

SADDLEBACK CHURCH SMALL GROUPS
COMMUNITY LEADER

POCKET GUIDE



Saddleback Church Small Groups Community Leader
POCKET GUIDE

Edition 3.2

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JESUS' PURPOSES FOR OUR CHURCH, OUR GROUPS, AND US

GREAT COMMISSION

“Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations [EVANGELISM], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [FELLOWSHIP], and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you [DISCIPLESHIP].”

Matthew 28:19–20 (NIV)

GREAT COMMANDMENT

Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind [WORSHIP].’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself [MINISTRY].’”

Matthew 22:37–39 (NLT)

SMALL GROUPS VISION STATEMENT

To see every person, from the core of our church to the ever-growing community, connected in a healthy small group.

SMALL GROUPS MISSION STATEMENT

To balance the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in the hearts of every member and group.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

With as many groups as you're overseeing, it's difficult to keep everything straight. It's tough to be able to determine how to speak truth into your hosts, not because you don't know the right answers, but because a relationship with a host isn't a static one. It's ever-changing, and you want to be able to help your hosts develop and grow no matter what stage they're at.

This resource is designed for you, the Community Leader (CL):

- To help you engage others.
- To help you build healthy small groups.
- To quickly access as a handy reference.
- To be able to quickly diagnose the development that's needed in a host.
- To breathe new life into hosts.

Part of your CL role is also to be a Weekend Connector (see page 39), so we included some questions you can ask to engage people during the weekend services.

We're in this with you!

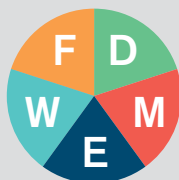
THE COMMUNITY LEADER — HOST DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY





OFF CAMPUS

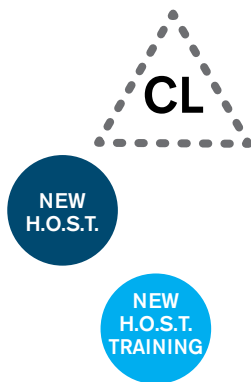
**LEADER
TRAINING
2**



**HUDDLES
&
GATHERINGS**

saddleback.com/smallgroups

PHASE 1



BE A F.R.I.E.N.D.

As you begin to build a relationship with a host, you don't have to jump straight to the deep end of your relationship with them. Just as most relationships start light, ease your way into their lives. At Saddleback, we use this illustration:

$$\text{TRUTH} = \frac{\text{TRUST}}{\text{TIME}}$$

We want to speak truth into others' lives, and that only comes after we've built trust. And trust is only built over a period of time.

START OUT BY BEING A F.R.I.E.N.D.

Find common ground

Replenish their soul

Interests they have

Engage and encourage their calling

Notes between meetings

Develop relationship

FIND COMMON GROUND

Start by simply finding common ground you share with your hosts. This is one of the places where trust begins to form. Here are some questions to help you begin:

- What is their faith story or the story of how they came to Saddleback? What do they love about our church?
- Are they married or single?
- Do they have kids?
- How long have they been part of small groups at Saddleback?
- Why do they love their group so much?
- Who brought them to Saddleback?

Somehow, some way, find common ground that you can share with them.

REPLENISH THEIR SOUL

Hosts are stronger if their souls stay replenished. Here are some questions you can ask to discover how they are doing in this area:

- Do they have consistent devotionals and prayer time?
- What resources can help them?
- Do they take margin?
- Are they taking time for a Sabbath?
- Do they enjoy nature walks or a nature outing?
- Is there a retreat they can attend?
- Do they have personal times of worship?
- Do they have a mentor?
- Have they developed close friendships?

INTERESTS THEY HAVE

Ask questions about the host's interests to help create common ground and build the friendship side of the relationship you have with each host:

- What do they like to do in their free time?
Do they have any hobbies?
- Are they a sports fan? Who's their favorite team?
- What show(s) do they watch on television?
- Where do they like to vacation? If they could vacation anywhere in the world, where would they like to go?

