

Small Groups

6-Week Core Value Series



Leader Guide

ARE YOU READY?

It's perfectly normal if you don't feel 100% ready for your groups launch! Opening your home and hosting a group can feel intimidating. Just know that you are not alone! Our goal is to provide you with all of the resources you need to host an amazing Small Group!

Our mission for Small Groups with UCC is to, "GROW as passionate and authentic believers, GROUP together in fellowship & GO live out our faith with fun, generosity & excellence."

NEW HOST TIPS

- Send a reminder to your group members a week before your first group. Tell them you are excited and remind them of the day, time and address of where you will be meeting.
- On the day of your Small Group, shoot everyone a quick reminder text.
- Confirm and communicate childcare prior to group start (no childcare, shared babysitter costs, member rotation, etc.)
- Invite, invite, invite! Invite your friends and encourage your group members to invite their friends as well.
- Pray! Pray for your group throughout the week and open and close your group in prayer.
- Plan for meal sharing during group – Everyone loves food! Keep it simple and have everyone contribute (see pg 14 for food ideas).
- Make sure you have access to Right Now Media and practice finding and playing the weekly video prior to group.
- Read through your discussion questions prior to the group. If you have any questions or need clarity, please reach out to the Small Group Director tracy.malloy@unitecommunitychurch.com

- Learn to team lead – Don't teach!

Don't worry about being prepared to preach or teach. No one is expecting you to give a sermon. Groups are intended to be sharing and discussion based, not a lecture format. Learn to invite your group into co-leading, taking turns asking the questions and starting the discussions.

Designate roles to each of your group members or allow them to choose their own supportive role:

- **GroupMe Recorder** – post prayer requests, sends group reminders, keeps the weekly conversation going
- **Growers** – Helps disciple others, comes prepared with a thought from the weekly UCC sermon to share during discussion time
- **Groupers** – Coordinates meal theme, organize groups social/fun activities
- **Go'ers** – Helps plan GO events, helps identify needs in the church body or internal group needs

A meeting outline is provided for each week of the 6-week series to help guide you through your group meetings. This outline is just a tool so remember to be flexible and follow the natural flow of your group. For example, Icebreakers are included for each week but are completely optional. Read your groups climate and determine what works best for your group's personalities. Remember the goal is to have fun, while discovering and loving who Jesus is!

Questions? *If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your Small Group Director Tracy at tracy.malloy@unitecommunitychurch.com*

Week 1: Introduction

LEADER INTRO

Welcome to the new season of Small Groups. Over the next 6-weeks, together you will learn about the 5 core values of Unite Community Church. The purpose of the first group meeting is to introduce you to this study, provide expectations and help everyone break the ice and get to know one another.

This guide will lead you through each week, providing an outline for the evening which will include an introduction to the lesson, an optional ice breaker, instructions to the weekly video, discussion questions and closing prayer.

ICEBREAKER (*Optional*)

Conversation Card

In your kit, find the UCC Conversation Card. Take a few minutes to ask some of the “Get to Know You” questions from the cards.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA

Play Week One – UCC Core Value Series Introduction Video

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Talk as a group about the intro video. What is everyone’s initial thoughts about UCC core values? Which one sticks out? Which one is surprising to be a Core Value? What are people excited to learn? What are people scared to learn?

Dedicate the rest of your evening to getting to know each other, having fellowship and having fun! Close in Prayer and remind the group of your next meeting date.

Week 2: Passion

LEADER INTRO

Today we will STOP and really assess where we are at in our faith journey and where our level of passion is at. Today we will be talking about PASSION. What does it mean? What does it look like practically? How do we increase our passion?

Share UCC's definition and discuss what everyone thinks passion has to do with faith:

"We will passionately pursue the power and presence of God in our lives. We will pray, worship, preach and play with passion."

Therefore, as Jesus was passionate, we will strive to be as well.

ICEBREAKER (Optional)

DICEY DISCUSSION

Supplies: Large Dice

Each group member takes turns to roll the dice and answer the question that correlates to their dice roll. (Online groups: one group member with a dice can roll for each participant):

1. What makes you forget to eat and pee? In other words, what do you get so lost in that you lose track of time?
2. What did you love to do as a child?
3. If you could be remembered for 3 things after you die, what would they be?
4. If you were financially secure, what would you do with your time?
5. What's been your favorite vacation?
6. What really makes you angry?

