



What is a GROW Group?

At OCC our vision is to see everyone, everywhere – experience and be transformed by the love of God. And GROUPS are critical to the vision as this is *where* church happens. Here people are living out, growing and practicing their faith in community with one another.

GROW GROUPS are groups of **4-10 people** who gather online or in person **weekly for 90 minutes** to connect, pray, and study the Bible together. These could be made up of your family members, roommates, a circle of friends or even coworkers. It could be your nearby neighbors, folks you know at OCC or some OCCers you’ve never met before!

Regardless of who you are in a group with - the goal is the same... to GROW in community.

1. GROW in connection with & care for ONE ANOTHER.
2. GROW in intimacy with JESUS and His Word.
3. GROW in responsiveness to Jesus’ mission of LOVE.

What is the FORMAT?

GROW groups follow a **Discovery Based method** of reading and studying Scripture. Passages selected are directly connected to the weekly sermon series. In this particular format, there is not an “expert” or teacher, but your role is more of a facilitator, allowing everyone the opportunity to learn and discover God’s truths from the source Himself. This method is very simple and easy to apply and reproduce!

Here are a couple of quick videos which explain the basic format of the Discovery Bible Study Method. We also have a quick facilitation guide on the next page all ready for you!

- “Disciple Making Movements” – 4 min ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
- “Discovery Bible Reading” – 4 min ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))

What is the SCHEDULE?

Grow Groups usually meet weekly and start off with a **5-6 week commitment**, but often can evolve into a regular ongoing group, but it is completely up to you and the members if you wish to continue. **You get to pick the day & time your group meets!**

For ongoing groups, we highly suggest you build in periodic connection times outside the group (perhaps monthly or a couple of times a session) where instead of the normal gathering, groups either serve together, gather to do something fun or practice a spiritual practice.

GROW GROUP FACILITATION GUIDE

****Rotate facilitation in your group as much as possible!!****

Connect // 25 min

Connect with one another!

- ✓ Ask an opening **connect question** (see next page for connect question ideas)
- ✓ Ask if anyone has a need or knows of anyone with a **need** that the group can help with.
- ✓ Ask how their **"I wills"** and sharing went from last week?
- ✓ **Pray** over any needs/concerns that come up.

Read // 5 min.

Listen to what the weekly passage of Scripture has to say, follow these steps...

- ✓ Ask someone to **read** the weekly passage aloud.
- ✓ Ask someone else to **re-read** the passage aloud perhaps in another version.
- ✓ Ask if anyone can **re-tell** the passage in everyday words or do as a whole group.

***Weekly passages can always be found at www.occ.org/group-leaders.**

Observe // 30 min.

Discover together what the Scripture is saying. Resist the urge to teach. Ask these **questions...**

- ✓ What got your **attention**? Any words or phrases that stood out?
- ✓ Is there anything that seems **confusing**?
- ✓ What do we discover about **God** in this passage?
- ✓ What do we discover about **people** in this passage?
- ✓ What do we learn about (**topic of the week or series**) from this passage?

Apply // 10 min.

Share how God is asking you to **apply** these learnings to everyday life by asking these questions...

- ✓ If this passage is true, what changes might you want to make to your life as a result? OR What is God saying to you? What are you going to do about it?
- ✓ Ask everyone to create & share an **"I will"** statement for the week. (Ex. "I will commit to...")
Encourage **SMART** statements. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)
- ✓ Ask everyone, "Who is someone you can share what you've learned with this week?"

PRAY & WRAP UP // 5 min.

- ✓ Pray as a group. Some sample prayer prompts are on the following page.
- ✓ **Encourage** everyone as they return to their weeks. **Remind** them that they are loved and not alone and if something comes up to reach out to the group.
- ✓ **Send** the "I will" statements out to the group after the meeting to help keep everyone accountable!

CONNECT QUESTIONS IDEAS //

- What are you feeling grateful for this week?
- How have you seen God at work this week?
- How have you experienced God's love this week?
- What has been particularly challenging this week?
- How do you feel God is transforming you lately?
- Have people do a Show & Tell that represents something they are thankful for
- Have someone share a part of their faith story or their testimony.

PRAYER PROMPTS IDEAS //

- Pray for one another & their families
- Pray for Overlake, the staff, elders, and the mission
- Pray for Overlake's global partners around the world
- Prayer for Overlake's ministries (KidTown, Student Ministries, Safe Parking, You Belong, CR)
- Pray for our local communities
- Pray for current world affairs

FACILITATION TIPS //

- First meeting: Be sure that everyone introduces themselves.(Names, neighborhood, etc)
- Avoid the temptation for you or anyone to be the teacher or expert! Removing the dynamic of "experts" fosters participation. Rotate facilitation each week.
- Allow everyone an opportunity to share what they are learning, even if you have to call on people to share. For families: Let your youngest share first!
- Encourage everyone to only share revelation from the specific passage you are studying. Avoid bringing in prior knowledge from past sermons, podcasts, books, commentaries, etc. For those with lots of Bible knowledge this is going to be a challenge!
- Seek to honor one another's time by starting and finishing on time. In order to do this, encourage people to give their answers in "sentences, not paragraphs."
- Last Meeting: Be sure to communicate next steps. Do people want to continue meeting?

OTHER CONNECT IDEAS //

(Aim for 1x every 6 weeks or so)

- Have an outing! Do something fun together as a group!
- Plan to sit together one Sunday at church
- Do a spiritual gift test as a group, www.giftstest.com
- Devote an entire meeting to prayer & worship
- Serve together locally or on a Sunday morning. See www.occ.org/group-leaders for ideas!

NEW GROUPS // IDEAS for FIRST 6 WEEKS

Intro Week // New Connections.

- Open this week with introductions, especially for those who are new to the group.
- Have everyone share a bit about themselves: Name, neighborhood, connection (if any) to OCC, why they joined the group.
- Keep this week very relational. Make sure every voice is invited and heard.

Week 1 // Set the tone.

- Continue getting to know each other.
- Do a round of *Show & Tell*
- Think of who you could ask to facilitate next week. Normalizing shared leadership is our value!

Week 2 // Settling in.

- Maybe try another round of “*Show & Tell*”, something that they are either “thankful for” or represents something “stressing them out.”
- Let someone else use the guide to facilitate the group time. Multiply leadership!

Week 3 // Share the load.

- Open with one of your group members sharing part of their story. Thank them for being brave!
- Let someone else use the guide to facilitate the group time. Multiply leadership!

Week 4 // Share the load.

- Open with one of your group members sharing part of their story. Thank them for being brave!
- Let someone else use the guide to facilitate the group time. Multiply leadership!

Week 5 or 6 // Finish strong.

- First, thank YOU for honoring YOUR commitment! Seriously, thank you.
- Thank the group for their commitment. Talk about next steps from here. Do people want to continue? Some may. Some may not – that’s okay. You may. You may not – that’s okay too!
- See if anyone would want to start their own GROW group and connect them with Pastor Laura.
- Consider organizing a group celebration get-together!

SUPPORT //

- Group Leader Resource Page: www.occ.org/group-leaders
- Groups Pastor: Laura Abelarde, LauraA@occ.org