ENGAGE AND ENCOURAGE THEIR CALLING

Every host has a calling because leading a small group is a calling from God. Each host has a reason why they began leading and why they're continuing to lead. To speak relevant truth to hosts, you must understand their calling. Here are some questions to start with:

- What is their spiritual story?
- What trials or hurts are they experiencing right now? What have they experienced in the past that has shaped the calling God has placed on their life as a host?
- How has God S.H.A.P.E'd them uniquely for their role?

- S** What are their **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**?
- H** What is their **HEART** passionate for?
- A** What **ABILITIES** do they have?
- P** What is their **PERSONALITY**?
- E** What good and bad **EXPERIENCES** do they have?

NOTES BETWEEN MEETINGS

Group hosts are often nervous before their group meetings, or afterwards, are wondering how things really went. A word of encouragement goes a long way when it comes from you. Here are some suggestions:

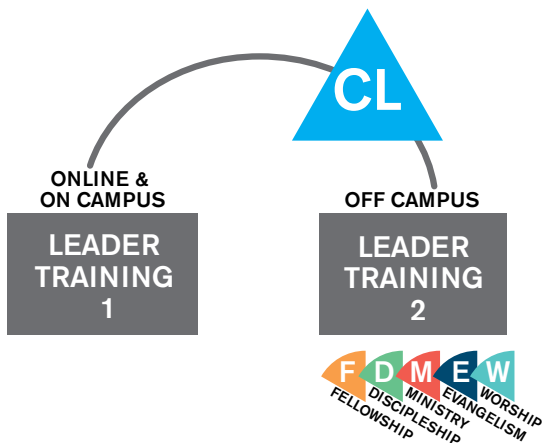
- Send them a quick text message on the day their group meets, letting them know you're praying for them and their group. Send them a text message the day after their group meets to check in and see how things went.
- Call them on the phone and pray with them, or leave the prayer via voicemail.
- Send them a handwritten card. Since handwritten notes are so rare these days, they can be a nice personal touch.
- Follow them on social media and encourage them on the platform(s) they use regularly.
- Text them when it's their birthday and anniversary (including their kids and spouse, if applicable), and send them a card on their big day.

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP

Moving beyond words of encouragement takes intentionality. It will help hosts feel like you truly care for them, because you're dedicating time to develop the relationships. Try incorporating the following acts:

- Invite them out for a cup of coffee or even share a meal together!
- If appropriate, connect with them at their place of business.
- Have them over for an event you're hosting at your house. Consider having more than one host over at a time to help build a network of hosts rather than just developing the relationship you have with them.
- Intentionally help connect them with others at Saddleback through one of our weekend services or through an event we have.
- Visit the hosts' small groups and give them positive feedback.

PHASE 2



BE A L.E.A.D.E.R.

This is one step further than you'd go with a host, taking the relationship slightly deeper with more intentionality. This is when we really begin speaking truth to a host that helps them as they grow and develop as the leader of their group. As you progress through this phase of development, the host will sharpen their skills considerably as you take on more and more of a leadership role in the host's life.

BE A L.E.A.D.E.R.

Listening skills — everyone talks

Engage the leadership development pathway

Active personal evangelism

Develop subgrouping by gender

Encourage role development

Remember and celebrate their wins

LISTENING SKILLS — EVERYONE TALKS

When it comes to helping a host develop listening skills, offer the following quick and easy tips that can help right away:

- First, remind them that the goal of the curriculum is **not about** getting through the study, but facilitating a discussion.
- Communicate to them that God gave you two ears and one mouth. Use them in that proportion.
- As people are sharing answers in the small group, work to identify feelings. Look for the emotion behind what's being said, not simply focusing on the words themselves.
- Ask them to look for and be aware of body language.
- Demonstrate how to ask “why” and “how” questions that spur dialogue.
- Give examples on how to affirm group members when answering questions.
- Help them to be comfortable with silence. Don't be the first person to answer the questions! Awkward silence helps push people to share more authentically.

