

# Pinelake Small Groups Launch

JANUARY 31, 2021

Welcome to a new semester of small groups at Pinelake! If this is the first week your group is meeting, you will be setting the tone for future meetings. Your focus should be on the people in your group. You want to put them at ease, create a positive environment, and make them feel welcome. Remember, for someone who is new to church or who has never been part of a small group, coming to the first meeting can be very intimidating. For many people, it's a big risk. Make that risk pay off. By the time people leave, make them glad that they came!

To help, we've created a simple group time to kickstart your semester together. Your first meeting will be a fun, relaxed gathering for your group to simply get acquainted, or if already know each other, to reconnect.

## ► Before Your Group Meets

We strongly suggest that you make food a part of the meeting's activity, even if you don't plan to do it the other weeks. There's something about eating together that breaks down barriers. Don't forget to tidy up the space where your group will be meeting and keep energy and lighting high and your background music upbeat!

## ► As Your Group Arrives

This meeting's focus is primarily social. As the leader, make an effort to greet every person individually as they arrive and chat with them briefly. Be the host and put them at ease. Introduce people to each other and help them start a conversation, then move on to someone else. Watch out for loners and try to facilitate connection among people.

Feel this time out. For the first meeting, as long as people are engaging each other, don't feel bad about letting the first 15-20 minutes of your time be about connecting. On the other hand, if you feel the energy of the room lagging, go ahead and bring everyone together.

## ► Bring Everyone Together (2-3 Minutes)

After people have had an adequate time to interact, call together everyone to meet in a circle for discussion. Thank everyone for coming. Introduce yourself and explain that the group will be meeting for 8 weeks to discuss the current sermon series. Faith Walker. Let people know that the main purpose of the night is to get to know one another, and that you will start the regular discussions next meeting. Transition to a fun activity to get things going.

## ► Icebreaker (10-15 Minutes)

Your goal for an icebreaker is to increase the energy of the group, learn things about each person, and make things fun. After you state the question or give the scenario, be the first to answer it, keeping in mind that your answer sets the tone for those who follow you.

- **Option 1:** Ask the members of your group to imagine the following scenario: "Your house is on fire, and everyone is safe. You have 30 seconds to run through the house and collect three or four articles you want to save. What would you grab? Why?"
- **Option 2:** (Ideal if you're doing a virtual group): Ask everyone to spend five minutes running around their home to find objects that represent how they are currently feeling emotionally, spiritually and physically. Once the group has regathered, have each person share their three items. Let them decide how deep they will go.

Tips: While you'll want to give more time to this than in future weeks, it's still a good idea to set a timer for a specific time in order to keep the icebreaker within an appropriate frame.

At the end of your icebreaker time, thank everyone for sharing. Let your group know that you're about to spend some time recapping and discussing the Growth Plan sermon series, but first it would be helpful to set some ground rules for the group.

# Pinelake Small Groups Launch

JANUARY 31, 2021

## ► Ground Rules for Small Group Discussion (2-3 Minutes)

1. Confidentiality. What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. No crosstalk. Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
3. No fixing. We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
4. Sharing. Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

## ► Growth Plan Discussion/P28 Look Ahead (15-20 minutes)

After setting the ground rules for your small group, transition to discussing how the new year is going and our Growth Plan sermon series. Depending on how long your group interacted before you got started, feel free to use as many or as few questions as you'd like. Remember, this week the focus is on the people and getting your group started well.

1. Did you make any goals or resolutions to kick off 2021? If so, what were they? What's working well? What's been difficult?
2. In our series, Growth Plan, we have talked about Luke 2:52: Continued growth in wisdom, stature (taking care of our bodies), favor with God and favor with people. What week challenged you the most, and why?
3. If you could fast forward to one year from now and something in your life was different for the better and in a way that honored God, what would be different?
4. What are one or two practical things you believe God is calling you to do to grow this year in response to what you've learned during the Growth Plan sermon series?
5. Why do most resolutions or growth plans fail? What can you do to overcome that if you get off track this year?
6. How can this group help you grow this year and be a part of helping you achieve the things you feel God is leading you to grow in?

After you have discussed Growth Plan for a bit, transition to giving your group a heads up about P28. P28 is a season that Pinelake dedicates to more and more becoming a people of prayer and will kick off next Sunday, February 7. We challenge everyone to pray for 1 thing every day at 1 o'clock.

So, what is something you think you'd like to pray for over the next month that we could join with you?

## ► Close with Prayer

- Guide your group to open the Prayer tab on the Pinelake app and click Prayer Wall. Spend a minute praying for those who have submitted prayer requests.
- Pray for one another and the P28 requests that they have shared.
- Give thanks to God, asking Him to guide your group as together you seek to create a Small Group environment that will foster the growth you each desire.

Set a specific time and place for your group gathering next week.