

The Micro-Site Playbook

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What is a Micro-Site?

A micro-site is an intentionally small, church-based gathering that sees itself as the primary means of disciple-making ministry and mission in the world. A micro-site is typically made of groups of 6-12 people but can be represented by larger groups. Different from a traditional small group or bible study, a micro-site serves as the *primary* activity of church life, function, gathering, and ministry while remaining connected to a broader community of micro-site churches. The network and relationship of micro-sites might even associate under the same name and operational umbrella of a 'parent' church or leadership team. Micro-sites that operate under their own governance are simply referred to as micro-churches or a house-church. Micro-sites often meet in homes, but can also gather in coffee shops, community rooms, or other public and private spaces for fellowship and worship. Micro-sites can also be virtual gatherings through remote video conferencing tools.

Why consider 'going micro'?

In light of an ominous and threatening global pandemic, it would be easy to see micro-site churches as just "another model". However, a micro-site strategy for a church should be considered as an intentional discipleship approach, not just an alternative to traditional models. Micro-site or micro-churches have the ability to be an intentional strategy that seeks to catalyze a movement of Christ-followers who proclaim the Gospel to every community and neighborhood resulting in new fellowships that join God's mission both locally and globally, regardless of the times. Micro-site bypasses expensive overhead costs, maximizes resources for Kingdom expansion, embraces one-on-one discipleship, provides a natural context for individualized care and ministry, and embraces localized mission and evangelism. A micro-site church seeks to ensure "every member" is in a discipleship relationship by bringing the church to them.

SAMPLE: Strategic Micro-Church Mission and Core Values

Our Mission

To mature and multiply a missional-movement of Christ-followers among everyone, everywhere.

Our Core Values

1) Scripture

The Holy Bible is the primary source for learning what it means to be an identity-based disciple of Jesus Christ in both word and deed. We are committed to studying Scripture, engaging the Holy Spirit through it, and putting its teachings into everyday practice.

2) Gospel

The central message of Scripture is the gift of salvation, new life, and wholistic restoration of individuals, communities, and the world in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are committed to being part of a new life-story that regularly conforms our ultimate loyalties to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

3) Community

People are made for communities that exist for the glory of God and bringing about His Kingdom on earth. We are committed to living in, prioritizing, and cultivating new communities of Christ-followers among everyone, everywhere.

4) Worship

The heart of every person is meant to be directed to the desires and glory of God. We are committed to conforming our desires, hopes, and dreams through the activities that glorify God and demonstrate our worship of him above all things.

5) Prayer

The means of our communion with God is through silent listening, meditative thoughts, and vocal petitions in prayer. We are committed to a way of life that continuously prays in the power of the Holy Spirit both privately and corporately.

6) Mission

The life of a Christ-follower is a call to an identity with a mission that seeks to reach every continent and every people group. We are committed to the mission that embodies the incarnation of Jesus Christ who loved, served, and taught 'The Way' — the restoration of lives, our communities, and the world.

SAMPLE: Weekly Plan & Strategy

Strategic Discipleship Plan

The following is a recommended discipleship strategy that facilitates micro-site/church gatherings while maintaining corporate unity, communication, and teaching for larger churches and likeminded communities. This is a simple approach with two key components that can be adapted to meet your needs.

Component #1: Weekly Teaching & Communication

Pastor pre-records and delivers via video and/or audio podcast a sermon, message, or teaching, along with other important communication for their church community. It serves as a leadership connecting point and unifies the broader church community.

Component #2: Individual Reflection

At the conclusion of every weekly teaching, two or three reflection questions are given. Questions are phrased to challenge the individual towards personal application and meant to be considered and answered prior to the weekly gathering.

Component #3: The Weekly Micro-Site Gathering

Every member of the church community is matched to an identified leader or host-home of a micro-site that is geographically close. Gatherings occur in small group contexts. Experience suggests groups of 8–12 people are an ideal size for healthy group dynamics and forming deep relationships. Groups can self-manage their behavior, meeting times, and choose to opt for remote video conferencing if needed.

Individual Expectations Before the Gathering (Midweek)

1) Read

Read through and meditate on the assigned weekly passage.

2) Watch

If there is a teaching video with the weekly passage, set time aside to watch and take notes. It will serve as a guide to the primary content and points of emphasis for the next gathering.

3) Reflect

After reading and watching, set time aside for quiet, personal reflection and journaling. If specific discipleship or application questions were included with the weekly teaching video, use this time to answer those questions in your quiet time in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Liturgy/Program for the Gathering (Weekend)

The order and implementation of these elements can be re-arranged to fit the context and culture of the group.

