

GROUP MEETING PLAN

Church Growth in a Box

Introduction

Welcome to an exciting journey into your church's future. Starting today, you will begin to add words to your vocabulary like growth, outreach, connection, and impact. These will replace words like decline, status quo, and inevitable. You are more than ready to make that switch. That's why you purchased Church Growth in a Box.

This small group study is designed to help you select, train, motivate and inspire the team that will lead the efforts to connect your church to the neighborhood and community around you for years to come. Select the people you want to be part of this group with this long term goal in mind.

Let's get started.

What's in Church Growth in a Box.

- 8 copies of *Connect*
- A Connect leader's guide
- Group Facilitator's Guide designed to prepare the leader for the course
- 6 video presentations designed to facilitate group discussions (On an enclosed thumb drive.)
- A promotional Kit (On an enclosed thumb drive)
- A coupon for 1 free consultation (up to 1 hour) from the Provisum Group to help bring clarity or coaching should your group need it.

What You Need for the Group Meetings.

- A copy of the *Connect: Grow Your Church in 28 Days – Guaranteed* book for each group member. Additional copies may be purchased from connectandgrowyourchurch.com
- The *Facilitator's Guide* for the group leader (This is included in Church Growth in Box).
- The video-based instruction for each group session included on an enclosed thumb drive or at connectandgrowyourchurch.com/GroupSessionVideo

Who Should Participant in this Initiative?

Church Growth in a Box starts with a six-week in-depth study and application of the *Connect: Grow Your Church in 28 Days – Guaranteed* book. You need to find people who are enthusiastic about reaching your church's neighborhood and growing your church. This does not necessarily mean rounding up all of the usual suspects – staff members, elders, or board members – but your group should definitely include some of them.

Your group should consist of 5-10 people who can devote at least 2-3 hours per week to the group meetings and to assignments between the group meetings for at least six weeks in a row. This is not the place for people who feel they *should* be included. You need people who are ready to roll up their sleeves and do some work.

The selection of this group is vital to the long term success of your church growth efforts. It is from these people that your connection team will come. It is from this group that the people who will lead the ongoing effort to grow your church after the study is over will come. This group study is designed to train and motivate the people who will connect your church to the neighborhood and community around you long after the study has ended.

Choose wisely.

The Heart of the Evangelist

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, the apostle Paul wrote:

Eph 4:11-13

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

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Here Paul describes for us the 5-fold ministry gifts. As such, each church has at least one person who possesses one or more of these gifts. So somewhere in your church is at least one person in whom God placed the heart of an evangelist. It is a promise of God.

The heart of the evangelist carries a heavy burden to connect with people who live far from God and lead them onto a path of discipleship. If God is who He says He is and His word is true, that person is already in your church. Your most important assignment when putting this group together is to find that person(s) and make sure he/she is part of this group. It is in the heart of the evangelist that God will supply the endless energy and passion for the connection with undisciplined people living in the neighborhood around your church and ensure the long term viability and success of the connection process in your church.

As you gather your group, pray about inviting people who have a passion to reach the neighborhood. Who is frustrated with the current state of outreach in your church? Who is ready to take action? Who recognizes that sticking with the status quo will not produce a good outcome for the church?

Find people who are open to new ideas and trying new things. That doesn't mean you need only people who say "yes" to everything. You will also need to win over folks who are more skeptical or deliberative. They may take a little more time to warm up to new ideas, but that's okay.

What is Expected of the Group Participants.

Group participants should be committed to:

1. Attend all of the Church Growth in a Box group meetings.
2. Prepare for each meeting by reading the corresponding chapters from the *Connect* book.
3. Complete assignments between meetings to plan, prepare, and execute outreach to the church's neighbors.
4. Positively influence other church members with what they are learning in the group meetings.
5. To be part of implementing and sustaining the things you all will learn in this group study.

Checklist for the First Meeting.

- A meeting place at the church or in a home with comfortable seating for the group members.
- Secure copies of the *Connect* book to distribute each group member prior to the first meeting. Members should come to the meeting having read the Foreword, Introduction, and Chapters 1-5 of the *Connect* book.
- Arrange for a means to view the streaming video-based instruction. Ideally, the group could meet in a room with a video monitor or television with an internet connection. The group could also use a laptop or tablet to view the video.
- Provide some refreshments for the group. This responsibility could be shared by members of the group.
- Arrange for childcare, if needed.

How to Use The *Connect Leadership Guide*.

