



# LifeGroup Leader

## COACHING GUIDE







# Leading reproducible Lifegroups that accomplish the mission of the church

## The GOAL of this guide is to

1. Envision our leaders in unity coming around common Vision, Values, Meeting Flow and Core Experiences.
2. Equip leaders to experience joy and clarity in their role of shepherding others. Following this approach will result in less pressure on you and more life for you and those you lead.
3. Empower us with a reproducible way of leading a Lifegroup that fuels progress in a group's culture toward multiplying.

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## VISION AND VALUES FOR LIFEGROUP >>>

The importance of clarity on the vision of Lifegroup is immensely important. Understanding the role of the Church in the kingdom of God and, then, the role of the Lifegroup as the Church will help you and your group experience all God planned for them.

Acts 2:42-47 describes what the church (Lifegroups) does and how the followers of Jesus love one another and the world:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (NIV)

### **Lifegroups are really house churches**

Lifegroup is the starting place of the family of God. In this sense, it is the Church. Lifegroup is what best matches how the Church is described in the New Testament. The biggest difference between the Sunday gathering and Lifegroup is that Lifegroup is the place where people are known. When people are known, they can be disciplined and loved well. Every function of the church is represented in Lifegroup: evangelism, discipleship, ministry, worship, and mission.

# The Vision

We are a family enjoying and following Jesus together.

## The Values of Lifegroup

Because the Lifegroup is an expression of the Church, our aim must be to build up one another and activate God's people to be his hands and feet in the world. We want people to enjoy and follow Jesus together as God's family, so we must lead in these three key values:



### We are Jesus-centered.

So we enjoy and follow Jesus together as His sons and daughters.  
(John 17:3)

### Keys:

- **Intimacy:** *We always seek to experience a deeper relationship with Jesus. (Ephesians 3:17-18)*
- **Freedom:** *We address sins, lies, and wounds that hinder our relationship with Jesus. (Galatians 5:1)*
- **Obedience:** *We follow Jesus by keeping his commands because we love him. (John 14:21)*

Being Jesus-centered also means being life-giving. The term life-giving can feel vague, and we will never completely define all the ways our infinite God might bring a life-giving experience to his children.

Here are some the ways the early Church experienced life, which we can emulate:

- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Work with one another to make disciples (Philippians 1:27)
- Help guard one another against sin (Hebrews 3:1)
- Edify one another with encouraging words from the Lord and the spiritual gifts he's given (1 Corinthians 14:3, 31)
- Worship with one another and be in the Word together (Colossians 3:16)
- Help one another persist in the mission of the church (Hebrews 10:24)
- Welcome one another and others into fellowship (1 Peter 4:9)
- Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Raise up leaders who can lead others (2 Timothy 2:2)

If a group is NOT Jesus-centered, then it will be leader-centered. The group must not revolve around the leader's personality, gifts, or experience. If it is, the result is eventual leader burnout and crippled growth of the group and effectiveness for kingdom impact. To help keep the life-giving experience centered on Jesus, the Lifegroup leader needs to keep the words of John the Baptist in mind: "He must become greater, I must become less" (John 3:30).



### Life Drain Alert

Type A leaders often talk too much. Type B leaders often do not explain clearly enough for others to fully understand.



### We have a Kingdom calling.

So we join Jesus in his work in the world in preparation for his return. (Matthew 24:14).

### Keys:

- **Pray:** *We fervently pray for others, asking Jesus to include us in what he is doing. (Colossians 4:2-6)*
- **Share:** *We boldly proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)*
- **Mobilize:** *We send people into the world to make disciples who make disciples. (Matthew 28:18)*

Because Lifegroup is the most important gathering of the Church, it must be centered on what God is doing in the world: reconciling people to himself and bringing them into the Church. Lifegroups that focus on God's expanding kingdom impact their *oikos* (circle of influence) and stir passion in the hearts of Christ-followers for all the nations of the world.