ENGAGE THE HOST DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

We have a development pathway in place, but that doesn't ensure everyone is on the pathway. Part of being a leader in a host's life is helping make sure they're progressing through the following modules we have created:

- Show them the Host Development Pathway (see pages 8 and 9), and find out where the host is in this process.
- Show them how to access their Small Group profile within their **Saddleback.com** account.
- Watch the first host training video with them.
- Have a list handy of the different times when each module is offered and plan to attend one of them with the host.
- Email hosts the dates of "Leader Training 1" and "Leader Training 2."

ACTIVE PERSONAL EVANGELISM

If a host is going to lead their group well, they have to model personal evangelism. Here are some ideas you can offer the host:

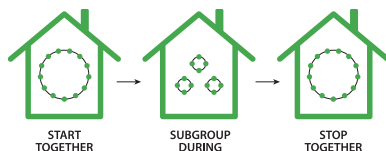
- Start out by reminding the host of their six circles of influence: friends, family, factory, firm, faceless, and frequent contacts.
- **Crawl Step:** Help the host identify the name of one person they can pray for. As their CL, you can offer to pray for that person as well (thus building accountability). This is an activity the host can do with their small group as well!
- **Walk Step:** Pray for the person (first name only) out loud. Again, this is a great activity for the host to do with their group!
- **Run Step:** Get to know the story of the person you're praying for.

Ideas: Invite a new person to weekend service, small group, or Saddleback event. Pass out Saddleback event promo cards to family members, neighbors, co-workers, businesses, and restaurants. Share your testimony, share the gospel, give out a Christian book or Bible. Share a web link to a weekend service, Daily Hope radio broadcast, or Drivetime Devotions.

DEVELOP SUBGROUPING BY GENDER

Instead of staying together in one mixed gender group each and every week, a healthy group subgroups by gender. Here are a few ways you can help a host lead in this area:

- For fellowship time, have a “guys night out” one week, then a “girls night out” the following week.
- During the discussion time (or prayer time), send the men to a different spot than the women. You’ll often find a different level of sharing when this happens.
- Each group should also identify a men’s “champion” and a women’s “champion.” Remind the group that splitting up by gender promotes overall group health and creates more opportunities to go deeper as a group. The champion can then facilitate discussion or prayer time within the subgroup.



ENCOURAGE ROLE DEVELOPMENT

There are many different aspects to a healthy small group. If the host chooses to take care of all group tasks, everything may get done, but group development and ownership won't happen. Below are some tips for hosts to help them share their responsibilities along the way:

- Start by ensuring each host has filled out their group roster in their Small Group profile.
- Share ideas from *250 Big Ideas for Purpose Driven® Small Groups* or *Leading Small Groups with Purpose* by Steve Gladen.
- Encourage the host to empower members to take ownership of the following purposes:
 - Fellowship
 - Discipleship
 - Ministry
 - Evangelism
 - Worship

REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THEIR WINS

Hosts easily forget their wins as they focus on areas where they need to develop. Here are some ways you can help remind them of what God has done through them:

- Help hosts define their wins. Are they pursuing health as a small group? If they don't know the target, they won't know if they're hitting it or not.
- Help hosts to track or measure their wins. Direct them to take one of our individual or group assessments to track how well they are balancing the five purposes.
- Write these "wins" down.
- Week after week, stories of life change are happening. It could be a dream someone finally realized, an obstacle that has been overcome, or a miracle that God performed. Help hosts and their groups capture these stories!

PHASE 3



HUDDLES
&
GATHERINGS

saddleback.com/smallgroups

BE A C.O.A.C.H.

As a CL, you have become the expert on small groups in the lives of your hosts. You've built trust over the course of time, and you've earned the right to speak truth to them. But the relationship is far from over! Now you're positioned to help hosts and their groups thrive for the long haul.

BE A C.O.A.C.H.

