

# Your Personal Guide to Starting a Small Group

A GUIDE MAP TO TAKE  
YOU FROM PREP TO  
YOUR FINAL WEEK

# Congratulations on starting a small group!

You've just taken a huge step toward spiritual health - not only for yourself, but for those who will be in your group, as well. As you read through this starter kit, you may have a moment where you think, "What did I get myself into?" That's OK! The wonderful thing about this process is that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. You don't have to be a Bible expert or teacher to Host a thriving group. All you have to do is:



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HEART FOR  
PEOPLE

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OPEN A  
SPACE FOR  
THE GROUP  
TO MEET

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GROUP

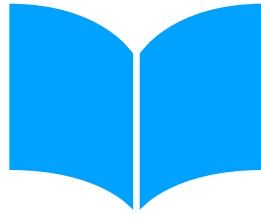
And the great news is, you're not alone! We're ready to come alongside you on this journey, sending you tips and helpful resources to connect you along the way.

We cannot wait to celebrate all that God is going to do in and through your group in the days ahead!

Blessings,

THE SMALL GROUPS SUPPORT TEAM

Refer to Your Quick Start Guide



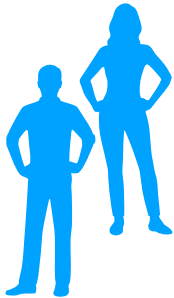
Start Here



Activate Your Small Group Registration



Attend HOST Gatherings



# NEW HOST JOURNEY

Watch New Group Training Videos

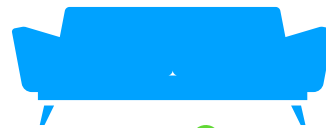


Explore Additional HOST Trainings



Host Your First Group

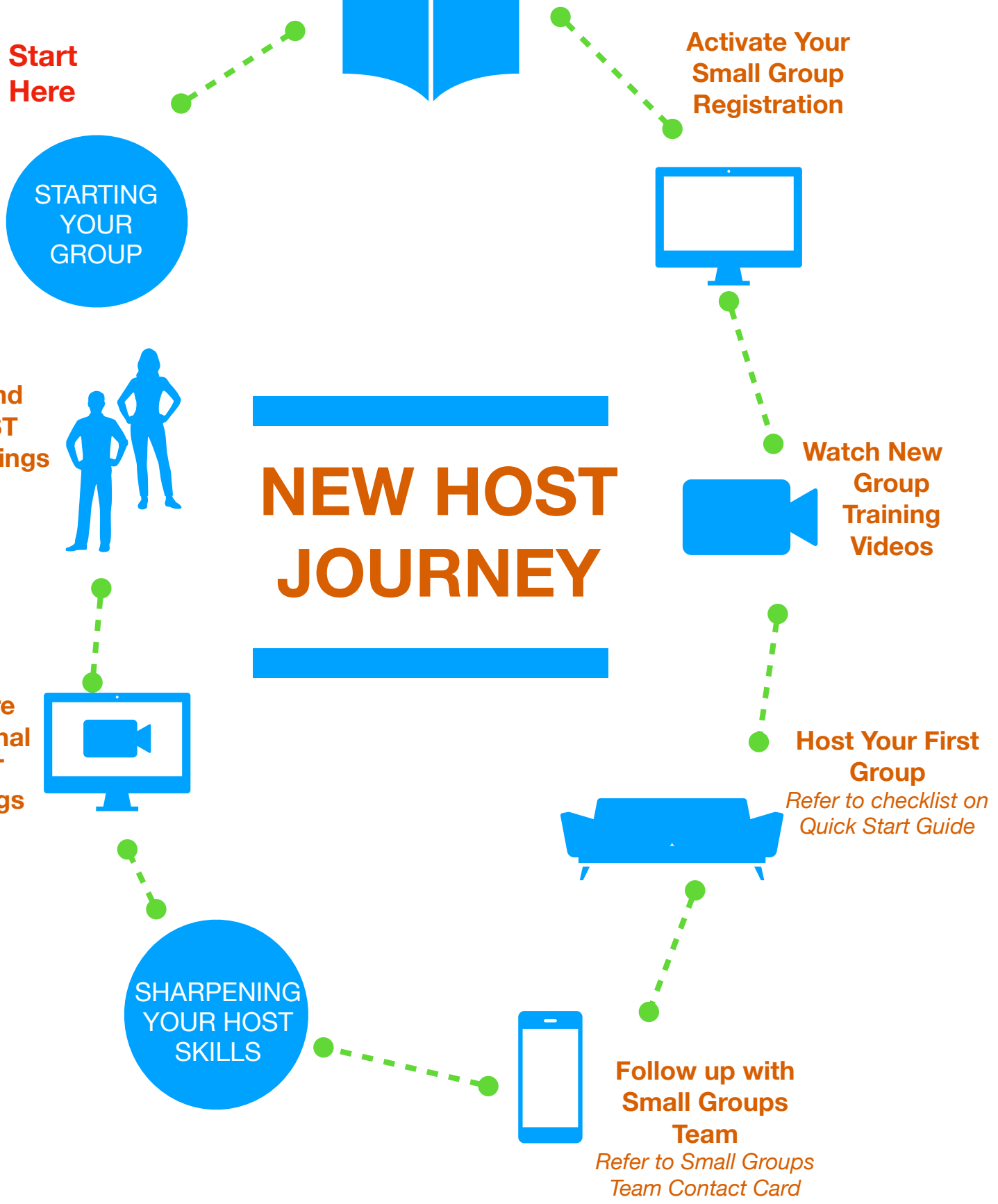
*Refer to checklist on Quick Start Guide*



