Group Leader Guide

Connecting and growing together in groups.

About This Guide

Realm, a ministry solution your church uses to serve the administrative needs of its staff and leaders, provides you with convenient tools to support the way groups connect and grow together. This guide highlights important information about the multiple things group leaders can do on Realm. It is intended to be a quick reference guide.

You'll learn how to…
- *Download the Mobile App*
- *Edit Group Settings*
- *Create Content*
- *Manage Group Participants*
- *Message Your Group*
- *Mark Attendance*

For comprehensive Help documentation, please visit:
go.acst.com/leaders_guide

For Realm implementation resources, please visit:
resources.realmchurch.com

Download the Mobile App

Stay connected to your group wherever you go with Realm's mobile app named *Connect - Our Church Community*. It is available for iPhone and Android devices. This free app enables leaders to communicate with members in a timely manner, and it keeps members engaged throughout the week. Although people are not required to use the app to participate in your group, it sure makes it a lot easier.

Connect with your group anytime:

- **News**—Keeps everyone up-to-date with the latest posts, photos, and events for your group and for your church as a whole

- **Posts**—Post messages to your group and comment on posts by others in your group

- **Photos**—Share images and photos with your group

- **Events**—See event details, submit your RSVP, and sign up to bring something

- **Files**—Access your group's shared files

- **Participants**—See names and basic profile details for the people in your group, based on what their privacy preferences

- **Notification Settings**—Manage your preferences for group notifications and emails

- **Mark Attendance**—Keep track of attendance for group events

- **Messages**—Message your entire group, or select individuals

Download "Connect - Our Church Community" today:

On your iPhone of Android device, go to: http://onelink.to/connectapp

Feel free to share/text that link to the people in your group.

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iPhone: *https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/connect-our-church-community/id1052274581?mt=8*
Android: *https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.acstechnologies.android.realm.engagement*

Edit Group Settings

Leaders should update their group's details whenever information changes. If you are in an open invitation model church, group settings include information like name, description, meeting time and location, campus (if a multi-site), and group photo. You can add additional details about the group's settings, target demographics (e.g. gender, age, marital status), and connected social media accounts if your Realm administrator has enabled the ability. Church staff can also edit group settings if they have the appropriate permissions.

More details available online at: *go.acst.com/edit_group*

Group communication permissions are determined by your church staff and can be reserved for leaders only if necessary. But when it's enabled, groups find it's easier to connect to each other in their proper context, unlike group texts and emails.

Important: When you create content within a group with communication settings turned on, Realm sends all group members an email notification. In an open invitation church, people who are a part of the group, but do not have a Realm profile receive an invitation to join Realm within these emails. Please keep this in mind when you are introducing communication to your congregation!

Types of Communication

- **Posts**—Any message you want to share with the group and open up for comments.

- **Comments**—Direct responses to a post, event, or other comments.

- **Photos**—Capture your moments together and then share them with your group.

- **RSVP**—Let people know if you can attend an upcoming event and what you signed up to bring.

- **Messages**—Send your entire group, or select individuals, a message that starts a conversation in the Messages tab.

More details available online at: *go.acst.com/enable_group_communication*

Create Content

Group communication allows group members to share posts, comments, photos, and event RSVPs with other members in their group. It's a great way to carry conversations throughout the week and keep connected to what's going on. When you create a post, photo, or event in Realm, it shows up on your group's News page, and all group members are notified by email or app notification, depending on their preferences.

Types of Content

- **Post** - A message created by a member of your group that all other group members can read.
- **Photo** - A single photo, or a gallery of photos, that group members share.
- **Event** - An event created by a member of your group that other group members can RSVP for.

Posts

When a member of a group creates a post, it appears in a newsfeed for that group. Other group members can respond to this post with a comment, or support it by clicking the heart icon. It's a good idea to create a few posts in your group so that people have content to interact with when you open the newsfeed to them.

Photos

A member can share a single image or a group of images in a photo gallery. Like Posts, photos also appear on the group's newsfeed. Other members can respond with a comment and support photos by clicking the heart icon.

More details available online at: go.acst.com/intro_group_communication

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Files

Group participants can share files with their group by attaching a file to a post, like Sunday school lessons, rehearsal music, prayer lists, study material, and more. When someone adds a file to a post, it will appear in the Files tab of your group. Shared files can be downloaded by members of the group. Files may not exceed 20MB.

More details available online at: go.acst.com/share_files

Events

Church groups often get together at regularly scheduled times, but they also like to gather for parties, picnics, prayer, outings, or other special events. Fortunately, you don't have to be the only one to organize and enter these events. Members may post events for the group, too. As a group leader, you always have oversight of your group's calendar and can make any edits as needed. Events can also be exported as an .ics file to be used with your preferred calendar program, like Microsoft Outlook.

Event types include:

- **Primary Event**—This is your group's regularly scheduled meeting time and location. You can maintain this information *online** with your group's details. People will likely reference these details while evaluating participation in your group.

- **Special Events**—Groups often hold other gatherings, which may occur one time or on a temporary recurring basis. Leaders and members may create events, but only leaders have the ability to edit all posted events.

