



Small Group Leader Guide

2022 - 2023





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We'd like to thank you for your commitment to being a Small Group Leader at Nativity. You are the heart of our parish and the backbone of our Small Group family. It is our promise to provide you with the resources and support to make your small group experience a success. We have seen thousands of hearts transformed, lives renewed, and our community strengthened through Small Group Leaders like you.

In today's culture, faith is not often a topic of conversation. It's easy to feel like we've lost connection with the friendships needed to strengthen our relationship with Jesus.

Our prayer is that your small group will revitalize your faith commitment and bring the members of your group closer to God and each other.

As we unite this year to carry out our mission to love God, love others, and make disciples, we will continue to look for opportunities to deepen our connections between our ministers, missionaries and Small Group Leaders.

Nativity's focus this year is **Ad Orientem**, or turning our focus to God, despite all of the distractions around us. It can be hard not to get distracted with everything going on and lose sight of what ultimately matters most. As we turn to God this new message season, we pray Small Groups will be a source of joyful fellowship, thoughtful worship, and loving discipleship for you.

We aim at developing a culture of purpose-driven groups and you, as a leader, are our most important investment. Along with our Group Life Team, we're dedicated to providing resources and support for a fruitful small group. Our energy and efforts will be focused on **spiritual nourishment** & self-care, to grow our **online campus** deeper & wider and to uncover God's plan for us to **serve** our local community.

We pray this annual booklet will help you start strong and guide you in your journey.

With Gratitude,
Susan Aldridge and Marek Lawera
Nativity Small Groups



SCAN FOR
UPCOMING EVENTS





message series topics

Fall 1	Expectations (Sept / Oct)
Fall 2	Who We Are / Why We Are Weird (Oct / Nov)
Advent Series	Missing Peace (Nov / Dec)
Winter 1	Decisions that Simplify / Declutter Your Life (Jan / Feb)
Lent Series	Healing (Feb / Apr)
Easter Series	Serve Our Community (Apr / May)
Spring	God at Work (May / June)



who we are

MISSION

Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples.

VISION

Make Church matter by growing disciples among disconnected Catholics in North Baltimore and influencing churches to do the same elsewhere.

OUR VALUES

The standards we hold important and pursue in everything we do.

Simple

We're not that smart

Adaptable

Keep calm and carry on

Committed

Dedicated to the greater good

Excellence

Outstanding fitness for a purpose

Growth Oriented

Go Deeper. Go Wider.

Hospitable

Wow-ing people with extraordinary service





LIFE CHANGE

SMALL GROUPS

HEALTHY EFFECTIVE LEADERS



Primary Stakeholders

- GroupLife Directors
- Leaders
- Members



Our Values

- Simple
- Excellent
- Adaptable
- Growth-Oriented
- Committed
- Hospitable



Vision

Generation upon generation will come to know, love and serve Jesus Christ.

Mission

Creating healthy balanced small group environments where disciples can grow.

WHAT WE DO

Primary Offering

Small Groups are the catalyst to growing in our faith journey and become who God intended each of us to be by balancing the STEPS.

Other Key Offerings

- Member Care
- Growth Path - 5 STEPS
- Leader Development
- Connection Events
- Retreats

HOW WE MARKET

Tag line

Life is better connected

Target audience

- Timonium Tim or Tina: skeptical attendee, arms crossed and unsure about Church, but sees some value in attending.
- Distant Disciples Online: enjoys our Church experience online from out of the 21093 area and desires a deeper connection, wants to grow deeper spiritually and experience healthy relationships.

Positioning

To grow spiritually you must be connected relationally.





next s.t.e.p.s.

LEADER ACTION STEP

Read this page to your group before one of your meetings and send them the info to review then talk about it for 5 minutes at the beginning of the next meeting (share link to website for online groups).

The heart of our Church is to become growing disciples, who are giving the whole of our lives to God, not merely checking off boxes or going through the motions. We are always challenging and encouraging the members of our Church to take their next step.

What's your next step?

SERVE- We have been given unique gifts and talents by God. Using our gifts to serve in Ministry and Missions creates an environment for others to experience God's presence on campus and brings God's love to other communities both locally and globally.

TITHE- We seek to honor God in all areas of life, including in our finances. As stewards, not owners, of the resources God has given us, we are called to sacrificial giving, which means percentage, progressive giving to the local Church and the poor.

ENGAGE- We believe faith grows in a circle. In Small Groups, we grow in fellowship and relationship with one another, with God, and in ways we cannot grow on our own. Small Groups are where our big Church gets small.

