



CHRIST CENTERED
CAREER GROUPS

Steps in forming an effective small group Group Members Guide

Initial Meeting Focus (1.5 Hours): Purpose: Introductions and begin to develop relationships – There is no formal agenda other than to provide the group with an opportunity to get to know each other personally. Ideally, the volunteer small group mentor will facilitate the first two meetings and ensure that the group covers the intended topics in the allotted time to the best of their ability. If the time is not well managed, many new members will be frustrated and may not stay with the program. A minimum amount of time should be spent in this meeting on the career search strategies. This meeting should be initiated in a relaxed, informal setting, perhaps at lunch. Each group member should discuss:

- Personal background including hometown, college attended, family
- Brief career overview
- Brief overview of career goal and interests
- Highlight the key challenge each is most concerned about in their career search

Once each of the members has made their introductions, the group should plan to cover 3 key items:

- Agree on a weekly meeting time, location, and duration (recommend 2 hours)
- Discuss what would be most helpful in this process for each member (Morale support? Networking contacts? Accountability? Spiritual support? Career search coaching? Other?) It will be helpful for each of the members to have a sense of what the others would most benefit from in order to serve those purposes. It may also be possible to invite special guests to a meeting to cover a topic that most of the group would benefit from.
- Closing prayer or devotional (see Bible Verses document to help facilitate)

Second Meeting (2 hours): This meeting is more focused on the career search issues and will include an in-depth discussion on the background and status of each career searcher:

(20 minutes focused on each member)

- Distribute Resume
- Highlight your career background
- Career interests/goals including the 30 second elevator speech
- Progress in the career search thus far and current priorities
- Challenges – what’s preventing you from achieving your goals and what help is most needed?

In the final 15 minutes of this meeting, the volunteer small group mentor should solicit one of the members to be the group’s key point of contact who can help communicate group updates, meeting changes, or any other coordination activities required by the group. This person may facilitate some of the subsequent meetings but ideally will rotate this role amongst the group members in order to keep all members active and engaged in the process. In addition, time should be spent either at the beginning or the end of this meeting in prayer and/or discussing a key passage of scripture that could be helpful for the group.

One-on-One meetings:

One great way to strengthen and accelerate the relationship development process within the group is through one–on–one meetings. These should be coordinated between the group members within the first couple of weeks and on going, as possible. Meeting once a week for 2 hours at a time is helpful but in order to better establish both knowledge of the group members and to begin to fortify the relationship, these additional meetings are essential and should focus on determining ways that each member can proactively assist the others in their search through networking contacts, coaching, and collaboration.

Subsequent, weekly meetings:

Once the group has been initially launched, a weekly leader/facilitator will be assigned (this role will be rotated amongst the members each week) to lead the weekly discussions. The following topics should be covered at each meeting:

- Opening prayer/devotional (see relevant scripture verses provided or others relevant to the facilitator) – 10 minutes
- Each member updates the group on progress, priorities, and challenges in their search (use “weekly progress/priorities” template provided as needed) – 10 minutes each
- Group brainstorms on new ideas/approaches for each person – 5 minutes each
- Review/discuss key job search meetings/resources that the group should be aware of in the upcoming week – 15 minutes
- Agree on next steps (including the next meeting) and follow up items – 5 minutes
- Closing prayer

It is critical that the time be well managed in these meetings in order to be both useful and efficient. Each of the members must feel they are getting and giving value in this process. If one person consistently dominates the time or discussion, the rest of the members are likely to under-value the forum. It is also critical that the discussion have a reasonable balance of constructive feedback and Christ-like support throughout the meetings.

Questions and Lessons Learned:

- ***How long will it take for a group to form effectively?***
It takes time for the groups to transform into a community based on trust and relationships (see stages of a small group below). Initially the members will view the group as interesting and somewhat helpful. In the space of a few weeks, assuming the members commit the time and energy required, the group will begin to significantly impact the progress of each member including their attitudes, motivation, spiritual growth, etc.
- ***Is the C3G format helpful for everyone?***
There will be some people who try out the concept but won't stay, largely because of the discomfort associated with either the accountability or the close and personal format (versus large networking meetings). We know this program will not be for everyone. But for those who have found the career search journey to be lonely, exhausting, and/or not very effective and would benefit from having a community of believers to collaborate with and to support them (and visa versa) in this process, that is whom C3G is intended to serve.
- ***How do we add members to a group?***
New members can be added to an existing group but should not be done with regularity. The relationship and trust developed between members is vital to the success of the group and this takes time to establish. It is likely better to start a new group, where possible, than to continuously add new members to existing groups.
- ***How can the group continue to meet as some of the members find employment?***
As members of a group become employed, the challenge becomes finding a convenient meeting time for all members (including the employed members). If it proves too difficult to find a convenient time, it's better to pick a time that all of the un-employed members can make and have the employed members join whenever they are able. In addition, the employed members should be encouraged to meet individually with the other members to ensure that they are being supported and encouraged throughout.
- ***How much of a commitment is required of each member?***
In order to be most effective, members must be proactive in their support and commitment. A two-hour meeting every week, by itself, is not that helpful. The most effective group's members will be proactively trying to network on behalf of the others, determining how they can help the others with challenges (perhaps writing a resume) or any other activities that convert this from a group to a real "Christ Centered Community". We would expect each member to spend

