



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Everything you need to
know to serve students
in our ministry

2019 - 2020

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Welcome!

Are you ready to be a real-life small group leader? We can't wait! Before you start, make sure you read through this volunteer handbook. It'll have everything you need to know as you join our ministry, and it's a great place to reference if you forget something!

Here's a few things you should know up front:

THE WIN

As a small group leader, we need you to invest in the lives of a few to encourage authentic faith. You win when kids have meaningful interactions—both inside and outside of small group—that deepen their faith in Jesus and influence their relationships with others.

JOB DESCRIPTION

What exactly IS a small group leader? A friend? A parent? A coach? A teacher? Here's what we define as a small group leader:

A small group leader is anyone who chooses to invest in the lives of a few to encourage authentic faith. Every SGL should do five things:

- **Be Present**—Connect their faith to a community by showing up predictably, mentally, and randomly.
- **Create a Safe Place**—Clarify their faith as they grow by leading the group, respecting the process and guarding the heart.
- **Partner with Parents**—Nurture an everyday faith by cueing the parent, honoring the parent and reinforcing the family.
- **Make it Personal**—By your example, inspire their faith by living in community setting priorities and being real.
- **Move Them Out**—Engage their faith in a bigger story by moving them to someone else, moving them to be the church and moving them to what's next.

You can read more about these principles in the next couple pages!

QUALIFICATIONS

To be a small group leader, you don't have to be a Bible scholar, pass a theological aptitude test or display a particular set of special spiritual gifts. You don't even need to be that cool! Here's all you need to do:

- Love God.
- Care about kids.
- Be committed to consistently investing in and caring for your few over a period of time.
- Complete and pass the background check and Ministry Safe training.

EXPECTATIONS

- Serve weekly.
- Show up on time.
- Come prepared with the question and materials you need for group.
- Connect with your youth staff and be willing to ask for guidance when needed.
- Connect with your few in various ways outside of youth group.
- Attend the appropriate training events and meetings whenever possible.

What's Leading Small?

We have a challenge—a BIG challenge. We want to help kids and teenagers develop an authentic faith—faith that stays with them when life gets hard, when they have more questions than answers and when they graduate and move on to whatever is next in their life. We want to them to have a faith that lasts.

We believe that the only way to cultivate authentic faith is through **leading small**.

That's why what you do every week matters! When you lead small, you realize that what you **do for a few** will always have more potential than what you do for many.

When you **lead small**, you simply make a choice to invest strategically in the lives of a few over time so you can help them build an authentic faith.

Here's a few important graphics, you may be curious about:



- a circle represents a group of students or kids. Not just any group, YOUR group.



- a large orange dot represents YOU. The SGL. Don't you look good?



- a small dot represents one individual in your group. Someone you are leading.



- a home represents . . . well, a student's home. What else would it be?

There are **5** parts of the small group leader job description that we'll go over in the following pages:

BE PRESENT
CREATE A SAFE PLACE
PARTNER WITH PARENTS
MAKE IT PERSONAL
MOVE THEM OUT

be present.

CONNECT THEIR FAITH TO A COMMUNITY

God created us for community. Jesus illustrated community. The Church practiced community. That's why you show up—to connect the faith of your few to a community.

When you choose to be present, that means you. . .

1) Show up predictably.

For most of you, that means weekly. You cannot lead a small group without trust. You cannot build a community without trust. And the first step to gaining the trust of your few is making sure they know you will show up—predictably.

2) Show up mentally.

Check your phone at the door—unless of course you are using it for this app! When you show up mentally, you commit to engaging your few in meaningful discussions and to listening—really listening—to what your students have to say. This means knowing the content ahead of time and being mentally prepared to shed some light and scriptural insight into their world. They are worth an hour of your attention.

3) Show up randomly.

Never underestimate the power of showing up randomly. This may look like a phone call, a birthday card, a ball game, a text message, a Facebook post or a postcard from your trip. These small connections may seem insignificant, but when you choose to be present in an unexpected way, outside of your weekly group time, you reinforce your students' connection to the community you are creating.

The best way to be present is to lead small.



JOURNAL

Use the space below to record a few things about those in your circle. Go the extra step and bring this book along with a pen and paper to your next meeting, and record important tidbits about your few.

SHOW UP PREDICTABLY

Record something specific about each one of your few, and make a note about his or her latest accomplishment:

SHOW UP MENTALLY

Start a practice of writing down prayer requests. This will help you continue to pray throughout the week and also give you a way to follow up on specific prayer requests.

SHOW UP RANDOMLY

Consider sending a note with a picture of something fun that happened in your circle (on your phone or through the mail.)

create a safe place.

