



VICTOR
COMMUNITY
CHURCH

COMMUNITY

groups

leader guide

September
2024

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A: Calendar, B: Curriculum, C: Responsibility Template,
 D: Fellowship, E: Icebreakers, F: Meeting Agenda, G: Help!

Note: *The Scripture references in this guide are from the New International Version except where noted.*

Why community groups?

- At Victor Community Church, Community Groups exist to connect people relationally so that they grow spiritually. We believe God created us to live in community with others, and only then can we experience the full life he intends for us.
- We believe life change happens in the context of relationships.
- Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

—ECCLESIASTES 4:9–12

Why community groups?

- At VCC, we gather in Community Groups to build community and care for people. We have a goal at VCC to become a church of Community Groups, not a church with Community Groups.
- We base our Groups model on the early church, as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

—Acts 5:42

Why community groups?

VCC Community groups provide an opportunity to grow our faith beyond Sunday mornings.

Our purpose (ABCs):

- Apply the Bible
- Build relationships
- Care for one another
- Serve together



For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
—EPHESIANS 2:8-10

What a community group offers...

1) A place to connect

Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

—1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 (TLB)

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community. Small groups (Community Groups) provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

What a community group offers...

2) A place to be known

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

—1 JOHN 3:16 (NLT)

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Community Groups become a safe environment where others don't just know your name, but also care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

What a community group offers...

3) A place to grow

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

—PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Community Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

Group Meetings – 4 Components

No matter what your group's focus, each meeting should be made up of four things:

1) Casual Fellowship

A laid-back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.

2) Discussion Topic

This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be a discussion about a topic of faith, Sunday message, or a study from RightNow Media.

3) Spiritual Component

This is what differentiates your Community Group from your neighborhood social club. Whether it's through activities or the discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you or talking about a verse you read that week.

4) Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

Group Meetings – Things to Avoid

Community Groups are **not** a place for:

- Business networking or advertising
- Offerings or collecting money
- Political discussions
- Unapproved material that is contrary to Scripture or the beliefs and values of Victor Community Church

If the discussion drifts off to these things, steer it back to stay on topic!

Your role as a Community Group Leader

- God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Community Group Leaders come alongside the VCC Leadership to help care for people.

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. - **EPHESIANS 4:11-13***

- The primary role of a Community Group Leader is to help group members take steps forward in their walk with God.

*Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds... **PROVERBS 27:23***

Your role as a Community Group Leader

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives, and each person will have different next steps to take. The following are some next steps you can help people take:

- Start attending (and regularly attend) Sunday services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Begin serving in a VCC ministry and/or outreach event
- Share your testimony with others
- Get baptized
- Become a VCC member
- Start tithing
- Attend evening worship services
- Attend a VCC fellowship event
- Invite friends, neighbors, co-workers to church or to your Community Group
- Attend a Group Leader Training Meeting to become a Group Leader

How to be a successful Group Leader

- Pray for the members of your group.
- Share responsibilities with your group. Invite others to host, to lead discussions, to lead prayer time, to provide snacks, to plan serving or social events.
- Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group. ***Who is that next leader?***
- Connect with group members between weekly meetings, face-to-face or phone, email, text, or social media. Encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well.
- Have fun through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
- Respect people's time by beginning and ending the meeting on time.
- Invite group members to attend church services and events with you like worship nights, conferences, or outreach opportunities.
- Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

How to be a successful Group Leader

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a foundation of our church, and it is important for your Community Group.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

—2 CHRONICLES 7:14

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear his truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

How to be a successful Group Leader

When you feel uncertain about leading a group, lean into Scripture as your guide:

When you feel like you don't have the time, remember God has created you for this, and his timing is perfect.

*If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done. **ECCLESIASTES 11:4 (TLB)***

When you feel unqualified, remember God has equipped you.

*It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. **2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6 (NLT)***

When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember God uses imperfect people.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4***

When you feel like you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember **ESPN**:

E: Encourage

S: Share Scripture

P: Pray

N: Next Steps

How to be a successful Group Leader

Preparing for your group meetings:

- Send a reminder message (email or text) to group members about the meeting.
 - Meeting location
 - Time (*Suggestion: Doors open at least 15 minutes before meeting start*)
 - What will be the topic or study
 - Responsibilities (i.e. snack, discussion leader, prayer leader, etc.)
- Arrive early to set up a welcoming environment.
- Greet each person by name and introduce new people to all.
- Consider having name tags available for the first few weeks to help everyone learn names.