### Your Lifegroup can do this in four effective ways:

- 1. Invite people.** Lifegroup members should invite both those who are lost and believers not engaged in the Church. Inviting new people is one of the most life-giving activities and it brings joy to Jesus's heart. Don't ever stop inviting.
- 2. Love whomever Jesus brings.** Lifegroup isn't static; it's always changing. If a family with young children joins us, we adapt. If we have a person with special needs, we adapt. Regardless of someone's life stage, ethnicity, or spiritual maturity, we adapt to love him or her just as Jesus would.
- 3. Multiply.** Be willing to release one another for the sake of loving more people. We will spend eternity in heaven together. Yay! For now, our mission is to seek and to save the lost

(Luke 19:10). As the vision is consistently emphasized and new people are consistently added, the group will begin to take joy and pride in multiplying. Being willing to multiply is saying yes to Jesus's commands. He always blesses us when we say yes!

- 4. Become equipped to talk with others about the Lord.** Learn how to have spiritual conversations with the lost, share your personal faith testimony, pray for your *oikos*, and share the gospel. Lifegroup is a safe place to grow and foster boldness in our faith to reach out to others with the love of Jesus. Each one of us will grow to be missional in our everyday lives as we join Jesus in his work in the world.



### **We leave footprints for others to follow.**

So we disciple in a reproducible way (1 Corinthians 11:1).

#### **Keys:**

- **Personal:** We show people how to enjoy Jesus, follow Jesus and study the Word for themselves. (John 15:1-11)
- **Together:** We gather in various contexts to encourage one another in love and good works (Acts 2:42-47)
- **Sending:** We equip and empower teams with diverse giftings and callings for the purpose of growing and multiplying the Body of Christ in the world. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Because Lifegroup is the Church, it must be led in a way that other potential leaders can imitate. It's not enough for Lifegroup to be a life-giving experience; it must be led in a way that leaves footprints behind so that other leaders can follow.

Remember, we're teaching people to be the Church. Leading in a reproducible way has an incredible life-giving and multiplying effect; it can't be underestimated.



