



New Vintage Church

Growth Group Ministry

Facilitator and Host Training Manual

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1. THE “WHY” NEEDS TO COME BEFORE THE “WHAT”

INTRO

Why does NVC have small groups? Simply stated, to bring people together. Supernatural life transformation happens in the context of healthy relationships with a spiritual foundation.

The most amazing relationships are Christ-centered! When Jesus is the central focus, amazing things can happen. Life can be lived to the fullest in every way, like Jesus promises in John 10:10. “... I came that you may have life abundant.”

*⁹ Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:*

*¹⁰ If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.*

*But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.*

*¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?*

*¹² Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.*

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. – Eccl 4:9-12

OUR SMALL GROUP MODEL

NVC employs the “Semester Series, Sermon Based, Small Group” model. This model was inspired by Pastor Larry Osbourne of North Coast Church in Vista, CA. Pastor Larry is considered one of the present-day gurus of small group ministry with international influence.

The benefits of this small group model are awesome:

- 1. Facilitators, hosts, and participants will avoid burnout due to the semester model.*
- 2. For the following semester, you can become a facilitator or host a group or sign up for a different group altogether... or you can take a break.*

3. *There will be more ministry opportunities available: e.g., facilitating, hosting, worship leading, etc.*
4. *A sense of family will always be intact as the church grows significantly. Going through a difficult time? Your Growth Group family is there for you.*
5. *Spiritual needs will always be met. Pastoral care is extended to the facilitators of each group.*
6. *There's an evangelistic element. "Come over to my home" can be more effective than "come to church with me."*
7. *The church will grow up in the same healthy doctrine due to the sermon-based model. Rogue teaching is discouraged.*

At New Vintage Church, we have three 10-week semesters each calendar year.

- *Our fall semester ends the week prior to Thanksgiving week.*
- *Our winter semester starts in January.*
- *Our spring semester ends the week prior to summer break.*

OUR CORE MOTIVATION

Throughout the New Testament, there are 60-something "one another" commands, and it's simply impossible to obey them without a small group ministry. For example, it's just not feasible at a Sunday main service to confess our sins to one another, carry one another's burdens, serve one another, encourage and build one another up, and so on.

Also, it's interesting to note that we think of these 60 commands as *delights* because we just love God! Out of a love relationship, the most natural thing is to desire to obey Him, and we do so by His grace.

³ *In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome... - 1 Jn 5:3*

WHAT OUR GROUPS OFFER

1. A place to CONNECT. Small groups are where doing life together becomes so fulfilling.

*²² ... whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him... –
1 Cor 9:22 – LB*

2. A place to PROTECT. Small groups are a safe place where we “have each other’s backs.”

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. – 1 Jn 3:16

3. A place to GROW. Small groups are where we can rub off the rough edges and become more spiritually mature.

*¹⁷ As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another. – Prov 27:17*

YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR AND/OR A HOST

You’ll learn more details regarding your role throughout this training manual. One detail in specific is that of you “doing the work of the ministry.”

This is specifically what the book of Ephesians instructs a local church body’s leadership to do: equip the saints for the work of the ministry. The very purpose of this training manual is to do just that! But what does that entail?

In the context of small group ministry, that entails you engaging in PASTORAL CARE. This involves simply doing what people in relationships do: celebrate a birthday or a graduation, swing by the hospital to visit on the way home from work, provide a ride if a member's car is in the shop, and so on. You are the one who coordinates such activities. You don't necessarily do those activities yourself because, again, according to Ephesians you would equip others to do so. Yet, you lead by example, of course.

In summary, small groups provides the opportunity to be *Biblical Christians*.

Let's move on to the next chapter, where you will learn all about *group dynamics*.

2. GROUP DYNAMICS

ELEMENTS

Employing the following elements in the order shown at every Growth Group meeting will bring about wonderful results:

1. Mingle Time –

People need to decompress from a hard day at work or school and “let their hair down” for a few minutes before starting. Be sure to keep your eye on the clock though, and start, say, five minutes after your start time.

