

# FAQS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

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**What is the process for becoming a Small Group Leader?**

There are 10 Easy Steps to becoming a S.G. Leader at Riverwood

1. Check to see if you meet the qualifications (see Q2)
2. Fill out a 'Sign Up Card' in the Starter Kit indicating your interest in leading a S.G.
3. Have a 'meet 'n greet conversation' (in person or on the phone) with our S.G. Director, Michelle Plett.
4. Receive confirmation of your appointment as a Riverwood S.G leader from the S.G. Director
5. Complete the 'Small Group Leader Profile'
6. Receive the name of your Support Coach/Team Leaders
7. Establish your group's 'idea' and begin gathering people to your group (see Q5)
8. Attend the Essential Teaming & Training event October 5th and keep up to date by watching the short SGU videos as they release.
9. Launch your 8 week group
10. Evaluate your experience and decide if you are ready to do it again in the next session!

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**What are the qualifications for being a Riverwood Small Group Leader?**

Here are the qualifications:

1. Committed Christ-follower (for more than 2 years)
2. Consistent Godly Character
3. Covenant Community Member\*
4. Commitment to Basic Training and Communication with Leadership

*\* Note: Those who have not taken the 4 hour Covenant Community Course can be S.G. Leaders as long as they are committed to taking the course.*

**What is the Covenant Community Course and why is it a requirement?**

The Covenant Community Course is Riverwood's version of church membership. It consists of four steps: Investigation - a 4 hour course exploring Riverwood's history, vision and values; Affirmation - a signed Covenant that you affirm at the end of the course; Confirmation - a signature by an Elder or assigned Ministry Leader that confirms your affirmation. These first three steps are designed to take place within the four hour C.C. Course. The last step is Celebration - a 5 minute on-stage celebration and prayer for those who are becoming part of Riverwood's Covenant Community. The course is free. Registration is required.

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## A Small Group at Riverwood is... **"A leader. A group. An idea. Living the message, supporting one another."**

<b>"A Leader"</b>	Qualified. willing. trained. accountable to the S.G. Director and Leadership Team.
<b>"A Group"</b>	A growing, inviting, committed group of 6-14 people, meeting weekly for an 8-10 week session. They may be a traditional 'house group' or might be a 'serving group' or 'common interest group' or part of a network of small groups, such as Uprising, Alpha, Men's, Women's, Marriage, STIR, Young Adults, Making Connections or MOM's.
<b>"An Idea"</b>	<p><b>'Spiritual growth'</b> by taking the message introduced on the weekend deeper.</p> <p>or... it might be a <b>'topic'</b> like Spiritual Gifts Discovery, Parenting or the Book of James.</p> <p>or... it might be a <b>'support/recovery'</b> theme like Divorce Care, Grief Share or Depression.</p> <p>or... it might be a <b>'stage of life'</b>, like 'Parents of Small Children', 'Singles', 'Seniors', 'Parents of Teenagers', 'Engaged', etc.</p>

**Continued...** or... it might be a **'serving group'** at a homeless shelter, on Riverwood Kids or worship team, at the Garage, in a soup kitchen, neighbourhood club or seniors home.

or... it might be a **'shared interest'** like motorcycles, knitting, road cycling, photography, fitness, cooking, weight loss, car repair, hunting, travel, camping, quilting, etc.

**"Living the message"** Regardless of the group's identified 'idea', EVERY GROUP will interact with, re-enforce and build on the message (the biblical teaching from the previous weekend). A 'study', 'serving' or 'shared interest' group might spend the first 15 minutes talking about and applying the message from the previous weekend before moving on with their study or activity. Most groups will use the message-aligned 'Talk It Over' curriculum as the basis for their group.

**"Supporting one another"** The second element that will be built into EVERY GROUP is 'caring for and supporting one another'! In a church the size of Riverwood, it is so easy for people to slip through the cracks and live unconnected and uncared for. The ultimate goal of every small group will be to 'live the message' and 'support and care for one another'.

**Our Small Group has typically operated from September to June and taken the summer off. Is this how Small Groups will be scheduled and operate in the future?**

Groups meet weekly on a day or evening of their choosing for 8-10 week sessions. We believe there are some great benefits to this! One is that people are more able and willing to commit to something that has a definite beginning and end. Another is that when a group only meets every two or three weeks, if someone misses one, they are out of contact for a month or more! Our 3-sessions-a-year meeting calendar flows in the natural rhythms of people's lives. We've already set the sessions for the next year and a half!

**FALL 2019** Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> (8 weeks)

**WINTER 2020** Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> – March 20<sup>th</sup> (8 weeks)

**SPRING 2020** May 4<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup> (5 Weeks)

**Is the lesson or curriculum provided?**

Yes! We are strongly encouraging groups to use the message-aligned curriculum called 'Talk It Over', which is really 'Part 2' of every weekend message. It is made available online by Monday noon and ready for download. Studies have shown that people in churches are bombarded by 100's of disconnected ideas every week. However, when they receive the biblical teaching in their Worship Community and then discuss it, interact with it, study it a bit deeper and apply it to their lives in their Small Group Community, that message has a much better chance of sticking.

Groups who have a 'topic study', 'serving mission' or 'common interest' as their 'idea' may use a different (approved) curriculum or no curriculum, but EVERY GROUP needs to connect their group to the message in some way! It might be with a 15 minute group-opener or by weaving the previous week's message into their group time. Our strong preference would be that all groups would build on a singular message by 'talking it over with their group', but we have lots of room for groups to study other material while building on the weekly message.