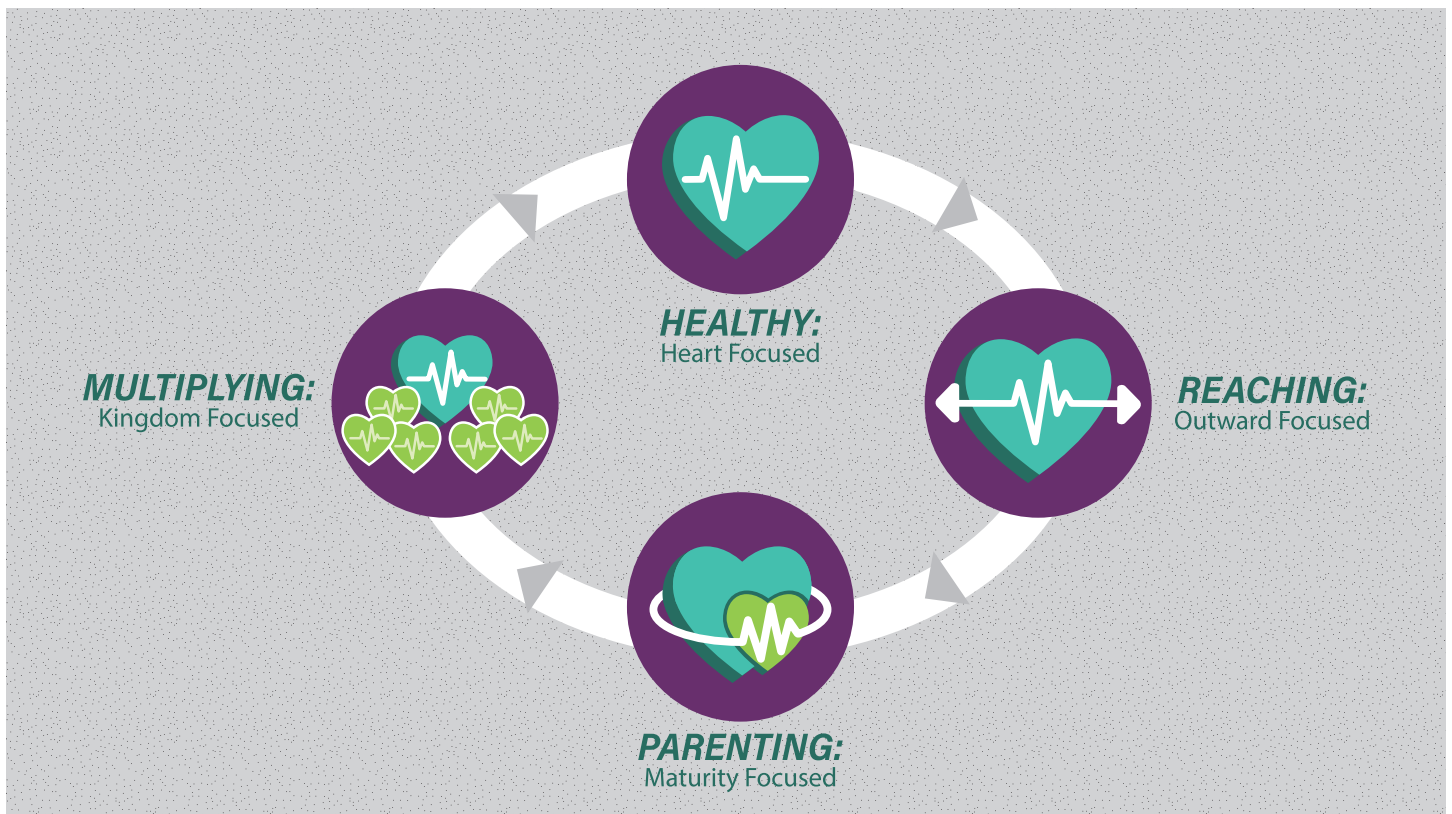
## THE STAGES OF LIFEGROUP >>>

How do we know our children are healthy and thriving? They grow! They go through various stages of growth, changing and developing into mature adults who are ready to embrace their calling to live for Jesus and bless others.

When we embrace the Lifegroup Values, Flow, and Core Experiences, we can expect to see growth of individual members as well as the culture of the Lifegroup family. Every family, team, and group has a culture. Culture is the sum of the espoused beliefs, values and underlying assumptions that explain why things are the way they are and shape the things we do.

At CrossBridge, we seek to align to Jesus's culture, which prioritizes relationships. We can confidently expect our spiritual children and Lifegroups to grow, not only in spiritual depth, but size. As leaders of the family, we shape the culture and guide the group through the various stages from Healthy to Reaching to Parenting to Multiplying.





**HEALTHY:** Heart-focused

Groups go after the hearts of the people and seek to integrate the healthy relational experiences with Jesus into the everyday lives of those in Lifegroup. We want each person in Lifegroup to experience the life-changing presence of Jesus as each person grows in his/her faith and deepens his/her relationship with Jesus by walking in freedom and obedience.

**REACHING:** Outward-focused

As we experience Jesus for ourselves and the significance of being a part of his life-giving family, we pray and share with others about how amazing life with Jesus is. The fruit of our own experience of Jesus is to want others to experience it as well, so we invite, serve, share, and love others with his love.

**PARENTING:** Maturity-focused

We want to grow to embrace our Christ-centered identity, belonging, and purpose. We seek to relate as brothers and sisters in Christ and leaders that live out sacrificial love as parents. Disciple making is likened to parenting because of the relational basis of God’s love that changes us on the inside as we walk out his truth.

**MULTIPLYING:** Kingdom-focused

The vision is dynamic, not static. Your role is to guide your group through these stages so that each group reproduces. Like God said in Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful and multiply.” This is how the kingdom of God expands, forming new churches in neighborhoods and bringing light to the darkness. Every time we multiply, a new house church is planted, so let’s come around the vision of being church planters.