2. Introductions –

Only if there are any new people, have everyone introduce themselves, along with answering an icebreaker question such as:

- a. What is your favorite hobby?*
- b. What are you looking forward to this year?*
- c. Do you have any pets? If yes, share a detail about that.*
- d. How did you learn about the church? (Or this group?)*
- e. What is your favorite type of food?*

3. Opening Prayer –

This is important because it sets the tone for the meeting and invites the Holy Spirit to minister. Your goal is for the Holy Spirit to change the atmosphere with His presence and usher in peace, joy, and hope.

For the first couple of weeks, you could pray. Yet, this provides an awesome opportunity for others to learn to pray out loud, so encourage someone else to pray after a couple of weeks. (Unless, of course, you already have people who can open in prayer for the first meeting.)

The point is that you are not supposed to do all of the ministry work, but rather offer others the opportunity to grow in such spiritual activity.

4. Prayer Requests and Praise Reports –

Everyone should be encouraged to share either a prayer request or a praise report or both. Typically, it works best to go around in a circle.

It is important for you to lead by example and write down everyone's names and what they share. (Or type them you're your note app in your phone.) Encourage them to do the same, yet not everyone will, and that's okay.

Tell everyone that you are committed to pray for them in the coming days and encourage others to make the same commitment.

The number of people who attend your meeting would determine how much time each person has to share, right? If you have 4 or 5 people, then there would be more time to share than having 14 people.

5. A General Prayer –

Pray a general and short prayer over the prayer requests and praise reports. The reason why it needs to be general and not specific is because you only have 90 minutes (or whatever you and the group decide) for the entire meeting.

6. Going Over the Previous Sunday's Note Sheet –

Be encouraged to be thorough with the note sheet. This would be very beneficial because, for example, having everyone look up every supporting passage listed on the note sheet will increase their knowledge of where the books and chapters are in their Bibles. It is very valuable to have everyone opening, looking through, and reading their Bibles, of course!

That said, a lot of people these days rely on Bible apps. Yet, the meetings present an opportunity for them to utilize their app to their fullest extent, e.g. reading the commentaries and looking up the Greek and Hebrew words, etc. along with the Bible reading.

It goes without saying that the previous Sunday's note sheet's *primary purpose* is to provide an opportunity for your members to APPLY into their daily lives what they learned from the message. This contributes significantly to spiritual growth which leads to freedom! That said...

Due to their sensitive nature, there are some Going Deeper questions that may be pretty tough for some people to answer and share about. So, if people don't want to share something sensitive, that's okay, of course.

7. Closing in Prayer –

Closing in prayer not only provides the Holy Spirit an opportunity to seal all of the ministerial work that He accomplished in everyone, but also to formally end the meeting. As the host of the meeting, you can decide how long after the meeting people can hang out and have fellowship, yet that closing prayer gives anyone that needs to leave right away the opportunity to do so.

Before finishing this section of the chapter, I have a couple of final thoughts.

Sure, it's important to have these fundamental elements in your meeting, yet it is also important to be led by the Holy Spirit. Maybe the Lord desires for you to lay hands on and pray over someone who needs healing, or to minister encouragement and comfort to someone who is in need.

Also, perhaps one of your members' desires is to lead worship on the guitar or piano, so you would include that element in your weekly meetings. Or you could sing a song a-Capello each week. Maybe you desire to spend more time in prayer each week than the other groups. The point here is that you have flexibility to define your own group's DNA.

Just make sure you keep the main thing the main thing, and that is that the fundamental spiritual components of prayer, Bible, ministry, and fellowship (and perhaps worship via music) are vibrant, loving, and powerfully anointed.

Now, let's dive into the bits of wisdom that, when applied, will contribute towards a super healthy, spiritually vibrant, and safe environment.

BITS OF WISDOM

Expectations –

People tend to meet whatever expectations you set. If you kindly expect them to share, then they'll share. If you expect them to show up on time, then they will. If they are expected not to monopolize the time, then they won't. If they are expected to stay on topic, then they will, generally speaking.

Have a start and end time and stick with it –

This way, the members can feel that their time is respected, not to mention that there is integrity in establishing this. On the other hand, there's no integrity in waiting for so-and-so to arrive, and then waiting for them to pour their cup of coffee and settle in their seat.