Create good group dynamics

Set expectations

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. Explain the times you will begin and end, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests.

Follow the 70/30 Rule

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

Keep the discussion positive

If conversation takes a negative/destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after group.

Keep the conversation relevant to everyone

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new churchgoers.

Respect boundaries

Men should minister to men, and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Community Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from uncomfortable or inappropriate situations.

Helpful Scripture References

At VCC, we believe ministering through the Word of God is the most powerful way to care for people. As you pray over a Group member, try inserting that member's name in the Scripture to make it more personalized.

As a leader, we encourage you to find and memorize at least three Scriptures that can equip you to walk with someone through a tough situation and can give you strength as a leader throughout the semester.

Here is a list of powerful Scriptures to apply to various situations:

- **WORRY:** *Philippians 4:6–8; 1 Peter 5:7; John 14:1*
- **PEACE:** *Isaiah 26:3; Colossians 3:15; Psalm 4:8*
- **FEAR:** *Psalm 27:1–14; 2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15–16; 1 John 4:18*
- **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:** *1 John 1:9–10; James 5:16*
- **CONTENTMENT:** *Philippians 4:11–13; Hebrews 13:5*
- **CONFIDENCE:** *Philippians 1:6; Jude 1:24–25*
- **TRUST:** *Proverbs 3:5–6; Romans 8:28–31*
- **FAITH:** *Hebrews 11:1, 6*
- **CONFLICT:** *Hebrews 12:14; Ephesians 4:1–3*

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I recruit new people to my Community Group?**
 - Start with people who are already in your sphere of influence (co-workers, friends, and neighbors).
 - Find people around you who are new to the church, are new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
 - Ask God to send the right people to your group.
- **Where will my Community Group meet?**
 - We encourage Community Groups to meet outside the church building, but meeting at the church building is an option. Common meeting places are homes, restaurants, parks, coffee shops, and office buildings.
- **Where can I find Community Groups Curriculum?**
 - We have a variety of curriculum suggestions available to you at RightNow Media and in this guide (Appendix B).
 - You may consider discussions from Sunday sermons.
- **How often should my group meet?**
 - We encourage meeting weekly each trimester in order to build genuine relationships.
- **How should we handle child care?**
 - Every group is different. Some groups share the cost of a sitter during the group time, others welcome the kids to join and play during group time. Talk it over with your group to see what will be best.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if group members are taking next steps?

Ask! Make it part of your discussion, whether in a group setting or individually. Here are some great questions to guide your conversation:

- How did you get connected to this Community Group?
- What are you most looking forward to in the group?
- What brought you to VCC?
- Have you ever been part of a Community Group before?
- What do you feel like God has been doing in your life lately?
- What areas of your faith are you hoping to grow in the coming months?
- What are you focused on in your life right now?

Everyone in your group will be at different places spiritually. The vision of helping them “take next steps” is not to get them to do everything at once; it’s to help identify where they currently are spiritually and offer a practical next step to help them grow.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if group members are taking next steps?

Here are some examples of next steps you can share, depending on where a group member is spiritually:

- Invite them to attend a Sunday service with you.
- Share your personal testimony of coming to faith in Jesus and what God has been teaching you.
- Ask them to consider being baptized. Invite your Group to be there to celebrate anyone getting baptized.
- Share how you find time regularly to pray, worship, and read God’s Word, and encourage them to make their own plan for time with God.
- Tell them about the YouVersion app and consider doing a reading plan together.
- If they are ready to receive Christ, share the Gospel and pray with them. The Gospel can be as simple as ABC.
 - **ADMIT:** Admit that you are a sinner in need of a Savior. In Romans, it states, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)* and *“the wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23)*
 - **BELIEVE AND CONFESS:** Believe in Jesus as your Savior. *“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).*

Frequently Asked Questions

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

- It's okay to not have all the answers. "I don't know" is an acceptable response!
- Thankfully, we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit.
- Throw the question out to the group.
- Let them know that you will do your best to find the information and get back with them at your next Group meeting
- Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying.
- Do some personal research. Call Pastor Steve or the Groups Director for advice.

