Everyone needs to know: strengths are God-given, and vulnerabilities are where His grace shows up.

Conversation Starters:

- “What’s a strength you’re proud of? How has God used it?”
- “What’s one struggle that frustrates you?”
- “How might God want to show His strength in that area?”

Practical Activities:

- **Affirmation Circle:** Each person shares a strength they see in another.
 - **Strengths & Struggles Journal:** List 3 strengths and 3 vulnerabilities; pray through how God can use both.
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Part 2: To Grow (Applying Identity)

Learning Styles

Leader Overview:

Knowing how you learn reshapes how you engage Scripture and grow in discipleship.

Participant Relevance:

- Some feel “bad at Bible study” when they just haven’t used their natural style.

- Parents, professionals, or retirees can each benefit by aligning study habits with wiring.

Conversation Starters:

- “What’s one way you learn best in daily life?”
- “How could you study the Bible in that same way?”

Practical Activity:

- Small groups by style; read one passage and share how each group processes it differently.

Communication Strengths

Leader Overview:

Strong communication is the foundation of healthy marriages, families, friendships, and workplaces.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: friendships and dating.
- Adults: marriages, parenting, workplace relationships.
- Seniors: mentoring and legacy conversations.

Conversation Starters:

- “Do you think you’re more of a listener or speaker? Why?”
- “How does your style affect your closest relationships?”

Practical Activity:

- Role-play conflict resolution; practice reflective listening.

Navigating Challenges

Leader Overview:

Stress and difficulty look different at every stage of life, but everyone faces them. Wiring shapes how people respond.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: financial strain, early career stress.
- Adults: work-family balance, health concerns.
- Seniors: grief, transitions, purpose in later years.

Conversation Starters:

- “What’s one challenge you’re currently facing?”
- “How do you usually respond under stress?”

Practical Activity:

- **Challenge Mapping:** Write one challenge and brainstorm responses using strengths.

Relational Strengths

Leader Overview:

Healthy community is vital to the church. Identifying relational strengths helps participants love and serve better.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: building friendships and networks.
- Adults: nurturing families, teams, and ministries.
- Seniors: investing in mentorship and hospitality.

Conversation Starters:

- “What’s one way you naturally make others feel valued?”
- “Who models relational faithfulness in your life?”

Practical Activity:

- **Strengths in Action Challenge:** Each participant uses a relational strength that week and reports back.

Part 3: To Thrive (Purpose)

Career & Calling Guidance

Leader Overview:

Work is one of the primary places people live out their identity and purpose. Many struggle with career choices, feeling stuck, or questioning whether their work really matters to God. Helping participants connect their wiring to their work reframes career as calling.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: “What job should I pursue after school?”
- Mid-career adults: “Am I in the right career, or do I need a change?”
- Later life: “How can I contribute in retirement, volunteering, or mentoring?”
- Everyone wrestles with: “How do I know if this path fits who God made me to be?”

Conversation Starters:

- “What kind of work makes you feel most alive?”
- “Do you see your current work as just a job or part of your calling?”
- “How might God want to use your strengths in your career or service?”

Practical Activities:

- **Career Buckets Exercise:** Identify which category excites them most (Overall Fit, Social Impact, Vocational, Ministry).
- **Resume Strengths:** Rewrite personal traits as professional strengths (e.g., *Empathy* → *Skilled in listening and conflict resolution*).
- **Mock Interview Practice:** Ask 2–3 common interview questions, coaching participants to tie responses to strengths and values.

College & Educational Direction

Leader Overview:

Education is not only for students choosing majors—it’s for adults discerning further study, certifications, or lifelong learning. Matching study paths with identity helps participants avoid wasted time and find fulfillment.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: choosing majors, college pathways, or grad school.
- Adults: considering further education for career advancement.
- Seniors: pursuing study for enrichment or ministry preparation.

Conversation Starters:

- “Which subjects or areas of study excite you most?”
- “If you could take a class on any topic, what would it be and why?”
- “How might additional study prepare you for your calling?”

Practical Activities:

- **Major Match Workshop:** Compare different areas of study with participant strengths and passions.
- **Degree Ladder Mapping:** Help participants explore what further education could support career or ministry goals.

Service Opportunities

Leader Overview:

Serving is where identity and purpose connect in practical ways. Helping participants choose service projects aligned with their strengths makes service life-giving, not burdensome.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: local service builds character and leadership.
- Adults: service adds meaning beyond career and family roles.
- Seniors: service provides new purpose and a way to give back.

Conversation Starters:

- “What kind of service project would feel most meaningful to you?”
- “How do you think serving others could help you see your strengths in action?”

Practical Activities:

- **Service Strengths Match:** Assign service opportunities based on strengths (organizers → logistics, compassionate → direct care, practical → building/repairs).
- **Debrief Circle:** After serving, participants share: “Where did I feel God using me most?”

Mission Engagement

Leader Overview:

Mission is more than going overseas—it’s about being sent into workplaces, neighborhoods, and nations. Identifying team roles and adventurousness levels helps participants step into mission with confidence.

Participant Relevance:

- Young adults: excited but nervous about short-term missions.
- Adults: balancing family, work, and a desire to serve.

- Seniors: offering wisdom, mentoring, and availability for mission trips or local/global partnerships.

Conversation Starters:

- “Which role would fit you best on a mission team—encourager, builder, teacher, organizer?”
- “What excites you about missions? What concerns or fears do you have?”
- “How do you see your everyday life as part of God’s mission?”

Practical Activities:

- **Adventurousness Scale:** Participants mark their comfort level (Local → Regional → National → International).
- **Team Role Simulation:** Assign roles and walk through a “mission challenge” scenario (planning an outreach, responding to a need).
- **Mission Discernment Prayer:** Spend time praying over where and how God may be calling each participant.

Final Summary for Leaders

This guide gives you practical tools to help participants move from self-discovery (**Identity**) to everyday growth (**Relationships & Learning**) to living with purpose (**Career, Education, Service, Mission**). Use it to spark conversations, build community, and guide people toward living the lives God designed them for.