RIGHT NOW MEDIA

Play Week Two – UCC Core Value Series Passion Video

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read together (Rev 2:2-5) and discuss what these verses are saying.
2. What does the scripture mean when it says, “you have forsaken the love you had at first”?
3. Compare life as a new believer to life as a seasoned Christian. Why is it harder to continue to be passionate?
4. What was God’s solution to lack of passion in verse 5?
5. Let’s take a moment to honestly assess where our passion level is at. Remember, passion is not a felling, it’s a place of being. How can we be more passionate?
6. Our passion gets reignited when we really realize who God is and we rid our hearts of self and fill it with God. We become passionate about the mercy we received and the hope that comes from being a Christian. Read together (Acts 19:1, 8)

What might some people be tempted to do if they spoke up for Christ and were shot down as Paul was?

7. What would have happened if Paul had not had such a strong passion that didn’t give up when he faced opposition?
8. Share one thing that challenged you in today’s study.

CLOSING PRAYER

Week 3: Authenticity

LEADER INTRO

Share UCC's definition of Authenticity and discuss what everyone thinks it has to do with faith:

"We will always be honest about our journeys of faith and support and encourage one another so that we can become the people and the church that God has called us to be"

ICEBREAKER (Optional)

REAL OR NOT REAL

Supplies: Tokens

Instructions:

1. Everyone in the group thinks of one "fact" that is either real or not.
2. Give someone the token and have them share their "fact"
3. Let the group guess if the statement is real or not real.
4. The token holder will reveal if the fact was real or not by showing the X side for Not Real or the blank side for Real.
5. Pass the token to the next person and repeat.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA

Play Week Three – UCC Core Value Series Authenticity Video

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be authentic with God and authentic with others?
2. What can help remove the perception that the church is full of hypocrites? (hint: being authentic, not lying)
3. Read together (2 Cor. 12:10). Talk about what this verse means in relation to being real and being weak in our humanity.
4. Doubt can cause us to lose faith and therefore lose authenticity. Doubting is completely normal. Share stories from the bible where people doubted. Talk about the lessons from those stories.

How does reflecting on other's faith stories help heal doubt?

5. Part of being authentic is sharing our truths (our stories). Take a moment and have each group member share their experiences in coming to Christ, coming to church or some personal interaction with God. Give ample time for people to think.

CLOSING PRAYER

Week 4: Generosity

LEADER INTRO

Share UCC's definition of Generosity and have discussion about everyone's initial thoughts of what generosity means in relation to faith.

“We will lavishly give, because of HIS reckless love towards us. It's truly better to give them receive”

ICEBREAKER (*Optional*)

NEVER HAVE I EVER

Supplies:

1. Dixie cups, one for each group member
2. Bag of candy (i.e. starburst jelly beans, m&m, etc)

Instructions:

Pass out a small cup and have each group member put 10 pieces of candy in each cup. The object of the game is to have the most candies at the end. Every time you answer YES, meaning you are guilty of that activity, you must eat one of the candies.

For example, “Never have I ever sang karaoke”. If you have, you eat a piece of your candy.

Leader Tip: A secondary goal to the game is to allow for fun conversation. If someone has a story to share about from their experience, encourage conversation.

1. Never have I ever, been to more than 3 countries.
2. Never have I ever, gone more than 2 days without showering (including childhood)
3. Never have I ever, eaten sushi
4. Never have I ever, climbed a mountain
5. Never have I ever, eaten a carton of ice cream
6. Never have I ever, gotten a speeding ticket
7. Never have I ever, broken a bone
8. Never have I ever, watched an entire tv series in one day

9. Never have I ever, eaten dog or cat food
10. Never have I ever, panic shopped during COVID-19

RIGHT NOW MEDIA

Play Week Four – UCC Core Value Series Generosity Video

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who in your life is someone that you would consider a generous person? What traits or values do you notice?
2. Have you ever had an expensive hobby or money pit? When did you realize you were owned by that item instead of owning it? What lesson did you learn?
3. Read together Psalms 24:1. Do you view your skills and abilities as a gift from God? Do you live like you are a steward or owner?
4. Read together Luke 9:23-24. Are we still disciples if we don't (chose not to) take up our cross? What does this look like practically? What steps can we take to turn control of our lives, possessions, decisions, and preferences to Jesus?
5. How have your priorities changed since becoming a Christian? What is a growth area for you?
6. Read together Acts 2:42-47. How did early Christian's view "their stuff"? What would it be like to be part of a community like this? Talk about how generosity is risky.

7. Do you see yourself as a participant or spectator in what God is doing in your community? Discuss together what God can do with a church full of generous people.
8. Where is God calling you to be more generous? Finances, relationships, possessions, giving of your time? Be specific and share where you want to take new risks with your generosity.

