

# Growth Groups

A new approach to groups at Crossroads

## The Story So Far...

It has been two and a half years now since Crossroads moved into its new location on Moffat Blvd. We've seen hundreds of people walk through our doors. We've seen many receive Christ, get baptized or get involved in groups. This is awesome stuff and God gets all the glory!

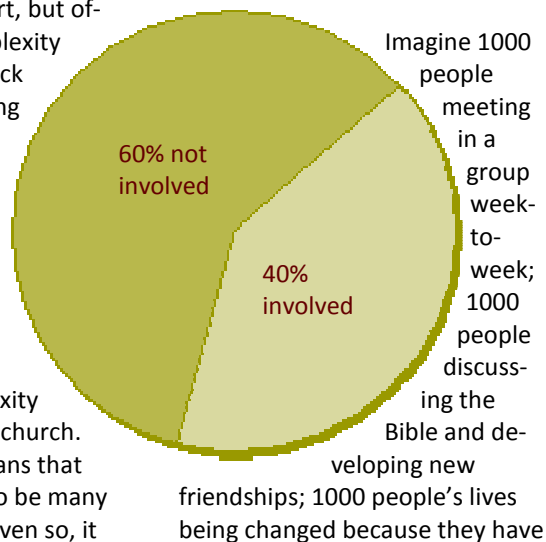


However, sadly, we've also seen many come to Crossroads and leave not too much later because they were not able to get connected. They came to a large church and found too many obstacles to building relationships. Sometimes this was because of a lack of effort, but often because of the complexity of the church, and the lack of a simple path to getting connected. The number of people who have come and left in the last two years numbers in the several hundreds.

For some time, the leadership of Crossroads has talked about the complexity of ministries here at the church. Being a large church means that there are always going to be many activities going on. But even so, it

should be simple for those who attend to figure out how to meet new people and get involved. If we could simplify and bring alignment to our ministries – if we could all work together in our planning and scheduling – we could make getting involved at Crossroads simpler. We would then see involvement increase and more people growing in their faith.

Currently, we have around 40% of our average Sunday attendance involved in some kind of group; whether a small group, Theology Program, Divorce Care or other group. We're not content with that! We want to see 100% of our average Sunday attendance involved in a group. Read that again. Yes, we're serious. We believe groups make such a difference in the spiritual walk of believers, that no believer should miss out on this opportunity.



found a place to be real about their faith. That is an awesome vision. Over the next year, with tweaking our current system and bringing alignment, the leadership believes we could see involvement reach 70-80% and then 100% in the near future. Many churches around the

**Imagine 100% of our average attendance involved in a group!**

country have that kind of involvement, using a system very much like the one explained in this document. If that vision is going to be achieved, it takes a lot of people to be behind it. We need you to be behind us in this. We need you to own this vision, to spread the word about this vision and we need some of you to be leaders in accomplishing this vision. So please read carefully, pray about it, and talk with us about any questions or concerns.

Achieving this vision doesn't just take new leadership, however. We're a big church, and part of becoming big is realizing when your current structure won't meet the demands of an increased size. We see that our current system can't take reaching a vision of 100% involvement. So, in the next few pages we outline how we see tweaking our current systems will remove obstacles to involvement.

## Five Current Obstacles to Involvement



Joining a group currently can be like a series of hurdles, and many don't make it!

**We're a big church, and part of becoming big is realizing when your current structure won't meet the demands of an increased size.**

There are five main obstacles to involvement that filter out the 60% who currently do not get involved.

**1. "Will I have to be in this group until Jesus comes?!"**

People fear unending commitment. Our current system is set up that way. We won't see more people getting involved if they think that once they're in the group there's no way out. We believe once they get in a group they will like it and stay, but people need to know the length of their commitment.. This same obstacle applies to those who might consider leading a group. Many don't lead because they fear being stuck leading a group forever. We've got to remove this obstacle for both those who might join a group and those who might lead a group.

**2. Inconsistent and Scattered Promotion**

Small groups and groups in general have increased over the past few years and part of this is to do with some key church-wide series that we promoted...for example, the

Mirror Image and the Developing a Servant's Heart studies. However, there's no rhythm in our current system to maintain a consistent promotion of groups, so that people are continually having an opportunity to hear about them and join. We have lots of slides, lots of types of groups – which is fantastic – but it can easily become background noise when there's so much.

**3. Multiple step sign-ups**

Currently, to sign up for a group usually requires two steps or more and involves the person contacting a leader themselves. This is a hurdle that some of those 60% who are not in a group never get past. We need to make this a lot easier. If there was a way to have one-step sign-ups, we would see a dramatic increase in interest and involvement in groups.