## THE ROLE OF THE LIFEGROUP LEADER >>>

Good news: Your role isn't to do it all!

Here are five foundations to grow in leadership:

1. We personally enjoy and follow Jesus.
2. We are guardians and stewards of the three Values.
3. We model Lifegroup so others can lead it or parts of it.
4. We disciple those who are hungry to go deeper.
5. We spiritually parent the group to function as a healthy family and multiply.

Let's break these down:

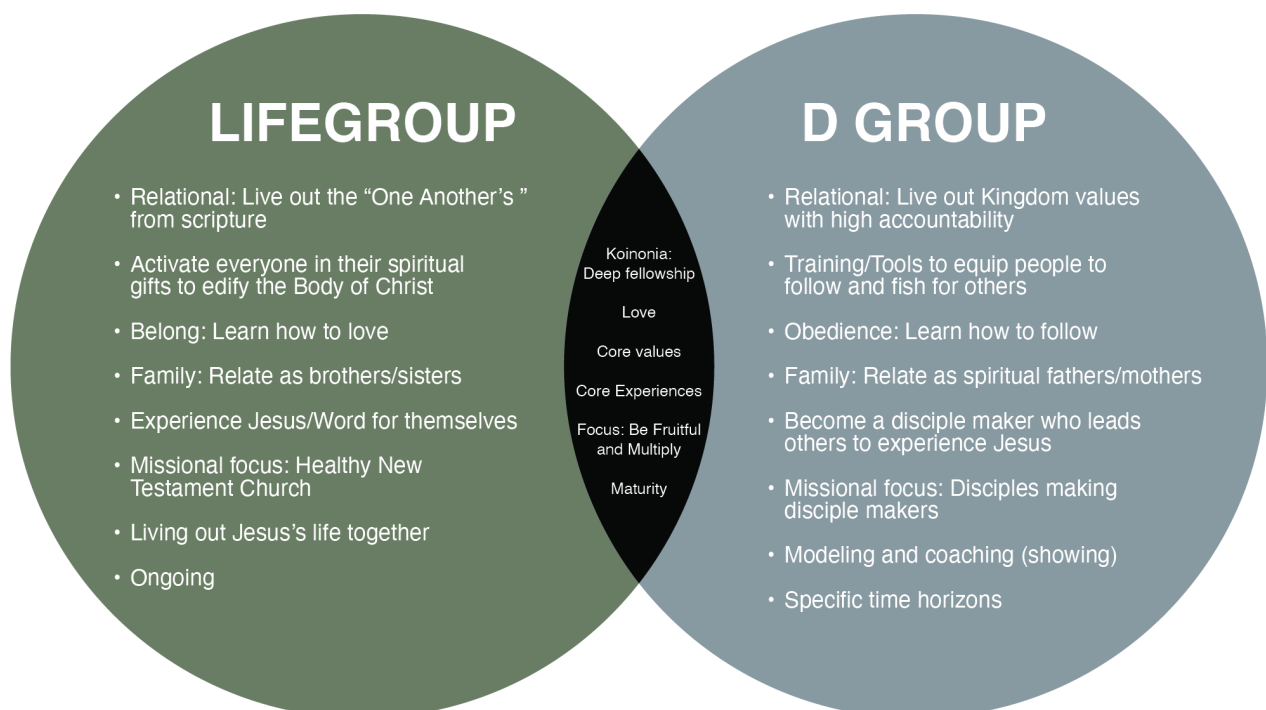
- 1. We personally enjoy and follow Jesus:** Jesus fills us with joy and a desire to love, lead, and bear with others. As we tend to our own heart by spending time with Jesus daily, we will have contagious joy and the wisdom and insight for leading. You will lead out of something, so we must abide to lead from the Spirit.
- 2. We are the guardians and stewards of the Three Values:** Lifegroups cease to be life-giving because one of the Three Values has been neglected. It's hard to overstate the importance of guarding the values. Some good questions to ask yourself include:
  - Is the group Jesus-centered or leader-centered?
  - Does the group have an outward focus or has it turned inward?
  - Am I leading in a way that others could imitate?
- 3. We model Lifegroup so others can lead it or parts of it:** One of the best things about Lifegroup is, ultimately, everyone in the group contributes. As a leader, we model how to lead worship, share the announcements, and lead the Core. Most of all, we model being responsive to the Spirit's leading throughout each part of the meeting flow. Sometimes this means being still and other times stepping into ministry. We leave footprints behind so others can learn to do it.

