



Hello Leaders and Hosts!

Welcome to a new quarter of Life Groups! We are so grateful for your leadership and willingness to serve your group. In this packet, you will find helpful information to prepare you for this quarter of Life Group meetings!

- First Night Agenda to help you have a great first meeting
- Life Group Covenant to help set the expectations for your group (Member copy AND Leader copy with guide included)
- 4 Q's (four questions) to ask when someone is struggling with something in your group

Any additional resources you may need can be found on our Life Group Leader Resources page at <https://www.springfieldfaithcenter.org/leader-resources>. Thanks so much for all you do!

We are praying for a blessed quarter for your group.

The Life Group Team,
Springfield Faith Center

LIFE GROUPS

FIRST NIGHT AGENDA

FIRST NIGHT PREPARATION

Leaders/Hosts – Check your rosters online and **CONTACT ALL MEMBERS** one week before the first meeting and welcome them to the group. Provide the location and time of your group, as well as any entrees to bring for dinner/dessert.

GOALS FOR THE FIRST MEETING

- Rekindle relationships and meet new members
- Clarify your group's direction / expectations / commitments
- Briefly discuss the sermon topic (if there is time)
- Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group

ITEMS NEEDED

- Dinner / dessert plans decided
- Beverages set up
- Life Group Commitment
- Nametags (especially if you have new members)

THREE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF YOUR EVENING

#1 WELCOME, MINGLE AND TALK WHILE YOU EAT

- Leader/Host greet members upon arrival with music.
- The first seven seconds after arrival are critical for new members. Make a great first impression!

#2 FIRST GROUP DISCUSSION

- Sharing Activity: "Be Friendly" questions and/or Getting to know you game like 2 Lies and a Truth.
- Worship (optional): This is a great way to connect spiritually with your group.
- REVIEWING THE COVENANT IS CRUCIAL
- Closing Prayer: Dedicate the quarter to God.

#3 KEEP IN MIND, YOUR DESSERT CONVERSATIONS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR MEETING DISCUSSIONS.

LEADERSHIP TIPS

1. Never underestimate the significance of the time after the meeting.
2. Use the Commitment to set the standards for your Life Group.
3. Visit the Leader Resources for additional tips at <https://springfieldfaithcenter.org/leader-resources>



LIFE GROUPS COVENANT & GUIDELINES

Leaders _____ Phone # _____

Hosts _____ Phone # _____

Life Groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

LIFE GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual growth through authentic Christian relationships and the study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs*.

SERVE

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the session, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to . . .

- ❶ Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).
- ❷ Accept one another (Romans 15:7).
- ❸ Take care of one another (John 13:34).
- ❹ Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
- ❺ Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).

GUIDELINES & COVENANT

Dates	We will meet _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this session will be on _____.
Time	We will arrive between _____ & _____, and begin the meeting at _____. We will spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing.
Children	Life Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group.
Study	Our studies will be based on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.
Prayer	We will commit to pray for one another.
Homework & Attendance	Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to <i>attend each week and do the homework ahead of time</i> . Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! If we cannot attend a meeting, we will call _____
Desserts	
Social & Service Projects	
Other	

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 16. _____ |



LEADER GUIDE - LIFE GROUPS COVENANT & GUIDELINES

Leaders _____ Phone # _____

Hosts _____ Phone # _____

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SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. *Our goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not to answer all the questions.*

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

SERVE

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the session, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to . . .

❶ Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).

→ *Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*

❷ Accept one another (Romans 15:7).

→ *We will have different preferences and opinions.*

❸ Take care of one another (John 13:34).

→ *When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals, etc.*

④ **Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).**

→ *Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once.*

→ *Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge or fix—unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.*

→ *Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a "dominator"—be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.*

→ *Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this..."*

→ *No put-downs.*

→ *What is said here, stays here—of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.*

⑤ **Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).**

→ *Please give us a call if you can't make it to Life Group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.*

GUIDELINES & COVENANT

Dates	We will meet _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this session will be on _____. <i>Fill in the blanks.</i>
Time	We will arrive between _____ & _____, and begin the meeting at _____. We will spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing. <i>Fill in the blanks.</i>
Children	Life Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group.
Study	Our studies will be based on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. <i>Not to answer every question.</i>
Prayer	We will commit to pray for one another. <i>We will go over tips on topical prayer the second week of group. Remember – being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like this: "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also recognize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Let them know you'll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of stereotypes of what it means to pray.</i>
Homework & Attendance	Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to <i>attend each week and do the homework ahead of time.</i> Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! <i>This</i>

commitment is the key to a healthy group.

If we cannot attend a meeting, we will call _____

→ *Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (A good group starts with good preparation)*

→ *Make sure everyone is with you. (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*

→ *Most weeks require 20-30 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.*

Desserts

Have everyone sign up for a night to do dessert.

Social & Service Projects

Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As a leader and host, have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates. Choose a date or ask the group to bring their calendars next week. New groups are preferred to have their social gathering by mid-session.

Other

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

Have the members sign the group Covenant now if they are ready. If not, they are welcome to wait until the third week of the session.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
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THE FOUR BIG QUESTIONS

#1. How long have you been dealing with this?

- When did this first occur?

#2. Who else knows?

- Have you talked to anyone else about this? If so, who? How often?
- When was the last time you talked to someone about it?

#3. Have you received any advice or counsel on how to deal with this?

- What have those you've talked to said about it?
- Have you sought any other help or resources regarding this issue?

#4. Do you have any plans for your next steps?

- What do you think might be your next step?
- Would you like me to check on some other resources?