**4. "What curriculum is the group studying?"**

This is an obstacle to some people. Some fear a difficult study like Revelation. Others need to have their interest piqued by a topic that a group is dealing with, before they will

join. Currently, we don't track what groups are doing and different groups start and end topics at different times. There also needs to be wider variety of groups, that are dealing with needs or issues where people are at.

**5. "Is the group open to new people?"**

Perhaps this is the biggest obstacle. People fear turning up for a group that has been meeting for a long time, who know each other really well and who aren't really ready for new people to join. It's a big obstacle. If there was some way we could say, "On this date all groups are starting afresh and are looking for new people! Get involved!" we could reduce this fear.

These are five of the obstacles to involvement in our current system in seeing people join groups. If we're going to break through the 40% mark, we've got to address these obstacles better. Below, we explain four main steps we're taking to address these obstacles which we pray and trust will lead to more involvement and spiritual growth at Crossroads.

## Five Steps to Achieve the Vision

**1. Groups meet for trimesters of 12 weeks**

This is the main change that brings alignment and short-

group for 12 weeks at a time. After the 12 weeks finish, the group breaks, and the members of the group are welcome

same time, allows groups to continue meeting every trimester. It also brings alignment: every group, every ministry in the church aligns around the same calendar. We're removing a huge obstacle through this change.

**2. Promotion Months**

The months off (three per year) will not only be a break for the leaders and members of the

term commitment. The year is split into three trimesters of 12 weeks each, with a month (or more) off in between. People would only commit to be in a

to re-sign up to join the same group again, to join a different group, or not join a group at all. This allows people to commit to just 12 weeks, and at the

**Approximate Trimester Dates**



**Key: Groups Meet – Promotion/Break**

## Five Steps to Achieve the Vision (cont.)

*(Continued from page 2)*  
group, it will also be an opportunity to strategically promote the next trimester. During that month we will be creatively and persuasively communicating, “Sign-up for a group! Try it out for just 12 weeks!”. So three times a year, consistently and strategically, we are saying, “Groups are starting, get involved!”. No more inconsistent promotion, but a strategic, momentum building system which will increase involvement.

### 3. One Step sign-ups

No longer will it be the responsibility of the person interested in a group to contact the leader, but the opposite way around. The person will choose their group, sign-up and the leader will get in touch with him or her. Our staff will handle all the administration of getting the information to the

right people.

To communicate the choices clearly, we’ll create one brochure which will outline all the groups that will be starting the next trimester. We’ll distribute that to everyone coming through our doors on a Sunday during the promotion month. Then they will hear “Sign-up for a group! Try it out for 12 weeks!” There are three ways they will be able to do this: by filling out a card in service, by visiting our website or at a table in the lobby. They just take one step. Behind the scenes, we’ll do multiple steps for them.

### 4. Name this group system “Growth Groups”

This step means that every group, whether a bible study meeting in a home, Divorce-Care, Theology Program, or other groups, will all fit under one unifying name, “Growth

Groups.” This name emphasizes the purpose of these groups – spiritual growth – rather than the size of them “small groups”. This also brings unity and alignment. Groups won’t lose their particular names (like, Theology Program will still be called such), but communicating about joining a Growth Group becomes much easier.

### 5. Coordinators in every group

Finally, we need to see more leaders involved. We are introducing a role called “Coordinator” which every leader will be asked to have. This person will be responsible for emailing the group about meetings and prayer requests weekly, as well as leading the group a couple of times a trimester. This person, after one or several trimesters, would come to the point of leading a group himself/herself.



Growth Groups— 12 weeks of strengthening your faith

**Imagine 1000 people meeting in a group week-to-week; 1000 people discussing the Bible and making new friends; 1000 people’s lives being changed!**

## Some More Details

Having explained the five main steps, let us explain a few of the details.

### This system has a leadership structure that does not overwhelm any one person.

When you have 1000 people or more, there has to be multiple leadership levels so that the care of the people does not all fall on one person or a few, who would then get quickly overwhelmed. We have set up four layers of leadership, so that every single person is cared for. See the diagram to the right.

### The Responsibilities of Growth Groups

Part of this new system will be

that Growth Groups are asked to do four things each trimester.

#### 1. The group will meet weekly

#### 2. Once a trimester they will have a party together

Whether as part of their 12 meetings or a separate meeting, the group is required to party!