**4. We disciple those who are hungry to go deeper.** This is perhaps the most time-intensive part of being a leader. Here are the levels of discipleship:

- **Everyone:** “What is the next step for each person in his/her spiritual journey?” For example, for deep wounds or underlying struggles, suggest Freedom Prayer. For those experiencing marital or parenting concerns, share the equipping experiences and classes we offer. For bigger issues, you may want to recommend counseling.
- **Core people:** “How can these men and women grow by leading inside and out of the Lifegroup?” Invest in the four to five consistent, faithful members by calling them higher, empowering them to use their gifts, and leading out in ministry.
- **Potential leaders: “Who is hungry and eager to experience Jesus who I can disciple?” We disciple potential leaders because:**
  - Future leaders must be vetted in a way that we know where they struggle, what hidden sins or strongholds they suffer, etc.
  - Future Lifegroups must be led by a leader who walks in freedom, has conviction to stick with the vision, healthy accountability, and a responsiveness to the Spirit’s leading.
  - Future healthy leaders must pass on this strategy.

**5. We spiritually parent the group to function as a healthy family that’s moving toward multiplication.** A spiritual parent thinks big picture and each meeting facilitates a spiritual atmosphere as a family. Have family meetings (when needed) to confront unhealthy times or group dynamics. In love, have difficult conversations with group members who may need more self awareness or use this time to address negative implications in the group. We guide the group to progress toward multiplication.

## WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LIFEGROUP AND A D GROUP?





## TRAINING THE FLOW >>>

One of the best ways to build the Lifegroup around the mission of CrossBridge is to develop a common, life-giving flow to the meeting. The Flow described consists of elements, which are points of blessing through which the Holy Spirit loves to work. Each part of the Flow provides the chance for him to move and speak to us and through us.

As leaders stay attuned to the Spirit's prompting, the Flow facilitates a life-giving experience. We give the Holy Spirit room by responding to his lead by slowing down, waiting on the Lord, or sharing. It is also what God desires for you to model and pass on to future leaders.

The Flow is an intentional way to relationally connect, leading to transformed hearts and kingdom impact.

## The Flow of Lifegroup:

1. Fellowship
2. Announcements
3. Vision
4. Worship
5. The Core
  - a. Discovery Bible Study
  - b. One Core Experience each week:
    - i. Listening to the Lord
    - ii. Talking With the Lord
    - iii. Listening to the Lord for Loving Others
    - iv. Talking with Others About the Lord
    - v. Listening to the Lord for Freedom

### Why is a consistent flow important? A common flow helps:

- The group learn to trust one another so they know what to expect and can engage more quickly.
- Those with leadership ability see how they might become an effective leader.
- People know how to describe Lifegroup to others, giving them more confidence to invite others.
- Lifegroups become reproducible, making it easier to multiply utilizing the same life-giving flow.



#### **Life Drain Alert:**

- A lack of clear transitions drains life. Anytime you move into different parts of the Flow, speak words that explain what happens next in simple words about what the group is about to do to build a bridge to help people engage quickly. Over-explaining transitions brings confusion while a lack of context creates insecurity.
- Using churchy words or CrossBridge lingo may not communicate well for new people. Keep it simple.

# How to Lead the Flow

Here are some important tips and aspects of leading the Lifegroup Flow in a life-giving way:

## 1. Fellowship

Utilizing food, ice breakers, games, or introductions creates an environment of openness, especially for new people.