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

- If you encounter a difficult situation within your Community Group, please know that you are not alone.
- Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation.
- If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer, encouragement, and support.
- There may be a time that professional counseling is needed. If this is the case or if you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to reach out to the Groups Director (call, email, or text).

Appendix A: Calendar

September '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Group Leader Workshops

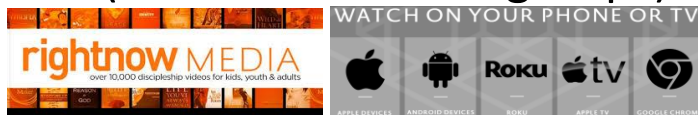
28 meeting weeks = yellow

Notes: Fall trimester 10 weeks
 Winter/Spring - 18 weeks (with two 1 week breaks)
 June through Aug: Social Events

*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another. **Hebrews 10:24-25***

Appendix B: Curriculum Ideas

- RightNow Media (free access for all groups)



- North Point Anthology Streaming Studies

Many Topics, including *Circle Up*



<https://www.anthology.study/Studies/AllStudiesAll>

- Sermon Discussions
- Topical Bible studies/discussions – marriage, parenting, etc.
- Read/discuss a book of the Bible, chapter by chapter
- The Bible Project <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/>



- Resources/Studies from ChristianBook.com

Appendix C: Responsibility Template

Trimester 1 - Community Group Schedule (Example)					Thurs. Evenings at 6:15 PM	
Date	Host	Snack	Icebreaker	Timekeeper	Discussion Leader	Prayer Leader
9/17/20	<i>Group Dinner at ???</i>					
9/24/20						
10/1/20						
10/8/20						
10/15/20						
10/22/20						
10/29/20						
11/5/20						
11/12/20						
11/19/20						
Host/Setup	No need for extra prep or clean. Have enough chairs for group (OK to ask others to bring folding chairs).					
Snack	Bring snack for group.					
Icebreaker	Discussion starter that helps us to know each other better.					
Timekeeper	Provide 2-minute warning for discussion to end (at 7:25 PM most evenings).					
Discussion Leader	Lead discussion w/ Pastor Steve (or lesson) questions. OK to interject your own questions/thoughts. All will help!					
Prayer Leader	Determine method and direct group (group, cards, split up men & women, etc?).					

Appendix D: Fellowship Suggestions

The key for group unity and growth is doing life together! The following activities are possible fellowship gatherings for groups. There are many great activities that are not on it. Some of these will fit your group, others will not. It is meant to serve as an idea starter, so your group so you can come up with activities.

1. Have a party! Have everyone bring food, and use the time to talk and laugh and maybe play some games.
2. Have a group picnic.
3. Go to a baseball game.
4. Clean a widow's house.
5. Serve in the church nursery.
6. Play softball.
7. Have a married couples' date night.
8. Visit and hold a worship service in a nursing home.
9. Attend a Christian conference or seminar.
10. Go for a bike ride.
11. Camp together.
12. Mow and clean up a retired man's lawn.
13. Serve food to the poor and homeless in a soup kitchen.
14. Serve as greeters or parking lot attendants for a service.
15. Have a cookout/barbecue.
16. Go bowling.
17. Play volleyball.
18. Pass out Bibles door-to-door.
19. Take a short-term missions trip.
20. Go out to eat at a nice restaurant.
21. Put a roof on a disabled man's house.
22. Take Christmas dinner and gifts to a needy family.
23. Watch a group member perform in a concert or play

Appendix D: Fellowship Suggestions

24. Go for a hike.
25. Help a group member move.
26. Have a holiday party.
27. Watch a special TV program.
28. Play board games.
29. Have a theme party and dress accordingly.
30. Visit a museum.
31. Go Christmas caroling.
32. Play soccer.
33. Have a backyard campfire.
34. Have a birthday party.
35. Visit a group member in the hospital.
36. Have an international dinner with a missionary.
37. Have a scavenger hunt.
38. Have an all-night prayer meeting.
39. Play basketball.
40. Serve as counselors or sponsors at a youth activity.
41. Paint a needy person's home.
42. Play Frisbee golf.
43. Bake cookies.
44. Serve in children's church together.
45. Go canoeing or rafting.
46. Have a housewarming or dedication party.
47. Go to a concert.
48. Run an obstacle course.
49. Play paintball.
50. Have a pool party.
51. Go on a prayer walk.