approximately 4 hours per week associated with his or her C3G group in some form.

- ***How important is the spiritual component of this program?***
Unemployment represents a unique opportunity for God to get our attention and a real invitation to grow in both our knowledge of and relationship with Him! It is imperative that the groups keep the focus on the spiritual part of this journey. If all we accomplish is returning members to work, we have not only missed the opportunity to help them grow closer to our Savior, we have also fed the problem because a busy work life can actually draw people further away from Christ.
- ***Does this replace the need to attend Networking meetings, etc?***
No! There are typically plentiful resources and networking meetings in most communities that serve the purpose of educating people on the job search or inspiring, or connecting people via networking. The C3G concept is not intended to replace or compete with these great resources. In fact, we believe that getting individuals connected with a caring, supportive small group will actually enhance their use of these types of programs and resources.
- ***How does C3G help a family?***
If the unemployed spouse can learn to confront his/her frustrations and fears, he can better lead his family through this difficult time of interruption in employment. C3G can help promote communication in the family. We encourage the groups to involve families in periodic social gatherings.
- ***Can C3G be used to reach those who are not church members?***
We encourage you to use this as both a support vehicle for your congregation members and as an outreach where possible. Your own church members who participate or volunteer will exemplify love and compassion that will strongly influence those who are not members.
- ***Can C3G help get jobs?***
Yes, although it is not the singular purpose of this program to secure employment. We believe that through this Christ centered support, career searchers will both grow in their relationship with Jesus and will become more effective in the career search process.
- ***Who leads each group?***
The establishment of a formal group leader is discouraged because it places the organizational responsibility on one person. As a consequence, the group's identity matches the "leaders". With weekly rotation of the facilitator, the group continues to belong to all the members equally.
- ***Are groups separated by gender?***
Most commonly, yes. Communication of personal matters is difficult enough; mixing genders would make this more difficult. Some may choose to mix genders and as long as there is recognition of the difference in group dynamics, this can be workable.
- ***Where and when do the groups meet?***
It is best to have meetings in the early morning or early evening to minimize the impact on time required for other networking opportunities. The groups elect their own meeting place based entirely on convenience for the members. Most groups choose to meet at restaurants, some in offices;

however, we discourage using private homes since someone is burdened with "picking up" each week.

- ***What happens if I can't attend a meeting?***
Absentees are encouraged to contact their group members by phone or drop a note. Regular attendance will be a key success factor for the group to be most effective.
- ***What do groups talk about?***
Whatever is important at the time. To keep meetings focused, a suggested agenda is provided and individual agendas are recommended.
- ***What about spouse support groups?***
A great idea and it should be recognized that the spouse relationship is significantly tested during unemployment. Any resources/seminars that can be made available to serve this need will be helpful. In addition, church sponsored career seminars, financial seminars, networking classes and more would be useful. No project of this nature, however, should be considered until a leader within the groups is identified.

Christ Centered Career Group

A Group Covenant

"...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well"

Matthew 6:33

". . . if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how can the love of God be in him?"

1 John 3:17

I _____ covenant with my C3 group to do the following:

1. Faithfully meet every week unless urgent circumstances beyond my control prevent my attendance. If unable to attend, I will try to make my presence otherwise known with personal phone contacts to my fellow members.
2. Keep confidential ALL personal conversations held at C3G
3. Help facilitate the C3G meetings on a rotating basis
4. Participate with honesty, enthusiasm, patience, compassion, love and understanding.
5. To proactively give help as I would wish it to be offered and to accept help with the same spirit as I would give it.
6. Continue this covenant until ALL members of this group are employed.
7. Pray for my fellow participants.

Signature

Date