

EMPOWER

Creating Intentional Small Groups and Disciple-Making Leaders

OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS & KEY LEARNINGS

SESSION ONE

GROUND RULES & SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

This session gives an overview of the entire Empower training, covers ground rules, and models a real small group experience. The small group experience is intentionally designed to model four key areas of leading a dynamic small group: Intentional Leader, Relational Environment, Biblical Foundation, and Reproducible Process. All of these intentional elements are debriefed in Session Two.

Key Learnings:

- Understand ground rules and how to personally apply them
- Participate in a very intentional small group – experiencing it as a group member, not a leader/facilitator
- Experience how a group can go incredibly deep in the very first meeting

SESSION TWO

DEBRIEF OF SESSION ONE – INTENTIONAL LEADER, RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, BIBLICAL FOUNDATION, REPRODUCIBLE PROCESS

This session debriefs what was experienced in Session One. Each intentional element modeled in the small group experience is discussed so all of these can be fully understood and reproduced.

Key Learnings:

- How ground rules help the leader to speak an environment into existence
- Orality – the power of biblical story telling
- How to rebuild a story as a way to solidify the teaching, manage the discussion, and to build rapport with the group members
- How to ask effective questions and get everyone involved in the discussion
- How to effectively use silence (and the other ground rules)

- Inviting the Holy Spirit into the group
- Effective group facilitation vs teaching
- Deep dive into: Intentional Leader, Relational Environment, Biblical Foundation

SESSION THREE

SMALL GROUP INGREDIENTS

This session takes a look at the fundamental ingredients of a great small group – from the time the leader begins to prepare before the group through the time the last person walks out the door.

Key Learnings:

- Preparing for your group meeting
- Creating a welcoming environment
- Tools to starting the group on time
- Techniques for an effective opening prayer
- Establishing ground rules – first time, second time, and reminders
- Proper use of icebreakers
- Effective utilization of curriculum
- Asking good questions
- Celebrating in the group
- Techniques for an effective closing prayer time
- Fellowship time
- Ending on time

SESSION FOUR

SMALL GROUP NUTS & BOLTS

This session helps leaders process through a variety of common small group challenges. This helps leaders to be better equipped and prepared to lead healthy, high-functioning groups.

Key Learnings:

- Defining the purpose of the group
- Curriculum options
- Developing a host for your group
- Deciding on a location and advantages to geographic/neighborhood based groups
- Frequency of meeting, breaks, and seasons
- Fun and social gatherings
- Solving childcare challenges
- Structure and authority
- Inviting people to your group
- Techniques to healthy group growth
- Calling and developing an apprentice
- Group multiplication/branching philosophies
- Key elements of a great first group meeting and vision cast

SESSION FIVE

OVER & UNDER-TALKERS & LISTENING

This session gives practical help for dealing with over-talkers and under-talkers. It also equips leaders to become better listeners and gives practical help for positive growth. Leaders will develop better listening skills that will help in every area of life.

Key Learnings:

- Identifying the various types of over-talkers
- Understanding how over-talkers affect the small group leader, group members, relational environment, and the discipleship process
- Tools to effectively deal with over-talkers, both inside and outside the group
- Identifying the various types of under-talkers
- Understanding how under-talkers affect the small group leader, group members, relational environment, and the discipleship process
- Effective tools for helping draw out under-talkers – both inside and outside the group
- Effective listening skills
- Overcoming environmental and other challenges to effective listening (and understanding)

SESSION SIX

LOOKING BELOW THE SURFACE

This session provides leaders with practical help in going deep with people, uncovering issues that are creating obstacles to personal and spiritual growth. The skills learned in this session apply to all areas of life and relationships.

Key Learnings:

- Helping people look below the surface to create lasting change.
- Understanding the various levels:
 - Behavioral: Thoughts, emotions, words and actions
 - Motive: Hopes, wants and desires
 - Core: Beliefs, principles and values
- Investigating blind spots
- The value of realizing we all have blind spots
- Using blind spots for personal growth and spiritual maturity
- Valuing and asking for feedback
- Achieving true understanding in our personal conversations
- Valuing the perspective of others – valid vs correct
- Effectively challenging/changing the perspective of others
- Getting to the basement – going deep with people, uncovering things at the motive and core levels
- What is being said, why it's being said, and potential lies that might exist
- Preparing people to walk others down into the "basement"
- Our part, the other person's part, and God's part

SESSION SEVEN

BECOMING A SHEPHERD – PURSUING STRAYS & BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This session utilizes group activities and discussion to help equip leaders to be good shepherds, to pursue strays, and to deal effectively with resolving conflict. This is another session that will apply to many areas of life, not just in small group leadership.

