



### Option 1: Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children

#### 1. Core Team

- Add school parents to the Core Team who can help with advertising to school parents and administering the small groups.

#### 2. Plan day and time

- Considering the school calendar, plan the day of the week and the six weeks to meet between September 19 and November 14, 2021.
- Plan a start time that is convenient for parents after student drop-off.
- Sample advertisement:

**Join together with other school parents for our Synod small groups  
Tuesday mornings from 9:15 - 11:15 a.m. starting September 28!  
Come alone or with friends and the parish will place you in a small group.  
Registration appreciated but not required. All are welcome!**

#### 3. Reserve parish calendar and space

- Reserve parish space for small groups, and equipment needed for video screens.

#### 4. Prepare communications plan and calendar

- Prepare an "Information and Signup Form."
- Review the school calendar and identify key dates and activities. Using the school's existing channels of communications, prepare a plan to communicate with parents. For example:
  - Send the "Information and Signup Form" home with the students,
  - Staff an information and signup table at any open houses, after the opening school Mass, and other school events.
  - Have some parents at student drop-off the first week to extend a personal invitation.
- Review with the school principal (and Pastor, if applicable)

#### 5. Recruit facilitators and scribes

- Using the same process as the Baseline Approach, estimate the number of facilitators and scribes to invite, prepare a list of invitees, and review the list with your pastor. It's helpful to have one parent or couple from each class help with this process.
- The Small Group Process Manager or Core Team members extend a personal invitation (with email follow-up) or just an email invitation.
  - See website for "Sample invite – Facilitator or Scribe (Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children)". Download and edit as needed
- If more facilitators or scribes needed, extend a parish wide invitation.
  - See website for "Sample invite to all parishioners – Facilitator or Scribe (Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children)" which includes expectations. Download and edit as needed.
  - Given this person will be in a leadership position with parishioners, the Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) would meet with the parishioner to discuss the role and approve them as a facilitator.

#### 6. Facilitator and scribe attend a training in August/September

#### 7. Document list for Option 1 (downloadable)

- Sample invite – Facilitator or Scribe (Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children)
- Sample invite to all parishioners – Facilitator or Scribe (Small Groups for Parents of School Age Children)
- Information and Signup Form

**1. Identify Common Interest Groups**

- Examples: young singles, recently married couples, parents of children recently baptized, parents of children receiving 2<sup>nd</sup> grade first sacraments, parents of children in confirmation, or parishioners in senior living.

**2. For the chosen common interest groups, recruit a parishioner to be the host and facilitator**

- Review names with pastor for prior approval.
- The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) extends a personal invitation (with email follow-up) or just an email invitation.
  - See "Sample invite – Host and Facilitate a Common Interest Small Group" which includes expectations. Download and edit as needed.
- The facilitator should recruit a scribe from the group, and both should attend one of the trainings offered in late August/early September.
- Facilitators and scribes communicate with the Parish Small Group Process Manager throughout the process.

**3. The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) meets with the facilitator to plan the small group**

- Plan the meeting dates and times.
- Plan the meeting location – either at the parish, a home of a small group member, or a coffee shop (if there is a private room where the group can watch the video).
- Prepare an "Information and Signup Form."
- The facilitator would recruit a scribe from the group, and both would attend training late August/early September. The facilitator and scribe would communicate with the Parish Small Group Process Manager throughout the process.

**4. Prepare the communications and signup plan, tailored to that particular common interest group**

- Example for newly married couples:
  - After approval from the pastor, obtain a list of newly married couples at the parish. From that group, recruit a couple to host and facilitate. Meet with the couple to plan the small group and create the "Information and Signup Form." The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) extends a personal invitation (with email follow-up) or just an email invitation to the other newly married couples at the parish attaching the form.
- Example for a common interest group of parents of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade first sacraments:
  - After approval from the pastor, obtain a list of parents of children in first sacraments. From that list, recruit a father, mother or couple to host and facilitate. Meet with the parishioner(s) to plan the small groups and create the "Information and Signup Form." The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) and facilitator attend a meeting of parents to present and invite parents to signup using the form. If a parent meeting is not scheduled or is scheduled too late, then communicate the invite via email.
- Required numbers:
  - For a small group to form, a minimum of five members is required.
  - If less than five people signup, the small group is not formed and the interested parishioners are invited to attend another small group (either the Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups or another of the parish small groups).
  - If more than eight people signup (including the facilitator and scribe), invite those over that number to join another parish small group, or (if there are enough people) recruit a facilitator from that group and start a second small group.

**5. Facilitator and scribe attend a training in August/September**

**6. Document list for Option 2 (downloadable)**

- "Sample invite – Host and Facilitate a Common Interest Small Group"
- "Information and Signup Form"

**1. Invite parishioners to host and facilitate an open signup small group**

- Invite parishioners who would like to host and facilitate a Parish/Facilitator Hosted Open Signup Small Group to complete an "Interested Facilitator Form."
- As this person would be in a leadership position with parishioners, the Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) would meet with the parishioner to discuss the role and approve them as a facilitator.
- Parishioners interested in this role will vary. Some may opt to open their small group to any parishioner who wishes to signup. Others may wish to specify the type of group.
  - Examples include an empty-nester couple who wants to open their home for a small group for any parishioners who signs up, a men's group who wants to meet at a coffee shop (provided there is somewhere they can view the video) in the morning before work, or a women's group who wants to meet at the parish.
  - Examples of facilitators who specify a type of group includes: a mother of young children who wants to host a Saturday morning small group for other mothers of small children, or a person who wants to host a small group with other runners (bikers, gardeners, golfers, car enthusiasts, etc.).

