

# group

**leader  
training  
guide**

life is  
better  
together



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# What To Expect

*Leading a LifeGroup isn't about being perfect; it's about serving others by giving them a place to build relationships. We believe people's lives are changed through the power of the Holy Spirit as we simply give people the opportunity to grow together.*

## What Does A Group Gathering Look Like?

Here is a sample plan for a Group Gathering:

**Start Time—6:30pm**

**End Time—8:00pm**

**6:30-6:45pm** *Allow people to arrive, talk, and snack. (15 min.)*

**6:45-7:00pm** *Have everyone introduce themselves and discuss the Ice Breaker question! (15 min.)*

**7:00-7:05pm** *Have someone pray and invite the Holy Spirit to lead the discussion time. (2-5 min.)*

**7:05-7:45pm** *Lead discussion and study using the "Talk it Over" questions. Be sure to allow space for others to talk. Being a leader means learning to invite others to be expressive and being able to draw others into the conversation. (30 min.)*

**7:45-8:00pm** *Break into groups of 3 and pray for each other. Conclude in praise by thanking God for the night! (15 min.)*

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not necessarily getting through all the material.  
God is the one who does the work in people's hearts.  
We are simply creating an environment for community and  
for life change to happen!**



# How To Be A Good Leader

*When we're leading in our Group, our goal is to create dialogue between participants and make room for the Holy Spirit to bring wisdom and revelation to people. That means the pressure is off!*

- **We don't have to** have all the right answers.
- **We don't have to** lead the perfect dialogue every time.
- **We don't have to** get through all the material in each meeting!

*We want to:*

- **Encourage people to think** about the topic at hand.
- **Create a safe and welcoming environment** for people to share.
- **Help everyone feel valued** about the input they've offered.
- **Help people see situations** through God's point of view.

## Asking Good Questions:

*One of the most important skills in LifeGroup leadership is not having all the right answers, but asking the right questions. Our Talk It Over questions makes it easy to ask the right questions! Here are a few secrets to good question-asking:*

- **Ask open-ended questions.** Avoid the yes/no, true/false, multiple-choice questions. Ask questions that begin with "Who", "What", "When", "Where", "Why", "How", or "How Much".
- **Ask questions so people share** their thoughts and feelings.
- **Ask follow-up questions.** Many people often stay fairly surface-level with their answers to the questions. It's important to get in the habit of encouraging people to help the group in understanding their answers.
- **Ask more questions that follow-up on their response.**



## Asking Good Questions Cont.

*Some examples of good follow-up questions for the short and simple answers that people often give:*

- **What makes you say that?**
- **How do you feel about that?**
- **How do you think that would've affected you if you had been living in the time of Jesus?**
- **How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?**

*The idea is to get at the core of what people are really trying to say.*

- **“Challenge” in love and encourage to stimulate thought.**  
Everyone is not always going to agree. Encourage people to express their unique perspectives even if it goes against everyone else.

*Here are some examples of questions that can help create dialogue:*

- **Do you really agree with what the message is saying? Why or why not?**
- **Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?**
- **What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?**
- **Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?**



# LifeGroup

## Best Practices

- **Confidentiality (Safe Place):** What's said in group stays in group. No one wants to find out he or she has been the subject of gossip. This is probably the most important best practice of all.
- **Start On Time—And End On Time:** It will be up to the Leader to guide the group in sticking with this best practice. It's especially helpful to those who have children at home with child care and those with work schedules that are affected by late nights or meetings that run over.
- **Dialogue Involves Everyone:** To make this work, everyone needs to participate as a listener and as a speaker. If one person is monopolizing the dialogue, the Leader may say, "Who else has something to share?" Then, when another person has listened for a long time without speaking, the Leader might ask, "Do you have any input you'd like to share?" Be considerate that all have something to share and we all have a lot to learn.
- **Remember Your Manners:** Avoid dismissing their thoughts, don't laugh at others when they've shared (unless they've just told a joke), and no putdowns of any kind. These are the actions that make others "shut down" and feel uneasy about sharing. Opening up can be hard enough for some people as it is. The group is to be a welcoming place for all perspectives and personalities.
- **It's OK To Disagree:** It's just a fact of life that everyone has different opinions. If the group has differing thoughts on an issue, there's no requirement that everyone needs to agree. After a reasonable time of talking, the leader or another group member could state that it's time to leave this point unresolved and move on to another question or activity. Let's guard against others having his or her feelings hurt if others don't share all the same opinions. Keep Jesus first and focus on God's truth!
- **A Good Idea:** Turn off cell phones before group begins! It makes it easier to engage with the group when you have less distractions!





## Creating A Safe Environment:

*Trust is perhaps the most vital key to really making your LifeGroup a place where genuine community can be formed. Group members need to be able to trust each other that the group is a safe place—a place where they can get real and know that they will not be judged, gossiped about, and so on.*

*So how do you create this safe environment? There are some important steps you can take.*

- **First, make sure to cover the privacy and safety issue in your LifeGroup Best Practices.**
- **Reinforce that “what is said here and happens here, stays here.”**
- **Feel free to review these same best practices every single time a new person shows up to group.**
- **When someone shares in the group—no matter how much you may disagree, or how theologically incorrect they may be—make sure they feel accepted about their answer in the moment.** Later, you can (and often will) discuss with them about their comments outside of group, but it should be done one-on-one with mercy, grace, and love.
- **Avoid giving unrequested advice within the group—**“Well if I were you, I’d just do this. . .” That is one of the quickest ways to shut someone down from sharing. When you hear other group members start to do this, gently remind them that “this is a safe group, and we’re here to listen, not to give advice.”
- **As leader, model this safety and confidentiality yourself.**

# Harmony With All People:

*LifeGroups involve people and dialogue with people can sometimes bring tension. Here are some of the common personalities that you may encounter, and some tips on approaching them with grace:*

- **The Over-Talker.** This person always has plenty to say, and “loves” to be the first person to say it. Remind everyone in the group that this is an equal participation group. If the sharing is excessive, discuss with the person outside of group. Recognize them in what they do contribute, and inform them you need their help in getting some of the other people in the group to open up and share.
- **The Non-Talker.** This is the quiet person in the group who rarely wants to share. If you think that doing so won’t scare them off even more—that they just need a little affirming—try calling on them periodically to share an answer. If that doesn’t work, discuss with the person outside of group. Remind them how valuable all the different perspectives, including theirs, are to the entire group.
- **The Tangent-Starter.** This person is inclined to get the group way off track by starting tangents. When the time comes, clearly bring the group back on track by gently connecting their point to the topic or reminding them of the topic. If the tangents becomes excessive, again, discuss with the person outside of the group. Affirm them in what they do contribute, and let them know about the challenge you have in needing to stay on track, and how the tangents take the focus away from the topic. Ask them how they can help you.
- **The Insensitive Person.** This individual gives advice, makes fun of answers and people, cuts people off, or does a variety of other things to offend members within the group. This person is unsettling and potentially harmful to the health of your group! They can keep it from feeling like a non-threatening group more quickly than anything else. Definitely have the one-on-one conversation outside of the group to let the person know how important a safe group is, and what they can do to help make that happen.

**Remember...**

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# Scripture Guidance For Groups

## How God prepares us for relationships... **CHOSEN**

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourself with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

**Colossians 3:12-14 NLT**

## How God equips us to build relationships... **LOVE**

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8a NIV**

## How God is pleased by our relationships... **FRUIT**

But the fruit of the Spirit (the result of His presence within us) is love [unselfish concern for others], joy, (inner) peace, patience (not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

**Galatians 5:22-23a AMP**

questions?

want to  
learn more?

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