Key Learnings:

- Introduction to identifying and actively pursuing strays
- Group exercise in pursuing strays
- Our part, the other person's part, God's part
- Techniques for pursuing strays, having meaningful conversation, and restoration
- Biblical conflict resolution – personal challenges and healthy conflict resolution

SESSION EIGHT

PASTORING YOUR SMALL GROUP & DEALING WITH CRISIS

This session helps leaders see themselves as the pastor of their group and provides practical help to succeed in that role.

Key Learnings:

- Seeing yourself as the Pastor of your small group
- Group exercise to intentionally meet physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of others
- Things to avoid/be cautious of and setting healthy expectations
- Using these situations as a way to:
 - Mentor your apprentice
 - Call out the gifts of people in your group
 - Provide meaningful ways for people to serve
 - Intentionally loving others who are in the lives of those you are caring for – being aware and responsive
 - Deepen the relationships of those in your group
 - Celebrating God at work
- Effective means of dealing with crisis, tools and helps, what to take on and what to hand off, getting church leadership involved, and potential triggers

SESSION NINE

DISCIPLESHIP – INTRO & INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

This session helps equip leaders to reach and walk beside lost people through intentional relationships – focus on Acts 2:42-47. Emphasis on caring for people, bearing their burdens, sharing life and the hope of Jesus, and daring them to take a next step.

Key Learnings:

- Introduction to discipleship – Acts 2:42-47
- Developing intentional relationships with those who don't yet know Jesus

- Caring for others
- Taking a relationship deep – journeying with people through life’s challenges – bearing
- Opening doors to deeper conversations about life and faith – sharing
- Appropriately challenging/encouraging people to take right next steps of faith – daring
- Initial steps of walking next to those who say “YES” to Jesus

SESSION TEN

DISCIPLESHIP – GROWING THROUGH THE STAGES

This session helps leaders to understand how to intentionally move someone through the stages of spiritual maturity and empower others to do the same. Essential learnings for creating a movement of disciples who make disciples.

Key Learnings:

- Introduction to the stages of spiritual maturity – Infant, Child, Young Adult, Parent
- Group exercise to learn how to identify where people are in the process and help them to move to the next stage
- Review of the basic components of discipleship
- Personal challenge – who are you discipling?
- Discussion on how many you can effectively disciple and a personal challenge to get started

SESSION ELEVEN

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS & SERVE PROJECTS

This session uses group activities and discussions to help leaders create a dynamic community of believers within the group, and to encourage group members to impact the larger community in which they live – serve projects.

Key Learnings:

- Introduction and vision cast to creating a community of believers – Acts 2:42-47
- Group exercise – building a community within the group
- Group exercise – reaching the greater community (outside the group)
- Developing intentional serve projects
- Using serve projects to intentionally grow and develop the people inside your group, raise up your apprentice, build relationships with people outside the group, connecting people to God and the church, and celebrating God at work

SESSION TWELVE

LIVING ON MISSION – AS YOU GO, EVERYWHERE YOU GO

This session uses group activities and discussions to challenge leaders to see their lives and purpose in a radical new way – as people on mission for God 24/7, as they go, everywhere they

go. The session ends with a personal empowerment – sending the leaders out as shepherds, pastors and everyday missionaries - world changers, and a celebration!

Key Learnings:

- Defining vocation as a calling by the will of God – our primary life pursuit
- Seeing our jobs – how we pay the bills, as a secondary or subordinate life pursuit
- Watching for God at work and being willing to join Him
- Being more intentional with our time and energy where we live, work and play
- Thinking through our part, the part of others, and God's part
- Realizing the eternal impact our lives can have living on mission for God - becoming world changers
- Personal application challenge

Note: Following each Empower Session there is a practical application assignment that each participant is encouraged to complete to help drive concepts deeper and begin to build new habits.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX

- Sharing your faith as you go, everywhere you go
- Discipleship – Additional study
- Training assessment