

# MISSIONAL COMMUNITY SPECIFICS

BY TODD MORR



[WWW.MISSIONALMADESIMPLE.COM](http://WWW.MISSIONALMADESIMPLE.COM)

## **VISION:**

Gospel. Community as Family. Mission.

Let the values of Gospel, Family, and Mission guide the why, what, where, and how of everything you do as an MC.

## **SIZE RANGE:**

- 6-14 adults + non-Christians. When the group gets to the 12-14 adult size, it's moving towards multiplying, especially if it has a good number of children involved.
- Smaller than that, and it's not really a community.
- Larger than that, and it can become an unmanageable community.
- Core of 4-8 that are taking responsibility for the life of the community

## **RELATIONAL DYNAMICS:**

3 layers of relationship - Core, young Christians, non-Christians.

This usually means approximately 4-8 Core, 4-8 young Christians around the core, and 10-15 non-Christians that the MC feels called to love and influence with the Gospel - this is their Mission Focus.

## **PROXIMITY:**

Ideally, everyone in the MC living within 10-15 minutes driving distance or by public transportation. In big, busy cities with lots of traffic and further distances, you may need to adjust. Even so, still work hard for close proximity, or very strong affinity. If people aren't living close enough together, it's unlikely that they will live much normal or spontaneous life together.

If there's strong affinity, where lots of life is being lived together and there is significant overlap of relationships and schedules, then an MC like this can still function as a fruitful Family on Mission. Strong affinities could be a group of musicians, a group that does Cross Fit together, a group of doctors and nurses at the same hospital, or a group of families at the same school or youth sports team.

## **LENGTH OF TIME AND COMMITMENT:**

MC's usually organize for 1 year and commit to each other and life together for 1 year.

At the end of 1 year, groups are usually not dissolving but are multiplying or adjusting and reforming in some way. The 1 year commitment is like a normal life-cycle to then step back and assess, adjust, get feedback, and continue on with a fresh vision for the coming year.



## **FREQUENCY:**

A normal week could mean having 4 or 5 points of contact between people at various times and various ways. Sometimes that could be just a few people and sometimes many. Some things could be just for ladies and some things just for guys. MC is a life together, so it's going to mean many types of things, happening in many relational forms, at a wide variety of times and places. These "points of contact" could look like the following and hopefully will give you ideas for many more:

- Sunday morning gatherings
- MC Family Meal Nights
- DNA's for women and men
- Families having singles over for dinner or doing dinner with one other couple
- BBQ with 2 MC couples and 2 non-Christian couples from work or the neighborhood
- Going to the park or hiking together with part or all of the MC, including with non-Christian friends
- Running, walking, biking, or Cross Fitting with a few from the MC and others
- Babysitting someone's kids
- Game nights or movie nights with part or all of the MC
- Dropping off a meal or groceries to a family that is sick, just had a baby, or lost a job
- Sending regular texts to check in and encourage an individual, your DNA, or the entire MC

## **PLANNING:**

Create an overarching or big picture plan for the year but then plan specifically for 30 days at a time and communicate about this plan consistently. (See 30 Day MC Plan for an example.)

Adjust that 30-day plan when necessary, to take a particular season of the year or a season of life into consideration. The seasons often affect capacity and availability and may also create additional missional opportunities connected with the holidays, start of the school year, or start of a new year, etc.

## **MISSION FOCUS:**

Sit down with the regular members of the MC and write down the names of all of the non-Christians God has put each member in natural relationship with - from the neighborhood, work, school, school activities, kids activities, hobbies, etc. You'll find that is usually a pool of at least 40-60 people. Then, from that larger pool of people, pray and discern who are the approximately 10-15 that are the "good soil" from that group. The good soil are those that are more open to conversation, relationship, and seem more open to spiritual things. These are the people that the Spirit keeps bringing to your heart and mind. These 10-15 people then are the Mission Focus that your MC is prioritizing your lives around to love and pursue. (See also 5 Essentials for Effective Mission)



## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

1. **Multi-generational:** Having MC's be multi-generational, rather than segmented according to age, can have a huge effect on people's spiritual growth. There are many things that each generation needs to experience and be encouraged by from the other generations.
2. **Shared leadership of the core:** Take into account the gifting, personality, maturity, and experience of each person. Take advantage of each person's gifts, passions, and perspective. It's critical for MC's to be led by a group of people, rather than just 1 or 2 people. With a strong core there is more strength, capacity, diversity, and complementary influence. With shared leadership, every aspect of community life will be more effective and sustainable. This includes hosting, facilitating meetings and events, teaching, shepherding, communication, and planning.
3. **Communication:** Ask for input and decide what form of communication works best for your group and what they are most likely to read and respond to. It could be Facebook, email, text threads, or apps designed for group communication. Consider having one person in the core group take responsibility for weekly communication to the whole MC for a few months at a time. Sending out consistent reminders is crucial in cultures that have busy schedules and are consistently overloaded with information.
4. **Small children:** Parenting children together in an MC is a powerful experience, as the influence of multiple adults is helping shape the spiritual and relational growth of the children. A community that is living like family and living together on mission is able to model love, care, generosity, hospitality, and many other aspects of Gospel living. It's takes a community of disciples to help make mature disciples of our kids!
5. **Teenagers:** This is going to depend on whether or not the church has a youth group and what form that youth group takes. If there is a strong youth group, then it will fully complement the experience the teenager is having in an MC. If the youth group is very small or not very strong, then an MC could look at how to supplement the spiritual experiences for their teenagers. This could happen through something like Mentor DNA's, which are 3 or 4 youth meeting with an adult mentor. Other social events could also be added to meet their friendship needs, during the unique stage of the teenage years. Teens need to understand that they are the church now, and that they have value now. They should be seen as part of an MC just like any of the adults. Just like with smaller children, having the influence of multiple adults from an MC in their lives can be a powerful thing.
6. **Rotating homes:** Part of the reality here is that the community needs to be functioning like good family in this way as well. This means that everyone that has enough space in their house or apartment helps with hosting different meals, parties, and activities. This is very important to help prevent hosting burnout.



Part of the goal in this is to also help each person or couple grow in hospitality, which is an important trait of a maturing disciple.

7. **Meals and food:** Be creative and flexible. Keep it simple at times. At other times, have fun putting on a bigger, nicer meal that becomes the focus of the night. Again, be good family, in the way that MC meals are organized, prepared, and experienced. Expect everyone to chip in and help, and be sure to have people help clean up together. When you have a large number of small children, you'll need to be extra thoughtful in how you're going to get all of them fed and cleaned up, so that it doesn't always dominate the night.