- Gather to share the house rules, so host homes are valued and honored.
- Pray over the food and welcome God's presence.
- Make sure to welcome guests, sit with them, and make sure members include them during this time.
- Give a 2 minute warning before gathering to begin your time.



### Life Drain Alert

Don't let Fellowship go too long and compromise the rest of the meeting time.

## 2. Announcements

Announcements connect people with the bigger picture of our mission and the rest of CrossBridge. People want to know they're part of something bigger than themselves.

- **Connect:** Ask someone who may have a connection or experience with that announcement to speak about it and spur others on to participate in that event or opportunity. For example, a woman who attended Women's Retreat the year before can share about her experience.
- **Equip:** We view all our events as contexts to envision and equip group members in the Core experiences. View them as opportunities to go together as a group and then debrief afterwards as a Lifegroup family to deepen your spiritual growth together.
- **Send:** As group members feel called to go on mission, it is important they feel the support of your group. Plan to pray over them as a group before they leave, have them share prayer needs during the trip, and give them time to share what God did when they return.



### Life Drain Alert

By not sharing Announcements, people feel isolated, only knowing the people in their group. Don't just read announcements lifelessly; make them fun!

## 3. Leading the Vision

It's important to reiterate the vision every week. The power of hearing God's vision for his Church is significant. The best expression of vision is found in Acts 2:42-47. Here are two ways to do it:

- If your group has children: The kids go to the front of the room and do hand motions as an adult or older kid reads the vision. These are simple motions you can make up and are super fun things the kids will look forward to doing. Important: The adults have to stand up

and do the hand motions too!

- If your group doesn't have children: Have someone read Acts 2:42-47 and then in their own words briefly encourage the group to fulfill this vision.

Here some other passages which describe the vision of the Church:

Matthew 28:18-20

Mark 1:17

John 17:22-23

Acts 1:8

1 Corinthians 12:27

1 Corinthians 14:26-27

Ephesians 1:11-12

Ephesians 2:19-22

Ephesians 3:10-11

Ephesians 4:11-16

Colossians 3:13-16

Hebrews 10:22-25



#### ▶ **Life Drain Alert**

Rambling on about the Vision drains life. The person sharing the Vision must be concise, sharing for about one minute. Otherwise, no one else will think they could ever articulate the Vision. We want to stay away from expositional "teacher mode."

## 4. Leading Worship and Ministry

Worship is essentially surrendering to God and engaging his presence. It's a unique time to set our minds on Jesus together. Worshiping in Lifegroup is an upward experience, but also an opportunity for an outward experience as we pray for and encourage others. Songs, scripture, prayers of gratitude or praise can all be part of how we worship in Lifegroup.

### **Goal: Increase participation/eliminate distractions.**

Here are some basic coaching points for whoever leads worship:

- Pray for your Lifegroup worship time during the week.
- Prepare 15-18 minutes worth of songs. (Two to four songs)
- Sing familiar songs such as songs from Sundays.
- The first song should center around thankfulness as it opens the door to God.
- How to introduce worship:
  - ◊ Vision: "Our goal is... so let's feel free to..."
  - ◊ Feel free to use the CrossBridge YouTube playlists or two to four scriptures, possibly from the Psalms
  - ◊ Pray and invite the presence of God
- Be active, not passive. Encourage your Lifegroup to stand and raise their hands.
- Sing out loud, so turn the volume way up!

- How to transition at the end:
  - ◊ Thank God for his presence.
  - ◊ Ask if anyone felt the Spirit show them something to share.

During worship:

1. **Find ways to include the kids:** Try to begin by worshiping with them to one upbeat, fun song, encouraging them to jump, dance, shake an instrument. Conclude with time of prayer as families, kids, or differing groups to generate a culture of prayer and worship with our kids.
2. ***Listening to the Lord for Loving Others* during worship:** Begin by being still and asking the Lord for something encouraging to share with someone in the group. Let the group know our desire is to encourage, comfort, strengthen one another (1 Corinthians 14:3).
3. **Communion:** Periodically worship by participating in communion together. The Communion Guide is on the Lifegroup Leader Resources Web page.
4. **Read a Psalm together** and let it inform your praise.



