



Small Groups Coaching Guide

Dear Small Groups Leaders,

Our mission is to build a life-giving church that lasts! That means we value every generation and look to invest in our community by showing them the love of God in everything we do. East Coast Groups exist to bring people together and lead them toward community and freedom found in Christ. We love God, love people, and love life—together.

As the Pastor of Small Groups at East Coast Church, I want to personally welcome you to the team! Groups are a place where people can have fun, develop friendships, grow spiritually, serve others, experience authentic biblical community, and raise up future small group leaders.

We hope that this guide will be a valuable resource for you. It will give you the “why” behind groups, what groups look like, and how to lead a group everyone wants to be a part of. Life change happens in the context of relationships. That’s what small groups are all about.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 - “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help...”

As you begin your ministry, I want to say how excited I am about this next step in your walk with the Lord. If you have any questions, please contact me or Charlotte Lawrence.

Thank you for helping carry out the vision of Discipleship and Evangelism! You are making a difference!

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Vision for Coaching at East Coast Church

'You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.'

2 Timothy 2:2 NLT

Purpose

A Coach is a leader of leaders who intentionally helps others grow spiritually, build community, and develop leaders. They do this by listening well, loving well, and leading well.

Listening Well: The best gift you can give someone is your full attention.

1. Maintain good eye contact
2. Respond to what you are hearing and the emotion behind it.
3. Invite them to go deeper into their story and ask clarifying questions. Ask them questions about their spiritual practices: What is your time with God like? What has God been speaking to you about?

Loving Well: Know their story (story, pain, spiritual journey)

1. What's your Story? How did they come to know the Lord, where did they grow up, what brought them to East Coast, what made them want to lead a group, etc.
2. What are your biggest challenges/obstacles in your personal, spiritual growth? (pain)
 - Pain (normalize pain, crush shame, deliver hope) - everyone has pain points in their stories. Ask them where they are struggling, where they are hurting. Offer encouragement and prayer.
3. What is your time with God like? What has God been speaking to you about? (spiritual journey)

Leading Well:

1. Self-leadership (yours and theirs)
 - Through personal integrity (lifestyle, no alcohol at church events/groups, guard your social media)
 - Through authentic and honest transparency and vulnerability
 - Through personal spiritual growth and development
 - Through self-care. (body, soul, spirit)
2. Clear communication is kind and loving and builds community
3. Lead through conflict resolution and having difficult conversations
 - When it comes to difficult conversations, delivery trumps the issue. Speak truth in love.

- The goal of listening is not necessarily to feel empathy (although it should) for the other person we are in conflict with, or validate their belief or ideas, or even change their mind in the moment. Our goal is to understand them.
- Always involve your Lead Coach/Ministry leader before confronting a situation or having a difficult conversation. If not done well, this is an area where it's easy to harm someone.
- *Starter lines: Help me understand . . . I need to seek understanding on something . . .
- Everything goes UP . . . problems, venting, complaints
- Honor by asking permission . . . may I share with you what I'm observing?

Nuts and Bolts to being a successful Small Groups Coach

1. Pray for your leaders and with your leaders!
2. Attend your leader's group 1 or 2 times per semester (beginning and end).

Visiting a Group:

- Let the leader know ahead of time that you are coming
 - Remind them you're coming for support, not to lead the group.
 - Have a follow-up conversation focused on encouragement, coach if needed and remind them to look for the next potential leader to raise up.
 - Remind them to **take ATTENDANCE**. To know the health of the group, taking attendance is vital and mandatory; it is the barometer of the group. **For your leaders:** If a group member misses a group for 2 or 3 meetings in a row, we are asking the leader to call or visit the member.
3. Connect 1:1 at least 1x per semester with the leader to build relationships. (coffee, meal, etc)
 4. Connect regularly (establish a pattern – weekly, bi-monthly?) through texting/emailing/calling). Remember their birthday!
 5. **Be familiar with our Church database (Planning Center Online) and help leaders navigate it, take attendance, set up meetings, etc.**
 6. Celebrate wins and support through difficulties.
 7. If the group leader goes to the hospital or there is a death in the family, please reach out to them (and visit if possible) and be sure to notify your Lead Coach.
 8. Help meet practical needs (acts of service, meal train, etc).
 9. Commit to the role of a Coach for 1 year.
 10. **Raise up new leaders!!!**

Coach's Relational Connections

Your Relationship with Your Savior

Your relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship ever! You may already have a good plan for staying connected and keeping your relationship with Him refreshed and growing. We pray that is so. However, sometimes we find ourselves in desert seasons, times of discouragement, or feeling disconnected. You are not alone! If that happens, please let us know. We would love to pray with you and help you navigate that season.

Your Relationship with Your Lead Coach

This is your most important support relationship as it relates to your role as a coach. They genuinely care about you and pray for you regularly. Please respond in a timely manner. When you meet with them, they will be asking you how your leaders are doing personally and how their groups are going. They will want to know who potential leaders are and if there are any concerns the leaders have.

Your Relationship with Your Small Groups Team

Your Small Groups Team is in your corner! We are praying for you and are available to you at any time, for any reason. It is our heart's desire to pastor you well and provide spiritual and leadership growth opportunities for you.

Your Relationship with Your Group Leader

This relationship is the reason you became a Coach! At the start of each group or semester, please make a personal connection with your leader(s) and introduce yourself. Communicate with clarity your plan for staying connected and reminders toward having a successful group. Please pray with them before their group starts for the semester.

Coaching Tools

There are many tools available to you to help you Coach your leaders toward thriving groups!

4 Important Tools

1. **PCO Groups (groups.planningcenteronline.com):** East Coast Church uses a church database called Planning Center Online (PCO) to keep track of groups, take attendance, maintain group rosters, etc.

Training is provided twice/year at the Small Groups Leaders Training and also available online at: myeastcoast.church/small-group-training

Reporting attendance is **MANDATORY** as it is the only metric we have for determining how many people are connecting relationally.

2. **Your Lead Coach:** Your Lead Coach is in your corner! He/she is called and responsible for YOUR care! They are an invaluable resource to you and for you. Lean into them often. Please respond when they reach out to you and make your time with them a priority.
3. **Your Groups Team:** We are committed to praying for you and to your ongoing spiritual development. Our door is always open to you!
4. **Communication:** Communication is important in any family, including your small group family! Please respond to texts, email, etc in a timely manner.