Follow the 70-30 rule –

Being a facilitator means, amongst other things, facilitating conversation. In other words, giving everyone the opportunity to share. That said, 70% of the conversation should be from the group and 30% from yourself.

Keep discussion positive –

If the conversation takes a negative turn, guide it back to health. The Bible teaches that the power of life and death is in the tongue, so only life should be spoken. If someone brings up a sensitive or concerning issue, let them know that you would like to talk with them after the meeting. If you feel like you need assistance, then reach out to your coach by texting the church office at 414-400-8320.

Keep everyone on track regarding the topic discussed –

It's easy for members to veer off track. When that happens, simply guide them back to the topic at hand.

Establish and maintain healthy boundaries –

For some people, this may be a bit prudish, yet it is critical. In private settings, only men will minister to men and women to women. A couple can minister to a single person. Always maintain unquestionable integrity and purity. This boundary will protect you and your group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

All it takes is a sliver of an opportunity for the enemy to cause a huge mess. And many have never recovered from these types of messes.

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. – 1 Pet 5:8

Establish whether your group will provide childcare or not –

New Vintage Church desires to have Growth Groups that provide this service. Whether you will provide this or not, it's important to communicate this prior to your first week, of course, so that your members can plan accordingly.

Be Jesus to people -

Be easy breezy with people. Extend grace and mercy. Be kind and likable. Be agreeable regarding the things that don't matter. Exercise empathy.

Be an active listener. In other words, don't think about how you're going to answer someone while they are talking. Just immerse yourself in what they are saying by giving them undivided attention.

Understand that ultimately you cannot control people. They have free will.

Decide who you are going to train to be a facilitator –

This is HUGE! Who is interested in facilitating next semester? Be proactive in training them. Text the church office at 414-400-8320 and request a copy of this training manual for them. The training manual is also available on the church's website, in the "other services offered" page.

First, you do and they observe. Then, they do and you observe. Then, they do and you no longer observe. In other words, at some point, you need to let them take the reins and facilitate the group with you in attendance. Then, when you feel that they are ready, let them know that you're not available to attend one of the meetings. Then, review with them how the meeting went.

Be wise and discerning regarding who you train. Your trainee must be:

- A member of the church
- One who tithes faithfully
- One who attends church faithfully and consistently
- Has a reputation of living a life pleasing to God
- Is in agreement with the church's mission/vision/values
- Able to lead, motivate, and teach other people
- Is an A.C.T.S. disciple (Accountable, Correctible, Teachable, Submissive)
- Sincere, worthy of respect, and of good reputation
- A desire to minister to and serve people

- Able to create positive and healthy group dynamics and deal with conflict resolution

Obviously, because you are a facilitator and/or host, you have demonstrated that you have these above qualities.

8-13 The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith. – 1 Tim 3:8-13 MSG

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

One of your primary objectives is to *facilitate* the involvement of the members. They should be doing the praying and the sharing, for the most part.

In order to meet this objective, it's important to know that...

- *You shouldn't lecture. The group is not your audience to listen to you and maybe ask a question or two.*
- *You should not engage in a long dialogue with one of the members, excluding all of the others.*
- *There should be no "crosstalk" whereby chatter unrelated to the topic at hand between two members is happening while another member altogether is sharing to the group.*
- *There should not be more than one topic being discussed at a time.*

Rather, you SHOULD be steering the interaction between members, managing group dynamics (such as, for example, not allowing anyone to monopolize the conversation or

sharing too many times), and encouraging everyone to share. This way, the group is learning from one another's life experiences and wisdom... and growing together.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN MANAGING DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

It is beneficial to identify different personality types so as to avoid any frustration on your part and become skilled at working with them all.

Some personality types are constructive and should be encouraged...

- *The Peacemaker – Likes to resolve conflict*
- *The Focuser – Keeps people on track*
- *The Encourager – Looks for positive qualities in others*
- *The Empathizer – Draws out people's feelings*
- *The Initiator – Gets the ball rolling*
- *The Summarizer – Puts together the pieces of the conversation*

Other personality types, however, make the meeting more challenging...

