

GR UPS

LEADER PACKET

LEADER ESSENTIALS

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO LEAD A GROUP?



FOLLOW JESUS

- This essential reminds us to stay spiritually nourished.
- In John 15, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to instruct his followers to “abide.” When we stay connected to Jesus in this way, we welcome God’s work in us and through us.
- *How are you staying rooted in your relationship with Jesus Christ, realizing that apart from Him you can do nothing?*

STAY CONNECTED

- This essential is to remind you that you are not by yourself as a leader. Our Grow Team is here to help and support you and your group!
- We want to provide you with curriculum, train you to be effective, answer your questions, celebrate change with you, etc.
- *How can you best stay connected to the Grow Team?*

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

- This essential is focused on how we build community.
- By encouraging and facilitating connections outside of regular group meetings, you demonstrate the priority of relationships.
- *How are you and your group members connecting outside of group time?*

PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

- This essential focuses on how you involve your group members.
- Shared participation (facilitating the study, hosting the meeting, preparing the snack, leading prayer time, planning socials, guiding the curriculum-choice discussion, etc.) creates broader ownership of the group.
- *How are you involving your group members in supporting the group?*

PROVIDE CARE

- This essential focuses on the big and small ways we can provide care.
- Often people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Pray for your group, visit when someone is in the hospital, set up meals when needed. As Galatians 6:2 says, find ways to "Carry one another's burdens."
- *How are you making it a priority for your group to support and care for each other?*

CELEBRATE CHANGE

- This essential helps us stay focused on the purpose of the group.
- If we truly value the life change God brings about in people, it is important that we take the time to celebrate it in our groups.
- *How do you and your group members celebrate the growth you see occurring in each other?*

ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP

- This essential challenges us to prepare others for leadership.
- By passing on knowledge, skills, and opportunities, you are preparing others for future leadership while sharpening your own.
- All leaders must be approved by the Grow Team.
- *How are you intentionally investing in a potential leader in your group?*

FIND THE RHYTHM

- This essential challenges us to recognize that everything in life has a natural cycle even our groups.
- We want every group to determine how often they meet and what schedule works best for their group.
- *Is your group meeting too much? Not enough?*

FAQ'S

FAQS ABOUT BUILDING GROUPS:

1. **HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN I HAVE IN MY GROUP?**

We recommend groups around 10-14, but in rare instances a group may be a bit larger or smaller.

2. **WHERE CAN A GROUP MEET?**

Nearly anywhere. In your house, someone else's house, Starbucks, or your apartment complex's meeting room. Our only suggestion is find a place that's clean, comfortable, and consistent.

3. **HOW OFTEN AND WHEN SHOULD WE MEET?**

Find the rhythm and schedule that works best for your group. Most groups meet every other week, some meet every week, and even some once a month. We also have some groups that meet every week for 6-8 weeks and then take a break. Find what works for your group!

4. **WHAT ABOUT MY KIDS?**

There are several ways to manage childcare. The easiest is having a group at a home large enough to facilitate a babysitter watching the kids in another area of the house while the group meets. Some groups happen to have members who live within a few houses of each other, and they will have the study at one house and the kids just down the street with a babysitter.

Finally we know that sometimes a group meets too far away from the campus and a person financially is unable to afford childcare. We don't want that to be a deterrent for ANYONE being in community, and Hope has a process for reimbursing childcare. Please see your Grow Pastor for details.

5. **HOW WILL I KNOW WHO IS IN MY GROUP AND HOW CAN I CONTACT THEM REGULARLY?**

We will ask you to turn in a form that lists the details of your group, and we will put you in our Groups page through the Hope Fellowship website. Our Groups site creates a dashboard that allows you to track attendance for your group, know who is interested in joining your group, and will allow you to email them straight from the software.

6. **DOES MY GROUP HAVE TO BE ON THE GROUP PAGE?**

Your group must be on the Groups page so we can track attendance and stay in contact with you as a leader, but your group can be 'closed' and not appear on the public facing side of the website.

7. **CAN I ADD OTHER PEOPLE TO MY GROUP?**

Yes, your group can absolutely add people as you recruit them. Also, once your group is on the Groups website it can be searched by those looking for community and they can express interest in joining. To add members to your group, please reach out to your Grow Pastor.

