

Leading Small Groups That Thrive Supplemental Resource: Sample Group Covenants

Covenants are agreements between people that define how they will interact. For a small group, a covenant is a commitment on how each group member will interact with and support other group members. Agreed-upon covenants provide guard rails that both indicate when something is unbalanced and when your group is really thriving.

In creating a group covenant there are a few big picture themes to be sure you cover:

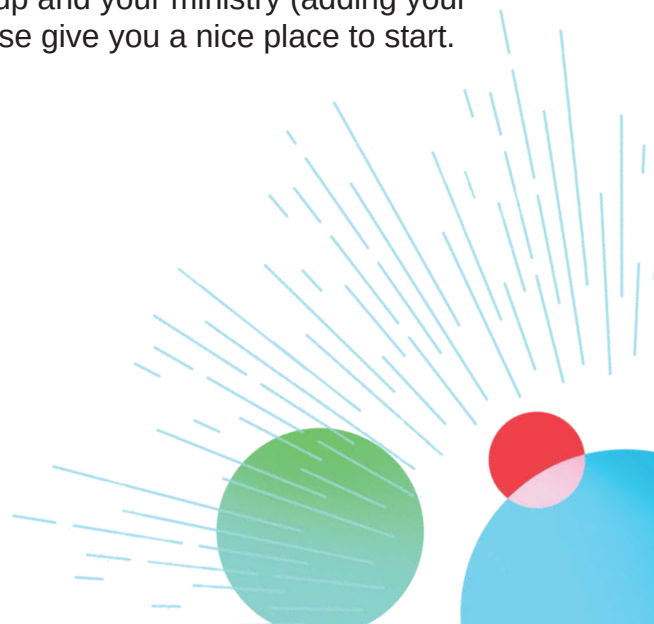
- > **People:** who will be gathering?
- > **Places:** where will you gather?
- > **Purposes:** why are you gathering?
- > **Plans:** what will you do when you gather?

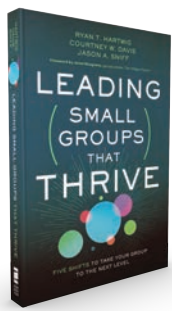
Other important items include creating an environment that promotes honesty and builds trust, establishing clear expectations for participating and communication both within and outside of group gathering times. The list can go on and on.

A group covenant is a great way to capture your group's key structures and ask members for their commitment to the group. For more information, refer to pages 93 and 94 of *Leading Small Groups That Thrive*.

We encourage you to create a living document that helps your group thrive in relationship and spurs you on to clearly accomplish your purpose.

The following are a few examples and styles that accomplish the overarching goals of a group covenant. Of course, personalize and edit them to fit your group and your ministry (adding your church/ministry logo might add a nice touch!), but we hope these give you a nice place to start.





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Sample Group Covenant #1

As a small group, we commit ourselves to becoming the best Biblical community we can be. We understand that when a group of people with various personalities and backgrounds gather together, forming a community takes time. But the effort is worth it as each group becomes a small but beautiful picture of the Bride of Christ.

Each of us agrees to the following:

Grow: Healthy small groups build authentic relationships with each other. This is done through gathering consistently as a group and connecting intentionally outside of our small group gatherings.

Together we choose: (Circle Preferences)

Meeting Frequency	Weekly	Bi-Weekly		
Meeting Duration (time)	1 hour	1½ hours	2 hours	
Preferred Group Communication	Text	Social Media	Email	Phone
Meeting Location:	_____			

Grow: Healthy groups pray, spend time in the Word of God, and help all members become more like Jesus in their every-day life; every time they gather.

Together we choose:

Study Focus:
Spiritual Discipline Focus:

Give: Thriving groups help each other in all aspects of life and find ways to serve others. Together we choose:

Specific ways we can serve each other well:
Specific ways we can serve others well:

Go: Thriving groups identify and reach to the people and places their group has influence. Together we choose:

People our group will pray for:
Places our group will commit to loving and serving:

There are no perfect groups and no perfect people. The beauty of a great small group is that we commit to loving and pursuing each other. We commit to working through any conflicts or misunderstandings with love and patience. We also commit to holding one another accountable to this covenant.

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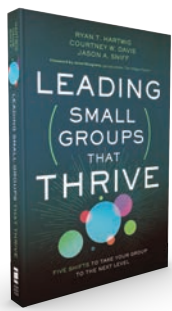
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Sample Group Covenant #2

Small Group Guidelines

WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING VALUES:

Clear Purpose: To . . .

Group Attendance To give priority to the group meeting time (call if I am absent or late).

Safe Environment To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved so we will be careful with being judgmental, giving quick answers, and offering our simple fixes to complex situations.

Be Confidential To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group (unless someone states they are going to hurt someone else or themselves).

Conflict Resolution To avoid gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matthew 18:15-17, which begins with going directly to the person with whom we have an issue.

Spiritual Health To challenge and encourage one another to live a healthy and balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.

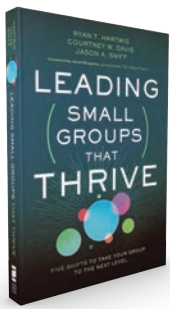
Welcome Newcomers To invite our friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers.

Building Relationships To get to know one another outside of the group time and pray for each other regularly.

Shared Responsibility To work with each other and develop group ownership as each one of us helps with group responsibilities (rotate homes, study facilitators, snacks, drinks, collect prayer requests, etc.).

Other:

Group Signatures:



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Sample Group Covenant #3

The purpose of our small group is to ...

The logistics and structure for our small group:

- Frequency: We will meet _____ times a month from ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___
- Duration: We will meet on _____ (day) from _____ (time) to _____, and we will strive to start on time and close on time.
- Location: We will meet at _____ (place), or will we rotate where we meet.
- Participation: We will agree to give attendance priority (at least 3 of every 4 gatherings).
- Delegation: We agree to share responsibility for the group.
- Preparation: We agree to come prepared and ready to fully participate in group gatherings.
- Invitation: We agree to continuously invite and look to have an open chair mentality for new people to attend our group gathering.
- Accountability: We agree to hold each other accountable to the areas agreed upon in this covenant.

We agree to the covenant information listed above. The ultimate goal is for each of us to take our next steps in our walk with Jesus and for each individual to learn how to live for Jesus in our every day lives.

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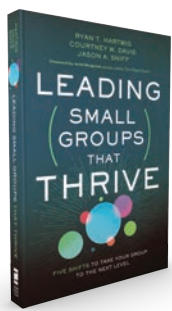
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Sample Group Covenant #5

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. A written agreement will help you avoid unspoken agendas and disappointed expectations. If the idea of having a written agreement is unfamiliar to your group, we encourage you to give it a try. A clear agreement is invaluable for resolving conflict constructively and for setting your group on a path to health.

We agree to the following values:

Clear Purpose:

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting (call if absent or late)

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes)

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group

Spiritual Health: To give group members permission to help me live a healthy spiritual life that is pleasing to God

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and we will encourage each attendee to share a small-group role in order to serve one another in love.

We agree to the following logistics:

- Refreshments/Mealtimes _____
- Child Care _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____

We agree to the following commitment (sign in box below):