- *Mr. Argumentative – Enjoys controversy and plays “the devil’s advocate”*
- *Mr. Joker – Makes light of everything*
- *Miss Know-It-All – Likes to share her expert knowledge*
- *Mr. Monopolizer – Likes the sound of his own voice*
- *Miss Onlooker – Has a hard time joining in and sharing*
- *Mrs. Prickly – Can sometimes come across as unfriendly*
- *Mr. Walls Up – Shys away from being vulnerable*
- *Mr. Sidetracker – Throws out information that distracts from the point communicated (This is called a “red herring”)*

OUR GROWTH GROUPS ARE NOT FOR...

1. Promoting any type of business
 - a. Some may see the opportunity for personal gain through the group, which is unacceptable. The group is a formal ministry and representation of the church.

2. Taking financial offerings

- a. It is unfortunate that, theoretically speaking, someone could be taken advantage of in this fashion.

3. Rogue teaching or presenting any unapproved teaching materials

- a. There are many divisive doctrines that the church may not agree with that people have been exposed to. It's best to stick to the teaching on the note sheet so as to avoid any possible division and strife.

4. Controversial topics

- a. There are many controversial, sensitive, and divisive topics that people can be passionate about regarding doctrines, politics, lifestyles, liberties, and whatnot that can easily derail a meeting. As soon as such dialogue starts, it is wise to end it right away!

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,^[a] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. – 1 Cor 1:10

By the way, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this entire training manual, text the church office at 414-400-8320 and you'll receive a prompt reply from your coach.

Let's move on to the next chapter.

3. WE DESIRE TO GROW!

One of the primary purposes of New Vintage Church's Growth Group ministry is to GROW.

⁴ Remain (abide) in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain (abide) in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last...— ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other. – Jn 15

As we see in the above passage, a fundamental part of being a Christian is to grow, so that, to borrow the analogy Jesus used, as branches grafted into the vine (Jesus) which provides life-giving sap, we will bear much fruit.

Your Growth Group represents members who are all branches grafted in the Vine, Jesus. It is important that you are ensuring that all your members are abiding, or adhering to Jesus to the point where He is their sustenance... their everything!

The result? They GROW.

There are two ways that growth will be experienced:

1. Your members will grow in spiritual maturity.

But how? Easy. By helping them identify what their NEXT STEP is. This is a HUGE goal of yours, as a facilitator.

Below are a list of next steps that you can help your members take:

- Start attending Sunday services consistently
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Sign up to get baptized
- Sign up for the membership class
- Start tithing
- Be your facilitator trainee
- Begin serving in a ministry
- Attend the next men's or women's fellowship
- Request a deliverance session
- Take their teen to the next youth event
- Attend the next all-church prayer meeting
- Host or facilitate their own group the following semester
- What else?

2. Your group – and the church - will grow numerically.

But how? Simply create an expectancy that your members will invite others to visit the group.

Each group represents a door into the church. Many people that we know will not accept an invite to walk through the doors of the church building on Sunday morning for service, yet they WILL accept your invite to visit your Growth Group! All you have to do is ask, so lead by example and ask someone from your work or neighborhood or wherever. Then, regardless of the response, you can share with your group that you asked so-and-so. You are requesting that the group pray for that person. THEN, you can encourage them to do the same.

As benefit #6 of our small group model states...

There's an evangelistic element. "Come over to my home" can be more effective than "come to church with me."

God desires for your invitee to grow in their relationship with Him more than you do! He has prepared hearts to accept your invite, so go for it!

Then, imagine your invitee taking their next step and getting baptized or becoming a member of the church or a facilitator for the next semester!

ALSO... THIS IS HUGE. Get into the habit of asking people at church whether they are attending a group or not. If not, invite them to your group. It's okay that they would be attending after the semester has started.

In summary, I cannot emphasize enough that our small group ministry is one of the primary ways that our church will grow numerically.

Let's move on.

4. WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST MEETING

Weeks prior to every semester starting, an online form is set up. All of the church members are encouraged to go to that form and select a group to sign up for, which depends on the evening of the week, location, and the facilitator/host.