- **Recess**—Sometimes groups take periods of time off, like for summer or for the Christmas season. Leaders can add a recess period to remove any previously scheduled recurring meetings from the calendar during a specific recess period. Other special events will remain on the calendar. When a recess is set, group members will automatically be emailed about this change. You will still have the ability to schedule additional, non-recurring events during the recess.

*You will be able to update primary event information in the mobile app in the future.

More details available online at: go.acst.com/manage_group_events

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Manage Group Participants

Group leaders can be given specific permissions to be able to maintain group rosters. Group rosters include leaders, members, and guests who have profiles on Realm.

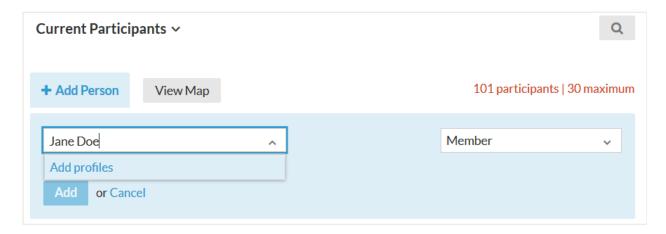| Permissions	Leader	Member	Guest
View names on roster	✓	✓	—
View members' contact information	up to the member	up to the member	up to the member
View list of group events	✓	✓	✓
View and download resources	✓	✓	—
Read and create posts	✓	✓	—
Add Events	✓	✓	—
Post resources (files and photos)	✓	✓	—
Send a message to the group	✓	✓	—
Mark attendance	✓	—	—
Set Meeting Times and Locations	✓	—	—
Add, delete, edit group members *(if permitted by church to do so)*	✓	—	—

Leaders

Leaders can add people to a group's roster. Once an individual has been added as a group member, he or she can be promoted to a leadership position. You can have more than one leader. Church staff can also assign group leadership.

Members

Members are participants in a group. Leaders can add members to the roster by using the search profiles field. Likewise, leaders can remove people from the roster at any time. You set the person's role in the group while adding her or him. You can edit a person's role any time. See Figure 1.0.
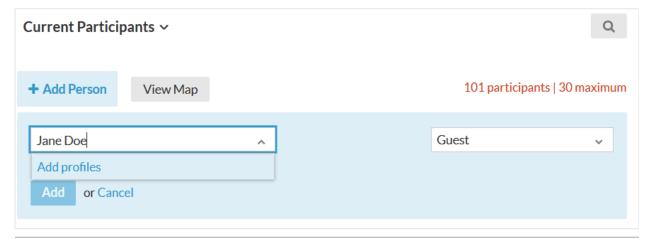
Figure 1.0 — Add Member to Group Roster

Guests

Guests are people who have attended your group with the intent to become a regular member. There are probably only a few edge cases where you would add out-of-town or one-time guests. If the church staff permits it, leaders may enter new individual profiles for guests. Use the "Add profiles" option to add a new profile as a guest if her or his name is not showing up in the system. Check with a church staff member if you have questions. See Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 — Add Guest to Group Roster

More details available online at: go.acst.com/manage_group_roster

Message Your Group

If messages are enabled for a group, the group leaders can send a message to everyone in a group, or just specific people, from the Participants tab. Sending a message will notify group members based on their preferred notification settings. It will also create a new conversation on the Messaging tab where the conversation can continue.

Notification Settings

You can view notification settings for each member in a group, and whether the member has a login to Realm. You can also see if a group member doesn't have a login or a method of communication. This helps you know how members receive notifications for messages and posts.

- Member has a Realm login

- Member receives email notifications from this group

- Member uses the mobile app and receives app notifications for this group

- Member does not receive communication from this group

Mark Attendance

Keeping track of your group members' attendance gives your church staff insight into how people are involved in the church. Thankfully, Realm makes it very simple for leaders to record attendance. All you need to do is go to your Group's Attendance tab and then click on a past event to mark attendance for it.

Options

- **Member Attendance**—You can mark member attendance by selecting the checkbox for each person who attended the meeting. The total number of marked attendance is calculated at the top of the screen.

- **Head Counts**—If you do not mark individual member attendance for the event, you can simply enter a whole number in the Total column. If you record a head count and later decide to mark individual members' attendance, the head count and individual member attendance are combined in the total. You will need to go back and adjust the number down for each selected profile to keep your total number consistent.

- **Printed Sheets**—Sometimes it makes sense to use a printed attendance-marking sheet so you can take roll on paper prior to entering it online. Attendance sheets are printed for a group's entire month of events. If attendance has already been entered for a past event, it will print pre-marked on the sheet. The printable attendance-marking sheet is exported from Realm as a PDF.

- **Attendance Profiles**—If you are the leader of multiple groups, ask your Realm administrator to set up an Attendance Profile containing all your groups. Then you can use the Attendance option to mark attendance for one group at a time without needing to go to each group's Past event list.

- **Reviewing an Individual's Attendance**—While looking at your group's roster online, you can hover over the ellipsis icon next to the attendance percentage to see a snapshot of the person's attendance history.

More details available online at: go.acst.com/mark_attendance

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If you have any questions or would like to speak with one of our experts, please give us a call at 1-800-669-2509.

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