Class progress

Open up their next steps in leadership

Affirm their personal and group growth

Curriculum strategy

Host a small group gathering

CLASS PROGRESS

Part of spiritual development at Saddleback is cognitive, and one of the ways we accomplish that is through our CLASS system. Over time, we teach the vision, values, and distinctions of Saddleback, and how each person can live out a purpose driven life. A healthy leader is growing through these classes:

- **Class 101:** *Discovering Our Church Family*
Explore the gospel, our church's history, and membership
- **Class 201:** *Discovering My Spiritual Growth*
Learn and develop spiritual habits needed for spiritual growth
- **Class 301:** *Discovering My Ministry*
Find how God S.H.A.P.E'd you for ministry
- **Class 401:** *Discovering My Life Mission*
Discover how to be part of God's global plan

Be familiar with the next time each of these CLASSES is offered on your campus. Check out the details at: saddleback.com/class.

Periodically check in with the host to encourage their progress through the CLASS system.

OPEN UP THEIR NEXT STEPS IN LEADERSHIP

Every leader has a next step. Encourage hosts to take the next steps in leadership. The best kind of encouragement is one that's informed by potential steps **and** the S.H.A.P.E. of the host. Consider these next steps with your hosts:

- **Raise Up Co-hosts, Purpose Champions, Gender Champions:** This is a step that they can take within their group, but it takes great leadership. Lead hosts to embrace this concept (which includes group ownership), and indicate their decisions in Group Manager.
- **Community Leader:** Can you see a particular host helping to get groups healthy? Can you see this host speaking hope and life into other hosts and connecting people during weekend services? Consider asking him/her to join our CL team!
- **Ministry Leader:** Has the host completed Class 301? What did their S.H.A.P.E. guide suggest they do in ministry and are they serving?
- **Vocational Ministry Calling:** Does this person have a calling to be on church staff?

AFFIRM PERSONAL AND GROUP GROWTH

Has the host taken the “Personal Health Assessment”?

Has the group taken the “Group Health Assessment”?

This is a great coaching moment you can have with them. Here are some tools you can use:

- Find all assessments at saddleback.com/smallgroups.
- The “Personal Health Assessment” has an accountability component, where the person taking the assessment needs to name a person that they will talk with about their results. This person will also help the host stay on track for their personal spiritual health. Has the host touched base with their spiritual partner? How is that relationship going?
- The “Group Health Assessment” is designed to be a shared assessment of how the group is doing seeking the purposes together. Has the group taken it? What areas are they weak in? Be prepared to offer practical suggestions on ways they can improve in each of the purposes.
- For a further explanation, see chapter 3 in *Leading Small Groups with Purpose*, by Steve Gladen.

CURRICULUM STRATEGY

A healthy group is one that has a strategy in place for how they're going to progress through curriculum. Here are a few diagnostic questions you can ask to find where a group needs to go:

- Has your group gone through the *Small Groups Quick Start* curriculum?
saddleback.com/startmygroup
- Has your group completed the *God's Design* series? Did you know they're all free at
saddleback.com/watch?
- Have you engaged with Talk It Over? You can find it at: saddleback.com/talkitover
- Provide a list of curriculum categorized by purposes, topics, or subject areas.

HOST A SMALL GROUPS GATHERING

Organize a gathering of hosts (and their groups)! This is a great way to help hosts and groups network together for growth, problem-solving, and fellowship. You can do this anywhere! This will further solidify the group of hosts and group members that God has entrusted to your care.

Here are a couple of ways you can gather hosts:

- Organize a gathering based on geography. For instance, gather all of the groups that meet in a particular city.
- Organize a gathering based on affinities. For instance, have a gathering by gender, age demographics, or shared interests. The possibilities are endless!
- Talk with your small groups pastor to lay out an agenda and help with teaching.
- Develop questions to facilitate health and growth.

CARING FOR LEADERS

Caring for hosts is a vital part of the CL role. You can connect with a host using their preferred method of communication, but it's also important to vary your communication with hosts. Using different methods is a great way to engage them, instead of simply relying on one form:

TEXT MESSAGES

EMAILS

PHONE CALLS

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Part of caring is finding out which method each of your hosts communicates most effectively and efficiently. When you find this out, the truths you're working to communicate have a better chance of reaching the hosts you're trying to lead!