That said, there are a few things you need to do:

- 1) Go to the online form and take note of who signed for your group
 - a. Go to signupgenius.com, click on the search icon, enter the email paul@newvintagewi.org, and locate your group
- 2) Text them to introduce yourself and relay the pertinent information, i.e. directions to your home (if necessary), whether you will have childcare or not, whether you have pets or not (some people are allergic to certain pets), etc.
- 3) Prep! Go through the Going Deeper questions from the previous Sunday's message and write down all your answers so you are leading by example and have good things to share.

Regarding your physical atmosphere –

Also, it is important to create a physical atmosphere that is pleasant and inviting. Is your home too cold or hot? Is it tidied up? Is there adequate lighting? Will any pets cause a possible disturbance?

Let's not forget your spiritual atmosphere –

Are you prayed up? Be encouraged to turn off the news or secular music. Replace that with your favorite YouTube worship channel or the Christian music station on the radio. Is there anything laying around that might stumble a member if they knew you had it?

Be encouraged to carve out adequate time to decompress from a hard day at work and don't frantically prep your home at the last minute! That's never a fun thing.

How about refreshments? –

Will you have refreshments available? I highly recommend that. Food and beverages are always a wonderful way to help your members have a relaxing and enjoyable start to the meeting.

Of course, it goes without saying that to provide alcohol would be unwise. What if one of your members brought a guest who struggles with alcoholism? What if one of your members actually believes that having even one drink is sinful? The Bible teaches that you would be responsible for the alcoholic's downfall and the legalistic Christian stumbling.

Partake of the enjoyment of alcoholic beverages for a time when you “do life” together outside of a formal activity of New Vintage Church.

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. (One person considers drinking alcohol as acceptable to the Lord; another believes it to be sin.)... ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister^[a]?

¹³ ... let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat (or drink), you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating (or drinking) destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. – Rom 14

YOUR FIRST MEETING

The Growth Group Covenant –

After your 5-minutes of mingle time and opening prayer, it is important to read aloud the Growth Group Covenant.

This PDF is available on the “main services” page of the website. Encourage everyone to pull it up on their phones and follow along as you read it. Ask anyone if they have any questions and ask for a hearty “amen” if they are in agreement! Congratulations. You established some expectations for everyone, and it is natural for people to rise to stated expectations.

Then, you would move on to the next item in the meeting elements.

Keep an eye on the clock! –

One of the trickiest skills to acquire as a new facilitator is to ensure that time doesn't get away from you. For example, you are going to need x amount of time to get through the Going Deeper questions.

In the past when I have let time get away from me, I will still end on time, no matter what. that way, people can count on having the opportunity to leave the meeting if they need to get home by a certain time to relieve the babysitter or make preparations for work the following morning or whatever.

ON A WEEKLY BASIS

Be sure to do the following:

- 1) Pray for your members

How awesome does it feel to hear from someone else, “Hey, I've been praying for you. How are things going in regard to that situation at your work?”

Be encouraged to pray specifically for your members and ask for an update at the meeting. They will be blessed beyond measure.

2) Text them every week!

This is the primary way to keep your attendance levels as high as possible. I am always surprised at how much people need to be reminded. Life is hard for everyone and it's easy for your members to get sidetracked or forget altogether.

You could send a group text to all of them with a general and short message. "Hey! I hope your week has been blessed so far. Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow evening!"

Also, I love to send what I call "impulse texts" to people as the Holy Spirit prompts me to do so. If someone is heavy on your heart, just drop what you're doing for 60 seconds and send a quick little text. God will anoint that little act of love and even perform a miracle through it.

3) Be prepared for the meeting.

As mentioned earlier, prep by going through the Going Deeper questions. Keep your home in order. And your heart too.

Let's move on to the final two chapters which 1) will provide you with a check-off list for everything that has been communicated in this training manual, and 2) will provide you with two documents for your reference.

Prior to moving on though, I would like to warmly thank you for taking your next step on your discipleship journey by becoming a facilitator and/or a host!

Don't hesitate to text the church office if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or if you need any assistance regarding our Growth Group ministry. A coach will reply in a timely manner.