PRACTICE- We know God wants us to live lives of integrity and virtue that stem from our personal relationship with Christ. We strive to practice daily prayer, Scripture reading, and full participation in the Sacraments to receive grace for our faith growth.

SHARE- We want others to experience the life-changing message of the Gospel. Our strategy is to "Invest and Invite". That simply means we invest in the relationships we have with people in our lives, and when the time comes, invite them to Church with us.



small group roles & responsibilities

Don't lead alone!

Leader - Discipleship Role

- Loves Learning, heart for the Word, and desires a growing walk with God
- Social, fun-loving, encouraging, and has hospitality gifts
- Shepherd's heart, servant leadership, spiritual walk and spirit of humility

Future Leader

- Shepherd's heart, servant leadership, spiritual walk and spirit of humility
- Loves Learning, heart for the Word, and desires a growing walk with God
- Social, fun-loving, encouraging, and has hospitality gifts

Serve - Ministry Role

- Cheerleader, goal-oriented, and loves to see people develop and grow themselves

LEADER ACTION STEP

Read this page to your group before one of your meetings and send them the info to review then identify a role they think best fits their personality traits about it for 5 minutes at the beginning of the next meeting (share link to website for online groups)

Share - Evangelism

- Includer and bringer, heart for people (especially unconnected/unchurched people in our country and around the world) and cross-cultural experiences and involvement

Engage - Fellowship Role

- Social, fun-loving, encouraging, and has hospitality gifts
- Loves Learning, heart for the Word, and desires a growing walk with God

Practice - Worship Role

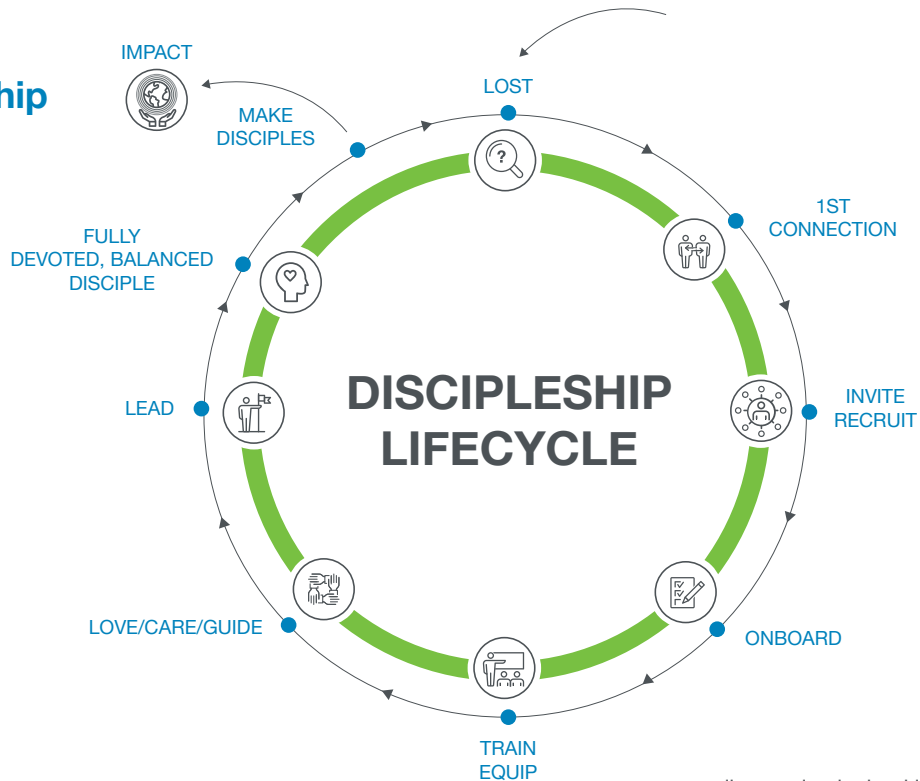
- Encourager, heart for personal and corporate worship, desires a deeper walk with God through prayer, and enjoys music and singing



LEADER ACTION STEP

Share and explain the graphic above to your group before one of your meetings and send them the info to review then talk about it for 5 minutes at the beginning of the next meeting (share link to website for online groups)

discipleship
lifecycle





leader tools

Your Small Group is where our large Church gets small. Your group will meet to discuss faith, go deeper in the weekly message, and support one another in their relationship with Christ. This is the place to care for others and be cared for; a place to impact our community and the world. Small Groups are a great place to explore, ask questions, and grow.