8. **HOW DO I CARE WELL FOR MY GROUP?**

As a leader, you will have access to the Grow Leader Care Form which you can submit online whenever someone in your group is going through a medical situation or hard time. The church will then be able to follow up with them and walk with them through that season. Within your group, you will want to set clear boundaries and expectations for how you plan to be there for each other. If you ever need assistance in navigating situations that arise within your group, please reach out to your campus Grow Pastor.

ORGANIZING THE GROUP

Some Groups will want as much social time as possible. Others will be primarily interested in study. Still others will prefer to spend most of the group time in prayer. All three activities are important to a great group experience. You can decide as a group how much time you want to spend in each. The important thing is that everyone knows what to expect.

A typical group meeting might be structured as follows:

- 30 minutes—Social time (you can serve coffee and dessert during this time; some groups even share a meal together)
- 45 min—Bible, book, video, or curriculum study (it's a good idea to begin this portion of the evening with a short prayer)
- 15 minutes—Prayer requests and prayer

Try to manage the group's time well. Don't be too rigid— it's okay to put aside the group agenda when life happens and a group member is facing a major challenge—but stick as closely as possible to the meeting agenda you've agreed on as a group. Some of your group members will be frustrated if, for example, social time consistently stretches on too long, stealing time from the study and prayer portions of the evening.

STARTING WELL

While there's no formula guaranteeing a successful group, there are a few things you can do to get your group off to a great start.

FIRST MEETING:

- Reminder: Take a few minutes prior to the arrival of your group members to pray for the evening.
- Make the meeting fun and mostly social.
- Ask someone in your group to collect and share everyone's contact info, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- Take five minutes at the end of the meeting to tell the group what excites you about where the group is headed.

SECOND MEETING:

- Share your story.
- Decide on a group curriculum.

WITHIN 1ST MONTH:

- Have the rest of the group share their stories.
- Start your study.
- Setup a future "fun only" night.

SECOND – THIRD MONTH:

- Setup a service project.
- Keep the Grow team on your campus up to date!

4 KEYS TO GOOD DISCUSSION

1. Give time for **discussion**. Avoid doing all the talking. A good guideline is the "70-30" rule. Approximately 70% of the speaking should be from members and 30% from the leader.
2. Keep the discussion **positive**. Carefully lead the conversation back to the topic when tangents occur. Where sensitive issues or complex questions arise in your group, follow up one-on-one after the meeting.
3. Steer the discussion in a direction where **everyone** can participate. Remember that some people may not grasp phrases that are common to us (i.e. spiritual warfare).
4. Be prepared to **change** the direction of the meeting if needed. The primary goal is to create an environment where people feel loved and accepted.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- **Right Now Media** - Go to www.hopefellowship.net/rightnow to create your FREE account.
- **Group Leader Resources** - www.hopefellowship.net/groupleader

THE DO'S AND DON'TS

SIMPLE GROUP LEADERSHIP

We want to make leading a group as simple and easy as possible, but we have found a few things that help ensure the success of a group. Here is the short list of do's and don'ts we are asking you to adhere to as you lead your group.

DO

1. **RECRUIT** A simple invite goes a long way! As you meet new people, don't be afraid to invite them into your group.
2. **PRACTICE SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT** Study curriculum, pray together, and help each other make progress in your spiritual development.
3. **BE SOCIAL** Don't forget the power of just hanging out or sharing a meal together. Some of the best spiritual moments are unplanned and happen in the middle of just doing life together.
4. **SERVE TOGETHER** Twice a year find somewhere for your group to serve! Whether it's through Hope's Project Serve or through something you find on your own, it's a great way for your group to make a difference.
5. **KEEP IN TOUCH** Stay in contact with your campus Grow Staff and keep your group up to date online. We want to know what you are doing and how we can help your group.

DON'T

1. **CONDUCT BUSINESS** Your group is not a place for anyone to sell anything. Period.
2. **COLLECT OFFERINGS** Your group should buy books and materials as needed, but cannot take up offerings. While we understand the heart behind it, there are numerous reasons groups must not take an offering. A group can give gifts to others in their group, particularly if they are in need.
3. **CONSUME ALCOHOL** While we are not legalistic about the personal decision to drink alcohol, we ask that all alcohol consumption is avoided while a group is meeting.
4. **UTILIZE UNAPPROVED SPEAKERS OR MATERIALS** Let us help you know who to avoid and who has the potential to lead your group down a wrong path.
5. **ENGAGE IN CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS** Not everyone will share the same viewpoint, so topics like politics must be avoided. Groups can quickly become hostile and people will not want to return.