In him and by His grace,

Pastor Paul

5. CHECK-OFF LIST

PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST MEETING

- Write down and follow in their proper order the elements that make up the meeting agenda.
- Decide who you will train to be a facilitator, that is, if there is one qualified.
- Visit the online form, put numbers of members in your phone, send them a group text introducing yourself, prep for your first meeting

YOUR FIRST MEETING

- Read through the Growth Group Covenant

ON A WEEKLY BASIS

- Pray, send out a group text, prep
- At church, develop the habit of asking people if they are attending a group or not. invite them to yours.
- Throughout time, discover and write down what each member's next step is. Invite them to accept your offer to be their "accountabilabuddy."

6. DOCUMENTS

HONOR CODE

As an essential part of the New Vintage Church facilitator and/or host team of New Vintage Church, it goes without saying that you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior.

While serving in this capacity, you pledge to present a pleasant appearance at all times, both in attire and behavior. You should strive to demonstrate biblical standards at all times and in all situations.

The way we present ourselves influences the way others perceive Christ! Our conduct and speech should be above reproach.

Exemplifying the highest moral commitment, New Vintage church facilitators and/or hosts are to maintain a lifestyle of Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship.

Also, please refrain from the following:

- Profanity
- Smoking or chewing tobacco in the presence of your group members
- Gambling outside of the purpose of entertainment
- Indulging in too much alcoholic beverages
- Dishonest gain
- Illicit drugs
- Pornography
- All sexual impurity, which is defined as any sexual activity outside of the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman

What a blessing to regard these details as part of our spiritual maturity process and not as an imposition or restriction.

ABUSE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that New Vintage Church is a safe place for all children and vulnerable adults. Further, New Vintage Church complies with all Federal and State laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse. As a small group facilitator and/or host, I understand that suspected abuse is to be reported to a staff member by promptly texting the church office at 414-400-8320. I also understand the four types of abuse as defined below:

PHYSICAL: A physical act directed at a child or vulnerable adult that causes injury

SEXUAL: Contact or interactions between a child and an adult, or another child, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation by the perpetrator or another person. This includes exploitation through photographs, videos, or other communications methods

EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL: Acts or omissions by the parent or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, psychological, or mental disorders

NEGLECT: Failure to provide for the child or vulnerable adult's basic needs. This includes, but is not limited to, adequate adult supervision, medical attention, housing, food, water, and clothing. Most causes of physical neglect involve inadequate adult supervision that causes harm to the child or vulnerable adult, or places them in danger of such harm.

I understand that it is not my responsibility to investigate and in no instance will I confront a parent or care giver if abuse is suspected. As a small group facilitator and/or host, I agree to comply with this policy and report any suspected abuse to a staff person by immediately texting the church office at 414-400-8320.

GROWTH GROUP COVENANT

It's a good idea to put words to shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. Discuss your guidelines to ensure a healthy group experience.

I AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

1. **GROUP ATTENDANCE** – I will make the necessary personal arrangements to ensure that I attend all 10 meetings in the semester. I'll text the facilitator if I'm going to be late or if an emergency arises.
2. **SAFE ENVIRONMENT** – I will create a safe place where people can be heard and feel accepted (no "course jesting", quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes – Eph 5:4). Also, I'll ask myself, "Is what I desire to share going to promote unity?" (Eph 4:3; 1 Cor 1:10)
3. **GROUP DYNAMICS** – I will be careful not to monopolize the time by talking too much. Others need to have the opportunity to share and feel valued. If I already shared once regarding a point, then I will allow room for others to pitch in. Also, I'll make sure that what I share is on-topic. Regarding prayer or other elements in the meeting, I'll be attentive to the facilitator's instruction.
4. **BE CONFIDENTIAL** – I will keep anything that is shared strictly confidential within the group.
5. **CONFLICT RESOLUTION** – I will avoid gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matt 18:15-17.
6. **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** – I will give group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy and balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.
7. **LIMIT OUR FREEDOM** – I will refrain from talking about certain liberties I have (such as, for example, alcohol consumption) that others may not have and could possibly be offended by. I will not talk excessively about subjects that do not edify others or do not please the Lord.

8. WELCOME NEWCOMERS – I will invite family and friends who would benefit from the group. I will warmly welcome newcomers.
9. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS – I will get to know the other members of the group, swap contact info, build meaningful relationships, and pray for them regularly.

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