#### 3. Once a trimester they will serve in an outreach project together

This might mean coming to a Second Saturday, or it may be a project that the group comes up with themselves.

#### 4. Once a trimester the group will celebrate communion together

Groups will find this time very meaningful as they share in this spiritual practice together.

### Responsibilities of Growth Group Leaders

Growth Group Leaders will be asked to do 4 things:

#### 1. Pray for group members once a day

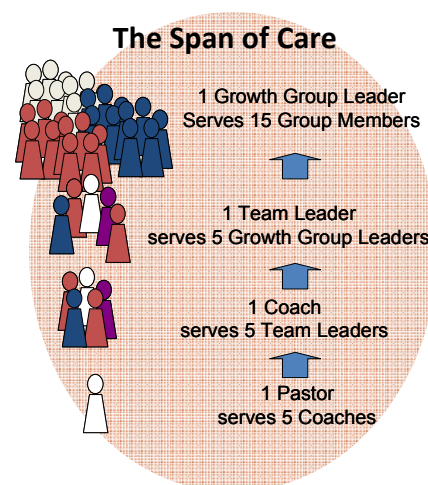
#### 2. Lead the group once a week

**3. Meet with Team Leader in a huddle once a month**  
This huddle is a brief face-to-face meeting with the team leader and 4 other group leaders for the purpose of encouragement, prayer and wisdom sharing!

#### 4. Form new groups from their current group once a trimester

The leader will encourage those in their group to consider stepping into leadership the

*(Continued on page 4)*



### Growth Groups Do 4 Things:

1. Meet together once a week.
2. Party together once a trimester.
3. Engage in an Outreach project once a trimester.
4. Celebrate communion together once a trimester.

### Growth Group Leaders Do 4 Things:

1. Pray for group members once a day.
2. Lead the group once a week.
3. Meet with Team Leader in a huddle once a month.
4. Form new groups from their current group once a trimester.

### Key Dates

**November 16:** Group Leader Notification Deadline

**December 28:** Growth Groups Announced to the congregation and signups begin

**January 17:** 3 hour required training for all growth group leaders.

**February 1:** Groups begin!

**March 7:** Synergy Small Group Conference

## Some More Details (cont.)

*(Continued from page 3)*  
next trimester.

### The Transition

So how do current groups transition to the new system?

We are asking that current groups take a break at the end of December through January. On January 17, all growth

group leaders are required to attend a three-hour training session. If you would like to lead a growth group, you must attend this training session (if you are unable to make the session, please contact us ASAP).

Group members will re-signup for groups in January along

with the rest of the congregation. They need to make sure that they sign up quickly for their group before it becomes too full.

Finally, groups will begin meeting the week of February 1 for twelve weeks.

## In Conclusion

### So there it is.

We've explained the key changes of Growth Groups. Some of these will be hard for some to swallow, but keep in mind the potential for us becoming organized and aligned. We have an awesome congregation here – and that's with 40% in groups. Imagine what could happen when the other 60% join in. Imagine what it would mean in each of those people's lives! Imagine what it would mean for the city of Manteca and the Central Valley!

But what about the current 40%? There are also many pluses for current group members in taking these steps. The

month off provides a rest for leaders and members alike. Rest allows for reflection on what has been learned and a space for growth. Also, people will be able to be part of a group that is dealing with an area they are interested in. This may be an additional group they attend for 12 weeks, or they may decide to take a break from their current group only to return the following trimester. Also there are incredible benefits in groups serving, partying, and celebrating communion together! This structure is designed for people to really "grow"!

**A question for you to consider**  
Perhaps as you've read the document you've thought that you might like to try out group leadership for a trimester. If so, let us know. You are free to choose your type of group, topic (though we'd like to look it over before we go public with it), day, time and location. If you are interested in giving this a try, contact Pastor Ed or one of the Growth Group Coaches (see contact details below).

Most of all, we ask that you pray about this new chapter, consider it, ask us any questions. We pray you would own this and spread the word about it. There are great days ahead!

## Questions? Contact a Growth Group Coach

Call the church at 209-239-5566 or email us at:

Ed Applegate

[ed@crossroadsgrace.org](mailto:ed@crossroadsgrace.org)

Lee Honzell

[leehonzell@crossroadsgrace.org](mailto:leehonzell@crossroadsgrace.org)

Penny Jones

[pennyjones@crossroadsgrace.org](mailto:pennyjones@crossroadsgrace.org)

Bret Patterson

[bretpatterson@crossroadsgrace.org](mailto:bretpatterson@crossroadsgrace.org)