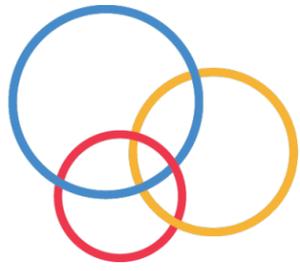


# How to start a Free Market Circle





# CIRCLES

## **Thank you for your interest in starting a new Circle!**

Circles are our unique small group environments at Grand Point where each person can be *known* and *grown*. They are a vital part of our desire to help as many as possible take their next steps to find and follow Jesus Christ. Thank you for taking your next step to host, lead, and create an environment where others can see what it means to follow Jesus in the world in which we live.

So, let's get started!

### **It's simple to start a Circle!**

- 1. Complete the Circle Start-up Form.**
- 2. Share with our coordinators and invite participants.**
- 3. Begin hosting Circle gatherings.**

We encourage you to read through the '**How to Start a Circle**' booklet, which will guide you through each of these steps in more detail.

Our purpose in this booklet is to help you grasp the greater vision for 'Free Market' Circles and to plan out what your Circle will become.

### What values guide all of our Circles?

Circles at Grand Point will strive to be:

1. **Relational** – Circles will be a place of *BELONGING*, where everyone is valued and welcomed. We will strive to keep an *open seat* to anyone God brings our way.
2. **Intentional** – Our Circles will be a place of *BECOMING*, where each person will be challenged to take their next step with Jesus. We will strive to keep an *open mind* to where God is leading and changing us.
3. **Missional** – We also need a place of *BUILDING*, where together we can make a difference in each others lives and in those in our spheres of influence... our Circles can be that place. We will keep *open eyes and hearts* to how God wants to use us to influence those around us.

While it can be difficult sometimes to connect with the larger church body when we gather for worship or larger events, Circles create the space and environment where the larger church is made small, and each person can be *known* and *grown*. We want everyone to sense 'You *Belong Here!*'

## What are 'Free Market' Circles?

Everyone has interests and passions. Free Market Circles are *groups that are created to reflect the passions and interests of our people as we seek to take steps toward Jesus together.*

- Free market groups *provide a natural context* for people to connect relationally.
- They *leverage the existing passions and interests* of leaders and group members and use that platform as an on-ramp for taking next steps.
- Free market groups are also open to everyone, not just those in our church communities, thus *expanding the reach and impact* to our greater community.

### Examples:

- |                 |                           |                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| • Star Wars     | • Running                 | • Bicycling     |
| • Fantasy Sport | • Hiking                  | • Race          |
| • Cooking/Food  | • Fly Fishing             | • Relations     |
| • Movies        | • Hunting                 | • Golf          |
| • Evangelism    | • History                 | • Pets          |
| • Book/Author   | • Bible Book or Character | • Sport Parents |
| • Marriage      | • Gardening               | • TV Show       |
| • Weight-Loss   | • Spiritual Warfare       | • Fashion       |
| • Fitness       | • End Times               | • Parenting     |
| • Finances      |                           | • Sewing/Quilts |
| • Leadership    |                           | • Motorcycles   |

There are exceptions, but the possibilities are almost endless. The dream is to empower leaders to discover their own unique vision for reaching and discipling others, and equip them to do it in whatever relational context they find themselves. We can train leaders to use their interests, passions, or hobbies as a catalyst for disciple-making in their sphere of influence.

## How to create a Free Market Circle around your interest, passion, or hobby:

1. Determine the logistics of your group:
  - When will you meet? (Day/time/length) \_\_\_\_\_
  - How long? (8-12 weeks) \_\_\_\_\_
  - How often? (weekly, bi-weekly?) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Where will you meet? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Kids/Childcare? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Space to grow as others invite? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Who could co-lead with you? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Decide on the 'one thing' you are passionate about: (the following may give you clues)
  - What is something you lose track of time doing or talking about because you enjoy it so much?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - What brings you 'bliss'? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is something those who know you say is your 'thing' or you are 'all about'? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is something you've helped others learn to do just because you enjoyed it? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is something you seem to know a lot about, or other people come to you about? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Who do you know already that are interested in this 'one thing'? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Tips for leading your 'Free Market' Circle:

- Be clear about start & end times and the general flow of the gathering. Make sure to honor people's commitment by starting on time and dismissing when finished. If you prefer, you are welcome to invite the group to stay after the gathering, but be sure the group is aware there is no obligation.
- You might find it helpful to develop a few common guidelines or expectations to share near the beginning of the gatherings.
- Especially when starting out, focus on getting to know each other and relationships. Connections are key!
- Be sensitive toward safety and cleanliness. Recognize that some may be hesitant about in-person gatherings although they may not express it. Be open to suggestions from the group to create a safer, more comfortable environment for everyone.
- Between group gatherings pray for each member of your Circle.
- Listen to the Holy Spirit and clues from your conversations for the 'one next step' each member could take as a result of this Circle experience:
  - To find help for some life situation
  - To explore their faith questions further
  - To connect with Grand Point or another church
  - To trust Christ as Savior
  - To go public with Jesus through Baptism
  - To lead/co-lead a new 'Free Market' Circle
  - To find their place to serve based on their passions
  - To influence their friends, family, or others for Jesus

## To better facilitate the Circle experience:

- Review the topic and conversation questions before the group begins. Try to discern the main point of your gathering, and what strikes you the most... let your passion come out a little! If you are excited about it, they will be too!
- Allow time during the conversation for questions from your members.
- Watch for body language and don't be afraid to invite members that you haven't heard from in a while to share.
- When you have members who share a lot (or dominate) say something like "Let's hear from a few others" or "from those who haven't shared yet" to encourage others' participation. You may need to speak with members outside the gathering about oversharing if it becomes distracting.
- If you pray together, especially for your first few gatherings, you as the leader offer a brief prayer. As the group becomes more familiar and relaxed, you can begin asking for prayer requests, and later ask someone that is comfortable with praying in a group setting to offer prayer (*you may want to ask that person privately before the gathering begins*). One person offering prayer for the group tends to work better than open-ended prayer times.
- *You got this!* God's in your corner, so pray, ask Him to lead you, and depend on Him.

