

CBF NEW CHURCH STARTS INITIATIVE

Innovation Groups

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Innovation Groups Overview

DISCOVERING NEW WAYS OF BEING THE CHURCH TOGETHER



Philosophy

Innovation Groups are made of people who gather to discover something new, possibly leading to a new church start.

Is there a dream for the Kingdom of God emerging through you? Would you like to meet with others who also are seeking a new way of being church?

CBF's New Church Starts Initiative can be a catalyst of support for your community.

New church starts are conceived in many ways. A church start does not always begin with an individual church starter — sometimes it starts with a community of people who realize it's time for something new. What starts as an informal gathering can quickly transform into an intentional process of discovering this new thing God is doing.

CBF seeks to enhance the journey for innovation groups with training, coaching and resources. This initiative focuses on visioning, forming and engaging this new thing God is calling groups to embrace.

Process

Innovation groups seeking to start churches with the Fellowship are invited to engage in a free discernment cohort. As groups journey through this two-way process, the groups learn more about how to establish an identity, form a shared vision, dream of new possibilities, expand their community and engage the church start. The process for each group is contextual and organic. Each group takes on a different form, timeline and vision.

Partnership

Since the process will be very different for each group, the formation of a partnership with CBF will be equally as varied. Following the discernment cohort, innovation groups may enter into partnership with CBF in a number of ways:

- Applying for a new church start grant
- Networking to discover a church starter
- Entering into coaching covenant

Discernment Cohort Overview



The purpose of this resource is to provide a process of discernment and contextualization that an innovation group can work through to form a church start. Although there are intentional touch points along the way, groups are encouraged to allow the Spirit of God to guide the conversation.

The key touch points will include:

- 1. DREAMING OF NEW POSSIBILITIES:** Where else can you create new and innovative ministry without the confines of tradition and congregational by-laws? Innovation groups will dream and explore new possibilities for ministry.
- 2. DISCOVERING OUR IDENTITY:** Why are you here? How do you function within a group? Who are you together? What unites you? Why are you having this conversation? What makes you Cooperative Baptists?
- 3. DISCERNING A SHARED VISION:** The innovation groups will clearly identify the “why.” Why new church starts? Why do we do this thing called church? Why are we called to engage in the mission of God?
- 4. CONTEXTUALIZING:** Now that the group has considered the “why,” it is time to turn your attention to the “what” and “how.” The group will begin to identify the context of where they are and whom they will reach.
- 5. STRENGTH-BASED DEVELOPMENT:** One of the first steps in organically connecting with the community around you is having a better understanding of who you are and what you bring to the table. Groups will investigate their interests and strengths.
- 6. FORMING A CHURCH START PLAN:** As innovation groups prayerfully discern and dream, God will help them to form a plan for how this new church start will become a reality.
- 7. EXPANDING THE INNOVATION GROUP:** The innovation team will develop a clear and thoughtful plan of how to engage in conversation with others to expand the community of the church start core group.
- 8. ENGAGING WHAT COMES NEXT:** The innovation group will live out their shared vision together.

Each session will consist of four parts: session preparation, biblical meditation, group conversation and group discernment.

Church Start Plan

Over the next eight sessions, you will compile various reflections, conversations, and discoveries of your group. Along side vision statements, tangible goals, and actions steps, you will need to compile these items into a church start plan.

You may want to create your own group journal, having someone document the group’s conversation.

This typed document should be organized around the eight sessions.

Upon completion, you will submit the church start plan to your coach and the church starts specialist.

Coaching

During this eight-session process, you will have access to four coaching calls. This space is designed to help produce the results that you want in your leadership of the Innovation Group.

See the coaching covenant for more details.