Appendix E: Sample Icebreakers

Using icebreakers is an essential small group skill. They should begin with light and informational questions then move to deeper and more personal levels as the group progresses together. If used well, they can move the group to experience greater community!

LEVEL 1 INFORMATION: What you know.	LEVEL 2 OPINIONS: What you think.	LEVEL 3 FEELINGS: Who you are.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What is your favorite movie and why? ❖ What is your favorite city? Why? ❖ What day of your life would you most like to relive? Why? ❖ What does your name mean? Why were you named that? ❖ If your house were on fire, what three items (not people) would you try to save? ❖ What was the best gift you ever received as a child? ❖ If you suddenly lost your eyesight, what would be the thing you missed seeing the most? ❖ What was your first job? What do you remember most about it? ❖ Tell the group briefly a story from your wedding day. ❖ If you could go to college (again), what would you study? ❖ You have been given a year sabbatical from work. What would you do? ❖ What has been one of the greatest adventures you have ever been on? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Who is one of your heroes and why? ❖ Who is your number one advisor in life and why? ❖ My favorite way to spend time is _____. ❖ Just for the fun/thrill of it, before I die I'd like to _____. ❖ I was (or would have been) voted "most likely to" _____ in high school? ❖ I wish before I got married someone had told me _____. ❖ If you were going to leave the world one piece of advice before you died, what would you say? ❖ Who was one of the most interesting persons you or your family ever entertained? ❖ Who was the best boss you ever had? What made him or her so good? ❖ People might be surprised to find out that I _____. ❖ Describe a grade school teacher that made a big impression on you (for good or ill). ❖ Each person in the group answer for the person on their right: "_____, I am so glad God made you because _____." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What is your biggest fear about death? ❖ What do you miss most about childhood? ❖ I am most like my mom/dad in that I _____. ❖ One of my biggest pet peeves is _____. ❖ When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Are there any surprises? ❖ For what do you want to be remembered? ❖ An emotion I often feel but don't usually express is _____. ❖ Where do you go or what do you do when life gets too heavy for you? Why? ❖ In what area of your life would you like to have greater peace? Why? ❖ What is one of your biggest fears about the future? ❖ When you were a child, what was your favorite time of day and why? ❖ In general, I worry too much about _____.

- What is your favorite movie and why?
- If money were no problem, and you could choose one place in the world to travel for a week, where would that place be and why?
- Who is your number one advisor in life and why?
- One of my biggest pet peeves is _____.
- People might be surprised to find out that I _____.
- You have three wishes. What would you wish for?
- If you suddenly lost your eyesight, what would be the thing you missed seeing the most?
- What is the most daring thing you have ever done? What made it so daring?
- My favorite way to waste time is _____.
- What's the story behind the longest time you've gone without sleep?

Appendix F: Meeting Agenda

Be Prepared!

Target 1.5 to 2 hours for meeting

- Fellowship/snack time (10-15 minutes)
- Gather in a circle and open with prayer
- Ice breaker question
 - Start light (5-10 min.)
- Study/Video (if applicable)
- Group discussion
- Prayer requests
- Prayer
 - Encourage (but don't require) praying aloud
 - Change it up... prayer cards, separate men and women, etc.
- Admin stuff
 - Next mtg. time, place, subject, etc.
- Fellowship/snack time*

**Note: Snack time may be at start, end, or throughout mtg.*

Appendix G: Help!



- ✓ A community group's ability to accomplish its mission hinges on leaders just like you.
- ✓ It may take a little while for you to get comfortable leading a group.
- ✓ Applying the techniques in this leader guide will help you to effectively lead a group.
- ✓ If you need help at any point for anything, don't hesitate to reach out to Dave Fisher (585.410.2807).