CLARIFY THEIR FAITH AS THEY GROW

There's inevitable tension when a group of different people with different personalities and backgrounds come together in one place. But what if tension is actually the platform that gives you an opportunity to demonstrate that this is a safe place? The safer your environment is, the more honestly your few will clarify their faith in the context of your circle.

When you chose to create a safe place, that means you . . .

1) Lead the group.

Lead your group to value acceptance. Lead your group to value confidentiality. Lead your group to value honesty. When you do, your few will feel safe to be themselves, share doubts, ask questions and admit their struggles and clarify their faith in an authentic way.

2) Respect the process.

Authentic faith is a continual process. It's not static. It is the molding, crafting, shaping and changing of faith through time, life experience and reflection. And the process isn't the same for everyone. Each individual is different, so celebrate their steps. Refuse to get impatient with the process. And let God do what only God can do.

3) Guard the heart.

Faith is personal. We often process the most difficult times in our lives through the filter of faith which is why, as an SGL, you should expect some pretty tough and even shocking things to be revealed during small group time. Your job is to know when to respect confidentiality and when you need outside help.

The best way to create a safe place is to lead small.



JOURNAL

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LEAD THE GROUP

Write down specific ways you can make your few feel accepted every week in your circle:

RESPECT THE PROCESS

When one of your few asks a question, your reaction may be as important as any answer you give. Write down three guidelines to help you respond in a way that will allow you to speak truth in love and honor their process.

GUARD THE HEART

Who is your “boss” as an SGL? Find that person and ask them what your church’s rules are for guarding the heart of your few?
When and who to contact for additional assistance:

Boundaries your church has set to protect you and your few:

partner with parents.

NURTURE AN EVERYDAY FAITH

No matter what you think about the parents of your few, two things are true. One, every parent wants to be a better parent. Two, they will always have more influence than you do. So, if you want to nurture the kind of faith that lasts, you need to partner with parents.

When you chose to partner with parents, that means you . . .

1) Cue the parent.

When you “cue” the parent, you give them just the right information at just the right time so they can make a move to do more than they might otherwise do. Cueing the parent is pretty easy. Just let them know who you are, and tell them what you’re talking about.

2) Honor the parent.

Some children struggle with authority. No, scratch that. All children struggle with authority. But remember this—if you’re not on the parent’s side, you’re not on the kid’s side. Model what it means to respect not only your own parents, but theirs’ as well.

3) Reinforce the family.

Although parents potentially have 3,000 hours a year of possible time with their child, it’s not always the same quality as the hours you have with your few. So when you plan your events and small group outings, be strategic. Don’t steal critical family moments. Christmas Eve is probably not a great time for a sleep over.

The best way to partner with parents is to lead small.



JOURNAL

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CUE THE PARENT

You already know what you think about parents—the ways you might secretly judge or question their methods. It's best not to write those down. So let's focus on the positives. What are two benefits of partnering with parents?

HONOR THE PARENT

Say something positive and specific about their child to the parent and let them know that you genuinely care. Ask them what they think you should know about their child.

REINFORCE THE FAMILY

Brainstorm some topics that might come up in your circle that would be a good opportunity to cue your few to connect with their parents.

make it personal.

INSPIRE THEIR FAITH WITH YOUR EXAMPLE

The most important person you need to lead is not your few—it's actually you.

When you choose to make it personal, that means you . . .

1) Live in community.

Whether hosted by your church, formed organically, or brought together through another local ministry, your own community provides the healthy and necessary outlet for you to process faith in a way you can't with your few.

2) Set priorities.

One of the best things you can do for your few, and for yourself, is to make your priorities clear. They need to see what you value. And when they see the way you prioritize your own relationship with God. It might even inspire your few to think about their own priorities.

3) Be real.

Find ways to relate to your few without compromising who you really are. It's more important for them to see a real, live person that is still growing, learning, and trying to live out authentic faith than it is for them to have another friend.

The best way to make it personal is to lead small.



JOURNAL

Use the space below to record a few things about those in your circle. Go the extra step and bring this book along with a pen and paper to your next meeting, and record important tidbits about your few.

LIVE IN COMMUNITY

Use this space to make a list of a few people who are or could be your community. Are they in a similar stage of life? Are they a little further down the road? Would they understand your struggles? Do you feel comfortable sharing with them? Would you respect their input?

SET PRIORITIES

What are you currently doing to invest in your own spiritual growth?

BE REAL

How do you decide if a personal story will be beneficial for your few?

move them out.

ENGAGE THEIR FAITH IN A BIGGER STORY

When you focus on the bigger story of their lives, you understand that what happens inside your circle is measured by what happens outside your circle.

When you chose to move them out, that means you. . .

1) Move them to someone else.

