

STARTING A MICRO-CHURCH

SBC Micro-Churches exist to bring the reality, beauty, and good news of the Kingdom of God to our neighbourhoods, social spaces, and homes in the Greater Victoria area.

HELPFUL MINDSETS

Failure is an option- As you start your Micro-Church remember that it will not always look, feel and function as you have hoped and planned for. That is okay! It is Jesus who will build his Church and God is faithful to use the weak and broken to accomplish his will here on earth. Each success and failure is an opportunity to learn and to witness God's grace and provision.

Substance over structure- Changing the size, location or elements of a church gathering does not in and of itself lead to meaningful discipleship or life transformation. The Spirit of God at work in people's lives is what is essential to the success of any church. The structure must be formed around what God is doing in a particular community and what the needs of that community are.

Priesthood of all Believers- The New Testament church that we read about in the book of Acts make it clear that church is people NOT a building or service. Each Christ follower is to function as a priest with God given gifts and abilities that are to be used to glorify God and serve others.

COMMUNITY- At the center of a Micro-Church is community. It is the family of God gathering together to demonstrate God's love and care to one another and to live out God's mission. Developing a strong sense of community takes time and intentionality.

ELEMENTS	HOW THIS MIGHT LOOK/SOUND	RESOURCES/REFLECTIONS
<p>CONNECTION</p> <p>Be sure to provide opportunities for people to simply connect and get to know one another. This may mean setting aside some time during your Micro-Church gathering for connecting or providing other opportunities outside of the regular gatherings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing meals together• Social events (ex. Games night, hikes)• Smaller meet-ups outside of Micro-Church gathering	<p>Questions to Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What shared interests are found within the group?• How do people within the Micro-Church best connect with others? Large groups? One-on-one?

SUPPORT AND CARE

Deeper community is formed when vulnerability is met with grace and love and when the needs and concerns of one member are acknowledged and responded to by others.

- Time set aside at each gathering for people to share prayer requests and receive prayer
- A system of communication (ex. group chat) allowing group members to share updates throughout the week
- Meeting one another's practical needs (ex. childcare, help with moving)

Questions to Ask:

- What structures or guidelines need to be put in place in order for people to feel comfortable sharing with the group?
- How can the responsibility for care and support be shared amongst the group?

SHARED VISION

Having a shared vision allows for a community to form around what God is calling your group to rather than common interests or life stages. A shared vision allows for diversity within a group.

- Share stories of the ways that God is working
- Have individuals share their testimonies
- Remind each other regularly of the purpose for gathering

Questions to Ask:

- What does it mean for us to be the church? What does that look like for us right now?

STRUCTURE- The structure of each Micro-Church will be different based on the context of the group and the members that make it up. Consider what structure (or lack thereof) for your gatherings will best allow your group to live out the Acts 2:42-47 model of the church.

ELEMENTS	HOW THIS MIGHT LOOK/SOUND	RESOURCES/REFLECTIONS
<p>PRAYER</p> <p>Prayer is an essential part of all Micro-Churches. It needs to be a part of the planning and launching of a Micro-Church, the regular gatherings, and the discerning of a mission.</p> <p>Ensure time is set aside to spend in prayer and listening to God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite the spirit to teach and lead as you study and discuss• Pray together before a shared meal• Listen to needs from the group and offering up prayers of petition• Spend time in silence listening to the voice of God• Seek God in prayer for the community around you and/or your mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Prayer of Examen• The Prayer of Examen Colouring Book• Imaginative Prayer <p>Questions to Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can you create space in your gathering to hear from God?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a prayer exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are Micro-Church members comfortable participating in corporate prayer? What prayer exercises encourage meaningful participation?
<p>HEARING AND OBEYING</p> <p>Discipleship is the practice of hearing from God and obeying what you have learned. This is both a personal practice as well as something you can do with your Micro-Church as you gather and discuss God's teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Discovery Bible Study discipleship tool to read the Bible together and discover what God saying to each person and how it can be lived out that week • Attend an SBC service or watch the livestream service together, discuss and apply • Choose a passage and have a member guide the group through Lectio Divina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery Bible Study • Lectio Divina • Discussion question suggestions • Do's and Don'ts of leading a discussion <p>Questions to Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are people in the group at spiritually? • How can you include application or obedience into your study time? • How can the group encourage one another and keep one another accountable for obeying what they have learned?
<p>BREAKING BREAD (communion)</p> <p>The act of eating bread and drinking wine or juice in remembrance of Christ death until he comes again was first modelled in a home by Jesus and then done by early Christians as they gathered in homes together. Including communion in you Micro-Church gatherings can be an important part of centering your time on the person and work of Jesus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing a meal together and spending a portion of the time intentionally reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice • Take communion as a part of a time of prayer of thanksgiving and repentance • Have a member read the story of the last supper and remind the group of the significance of the bread and the cup 	<p>Questions to Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assumptions and/or traditions are attached to the breaking of bread that need to be addressed within your group? • What level of understanding is there around communion? Is some teaching necessary? • Are there non-believers that are a part of your Micro-Church? How can you include communion in your gathering in a loving way?