- Fellowship
Intentional time for personal connecting, sharing of stories and life issues, building friendships, and establishing authenticity and vulnerability within the group.
- Discipleship
Open discussion and application of the assigned passage and video teaching.
- Prayer & Worship
This is where the power is; in our listening, receiving, petitions, and cries to the Lord. Expressions of worship and music is also encouraged to be incorporated in this time either through live or recorded music.
- Communion
The weekly celebration of our union with Christ and the profession of our faith in His life, death, resurrection, and return (Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 2:42).
- Service
The outward function of the community of faith is its witness and service to one another and the world. Service may take on a variety of forms and may only involve one or two individuals, the entire group, or a combination of other groups. There are no restrictions to how individuals may serve others as the Holy Spirit directs.

Expectations for Participants in the Gathering

- Group Leader(s) & Co-Leader(s)

The leader(s) responsibility is to be a model group member and act as the primary shepherd of the community. Leaders can be a combination of individuals or couples. The leaders seek to facilitate relationships, conversations, care for one another, practice and share the values of the church, help discover and activate the gifts of others, host and organize weekly gatherings, and maintain a group roster.

- Group Members

Members of the group are full participants in every aspect of the gathering. Each member will be led to discover and use his/her spiritual gift(s) to encourage and edify the group and greater community in the advancement of the message, mission, and movement of Jesus Christ.

- Simplicity

Gatherings should be simple to organize, execute, and reproduce. The Christian community is built on the foundation and headship of Jesus Christ. Avoid the temptation to over-complicate and over-program the weekly gathering. It should be as natural as having a few close friends over.

- Commitment to Our Values

Each group is to be committed to the core values of the church and seek to regularly practice those values. The values of the organization represent the DNA makeup and culture in the church's mission in the world and should be shared among all sites and regularly recommunicated.

Individual Expectations After the Gathering

- 1) Pray

The life of a disciple is marked by one who lives in communion with the Spirit through prayer. Therefore, members are to pray regularly for the church, other community members, your city/town, the non-believers in your life, and your role in the mission of Jesus to contagiously participate in the expansion of His message and mission in the world.

2) Act

Active disciples of Jesus are adoptive children of God. Therefore consider, plan, and act upon any significant attitudes, beliefs, or practices related to a change of heart, mind, soul, or strength that was discussed in this week's gathering related to your personal growth and maturing as a valued child and citizen of the Kingdom.

3) Share

As disciples of the ways of Jesus, we are to be living examples, evangelists, and lights of hope to the world resulting from our new identity in Him. What did you learn, witness, or experience in this week's gathering that should be shared with someone else? Pray for an opportunity to share and extend an invitation to learn more about Jesus.

Discipleship Questions for Leaders

The following are a list of questions to be used for leading, guiding, and facilitating the micro-church gathering around the reading, interpretation, and application of the Bible. Not every question needs to be answered or may directly apply to the study of the day. *These are guiding questions for leaders and members.* As the group matures, members may find this list insufficient and requiring new questions or methods for their discipleship time. Questions can also be adapted to supplement a weekly sermon or teaching.

Biblical Study Questions

- 1) What is the genre of this passage (narrative, law, genealogy, poetry/psalm, wisdom/proverb, letter, gospel, apocalyptic)?
- 2) What are the contextual historical clues in the passage or surrounding passages?
- 3) Who is the human author of this passage?
- 4) Who is the intended audience or reason for writing?
- 5) What does this passage teach about the character of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the nature of the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit)?
- 6) What is the main idea, concept, or proposition stated in the passage?
- 7) How does this passage illuminate or connect to the Gospel message (sinners saved by grace and faith in Jesus Christ)?
- 8) How does this passage connect to the redemptive mission of God?

Interpretive Questions

- 1) How might you re-tell the story or main idea from this week's passage using your own words?
- 2) Is there an illustration that comes to mind that helps re-tell the main idea of this week's study?

Application Questions

- 1) How does this passage illuminate what it means to be a devoted disciple of Jesus, worshipper of God, or Kingdom citizen?
- 2) What implications should the main idea/proposition resulting from this study have on my life as a follower of Jesus?
- 3) What sin is the Holy Spirit prompting you to confess and repent of as a result of this study?
- 4) Who might you share this message with this week? What approach will you take?
- 5) What questions were you left with that went unanswered?

Prayer Requests

- 1) What burdens are you carrying?
- 2) What areas or issues of faith are you struggling with?
- 3) Who are the non-believers in your life that you are actively sharing the message of Jesus with?

Additional Resources

Webinar: *Resources & Strategies for 'Going Micro'*

<http://matthewtill.com/2020/03/17/resources-strategies-for-going-micro/>

Ephesiology, The Study of a Movement

Discover God's passion for movements by studying the early church movement in Ephesus.

Resources available: books, weekly podcast, blog, and more!

<http://Ephesiology.com>

Blog

I write on topics of theology, culture, and mission.

<http://MatthewTill.com/>

We Are Church

House church network started by Francis Chan in San Francisco, CA. Register for local "Church Intensive" events near you.

<http://www.wearechurch.com/>

The Bible App for Kids

Children's Bible engagement app and curriculum.

<http://bibleappforkids.com>