▶ **Life Drain Alert**

Allowing the worship time to be stagnant drains life. If something's not life-giving, then ask for help. Don't do anything for the sake of "just doing it."





## TRAINING THE CORE >>>

During the Core, we gather the people of God to look at the Word of God while listening to the Spirit of God. Each week, we study the Bible with a simple method called Discovery Bible Study so everyone can participate. This can be done in a large group initially to model it but is best when the group gets into groups of three or four people.

### Discovery Bible Study (DBS) for 15-20 minutes

#### DBS Steps

1. Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to lead.
2. Read the passage (less than 10-12 verses) aloud and in two different translations.
3. Have someone retell the story in their own words.
4. Ask the following discussion questions:
  - a. What does the passage tell us about God?
  - b. What does the passage say about people?
  - c. How is this Good News to you?
  - d. Who is someone with whom you can share this?

#### DBS Coaching

1. Encourage everyone to bring and use their journal weekly.
2. Use the Discovery Bible Study approach, not the teacher-led approach. Use questions and listen to what the Spirit is saying through one another. Wait. Do not over-talk, but give room for others to engage.
3. Affirm the good things people share. If something shared seems off, simply say "Where are you seeing that? What verse gave that impression to you?"
4. Transition to one of the Core Experiences by introducing and sharing vision for the chosen Core Experience this week.



### Life Drain Alert

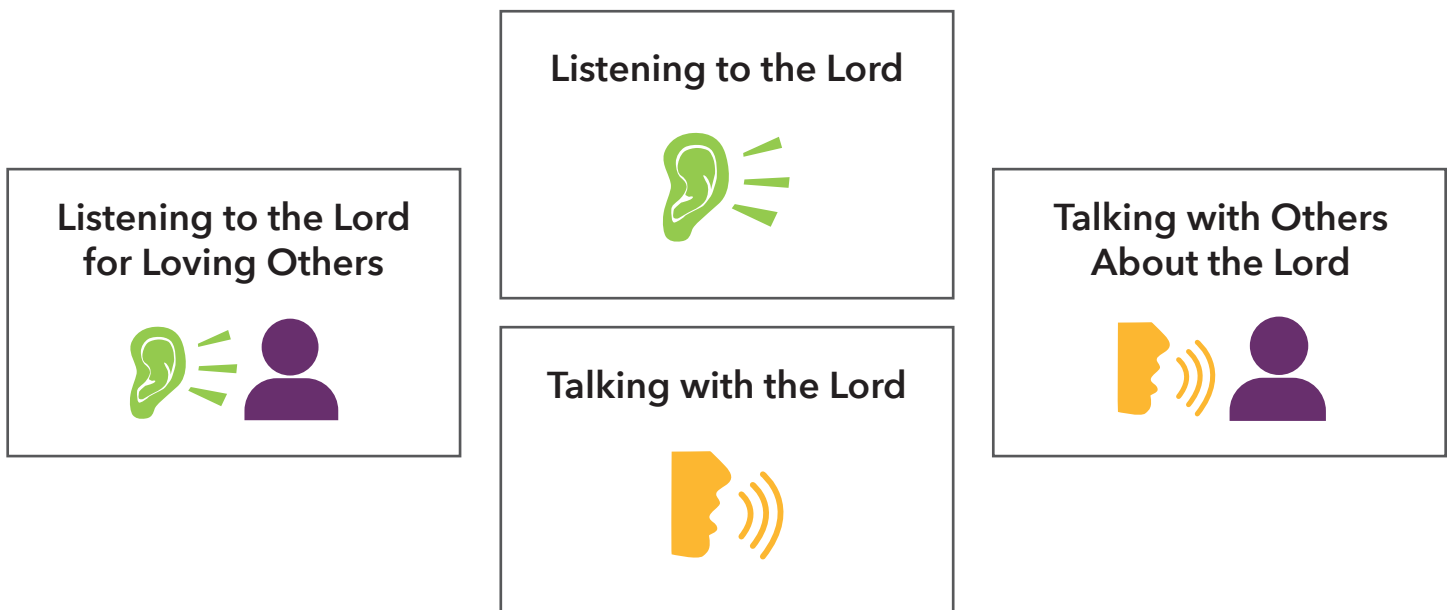
- Resist summing up the passage or stating the lesson everyone is “supposed” to get out of it. Instead, look phrase-by-phrase. This keeps even familiar passages fresh and alive.
- One “talker” can drain all the life out of the Flow. Emphasize the need for everyone to speak briefly.

