

MAC LAKE  
**GROWING  
SMALL GROUP  
LEADERS**

One year of resources  
for small group coaches

*Growing Small Group Leaders*  
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“Leadership, like coaching, is fighting for the hearts and souls of men and getting them to believe in you.”

– Eddie Robinson

# SECTION ONE

# AN INTRODUCTION TO

# GROWING SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- Who is this book for?
- Coaching Lingo 101
- What is a coach?
- How does this book work?
- The four keys to effective coaching





## Who is this book for?

**Small Group Coaches:** Anyone who trains, mentors, or guides small group leaders.

## Coaching Lingo 101

**Small group coach (coach):** Is in charge of caring for the souls of 3-5 small group leaders.

**Small Group Leader (leader):** Leads a small group and is accountable to the small group coach.

**Huddle:** Times for a Coach to care, connect with, and train his/her small group leaders. Huddles are focused on developing different skills a leader must have, and the obstacles they will need to overcome.

**One-on-one:** Time for a Coach to meet with an individual leader. This time is focused on encouragement, accountability, and challenge.

**Coach's visit:** Periodic times when a coach will visit one of the leader's small groups in order to observe. These times allow the coach to observe the leader in action, affirm their strengths, and identify an area of improvement.

# What is a Coach?

When I was 10 years old I idolized my little league baseball coach Gary Moore. He was young, enthusiastic, and had an outlook that made us feel like champions. The thing I personally loved about Coach Moore was his patience. I lacked the skill and confidence of a good player. So when Coach Moore would see me struggling he'd come over, not only telling me what to change but also modeling the correct techniques for swinging, catching, or throwing. Then he would always praise my progress by pointing out what I was doing well. I learned very quickly to keep my eye on him, to study his moves and imitate him. In fact I watched him so closely I even imitated the way he spit! Disgusting I know. I loved him because his coaching and encouragement brought out the best in my abilities.

***A great coach endears the heart of his players while at the same time challenges them to reach their fullest potential.***

I know many churches use coaches in their small group ministry but they tend to use them in different ways. Some coaches are in place simply to take care of administrative needs of the small group ministry: collecting rosters, communicating important information, or coordinating events. Others utilize coaches for trouble shooting. In these cases coaches are on standby just in case a small group leader has an issue they need help with. And in some churches the coaches are used as quality control. Coaches make visits into the homes of small group leaders to provide encouragement and evaluation. No matter how you use coaches at your church, they are vital to the success of the small group ministry.

I frequently tell our staff, "We work really hard to put together a quality weekend experience, drawing in a crowd of people with hurts, habits and hang-ups. We tell them Jesus can change their lives; then we send them to the living rooms of our small group leaders to experience that life change!" In most cases small group leaders are central to the church's discipleship process. Many churches depend on their small group leaders to help their members with the spiritual transformation process.

But we all know small group leaders are not perfect people. Like everyone, they're prone to struggle with spiritual burnout, temptation, and emotional fatigue. So the question is, "Who is there for the Small Group Leader?" I believe this is the coach's greatest opportunity and responsibility.

***A coach cares for the souls of small group leaders.***

At Seacoast Church we gathered 90 of our coaches to cast a fresh vision for coaching. We told them we had looked among the 10,000 attendees and selected them to be the key people overseeing our small group leaders. We chose them because they have a radical love for Jesus and a deep passion for small groups. After much encouragement, we apologized, for we had misused them in their role as coaches. We had selected them because of their spiritual maturity but then gave them administrative tasks: collecting rosters, sending out emails, communicating about events. This was not what the coach's role was for. After this apology, we cast a fresh vision for coaching. We redefined their role, telling them we desired for them to oversee no more than three to five small group leaders and to care for the souls of those leaders. We were thrilled with their response. I discovered this was the reason they signed up as a coach in the first place; they wanted to help shape the spiritual environment of our church. What better way to do that than caring for the souls of the existing small group leaders. Since that time we have heard story after story of coaches who are loving, caring, encouraging, and providing spiritual nourishment for our small group leaders.

# How does this book work?

In this book we want to arm you with some tools that will help you care for the souls of those you lead. There are two sections following this introduction that will help you with this.

Section Two: This section is for you as a coach. It is packed with tools to help you set the agenda and tone of your ministry year. It's also designed to equip you with personal growth tools that are designed to help you live in your strengths as a coach. It includes:

- A coaches assessment, designed to help you identify which of the three coaching styles — directional, inspirational, or shepherding — you fit into.
- Tools to guide you through the process of developing your own personal growth plan as a coach.
- A strategic coaching schedule.
- A plan for leading One-on-one sessions with your small group leaders.
- Tools and a strategy for having effective "Coach's Visits."

Section Three: This section includes 6 huddles for you to take your small group leaders through, as well as a "how-to" guide on leading a huddle. Each huddle has a downloadable participant guide (included on the attached CD). And before each huddle is a personal evaluation tool for you as a coach to check in on how you are doing as a leader.

## Four Keys to Effective Coaching

Coaching is an exciting journey of leading leaders. Overall remember these four keys:

**Be Sincere** – You don't have to pretend you are an expert; just be yourself. Your leaders will appreciate it if you are being you.

**Be Consistent** – Stay in regular contact with your leaders. If you allow large periods of time to go by without connecting with them they won't feel your support.

**Be Encouraging** – Remember leaders tend to be hard on themselves, so find things they're doing well and encourage them.

**Be Honest** – When you see a leader doing something that is negatively impacting their influence, let them know. Confront them in a loving way, with honesty, and they will appreciate it.

If you do these four things, you will be a coach your leaders will never forget. Enjoy the journey!