TEXT MESSAGES

Many people prefer the speed and efficiency of text messaging, especially when it comes to small group life.

Try sending a few of these encouraging texts:

- Praying for you and your group today! (A great text to send on the day their group meets)
- I know your group met yesterday and wanted you to know I've been praying for you. Hope it went well!
- I was just reading this verse and was super encouraged, so thought I'd pass it along! Thanks for all you are doing for your small group! (Include a **SHORT** verse.)
- Thanks for caring for your group! We're here to support you so don't hesitate to contact me if you need anything!
- I'll be praying for you and your group this week! Let me know if there's anything specific I can be praying for!
- **CLASS** or Leader Training 1 is coming up this month. I encourage you or your group members to attend.

EMAILS

There are plenty of times when we have information to share with hosts: dates, details, etc. But further the relationship by sending some of these encouraging emails:

SUBJECT: TWO QUICK QUESTIONS FOR YOU!

Hey (host name), I'm a CL with the small groups team, and wanted to say THANK YOU for all you're doing for your group, and check in with two quick questions. 1) What's been a highlight for your group in the last month? 2) How can I be praying for you? Hope everything is going well!

SUBJECT: SADDLEBACK SMALL GROUPS

Hey (host name), I'm a CL with the small groups team, and wanted to say THANK YOU for all you're doing for your group. We're committed to praying monthly for all of our small group hosts, so please know that you've got a great support team in place that wants to help you and your group be healthy! Let us know if we can ever do anything to better support you.

PHONE CALLS

A phone call and/or voicemail often lends a personal touch with your hosts. Here are some questions you can ask:

- Hey, this is (your name), and I'm a CL with the small groups team. Just wanted to see if you had any questions, or if there was anything I could do to help you with your small group. Call (or text) me back if I can help with anything, and thanks for caring for your group!
- If they pick up, take the time to connect relationally and then ask the following:
 - What has been a highlight for your group in the last month?
 - What has been a struggle for your group in the last month?
 - Is there anything you need from me at this time?
 - How can I be praying for you or your group?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Remember, your relationship with your host is beyond a simple transactional “How’s your group” conversation. Social media is another great medium to help build a trusting relationship. Here are some starting points:

- Follow and “friend” your hosts on any of the social media that you use.
- “Like” their posts.
- Comment on their posts.
- Take a picture with one of your hosts and post it on social media (making sure you have their permission first).
- Try Facebook Messenger or direct messages on Instagram and Twitter as other means to communicate in addition to email.

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Set aside time to connect with your hosts in person.
Here are some questions to open for discussion:

- What has been a highlight of your group in the past few weeks?
- How can I be praying for you or your group?
(If it's appropriate, take a minute to pray with them before you end the conversation!)
- What's something you're looking forward to in your group in the next few weeks?
- Is there anything you need from me or the small groups team right now?
- What curriculum is your group currently studying?
- How is God growing you as a host?

WEEKEND CONNECTOR

Part of the role of CLs is being a “Weekend Connector.” Being a Weekend Connector is vitally important because you are the face of small groups on your campus during the weekend services. You’re the “expert” on finding, joining, and building healthy small groups. Your small group staff members serve in this capacity as well, but together we all help extend the mission and vision of small groups as we relationally connect with people:

- Help people start small groups.
- Help people join small groups.
- Arrive 20 minutes before services to pray with people and prepare for the service.
- Stay 20 minutes after services to pray with people and connect them to healthy groups.
- Engage with people and help them take their next spiritual step.

As you're serving, here are a few questions you can keep handy to engage others:

- How long have you been coming to Saddleback?
Who invited you?
- How did you first hear about Saddleback?
- Are you feeling connected here?
- What did God challenge you with today?
- Do you live close by? (This is a great chance to talk about local small groups that we have or to inform them about other regional campuses we have that may be more convenient.)
- Have you been in a small group before?