**2. The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) meets with the approved facilitator to plan the small group**

- Plan the meeting dates and times.
- Plan the meeting location – either at the parish, a home of a small group member, or a coffee shop (if there is a private room where the group can watch the video).
- Prepare an "Information and Signup Form."
- The facilitator would recruit a scribe from the group, and both would attend a training in August/September. The facilitator and scribe would communicate with the Parish Small Group Process Manager throughout the process.

**3. Prepare a communications plan and calendar**

- Now through late August, use electronic and traditional means to communicate the opportunity to parishioners.
- In August and early September, prepare a specific communications plan by weekend.
- See the website for sample bulletin text.

**4. Prepare for signups in September – either at tables after Masses or electronic**

- Prepare for signups:
  - If signup will be done after Masses, plan and staff information and signup tables after Masses in September. Complete a "Small Group Signup Form" for each small group. Download the form and edit for each small group as needed.
  - If signup will be done electronically, prepare the electronic tool and process that will be used.
- Logistics considerations for signup tables
  - Greeters and table staffing:
    - Recruit your Synod ambassadors or other parishioners to greet people as they leave Mass and invite them to the information and signup tables.
    - Schedule core team members or ambassadors to staff the tables.
  - Tables:
    - Arrange for setup and takedown of tables.
    - Prepare signage in advance.
    - Place tables physically apart from each other to allow for people to move easily.
    - Prepare the "Small Group Signup Form" for each small group in advance
    - Have pens available for signup.
- Required numbers:
  - For a small group to form, a minimum of five members is required.
  - If less than five people signup, the small group is not formed and the interested people are invited to attend another small group (either the Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups or another of the parish small groups).

- If more than eight people signup (including the facilitator and scribe), invite those over that number to join another parish small group, or (if there are enough people) recruit a facilitator from that group and start a second small group.

## **5. Facilitator and scribe attend a training in August/September**

### **6. Example approach**

- Example for an empty nester couple who wishes to host and facilitate a small group in their home.
  - This spring through August:
    - The parish advertises this option to parishioners, and asks interested parishioners to submit the "Interested Facilitator Form."
    - The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) meets with the interested facilitator to discuss the role and approve them as a facilitator.
    - The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) meets with the approved facilitator to plan the small group and complete an "Information and Signup Form."
  - Late August/early September:
    - The parish advertises this opportunity (along with all of the other small group opportunities) for interested parishioners to signup.
    - The parish arranges signup weekends for parishioners to signup – either on paper after Masses or on-line electronically.
    - Five or more people signup (including the facilitator), the facilitator recruits a scribe and attends training, and communicate with the Parish Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) throughout the process.

### **7. Document list for Option 3 (downloadable)**

- Interested Facilitator Form
- Information and Signup Form
- Small Group Signup Form (prepared for each small group)

#### Option 4: PARISHIONER INITIATED Small Groups

##### **1. Invite parishioners to host and facilitate their own small group**

- Invite parishioners who want to invite friends, coworkers or neighbors and start their own small group to complete an "Interested Facilitator Form."
- As this person is inviting people they know personally, and are not taking open signup from parishioners in general, they are not in a direct leadership position, and the step of meeting with the parishioner to discuss the role and approve them as a facilitator can be skipped.

##### **2. The Small Group Process Manager (or assignee) meets with the facilitator to plan the small group**

- Plan the meeting dates and times.
- Plan the meeting location – either at the parish, a home of a small group member, or a coffee shop (if there is a private room where the group can watch the video).
- Prepare an "Information and Signup Form."

##### **3. Parishioner uses the form to invite their friends, coworkers or neighbors to their small group**

- The facilitator would recruit a scribe from the group, and both would attend a training in August/September. The facilitator and scribe would communicate with the Parish Small Group Process Manager throughout the process.
- Required numbers:
  - For a small group to form, a minimum of five members is required.
  - If less than five people signup, the small group is not formed and the interested people are invited to attend another small group (either the Parish Hosted Open Invite Small Groups or another of the parish small groups).

##### **4. Facilitator and scribe attend a training in August/September**

##### **5. Document list for Option 4 (downloadable)**

- Interested Facilitator Form
- Information and Signup Form

**1. Archdiocesan Requirements for a Parish Adult Small Group Ministry**

- The "Archdiocesan Requirements for a Parish Adult Small Group Ministry" form can be found at [archspm.org/synodsmallgroups](http://archspm.org/synodsmallgroups).
- The policy requires parish small groups comply with all of Governor Walz's Executive Orders and all Minnesota Department of Health Guidelines for gatherings of unrelated individuals.
- The policy also explains the required forms, procedures regarding vulnerable adults and minors, and other topics such as meeting size, transportation and alcohol. Regarding minimum sizes, three members of a small group must be present for a small group to meet. If only two members can attend, the facilitator must cancel and reschedule the meeting.

**2. Required Archdiocesan forms**

- All small group facilitators must sign the "Small Group Facilitator Form."
- For small groups that meet in a home:
  - All small group members must sign the "Small Group Member Adult Liability Waiver."
  - Small groups must also comply with all of Governor Walz's Executive Orders and all Minnesota Department of Health Guidelines for gatherings of unrelated individuals. The requirements starting March 15 for private social gatherings is 15 people indoors. Updated requirements provided in August/September training.
- The parish must keep these documents on file for two years.

**3. Essential 3**

- Questions regarding Essential 3 may be directed to Paul Iovino, Deputy Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environments, by email at [jovino@archspm.org](mailto:jovino@archspm.org) or office phone at (651) 291-4514.

**4. Document list for Archdiocesan Requirements**

- Archdiocesan Requirements for a Parish Adult Small Group Ministry
- Small Group Facilitator Form
- Small Group Member Adult Liability Waiver