



## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

### **Friends. Listen.**

God wants to break into your life and enter your heart in a new way. Small groups are an amazing way for Him to do that. They're an opportunity to gather in a smaller setting outside of Mass, and they give us an additional chance to get to know each other better and grow deeper in our faith. And in the end, they have the power to change lives! To change your life. And to change the lives of people you invite who may be on the fence with their faith. (The Mass wasn't invented to be an evangelistic tool, or the "front door" to Christianity. But your group of friends IS! Remember, as I often say "friendship is the ordinary forum for evangelization!") Small groups come in all shapes and sizes - men's groups, women's groups, married groups, single groups, moms groups, hiking groups, groups by location, or, really, anything else you can dream up. You don't have to be a theologian, priest, or even a teacher to create authentic and meaningful community in a small group. God uses all of us when we're willing! I urge you to have the courage and humility to start - or join - your own small group.

Chris Stefanick

## Why Small Groups? Because we're created for relationships!

The truth is, life isn't meant to be lived alone. It is meant to be lived with, and for, others. In fact, Jesus often likened his community to a family. As we work toward becoming more Christ-like people, we need deep relationships to help us apply and live out gospel truths. As we share with each other what we are learning, we grow together.

*"They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers." (Acts 2:42)*



Small groups are a classroom for learning how to love like Jesus did - to become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did. It's a life pursuit. And as the family of God, we need to take time in the ordinary rhythm of life in community to support one another to become transformed and become like Jesus. Only in regular contact with ordinary, imperfect believers can we learn real fellowship and experience the connection God intends for us.

While no family is perfect, a small group is a place where together, we can figure out how to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what He did.

*"The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." (1 John 3:16)*



## Starting a Small Group is as easy as 1-2-3!

*Be stubbornly simple. Nothing kills an initiative like complexity.*

1

**Personally invite a few friends to join your group.** Text them, send out an email, make a phone call, create a post on social media, or print a good old fashioned invitation.

2

**Decide when and where you want to meet.** A home, a coffee shop, a park, or even a video conference... any place where people can gather for conversation. We recommend meeting at least monthly. Twice-per-month or even weekly is great!

3

**Keep it simple.** If the Holy Spirit is leading you to conduct your own study and discussion of some material, great! And of course, also feel free to follow the prayer and reflection points provided in our small group resources. But don't forget the incredibly powerful way friends have always helped one another grow in the faith by simply asking: "How ARE you?" and "How is your prayer/spiritual life going?" And then, really listening!