The truth is, as we speak, while you are still their SGL, your few need other positive adult influences in their lives. Your few are going to connect with other leaders who will teach them something about God and help them discover something about life. They will experience significant things together. And that's a good thing. So do your part to encourage other adult influences in their lives.

2) Move them to be the Church.

The Church is more than just a building or a location. The Church is a growing, changing, moving, living being that your few get to be a part of.

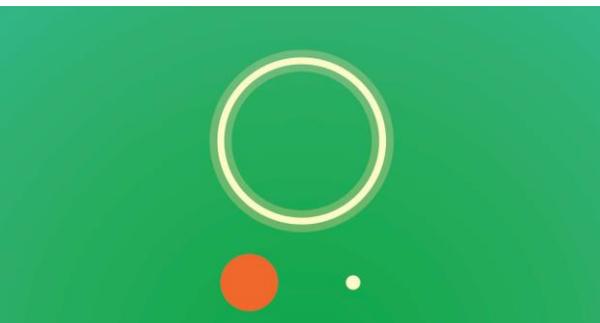
Never underestimate the importance of letting them pass out goldfish at snack time, allowing them to participate in telling the Bible story, or letting them help lead worship for younger kids.

The options are endless.

3) Move them to what's next.

No matter what is next in their lives, it is your responsibility to do everything you can to set them up for that transition and to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible.

The best way to move them out is to lead small.



JOURNAL

Use the space below to record a few things about those in your circle. Go the extra step and bring this book along with a pen and paper to your next meeting, and record important tidbits about your few.

MOVE THEM TO SOMEONE ELSE

Think about your few. Make a list of the people you know who are a positive influence in their lives. Make an effort to speak positively about these individuals and encourage these relationships.

MOVE THEM TO BE THE CHURCH

Write down a few ways you can help your few serve—within your circle or outside of your church.

MOVE THEM TO WHAT'S NEXT

What stage of life are your few in? Use this space to list a few big milestones coming up for them.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER STANDARD OF CONDUCT

If you are going to volunteer to serve the church, there are expectations we have of you as a leader and as a person of influence. This is not just when you're working but in all areas of your life. We are not trying to dictate your life; this is biblical for leaders in the church. God's grace is a huge part of this. As leaders we are called to set an example for the students in our ministry. Therefore, we put this code of conduct together.

-Know God, strive to be in relationship with Him daily.

-Attend youth group regularly including power groups and big groups

-Contact your students once or more a month via postcards, emails, phone calls, attending their activities, having coffee, etc.

-Keeping RISE students safe while in our care at all times, (seatbelts, responsible driving, no "R" rated movies, no PG-13 movies for Middle School students without written permission from parents)

-Conduct your private life (the time when no one else sees your deeds, thoughts, desires, etc) in a manner worthy of the highest integrity. This covers but is not limited to all forms of media (books, tv, movies, internet, music, etc.), how you treat your family, what you do with friends for fun, what you do with the opposite sex, etc.

-Keep yourself free from any questioning thoughts by anyone by not being alone with a student, even in a car. Not spending too much time with any student of the opposite sex even in public places or on youth group trips. Keeping your body contact with students at an exceptionally high level so no one will even begin to wonder about you, among other things.

-Staying within the law concerning drugs, alcohol, and tobacco (meaning legal age) and following the biblical standards of use of these substances (don't get drunk or even close, use drugs only as prescriptions and as prescribed, treating your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, etc.) Do not drink, smoke, or chew around students and/or while volunteering.

If there is sin, there needs to be admission and forgiveness so as to not give the devil a foothold. Please don't hesitate to find one of the four year-round staff and get it dealt with. We will all fall at some point in some area! There is nothing new under the sun!

I agree to the terms above as long as I am a volunteer of RISE ministry of Maple Valley Church. If I am unable to uphold this covenant, I understand that I will need to resign from my volunteer position or that I may be asked by the leadership to resign.

(Volunteer Signature)

(Date)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

DISCIPLINE

If you have a child who is not following the guidelines that have been put in place, try redirecting the child's behavior. If that doesn't work, have a plan in place to contact security or staff so that they can handle the situation apart from small group.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Each state has its own child abuse mandated reporting policies. Be sure you are familiar with those policies. You can contact your state Department of Child and Family Services for specific guidelines.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Everything is private in your small group time, but nothing is secret. If you are concerned that one of your few is harming themselves, being harmed or harming someone—this is ground for breaking confidence. Inform the parents within 24 hours and/or report if necessary. Involve youth staff as soon as possible to ensure all necessary steps are taken.

FAQ'S

Can I drive my middle schoolers or high schoolers to lunch?

After parent permission, you can take your students to lunch or bowling or whatever you want! Make sure your church leader knows and you aren't alone.

What is Connect For?

