

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SFBC SMALL GROUP MINISTRY ABRIDGED VERSION - AUGUST, 2021

THE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY (SGM) TASK FORCE Members: Doug Beasley, Cherry Johnson, Margaret Norton-Arnold (Chair), and Rev. Anita Peebles (Pastoral Liaison). Using the data and suggestions from the 2020 Long Range Planning (LRP) documents, we have crafted the following recommendations. (The full 8-page version is on the SFBC website.) We explored research related to best practices for church small group ministries, reviewed what SFBC currently provides and developed a vision for what we believe to be an exciting direction for our future together. PLEASE NOTE: This is a WORKING DOCUMENT. We want your input!

BACKGROUND

During the LRP Focus Groups of 2020, 67% of 125 participants identified small groups as a key personal/communal need. They also identified some concerns we believe could be addressed by this ministry, including:

- ⊕ Difficulty newcomers face in finding their “place” at SFBC (“cliquishness”).
- ⊕ BIPOC members expressed need to feel seen, heard, included and free of oppressive behaviors.
- ⊕ Need for spaces for continued expression of diverse theologies.
- ⊕ Need for greater coordination in social justice action opportunities.
- ⊕ Need for greater anti-racism education and action.
- ⊕ Need for more opportunities for families to “be church” to one another besides Sunday AM.

PROPOSED SMALL GROUP MINISTRY DEFINED

- ⊕ A grass-roots/organic ministry stemming from the expressed needs & desires of members, offering opportunities to interact with the church community up to seven days a week.
- ⊕ A ministry complementary to Worship ministry--carrying on where Sunday morning leaves off.
- ⊕ SGM will start small & in-house but over time will include outreach to neighbors.
- ⊕ All groups will relate to at least one of SFBC’s values, will operate through a lens of anti-racism & will adhere to a set of operational norms.
- ⊕ Groups could include those for: Spiritual Development, Study, Issue-Focused & Social Justice Action, Connections & Support, and Socializing.
- ⊕ Groups will meet at the church, in homes, on Zoom, in coffee shops, parks . . .
- ⊕ All groups and Group Leaders will be commissioned by the church.
- ⊕ Groups will serve as a point of entry where newcomers make connections.
- ⊕ Planned events will bring all groups together to increase a sense of community.
- ⊕ Members will feel comfortable inviting friends to groups, and thus expand our community.

LEADERSHIP

- ⊕ This ministry will embolden new lay leaders who fully reflect our congregation.
- ⊕ All leaders will be professionally trained in group dynamics, anti-racism/anti-oppression skills, facilitation, etc. Pastors may choose to lead some groups, but most will be lay-led.
- ⊕ One SGM part-time staff member serve as Administrative Coordinator, managing day-to-day issues, and one pastor will provide oversight of the ministry and its integration into church life.
- ⊕ An Advisory Group will work (in consultation with experts) to develop norms, training modules and a dispute resolution process, & will monitor adherence to SGM mission and goals.

BUDGET: For one part-time employee, intern/consultant stipend(s), supplies and special events

SAMPLES OF SOME KINDS OF GROUPS THAT MIGHT BE OFFERED

PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING THAT THESE ARE THE GROUPS WHICH WILL BE OFFERED. Ideas for groups will arise from the congregation. We just want to give you an idea of the TYPES of groups which COULD be offered if desired. The possibilities are literally endless, so use your imagination to expand this list. Remember that the ministry will start out small and slowly. The number of groups offered at any given time will vary and will depend on need, interest, and availability of trained leadership and resources.

(Note that groups preceded by an *asterisk are already in existence.)

Some Ideas for Spiritual Growth and Development Groups:

- ✧ *Bible Study & *Prayer Group
- ✧ Broader Spiritualities
- ✧ Faith Heritage
- ✧ Practicing Sabbath
- ✧ Latin American Christianity
- ✧ Contemplative Practice
- ✧ Your idea for a group _____

Some Ideas for Support Groups

- ✧ *BIPOC Members and Friends & *Men's Group
- ✧ Grief Support
- ✧ Former Catholics Support Group
- ✧ Transgender and Non-Binary Members Support Group
- ✧ Parents of School Age Children Support Group
- ✧ International Members Support Group
- ✧ 4th Quarter: A Group for those 75 and older
- ✧ Your idea for a group _____

Some Ideas for Issue-Focused and Action Groups

- ✧ *Brave Space, *Friendship Circle & *First Hill Interfaith Climate Action Group
- ✧ Study Group: Racism in the U.S. Criminal Justice System
- ✧ Churchgoers (A group that visits services of other faith communities)
- ✧ Immigrant Rights Activists
- ✧ Good Trouble (A group that "shows up" in the community when a presence is needed)
- ✧ Tendering (a group of members who visit people in the hospital, send cards, make phone calls to those in need, take communion to homebound folks, etc.)
- ✧ Your idea for a group _____

Some Ideas for Connection and Social Groups

- ✧ *Place at the Table
- ✧ Family Movie Night
- ✧ SFBC Knits!
- ✧ South King County Members and Friends
- ✧ Theater-Goers
- ✧ Your idea for a group _____