WORSHIP

Hebrews 12:1 makes it clear that worship is not just the singing of hymns and songs but the surrendering of each part of ourselves to God. Therefore, worship can occur in Micro-Churches without any music being played or song sung.

However, some groups may choose to offer praise and worship to God through music and/or singing.

- Group members who play instruments lead the group through worship songs
- Watch the SBC livestream together and join in singing with the worship band
- Listen to or sing along with your favourite worship band

Questions to Ask:

- Are there members in your group who have musical gifts that they are willing to share with the group?
- Regardless of skill or talent, does your micro-church connect in a unique way with God through music?

KIDS

There is no avoiding it- Micro-Church with kids is messy. Kids are energetic, have short attention spans and have the habit of desperately needing your attention at exactly the wrong moment.

Kids are also the best example of what we need to become in order to be a part of the Kingdom of God (Mark 10:15). Kids, simply being kids can and should play a vital role in the church body.

- Have kids participate along with the adults for a portion of the gathering (ex. Meal, connecting, worship, Bible reading)
- Have older kids or youth lead kids through their own lesson
- Rotate Micro-Church members in providing child care
- Dedicate some weeks to focusing on discipling the kids

Questions to Ask:

- What do you want the kids to get out of Micro-Church
- What elements can be done together? Apart?
- What needs to happen during a Micro-Church gather and what needs to/can happen during the week?
- What considerations need to be made for the kids in the Micro-Church? What considerations need to be made for the adults in the Micro-Church?
- What resources do you need?

MISSION- Jesus' life, teaching and great commission make it clear that his disciples are to not only love God and love fellow believers but are called to go into the world to demonstrate his love to everyone and introduce people to the hope that is found in following him. Each individual and Micro-Church will live out this calling in a unique way. We can be confident that God is at work in the people and community around us **and** that he wants to use us to partner with him in what he is doing.

ELEMENTS	HOW THIS MIGHT LOOK/SOUND	RESOURCES/REFLECTIONS
<p>PRAYER</p> <p>Determining the mission of your Micro-Church must start with prayer. Making prayer central to the discernment process ensures that no one person's vision for the group takes over. Unity of mission and vision is found when members are inspired by God and then find confirmation within the group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to spending time seeking God for direction each time you meet • Choose a week to spend praying and fasting • Spend time sharing as a Micro-Church the ways that God is speaking to each individual to discern how God is leading the group • Do a prayer walk through the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer Walk - https://www.24-7prayer.com/prayerwalking • Discerning Mission https://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/your-daily-prayer/a-prayer-to-find-your-mission-at-home-your-daily-prayer-august-9-2017.html • Discerning Mission https://www.mbseminary.ca/principles-discern-gods-will/
<p>LOOKING AND LISTENING</p> <p>We know that we live in a broken world where every part of God's creation has been marred by sin. We can also have confidence that God is at work, bringing His Kingdom to earth. As you determine what mission your Micro-Church is being called to, have your eyes open to recognize the needs of those around you and the evidence of God already at work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As individuals, ask God to show you the needs that are in the community around you • Take some time to learn about your community by engaging in natural conversation with those around you or intentionally participating in community event • Research what other groups or organizations are already doing good work in your community 	<p>Questions to Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is important to my community? What challenges do they face? What are their greatest needs? • What areas do organizations need support in? What gaps need to be filled? • Where can you see God already at work?

PASSIONS/GIFTINGS

Each Micro-Church is made up of a unique group of people with varying passions, gifts and talents. Considering the ways that God has already been leading and resourcing the members of your Micro-Church can help you determine what your collective mission will look like?

- Invite members of the group to share the things that they are passionate about. Do others share the same passions?
- Join a member of the group in an area they have already been serving in
- Encourage and call out in one another the gifts that you see

Questions to Ask:

- What natural resources (giftings, skills, connections, equipment) does your group already have? In what way can they be used to serve the community?
- Is there a mission that a member is already involved in that the group can join?

GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS

The ages and life stages of the members of a Micro-Church will play a significant role in determining the mission that they choose. While each age and stage may limit what kinds of missions that are possible, they also each offer different opportunities with the ability to reach a unique section of the community. Spending time considering both the unique potential and limitations of the group can help you determine a collective mission.

- Serving under-resourced members of the community that fall within the same demographics of the Micro-Church (young families, university students, seniors etc.)
- Serving with organizations during regular work hours (week day mornings vs. evenings and weekends)

Questions to Ask:

- What capacity does your group have? How much time can be given to the group mission?
- What segment of the community are you best suited to reach?
- What limitations are there on your group? (mobility, gender, safety concerns, work schedules etc.)