At the end of every series, we celebrate what we have learned by having a "Connect For" night! They are SG only nights, meaning no worship, no talk, no games planned. We allow this to be a night where you can CONNECT with your few FOR: fellowship, fun, service, or friendship! There are plenty of ideas on our website link below. It's easily a student favorite night! Watch your group grow on nights like these. The first one is October 23rd, the week before Trunk or Treat.

Can I take my few out on Connect For nights?

Absolutely! You can take them to ice cream, take them shopping for your decorations for Trunk or Treat, take them to Dave and Busters, take them on a service project, you name it! For middle School connect with parents and get consent yourself before you do that, saying what you will do and where you will go. For High school it's also good to keep them updated!

What happens if I can't make it on a Wednesday?

This is why we have two leaders! It will be ok! Life happens and we understand—just let your co-leader know as well as a staff member. If both leaders will be gone, we will search for a sub or combine groups.

How do I contact the Youth Staff?

Lindsey Bunn – 206-948-5942

Lindsey@maplevalleychurch.org

Joe Phenisee – 253-409-8344

Joe@maplevalleychurch.org

Alison Mendenhall – 206-227-8238

Alison@maplevalleychurch.org

If we don't get back to you within 24 hours, message us again!

How does youth staff contact me?

Using our impressive ninja skills, we already have all your numbers! Also, we contact you all through Remind from time to time, so go ahead and sign up to that by texting @srhighpg to 81010 for High school OR @628leaders to 81010

How do I get vital information on my few?

Once we confirm your background check and Ministry Safe training, you will be getting another email within a week or so that will tell you who your "few" names and the info we have on them!

Do we have a volunteer website?

Yes! <https://www.maplevalleychurch.org/connect/youth/youth-small-group-leaders.html>

Other Things (Including Curriculum)

- Nathan Douglas will be our security team this year. An extra hand if we should need it for rowdy ones in small group time or wanderers in transitions. He will have a walkie talkie on that connects to staff but if you need his number it is: 206-478-5011
- Our first SG night is September 11th from 6:30-8:30, please have your Background Check and Ministry safe Training finished by then! Also, download the Lead Small App:



- When you have that downloaded, if you are brand new to this app choose “sign up” and start a new profile. If you don’t see “Rhythm Week 1” once you log in, go to “settings” “Maple Valley Church” choose “MVPC Senior High” or “MVPC 628”, then, press the “Home button” and read on!
- If you are having difficulty with this, please reach out to one of us! We want to get you set up with this app. It also has a place for you to add your few’s names, faces and vital information. In case many experience issues, **the last page of this handbook is Rhythm week 1.**
- Wednesday the 11th and for many Wednesday’s to come, you can expect the schedule to look like this:

6:30- Middle School games in sanctuary/High School dinner in lobby

6:50-High School games in sanctuary/Middle School dinner in lobby

7:15-Talk and worship in the chapel together

7:45-Dismissed to Small Groups

- We would love to invite you to our RISE kick-off called Genesis Night on September 4th! There will be BBQ, bubble/foam slip-n-slide, swimming and more! It is a perfect time to connect/reconnect with your students.

Rhythm: Week 1

Scriptures: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30 NIV).

Goal of small group: To encourage students not to give up on their relationship with God even if they’re not “feeling it” yet.

Think about this: Leaders—in your small group, you may have students in various places in their relationship with God. You’ll have some students who have been Christians all their lives, and some who haven’t started their relationship with Him yet. Throughout this series, don’t assume where your students are spiritually. Instead, encourage ALL of your students—regardless of where they are—to participate. The hope and goal is for everyone to engage in the conversation.

Discussion questions:

1. What does a typical schedule or rhythm of your day look like? (e.g. school, practice, homework, Instagram, sleep)
2. Does anyone in your life show a good example of having a good rhythm with God? If so, who?
3. What would it look like to develop a habit or build a rhythm with God?
4. What do you do when you feel like your rhythm or relationship with God isn’t “working”?
5. What do you do when you feel disconnected or out of sync with your friends?
6. If reconnecting with our friends looks similar to the way we can reconnect with God, what’s one thing we can do this week to reestablish a rhythm with God?

Try this: Leaders—each week of this series you’ll give your students a 7-day challenge. Each challenge is specific for that particular week and is designed to help students begin to find a rhythm in their relationship with God. This week, challenge your students to start working on one of the most foundational habits: prayer! Even if it’s only for one minute, encourage your students to pray every day this week. You know your students best; if they need guidance on what to pray for to help them get started, you can use the following outline:

- Day 1: Pray for yourself.
- Day 2: Pray for your family.
- Day 3: Pray for your friends.
- Day 4: Pray for your small group.
- Day 5: Pray for something you’re thankful for.
- Day 6: Pray for your school.
- Day 7: Pray for one thing you want for your life this week.