

SMALL GROUP LEADER TRAINING “AT A GLANCE”

Each week will include time for check-in and reflection, as well as tips and resources for spiritual practices. The format of each session will include check-in, content, reflection, prayer and action. The prayer focus and action step will connect each week with the following week. Participants will leave the training with a ‘toolbox’ of resources and ideas for preparing, facilitating, and reflecting on their own spiritual formation as well as the formation of those in their small group.

Format: 1.5 hours weekly for 6 weeks, via Zoom, consisting of large group presentations, small group break-out discussions, and one-on-one follow-up

Timeline: Week of Jan. 10-week of March 1, 7:00-8:30 pm (Winnipeg)

Execution of small groups: Each participant (or group of participants, if working as a team) will lead a 4-6 week small group in their context between March-April 2021. Synod staff will continue to support small group leaders throughout the process, and small group leaders will support one other as well. A small group leader reflection gathering will happen near the beginning of May 2021 (before Pentecost), where leaders will reflect on their experience, share learnings and challenges, and help shape the training for the future.

Purpose/objective of MNO Small Group Pilot Project (SGPP)

- a. Equip leaders within congregations with tools and resources for starting small groups in their congregations
- b. Strengthen congregation’s capacity for connection and community while large-group gatherings are restricted
- c. Expand leadership/engagement within congregations beyond pastor and council

Structure of SG Training Sessions

- Check-in (to build relationship within the group, but also to model and train how to facilitate similar conversations)
- Content (variety of topics related to leadership, leading small groups, curriculum/resources, etc)
- Resource Review (learn about and review a particular resource)
- Reflection (connecting the content to your context)
- Prayer (building your own spiritual muscles while also developing tools for your use with small groups)
- Action (to be done in between sessions, as a way of putting into practice the content from the session, and preparing for the SGPP)

Curriculum:

Week 1: Introductions & Groundwork

- Overview of small groups, theological grounding, definitions and expected outcomes

Week 2: The Role of the Leader in Small Groups

- Small groups as discipleship formation
- Assessment of personal gifts/skills for leadership

Week 3: Preparing & Planning a Small Group Lesson

- Steps in preparing and planning

- Choosing/Evaluating curriculum
- Hospitality & communication

Week 4: Managing Group Dynamics

- Leading people vs. leading content
- Stages of group formation
- Listening and navigating discussions

Week 5: Sharing & Expanding Leadership

- Being the leader vs. doing all the leading
- Sharing leadership responsibility with others
- Identifying and equipping leadership in others

Week 6: Evaluation & Assessment

- Evaluating success & feedback
- Addressing challenges, concerns and hesitations
- Planning for, inviting others to, and beginning a small group (mechanics and next steps)