



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

{Summer Small Groups}



Summer is here! With many regular church programs slowing down or going on break over July and August, the summer is the perfect time to be creative and experiment with new, short-term small groups. And what's more – short-term small groups provide an easy way to connect new members as well as foster spiritual growth and deep relationships within the congregation.

Organizing a Short-Term Small Group

- 1) Choose the topic or activity that will be the focus of your gatherings.
See ideas listed below, and don't be afraid to try something new. Choose something you would find enjoyable and think that others would be interested in too.
- 2) Invite members of your congregation, neighbours and friends.
Short-term small groups are an excellent opportunity for outreach. If you know people outside of your congregation who might be interested what you've chosen as your focus, invite them!
- 3) Create a schedule.
Summer is a busy time for everyone, so it is good to have a schedule with set gathering dates and times. You may meet twice—once in August and once in July—or you may meet every week. Choose the frequency and duration of your gatherings as a group. Remember to be flexible! Summer small groups are meant to be relaxing and fun.

Ideas for Short-Term Summer Small Groups



Outdoor Film and Discussion Nights:

Now that many individuals and churches own projectors and laptop computers, having an outdoor movie night has never been easier. Choose from a wide range of [Hollywood films](#) that feature [Christian themes and storylines](#) as well as films created specifically for Christian audiences. Set up a backyard with chairs, blankets, and film screen (or use a blank wall), and enjoy your film together! Don't forget to leave room for discussion over drinks and snacks afterwards.



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Potluck Picnic in a Park:

Choose a time weekly or bi-weekly to meet in a park for a potluck picnic. Keep it low stress by encouraging people to [bring simple, easily portable food](#). If there will be children, consider having the picnic near a splash pad or playground. Incorporate a spiritual element to your gathering by reading from the Bible and/or praying together.



Backyard Book Discussion:

Many people would love to be in a book club, but feel they don't have enough time. Choosing one book for the summer and reading only a few chapters for each meeting can ease concerns about time. If the weather is nice, meet in someone's backyard or at a local park.



Dinner & Recipe Exchange:

BBQ and outdoor eating season is upon us. It is the perfect time to share your favourite summer recipes with others. Organize a supper club, where members of the small group visit each other's houses for dinner on bi-weekly basis. At the gatherings, each person is responsible for bringing part of the dinner (drink, appetizer, bread, salad, main, dessert, etc.) as well as a copy of the recipe for everyone at the gathering.



Bonfire Evenings:

Most people love sitting around a bonfire! Why not make it a regular event over the summer? If someone in your congregation has a fire pit, ask if your small group could use it a few times over the summer. Invite people to bring their instruments. Sing and tell stories together around the campfire.



Swap Meetups:

Why not organize a series of swap meetups as a small group over the summer? Choose a different type of item to swap each time: books, toys, clothes, kitchen items, household goods, etc. Anything that doesn't get swapped can be donated to a local charity. Use the swap meetup as an opportunity to give thanks to God for all God has given us.



Knit-Along:

Choose a knitting or craft project that a small group could do together over the summer. For example, why not get an early start on knitting hats, mittens and scarves for clothing banks and homeless shelters? Make it fun by setting a goal, such as 30 hats, 30 scarves, and 30 pairs of mittens, by September. Meet regularly to knit together.