Closing Thought:

“We need to learn how to hold our stuff differently as a result of what God has done in our lives. All my possessions are just tools for fulfilling God’s purposes. I either give them away or use them on that sole basis.” Rick Warren

God’s economy – When we sacrifice: others are served, we are blessed, God is glorified.

CLOSING PRAYER

Week 5: Excellence

LEADER INTRO

Share UCC’s definition of Excellence and have discussion about everyone’s initial thoughts of what it means in relation to faith.

“Excellence honors God and inspires people. We want to be so irresistible to the world that even when the GOSPEL offends them, as it will, they just have to come back because of our excellence in all we do.”

ICEBREAKER (*Optional*)

HUMAN POSTER BOARD



Supplies:

1. Post Its
2. Pens/markers
3. Prize - candy bars

Instructions:

1. Break into two teams. Have one member from each team volunteer to be the human poster board.
2. Team one will use post its to write as many adjectives as they can think of to define Excellence and stick them to the human poster board. Team two will write as many adjectives that do NOT define Excellence.
3. Share the answers aloud and count them. The team with the most post it's at the end of two minutes will win candy bars

RIGHT NOW MEDIA

Play Week Five – UCC Core Value Series Excellence Video

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the difference between success and excellence.

Leader Tip: Excellence is NOT success. You can fail excellently.

2. Why is Pastor P adamant that when we have community events, especially for teens, that we give out name brand pop?

3. Read together (Matt 22:36-40); Why is “Love the Lord your God” the greatest commandment?

4. What does it mean to love someone as yourself? What did God intend?

5. If the response to the GREATEST commandment is love God and love others – how much excellence do you think we should be putting towards it?

6. God wants us to be excellent in both who we are (inward character) and what we do (outward behavior). Excellence requires deliberate practice, effort, commitment, openness to correction (repentance) and learning from failures.

a) How can you improve this week in working towards more excellent and godly character?

b) Do you have a biblical mentor? Someone you go to for biblical advice regularly and have accountability with. Discuss who you can ask to be your biblical mentor.

Leader Tip: At UCC we encourage having a mentor as part of our Grow, Group and Go process. Explain what having a mentor means

and what it does for spiritual growth. Let group members know if they need help identifying a mentor they can ask any staff member.

CLOSING PRAYER

Week 6: Fun

LEADER INTRO

Share UCC's definition of Fun and have discussion about everyone's initial thoughts of what fun means in relation to faith.

"We will do what we love and love what we do. Nothing is more fun than jumping into God story."

- Waffle bar with every topping imaginable (bacon, peanut butter, chocolate syrup, etc.)
- TV Dinner Dining - boxed everything (pizza rolls, bagel bites, pretzels, everyone bring a box of a favorite frozen food item that you can just throw in the oven)
- Loaded Baked Potato Bar
- Gilled Cheese or Cheese Bar - (multiple types of cheeses, bacon, pickles, etc.)
- Salad Bar (for those health conscious eaters)
- Taco Bar
- Ice Cream Sundae Bar
- Bacon palooza - anything and everything with bacon
- Ethnic Foods - dishes from around the world
- Or the easiest option - order out and split the bill!

You get the idea! But make it FUN and entertaining. Build excitement. If you are excited your group members will be excited.

GROUP GAMES

Games are a fun way to break the ice and create good comradery. Below are several game options to play with your group during tonight's meeting. Play one or play several based on the interest of your group. You could also play a game of your own choosing such as Pictionary, CatchPhrase, etc. The overall goal of tonight's meeting is to relax, let your guard down and have fun and laugh together. Games are a great way to do just that!

THINGS

Materials: Pens/Pencils, Pieces of paper to write answers, cup or hat

Instructions: One person reads (or makes their own) things statement (for example "Things that Make you Smile") and everyone else writes down an example on a piece of paper. The answers are collected, mixed up and read aloud and everyone tries to guess who wrote what. (Tip: Don't spend too much time on the guessing part - the fun is in reading the answers)

Sample Thing Questions (do as many as you wish):

1. Things you shouldn't throw off a building
2. Things you shouldn't play catch with
3. Things that can cause a feud
4. Things that go bad
5. Things you wouldn't do for a million dollars
6. Things a chimp thinks when he sees you at the zoo
7. Things paramedics shouldn't say to a patient on the way to the hospital
8. Things that are rip offs
9. Things that don't go together
10. Things birds are actually chirping when they drop a load into a crowd

11. Things you find funny that no one else thinks is
12. Things that are so last year
13. Things that would make a good potato chip flavor

DANCING CHAIN

The game starts with forming a circle, and asking a player to do a simple dance step like moving their hips, or punching the air. The move is practiced by every single member, and the next person on the player's left practices another move as the second step of the dance routine. The chain follows till the last player, and in the end the group practices the whole dance routine together! What is more exciting and healthier than dancing with your group?