The *Connect Leadership Guide* is designed to make leading this study as easy and as turnkey as possible for you (or the leader you appoint). It is also designed to minimize the leader's prep time and enhance the experience for the group.

Each lesson is divided into five unique sections to lead the group through discussion. The sections are **Introduction, Getting Started, The Big Ideas, Practical Application, Strategic Execution, and Prayer.**

Each lesson starts with an **Introduction** section. This is a story underscoring one of the principles taught in the lesson. A group member should read this story aloud to the group.

In the **Getting Started** section, you will find icebreaker questions to get the group talking and to help them get better acquainted. Even though this group has been gathered for a short-term task, the relationships in the group are significant to the success of your church's outreach efforts. Take time to invest in the relationships. When the group has any disagreements or differences of opinion, the discussion will go better if the group members like each other.

In this section, you will also find housekeeping items for the group such as the Group Agreement in Lesson 1 and the opportunity for group members to give a progress report on their assignments from the previous week. This accountability is necessary to properly execute the key initiatives outlined in the lesson to reach the church's neighborhood.

In the **The Big Ideas** section, the group will start by watching the video sessions from Don Corder; the author of *Connect*. Each lesson will contain two or three video sessions with discussion questions for each video. After each video session, the video will prompt you to pause the video so the group can answer two or three discussion questions based on the information presented. After the group discussion, start the video to view the next session. This pattern repeats for each of the videos in this section.

In the **Practical Application** section, the group discussion will begin for the assigned reading from the *Connect* book. Key portions of the *Connect* book are included in this section to refresh the group members' memories as they enter into the discussion. It's important to take your time during this portion of the meeting and allow each group member to be heard.

In the **Strategic Execution** section, the group members will take on assignments corresponding to the chapters of the *Connect* book in the lesson. Group members should complete these assignments between the meetings. It's important for each group member to do their part, so that all of the work does not rest on a few members and so the group will have the information it needs for the next group meeting. The leader should delegate the assignments to the group members based on their interest, expertise, and availability to any data required to complete the assignment. The group members will be asked to report their progress during the Getting Started section of the next group meeting.

In the **Prayer** section. This time should be used to focus on what is going on in the lives of each member as well as for the church's success in reaching its neighbors. While the group will learn effective strategies to grow the church, even the best strategies lack power without the power of prayer. Pray for God to give opportunities in the church's neighborhood. Pray for the volunteers and funds the church will need to execute the strategies and plans. Pray for the hearts of the people who live in the neighborhood around your church. Pray for the people who need Jesus to show up right now. Pray they God will give them the strength to endure until your church shows up. Pray that God will use your church to show those people that Jesus is real. Pray for openness to new ideas and new initiatives by the church.

After the group study is finished-

Jesus said to make disciples of “all” (people) so the church has to be about “more” (disciples). We grow God’s Kingdom on earth by growing the local church. We grow the local church by making “more” disciples. And we make disciples by first connecting with people. But all of this will be for naught if you don’t take what you read and turn it into action.

In the 28th chapter of Matthew we find the Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age

(Matthew 28:19-20).

This verse is primarily recognized for the task Jesus gives to the church. The key words are “Go”, “Make” and “All”. Making disciples for the transformation of the world is the reason the Church exists. But there two other words that are equally important in this verse. They are “behold” and “with”. In the original Greek, “Behold” is an imperative case. It is more than a promise. Jesus commands himself to be “with” you when you “go” and “make”. But the word “with” (in the original Greek) means far more than Jesus will be present as you “go” and “make”. “With” means Jesus, through His holy spirit, will be there for you and to assist you in your efforts. It is “imperative” that he do so. It is an empowering truth that equips us as we “go”.

Accountability

Finally, if your ministry is going to benefit from what you have learned in this book, then someone is going to have to make sure that things get done. Someone is going to have to bring accountability to the process. To help with that, we have developed a checklist of the 28 action steps described in this book. The check list is designed to be kept in a desk drawer to help you (or who you appoint) remember what needs to be done today, tomorrow and so on.

To get your free copy of this checklist, go to

www.connectandgrowyourchurch.com/28daychecklist

You have the plan. You know what to do. At the end of this group study, you should have the people and the resources to make it happen. So step out in faith and do what the book says. Commit the resources even if you do not know where they will come from. Ask people for their help and support. Preach it. Teach it. Do it. Get your whole church involved. Jesus will show up and do mighty things. He promised. He commands it.