

SQUAD TRAINING MADE EASY 😊

WHAT IS A SQUAD?

SQUAD /skwäd/ (n)

1. A small group working or playing together.
2. A small group engaged in a common effort.

We all have our own “squad.” Every Sunday you have those people that you already feel safe and comfortable being around. These relationships are built from serving together, connecting online, common friends or just from the people you talk to on a regular basis. So, what we want to do is leverage the squad you have already formed and use it to intentionally grow your faith.

Imagine some of your friends at church (maybe even those outside the church) hanging out together once a week, once every other week or even once a month. No coerced small group sign ups or pressure to attend a meeting each week. A time where there are authentic relationships forming and joy from being together. A group where you journey with Jesus together. Where the responsibility of the group “leader” is not to force others to do things a certain way, but rather to create environments and opportunities where people can grow more naturally into who God created them to be. The beauty of an organic squad is that you can take what you already have relationally and just make a couple tweaks to turn it into a faith growing experience.

That being said, here are a few tips and ideas in case you need some help getting started.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

- Anyone can lead a squad (If you would like be placed on the squad leader list, please e-mail Pastor Brian at brian@churchofthesuncoast.com).
- The squad goal is 4-10 people (If your squad is consistently having 15 people then it's time to form another squad).
- Members are invited personally by the squad leader. Meaning if you want to form a squad then start inviting people now! (If you are serving you will get an automatic invite from your team leader. This doesn't mean you have to be in that squad, you are free to join others or start your own. *If you are not serving and not connected yet with some people, please e-mail Pastor Brian at brian@churchofthesuncoast.com*).
- We encourage a **10 meeting MINIMUM** to start with.
- Meetings could be weekly, every other week, or even monthly. *Just be intentional about putting meetings on the calendar* at the first gathering and then stick to them!!!)
- Gatherings can be centered around common interests, restaurants, activities, hobbies, parks, events... GO DO SOME STUFF and have fun! 😊
- Your first gathering should begin *before the end of April*.
- Squad members all get on the same Bible reading plan (bible.com) and during the gatherings have a conversation about what they read and what they are learning, even what they didn't understand.
- Mid-week communication is encouraged through group texts or social media.
- Squads care and pray for each other and look for ways to serve the church and others.
- There will be a new middle & high school squad forming (Let us know if you have a middle or high school student, e-mail Pastor Brian brian@churchofthesuncoast.com).
- Squads are family friendly as long as each meet up venue has a place for kids to play while the adults talk.

SPIRITUAL OVERVIEW

- The goal of squads is to take what we already have and use it, not add something to our already overloaded lives.
- Each squad will choose a Bible reading plan from **Bible.com** (the Bible App). Plans vary in length so before your first gathering have a couple options and then pick one that's not too heavy in reading to get going. A great place to start would be the 7-week long "The Bible Course."
- Then gatherings are guided by asking questions such as...
 - **WHAT STOOD OUT TO YOU FROM THE READING?**
 - **WHAT VERSES SPOKE TO YOU THE MOST?**
 - **WHAT HAS GOD BEEN SHOWING YOU?**
 - **WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?**
 - **WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?**
 - **WHAT ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH?**
 - **HOW CAN WE HELP?**
- This guided time should not be the entire time of your gathering, and it can even be sprinkled in throughout your general conversations.
- Pray as a group each gathering. Take requests and write them down. You can send them out to the group in between gatherings as reminders to pray for each other.
- Also consider sharing in the Lord's Supper / Communion at some point. (If you have questions on how to do it, e-mail... you guessed it, brian@churchofthesuncoast.com)
- Look for ways to serve each other, the church and the community.

RELATIONAL OVERVIEW

- Do life together! Do fun activities (parks, games, walks, recreational activities, hobbies, etc.)
- Meet at places other than just a home (coffee shop, park, beach, restaurants, etc.)
- Share meals together regularly!
- Value: Openness, transparency, and confidentiality.
- Mid-week communication is encouraged (phone calls, group texts, celebrating birthdays or milestones) **MAKE SURE YOU CAPTURE EVERYONE'S INFO AT THE FIRST GATHERING!**

FIRST GATHERING TIPS TO LEAD LIKE A PRO

- Pray! Ask God to help you and use you.
- ***Don't think meeting!*** Think fun time with friends!
- Make your invites and set the date, time and place for meet up number one (Someplace fun that will encourage natural conversation is a good idea, space for kids to play too).
- Send follow up messages a day or two out reminding people.
- Find a few Bible reading plans on Bible.com for the group to pick from (FYI plans can be done together with others on the website or app)
- Have a way to capture everyone's info if you don't have it all yet (cell, e-mail, social).
- Explain what your squad will be doing for the next 10 weeks (refer to this guide as needed) and **DETERMINE THE DATES** of the remaining meet ups (weekly, every other week, monthly).
- Pick a Bible reading plan and make sure everyone has an easy-to-read Bible like the NIV or NLT. (There are free Bibles at Next Steps in the lobby)
- Chat, laugh, have fun!
- Close your time by taking prayer requests and praying.
- Create a group text or social media group and begin connecting in between gatherings.