FAQs

As a CL, you may encounter some of the following FAQs from your hosts or prospective hosts:

1. Am I qualified to H.O.S.T.?

We will give you everything you need to start a group and walk alongside you as you do. If you have two friends that are willing to go on a spiritual journey with you to learn through our video curriculum, you can host a group! Are you a H.O.S.T.?

Have a heart for others?

Open up your place?

Serve snacks?

Type [saddleback.com/watch?](https://saddleback.com/watch?ref=CL)

If you answered yes to these, we'd love to help you start a group right now! Jesus called people in Matthew 4 by saying, "Follow me." If you're willing to follow our lead, as we follow Jesus, we'll help you on this journey!

2. How do I start a group?

We would love for you to start a group! You can start your group by filling out your information at saddleback.com/smallgroups. You can do that online or stop by the connection center during one of the weekend services, and we can help.

3. How can I join a group?

The easiest way is to actually start a small group. If you have two friends, we can help you with everything you need to get started. Or if you'd prefer to join a group, go to saddleback.com/smallgroups to our group finder tool. If you'd rather do this in person, go to the Connection Center at your campus and we can help you get plugged in. Keep in mind that if your first group is not a good fit, we'd be happy to help you get connected into another one. We are here for you!

4. Do you have groups for children, junior high, high school, and/or college-age students?

Yes, we absolutely do have groups for all ages!

Connect with the Saddleback Kids director on your campus for more information or visit their website: saddleback.com/ksg

For junior high and high school students, connect with Saddleback Student Ministries staff on your campus.

To sign up for either of those groups, visit their websites.

JHM: saddlebackjhm.com

HSM: highschoolministry.com

For college-age students, connect with the College Ministry staff on your campus. For more information, visit their website: saddlebackcm.com

5. Where do I get a list of support groups or Celebrate Recovery® groups? When and where do they meet?

Celebrate Recovery groups meet on the same night that your campus has Celebrate Recovery meetings. Check the specifics for your campus at: saddleback.com/CelebrateRecovery

For a complete listing of our support groups, visit Guest Services at the Connection Center on your campus, or visit: saddleback.com/supportgroups

6. I've tried signing up online, but I still haven't been connected. Can you help?

Yes! Thank you for not giving up during this process. We're sorry it's been difficult. Let me show you the groups we have available right now. (Pull up the Group Manager tool on central.saddleback.com to find specific groups.)

After you find potential groups for them to join, give them the group host's information (an email address is a good starting point rather than a home address).

Next, write their contact information down, and the contact information of the host, for your records. Contact both during the following week to ensure this person doesn't fall through the cracks. Finally, give them your small groups pastor's contact information, our Saddleback Small Groups email: smallgroups@saddleback.com, and our office phone number: **949-609-8701**.

7. I live outside of the area. Can I host a group?

Of course! We'd love to help you do that. First of all, do you know about our regional campuses? For our regional campus locations, visit: saddleback.com/locations. If you live here in Southern California, a campus may be really close to you.

If you live outside of this area completely, we can direct you to our online campus to start a group in your area.

Here's the link: saddleback.com/onlinecampus

Here's the email: online@saddleback.com

8. What curriculum should our small group study next?

Has your group gone through all of our *God's Design* series? Did you know we have six studies in that series?

We have a *God's Design* series curriculum that we recommend all groups go through. You can find the videos and study guides available for free streaming at saddleback.com/watch. If you've already completed *God's Design*, we have a lot of other studies available on the Saddleback Watch page. We also recommend any of the studies available at the Saddleback Bookstore or at pastors.com.

9. I'm single. Where can I meet people?

If you're looking to meet other singles, I'd suggest two points of connection:

- Join a singles small group. We can help you find one at saddleback.com/smallgroups.
- Go to saddleback.com/singles to see upcoming events.

10. Where can I find someone to pray with me?

YOU, the CL, are qualified! Take a step of daring faith and let God use you in the moment he's designed.

**SADDLEBACK
SMALL GROUPS**

smallgroups@saddleback.com

949-609-8701



saddleback.com/smallgroups