Side Note: Your Small Group director would LOVE it if you record the end result of your created dance routine. Share if you dare!
(Remember -sharing is caring!)

CONTINUING NOVEL

This game is likely to end in gales of laughter all across the room. All you need for this fun-filled, interactive game is a writing pad, a pen and a group with crazy imaginations. Vote on a fun theme and ask the first person to write 4-6 lines of a story. Now pass on the paper with just the last line showing and ask the next player to continue the story. Finally read out loud the literary mess that your group has created.

Story theme ideas:

- A man is afraid of everything
- A mom is obsessed with wanting to be popular amongst her teen daughter's friends and peers
- Mark Twain is transferred into the future to experience what life is like now
- A cowboy is forced to work in the corporate world
- An uber driver picks up a doppelganger
- An uber driver picks up Pastor P

- The world's unluckiest man
- A man suffers from a strange mental disorder that forces him to only communicate through puns

PARTNERS IN PEN

Materials needed: Non see-through bag, random objects from around your house, paper and pen.

This game requires a bag full of random objects, a paper, a pen and a bunch of friends. Divide your friends in pairs, asking them to sit back to back. Hand one of the partners a paper and a pen and hand the bag full of random objects to the other partner. Now ask the player with the bag to describe each object without naming it or telling what it is used for while the other partner tries to draw the object. This game usually ends with a bunch of imaginative drawings, and of course a lot of laughs.

BED SHEET PING PONG

Materials Needed: Bed sheet & ping pong balls

Now this is one fun game that everyone is likely to enjoy. Divide your group into pairs, make a pair hold one side of the bed sheet, while another pair holds the opposite side, and drop a ping pong in the middle. Both the teams try to move the ping pong ball by lowering or taking the bed sheet higher. The main goal of the game is to make sure the ping pong drops off the bed sheet from the side of your opponent, and hurrah you are the winner!

SCAVENGER HUNTS (For Virtual Groups)

Create a list of items then ask your members to gather those items and show them on a screen to earn points. Encourage your members to share stories about their items. Sample scavenger items are:

1. Your favorite kitchen gadget
2. Something warm

3. A photograph
4. Your furry friend
5. Most recent book you read
6. Item you owned the longest
7. Something edible
8. Item within arms reach
9. Something in the pocket of your winter jacket
10. Favorite mug

FIVE THINGS

This is an improv game to encourage team building. Here's how to play:

1. Name a topic and a person. That person has 15 seconds to name five specific items within the topic.
2. That player then chooses another topic and player to continue.

For example, you could choose a topic like "classic books" and the first participant would have 15 seconds to name five books like, "The Great Gatsby, 1984, Little Women, The Catcher and the Rye, Oliver Twist".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In lieu of games you could also choose to engage in some fun discussion questions. Some topic ideas are listed below:

1. What are the top three things on your bucket list?
2. What's the biggest risk you have ever taken?
3. What is the worst advice you were ever given?
4. What is the worst present you have ever received and why?
5. What is the weirdest food combination you have ever tried?
6. What is your idea of the perfect day?
7. What keeps you up at night?
8. What was your worst wardrobe mistake?
9. What is your favorite kitchen smell?

10. If you could live anywhere in the world where would it be?

LEADER CLOSING

UCC has a core value of fun because we believe that the gospel needs to be relevant and embraced with joy and gladness. We keep an element of fun in what we do because it's important to keep a song in your heart. We shouldn't live in anger, bitterness, or frustration. Let's give our burdens to God and let His love shine through us so others will see how Great our God is! There is a saying - the only Bible some people will ever read will be you. So, live like you are full of the joy of Jesus!

GO! CHALLENGE

Congratulations! Your group has finished the Core Value Series. Before ending your group, share with your group members the final challenge. GO'ing together! At UCC, we believe that faith must be lived out (James 2:14-26 - faith without works is dead) and we celebrate GO'ing into our communities through our Small Groups.

To celebrate the ending of your Core Value group, think of a serve project you can do and serve together this month. It can be something small, like writing cards to veterans or shut ins at a local nursing home or something bigger like doing lawn work for seniors, taking care packages to health care workers, etc. If you need a list of ideas, you can find them on our website at:

Brainstorm your ideas below:

Serve Date: _____

Remember - let's always be working and encouraging one another to live out our NEXT STEPS into becoming more like Jesus!