We now have *RightNow Media* available to all Small Groups!

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**What are Small Group Support Coaches/Team Leaders?**

Small Group Support Coaches/Mentors are a group of caring leaders who have stepped up to help care for and support our Small Group leaders. One of their primary jobs is to pray for the group leaders under their care. They will also check in and support the 3-10 group leaders they oversee.

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**We've heard the term 'S.G. Host' used. How does a S.G. Host differ from a S.G. Leader?**

A S.G. Host opens their home and is the driving force of the hospitality for the group. (ie: meeting space, food, drink, etc). A S.G. Leader is the driving force of the agenda, teaching or flow of the group.

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**What training and reporting expectations come with being a Small Group Leader?**

To launch this new season and the shifts that are being made in Small Groups, we're asking ALL existing and potential or new S.G. Leaders to attend three pre-launch gatherings:

1. Breakfast, Saturday, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:30–11:30 am
2. Leader Breakfast, Saturday, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 9:30–11:30 am
3. Party! Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, time TBA

Other than these two gatherings, S.G. Leaders will be responsible to:

1. READ EMAILS & WATCH 2 MINUTE COMMUNIQUE VIDEOS
2. Meet with your coach at least once in an 8-10 week Small Group Session.

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**What if I end up with someone in the small group I lead that is difficult, high needs, dominates the conversation or has more serious issues than I am equipped to deal with?**

When working with people, this is bound to happen. Relax! You don't have to have all the answers, be their very best friend or their counsellor. Your Support Coach will be available to help guide you. Beyond that, if you need more coaching or support, the S.G. Director or our Pastoral Staff are there to assist you. You won't be in this alone! We're going to team and partner together and we're only a phone call or email away!

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**During this next season, how will people be assigned or placed in groups?**

Great question! This is one of the most difficult challenges for churches. So, we're developing a Small Group highway with three 'on ramps':

**ENTRANCE #1 - 'Organic'**

This isn't a system or program, it's about creating a new culture! A culture where 'people-invite-people'! A culture of 'foyer-missionaries' on a mission to reach, invite and grow their groups. A culture of people in Small Groups inviting their friends and neighbours who don't even go to church! This is a shift in mindset. Imagine an army of over 100 S.G. Leaders, out looking for people to welcome into their groups! We believe groups can easily 'self-form' around natural connections and 'ideas'.

**Continued...**

### **ENTRANCE #2 - 'Hybrid'**

Now, not everyone is going to naturally get invited. So, a second on-ramp approach is to host some 'Group Link' like events where people specifically come together for the purpose of 'finding their people' and getting connected. This would be a 2 hour, fun, energized gathering that is designed to help new or 'not-full' S.G. Leaders find group members.

### **ENTRANCE #3 - 'Mechanical'**

Now, not everyone is going to naturally get invited or attend a 'Group Link' like event. Some people will still prefer to simply fill out a form(paper or online) and request to be placed. We will still offer this, but it will move from being the #1 way of us placing people to the #3, last resort.

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### **What personality traits or spiritual gifts are important for a S.G. Leader to have?**

Relax! You don't have to have a Masters in Theology or a pastoral degree to lead a Small Group! If you are kind, patient, loving, integrous and somewhat hospitable you have the makings of a S. G. Leader.

The gift of leadership or shepherding or teaching can be helpful, but in many new leaders these gifts sit unused and undeveloped. We're looking for people who love Jesus, love people, love their church, have a heart to grow people and a character that backs it all up. However, not everyone is cut out to be a S.G. Leader and we'll do our best to help you discern if you should or shouldn't be a leader.

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**What if my group wants to keep meeting, but I want to step out of leading the group?**

Whether you continue leading your group or not, you should always have someone in your group that you are raising up to be a future leader. You can either hand your leadership role to the person you have raised up, or if no one steps up to lead the group, your group members can sign up for different groups at the beginning of the next semester.

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**What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?**

It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully, we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them at your next Small Group meeting. Do some personal research and call your coach to get advice.

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**What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me (or the group) that requires attention beyond what I (or we) can provide?**

If you encounter a difficult situation within your Small Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer, encouragement, and support. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask your coach. If you need immediate attention, call 911. Be sure to contact the Support Coach that was assigned to you at the last ET&T.

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**How can I share stories of life change from the Small Group semester?**

We love hearing about lives that are changed through Small Groups. You can share your stories with your coach, or email us.

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**Can my group keep meeting after the semester ends?**

It's healthy to take a break from the traditional Small Group setting. However, this doesn't mean you have to cut off the relationship with your group members. Be sure to keep up with them and be available for them when you can. This is a great time to plan a fun group activity or an outreach event where you all serve together. We just ask that you recognize that not everyone will want to meet between semesters, and that's okay!

**Do we have to meet at a house?**

We believe that the best atmosphere for a Small Group is in a home, however, we understand that sometimes that is not an option. Other options for meeting places could include coffee shops, cafés, outdoor locations, etc.

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**What types of groups are there?**

We offer Married Couples Groups, Men's Groups, Women's Groups, Outreach Groups, and Young Adult Groups, Common Interest groups and Virtual Groups. Additionally, we offer small groups in all of our kids' and student environments. This enables our kids and students the opportunity to benefit from a small group when they're already at church.



**More questions? contact [michelle@riverwood.cc](mailto:michelle@riverwood.cc)**

