

A Small Group Leader's Guide to the Relate Podcast

On behalf of the Relate Ministry--thank you for the ways you serve and lead the members of your small group! Our desire is to help you, the leader of your group, navigate and facilitate the content found within the Relate Podcast and its various seasons. If you have questions about how to use the podcast for your group or stories from your experience as you engage the episodes we would love to hear from you. Please email us at relate@willowcreek.org.

The Relate Podcast exists to help us all get curious about the way we relate to ourselves, God, and others. Our desire is for each of us to do the rest of our lives better by building better relationships. In this guide you will find an overview of each season of the podcast so that you can find a topic that would be the next right thing to challenge, inspire, and build the relational health of your members as well as identify and expand the way you relate to God.

Season 1: Your Past is Present (Episodes 1-6)

In this first season of the Relate Podcast we explore how the families that raised us helped shape who we are today--and how both the beautiful and broken parts of our stories show up in our relationships with others, even our relationship with God. In these 6 episodes you will learn how to lean into your greatest strengths, break free from unhelpful, outdated relational patterns, and see ways your experience from your childhood is shaping or distorting your view of God.

Season 2: The Me in We (Episodes 7-10)

So many of us are good at caring for our friends, family, and coworkers but what about ourselves? God does not ask us to serve and care for others at the expense of our own well-being. This second season of the Relate Podcast will help you to discover ways that you can give of yourself to others while also doing the important work of honoring yourself in your current relational world. You will learn to rightsize your relational commitments, expectations, and energies to fit who God made you to be.

Season 3: Turning Disappointment into Deeper Connection (Episodes 11-14)

Relationships bring us joy, support and connection, but the unavoidable truth is that they also can bring us disappointment. Season 3 of the Relate Podcast helps us to identify ways we experience a gap between what we hoped for and what we are currently experiencing in our relationships in order to lessen that gap. Addressing our disappointment can be scary but we discuss how to proceed so that it can ultimately bring us closer to what we really want: deeper connection with those we love. This season ends with a festive and fun live podcast recording

with special guest Albert Tate where we discuss how to navigate awkward conversations with our families at the Holidays.

Season 4: New Year, New You? (Episodes 15-18)

Why is it that come January 1 we are bombarded with messages that we need to change all the less-than-desirable parts of ourselves and become a new person? What is it about our culture that obsesses with a “New Us” at the New Year, and what is it about ourselves that joins in? Is this what God wants for us in this season of life? Season 4 discusses the answers to these questions and also explores ways to go about healthy, lasting growth in areas that God is truly inviting us into.

Season 5: Stay at Home, Covid-19 season (Episodes 19-22)

As we find ourselves smack dab in the middle of an unexpected season of staying home and apart from friends and loved ones, how can we stay emotionally healthy in the midst of so much loss and change? We talk through our experience during the stay at home season and outline ways to stay connected with your feelings and wellness. We also celebrate Mother’s Day and Father’s Day with special podcast episodes. For Mother’s Day we got curious about our expectations going into a celebration at home with many businesses closed and for Father’s Day we talked to some amazing dads about how to build deep relationships with our kids.

Season 6: Life’s interruptions: how to stay connected to yourself in the midst of change and “little” losses (Episodes 23-25)

When life is moving along at a fast pace and all of a sudden we are hit with a change, planned or unplanned, that leaves us with feelings of sadness and loss, how do we respond those feelings without ignoring them and simply adjusting to our “new normal?” Maybe it’s a new job, a kid going off to college, or a dear friend moving away, these changes seem like ones we can muster up the strength to weather, but they too deserve our curiosity and care. We discuss how the feelings of loss that pile up from life’s “little losses” really do need our attention so that we can heal and grow.