

Parent to Parent Invitation

SHARE THIS WITH PARENTS TO USE AS A TEMPLATE FOR INVITING OTHER PARENTS INTO THE PROCESS OF STARTING SMALL GROUPS FOR THEIR CHILDREN. IT CAN BE EASILY COPIED AND PASTED INTO AN EMAIL. TEXT IN RED IS MEANT TO BE CUSTOMIZED.

Note: If your small groups are going to be meeting at your facility at set times, remove the paragraph "Discipleship groups are FLEXIBLE." and edit the paragraph "Discipleship groups are PARENT-PARTNERED"

Dear _____,

You may have heard that our community is doing something new for our [high school/middle school] students – a model known as small group discipleship.

I have been speaking with [my son/daughter's name], and [their son/daughter] came up as someone [he/she] would like to be in a group with.

Because this is likely a new concept, I want to take a moment to explain what discipleship is. Discipleship groups are groups of 4-8 teens, divided by sex, that meet regularly with adult mentors who lead them in conversation about their faith and how we live it out. Groups are flexible, parent-partnered, Catholic, and "the next level."

Discipleship groups are FLEXIBLE. Groups are encouraged to meet at times that work best for that specific group. While many programs are confined to one particular day and time, discipleship groups can meet any day of the week (before school, after school, or evenings) and where they want. Groups are encouraged to meet in comfortable environments such as homes and coffee shops.

Discipleship groups are PARENT-PARTNERED. In most programs, you drop your child off and pick them up a couple of hours later with not a lot of information about what they just did. Because discipleship groups can meet in homes, you have a chance to get to know the teens in your child's group as well as their mentors. And when it comes to content, parents receive an email after every session recapping the content of the discussion and discussion questions to help you process with your teen. Instead of asking, "How was small group tonight?" you can ask specific questions about specific topics.

Discipleship groups are CATHOLIC. Everyone has questions about what the Catholic Church teaches and how faith relates to life. Discipleship groups provide an opportunity to ask those questions and get reliable answers from the heart of the Church. Solid catechetical content will be provided by YDisciple, a youth discipleship platform powered by NET Ministries. (For more information on YDisciple, visit YDisciple.com).

Discipleship groups are THE NEXT LEVEL. [Include only if this is used for post-confirmation ministry: Now that your teen has been Confirmed, it is time to tap into the grace received in that sacrament.] Discipleship groups are for teens who desire to grow deeper in their faith or simply desire that elusive “something more.” This is accomplished by learning to strengthen your prayer life, diving into sacred scripture, having adult mentors who have ‘been there,’ and peers who will walk with you.

Discipleship is not another program; it is an apprenticeship in the Christian life.

[If you have information on who the adult mentor(s) will be, this is the time to say who he/she is. Otherwise, insert the following:

The other benefit of the flexibility of these groups is they are not assigned an adult mentor arbitrarily. It is recommended that the mentor is not a parent of one of the teens in the group. Other than that, we can talk amongst ourselves - parents and teens alike - and think about who might be a good role model for our kids. If we cannot come up with a name, [Insert coordinator’s name] already has a list of qualified adults who are eager to get involved in this ministry.]

I do want to emphasize that this is a commitment. Groups are encouraged to meet almost every week. Because groups are small, the presence or absence of a member is strongly felt. That being said, we are not asking your family to commit to this group for the next year. We ask that you commit only to the first five weeks. These weeks are about setting the foundation for what these groups are about. Only AFTER these five weeks are you and your teen asked to make a further commitment.

If this is something you are interested in for [their son/daughter], have a conversation with [him/her]. Tell [him/her] that you think having a group like this is important and is something you want for [him/her]. If your teen is interested, let me know, and we will get the ball rolling to get this group off the ground! If you have any questions about this group in particular or about Discipleship in general, feel free to ask me or [Insert coordinator’s name and contact info].

Your favorite way to sign off,

Your Name