You've stepped up to lead a Small Group, now what?

Before Each Group Meeting

- **Pray**
- **Preview materials** and the **discussion questions**
- Leader or Co-Leader communicates to **confirm location** and **attendance**

During Each Group Meeting

- Meetings typically last 90 minutes
- **Fellowship** for approximately 10-15 minutes
- Open in **prayer**
- Introduce and **watch the material**
- **Lead a discussion** referring to weekly questions as a guide
- **Announcements** and upcoming events
- Close in **prayer**


SCAN
FOR TOOLS



22-23 goals

- Equip **Small Group Leaders** with enhanced digital leader resources and group tools on the website
- Support the next generation by providing mentors for current **Small Group University** leaders
- Host spiritual experiences and connection events that will empower our **leadership body and members** to become more purpose-driven
- Love, lead and impact the **GroupLife Leadership Team and Coaches** in a transformational way





connect online

@nativitysmallgroups



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



HOW TO MANAGE
YOUR GROUP INFO



LEAD A
GROUP



LEADER
TOOLKIT



WATCH
MESSAGES



ONLINE
TIPS



OPEN
GROUPS



SMALL GROUP
UNIVERSITY



serving in small group ministry

SCAN TO LEARN MORE



LEADING IN-PERSON OR
HYBRID SMALL GROUPS



LEADING ONLINE
SMALL GROUPS

In Person Small Group Leader

Lead 6-12 people in faith discussion to go deeper in the weekly message and support one another in their relationship with Christ through a small group. Facilitate connection with others in person and create a safe and encouraging environment.

Hybrid Small Group Leader

Lead 6-12 people in faith discussion to go deeper in the weekly message and support one another in their relationship with Christ through a small group. Facilitate connection and create a supportive environment in a hybrid format for in person and online members.

Online Small Group Leader

Lead 6-12 people in faith discussion to go deeper in the weekly message and grow in relationship with Christ through an online small group. Help cultivate a community of support and create a home for people near and far.

SGU Mentor

Our University Age Leaders expressed interest in 1-on-1 spiritual mentoring as this new group segment emerges. Invest in the Next Generation of Adult Group Leaders this year!

GroupLife Ministry Leader Team

Our GroupLife Ministry Leaders serve and care for small group leaders. They plan events, build relationships and resource leaders throughout the season. Each segment of our groups we call life stages is looking to grow this year.

SCAN TO SIGN UP



LEAD A
GROUP



BECOME A
SGU MENTOR



JOIN THE GROUPLIFE
MINISTRY LEADER TEAM



small group staff



Susan Aldridge received her bachelor's degree from Loyola University Maryland. She has served Church of the Nativity as Director of Adult Small Groups since 2018. Previously Susan owned a talent acquisition company and supported the intelligence community in Technology and Cyber Security recruiting. She is a connector and evangelist with a heart for others. She is currently responsible for annual planning for small group ministry and leader development, contributing to the Adult Discipleship strategic planning team, event coordination, small group social media and online content management.



Emily Issing began her Nativity story in our High School Student Program. She is a natural leader, a gifted event organizer, and a small group message presenter. Emily had the vision to keep our college-age students more connected to Christ. That vision led her to create Small Group University, a college-aged segment of our Adult Small Groups. In addition, she is a musician and athlete who inspires other college-aged students in her leadership of faith and friendship.



Marek Lawera engaged deeper in his faith at Nativity in 2018, joined a men's small group and now serves on the Nativity staff as the Associate Director of Small Groups. His background in sales and coaching prepared him for this new role in developing Christian community. He has always had a heart for knowing and helping others. Having his faith revitalized and strengthened by relationships in small groups, Marek hopes to apply his experience towards growing along side other small group leaders at Nativity.

Marek believes that small groups are a key element of anyone's discipleship path, giving us the accountability, strength and foundation needed to become the disciples God has called us to be.

Having experienced firsthand the transformative power of a relationship with Christ in small groups and in the lives of young men, he is especially focused on getting more young people and men involved.



this year's grouplife ministry leaders

Men	Women	Couples	Mixed Adult	Small Group University (SGU)
Marek Lawera	Maura Marquez	Beth & Dan Morrison	Brian Cooney Dori Batavick Sherine Centenari	Emily Issing



SCAN TO
SIGN UP





small group member contact info

Name | Phone | Email



love **God** love **others** make **disciples**

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