SHARPENING YOUR HOST SKILLS

Follow up with Small Groups Team

*Refer to Small Groups Team Contact Card*



# Guidelines for a Healthy Group

Your small group should be a place where community is built and every member feels welcome to be open and honest with one another. Creating values and expectations are a great way to help your group get off to a great start and on the same page. The Group Guidelines will give your group a clear idea of what to expect, and you might even have more values to add.

**Our Mission** Our small group's mission is to balance the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in the hearts of every member in our group. We also want to grow healthy lives by building a fun and dynamic small group community that is committed to balancing the following five purposes:

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**Building relationships with others in the group** *Fellowship*

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**Supporting one another's spiritual growth** *Maturity*

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**Serving one another in the group** *Ministry*

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**Inviting others to join the group** *Mission*

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**Connecting with God through worshipping together** *Worship*

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# OUR GROUP GUIDELINES

## **Prioritize Group Attendance**

Life happens. We know life can seem crazy and surprises like to pop up in our schedules often, but the relationships we develop in this circle will help sustain us through the challenges of the daily grind. We'll do our best to prioritize the group so that we can forge the kind of community we all long for.

## **Start and End on Time**

We value your time and want to always do our best to honour it. Everyone is more than welcome to stick around as long as they'd like, but we want to be sensitive to those who need to run!

**MEETING DAY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**START TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**END TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Maintain Safety and Confidentiality**

What happens in group stays in group! Creating a safe place (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes) for people to be heard and feel loved is a cornerstone of this small group.

## **Share Roles in the Group**

This is OUR group! Whether that's bringing snacks, hosting, facilitating discussions, collecting prayer requests, or something else, everyone plays an important role.

## **Resolve Conflict Biblically**

We're all human. And we've all got issues. Conflict is bound to happen, but when it does, it's OK! That makes our community normal. Instead of panicking, gossiping, or letting the issue grow larger, we'll resolve concerns quickly by consulting Jesus' advice in Matthew 18:15-17.

## **Limit Our Freedom**

We want our group to be a relaxing, encouraging, and comfortable place to everyone who joins us. Since we can't know the backstory of everyone who gives the group a try, we won't drink alcohol during our meetings to avoid triggering someone who's struggled with it in the past.

## **Optional: Care Well for Our Kids**

If you anticipate kids being a part of your group, it would be great to add a word about how involved they'll be in meetings, how they'll be cared for when not present, etc

# Tips for Building a Great Group

Leading a small group is just the beginning of an exciting journey, and there are many other Journey Group HOSTs who are right there with you. Here are some personal tips to help you experience success!

- 1 Be friendly and be yourself.** God wired you uniquely with unique gifts and experiences. So relax and be the real you!
- 2 Share responsibility for the group.** Let others take ownership of the group to grow their investment and keep things manageable for you.
- 3 Ask great questions.** Ask compelling, open-ended questions and get comfortable with the famous awkward silence.
- 4 Pray for group members throughout the week.** There's nothing more unifying than praying for your group regularly.
- 5 Create opportunities for the group to get to know each other outside regular meetings.** Spending time together beyond the regularly scheduled group time can help bond your group and deepen relationships.
- 6 Don't cancel meetings.** At first, it's common to just have one or two people join you. But smaller gatherings offer a great opportunity to get to know people on a deeper level.



# Sharpening Your Host Skills

## NEW HOST TRAINING

**New HOST Training - Getting Your Group Started** will prepare you to be an effective HOST. Videos are categorized by common questions such as:

How do I prepare for a group meeting?  
What are the elements of a group meeting?  
What should we do about childcare?  
And many more!

## ADDITIONAL HOST TRAININGS

**HOST Training - Moving Your Group Forward:** Learn how small groups operate and get a Small Group Survival Guide.

## HOST TRAINING

Periodically, we gather our small group HOSTs for a community gathering and training. You'll connect with other HOSTs, share ideas and experiences, gain practical hosting tips, and interact with your Small Groups Team.

# Stay Connected

## YOUR SMALL GROUPS TEAM

Once your group is activated, we'll connect you with a Community Leader who will serve as your encourager and coach during your HOST journey. Your Community Leader will be available to you for advice, support, and prayer, and will regularly check in with you and remind you about upcoming trainings and gatherings. Remember - you are not alone!

## KEEP US POSTED

We'd love to see and hear about what God is doing in and through your group. Post your pictures (especially of your first meeting) and share your stories with us on Facebook and Instagram ( @journeysmallgroups). Sharing your images on social media with the hashtag #journeysmallgroups is a great way to let your community know what you're up to and how they can get involved!

If you have any questions or concerns about your group, please let us know how we can help, we'd love to connect with you! [groups@myjourney.church](mailto:groups@myjourney.church)