## The Four Core Experiences for 20-25 minutes

### Vision for Experiencing Jesus

Think of what you would want your children to embrace that would ground them in their pursuit of their true identity and purpose in Christ. You want them to develop a conversational relationship with Jesus through listening and talking with him. In light of this, we are making room in the Core for people to grow in their relational intimacy by activating them in five experiences to enjoy and follow Jesus.

Each week in Lifegroup, we experience a DBS together then pick one of the Core Experiences to do following the DBS.



### ONE: *Listening to the Lord* (John 10:27) ←

1. Watch the corresponding Core Experiences video on our LG Leader Website or give a brief intro with vision.
2. After DBS, take a minute or two to be quiet and still before the Lord. Using a journal or note card, ask the Lord to help you write down response to these prompts:
  - “[Your name], I want you to know...”
  - In response to what you heard, ask the Lord to help determine an action step in the form of an “I will.....” statement.
3. Break into smaller gender groups of three to allow people to share what they heard and

journalled. (Another option is to break up for both the DBS and this time. When you break up, consider putting a stronger person in each smaller breakout)

4. Have the small groups pray for God's encouragement and power over each other's responses.
5. Consider using smaller groups to check on/encourage one another throughout the week.

## How to coach *Listening to the Lord*

- Cast vision for ways the Lord might be speaking:
  - ◊ An action to start or stop doing
  - ◊ A truth to embrace or a lie to reject
  - ◊ Someone to love or forgive
- Use scriptures like John 10:27 that refer to God's communicating with us to evoke faith for listening to God's voice.
- Give grace for those who feel stuck in listening to God, encourage them to listen to the Lord and affirm what they already see in scripture. You can also encourage them to begin a dialogue of prayer with God by asking, "Jesus, what do you want me to know about \_\_\_\_? How do you feel about \_\_\_\_? Why is this important to you?"
- Encourage each member to journal what God is speaking to him/her as this fosters a two-way conversation that leaves footprints of what they heard and declaring their response.
- Always associate listening to God with obedience. In John 10:27, the sheep listen to the Shepherd's voice then follow him. We want to be a people who listen and respond with our heart and our faith.

### Some *Listening to the Lord* scriptures

Matthew 25:1-13	Acts 8:26-40
Mark 4:3-20	Romans 8:9-17
Luke 10:38-42	Ephesians 4:11-16
Luke 15:11-32	Colossians 3:9-17
Luke 19:1-10	1 Timothy 4:6-16
Luke 24:13-32	Hebrews 10:19-25

### Next Steps

As you engage in this experience, look for these contexts to spur your group on and to grow personally and in community.

- Disciple making relationships (D-groups)
- Listening to the Lord seminar



## **TWO: Talking with the Lord** (Matthew 6:9-15) ←

1. Watch the corresponding Core Experiences video on our LG Leader Website or give a brief intro with vision.

2. After the DBS, break into gender groups of three and pray the scripture together.
3. Below are three ways to pray scripture:
  - a. Agree with the truth
    - i. "You" statements
  - b. Declare the truth over yourself
    - i. "I" statements
  - c. Ask for more of the truth for yourself/others
4. Engage in Discovery prayer that mimics the Discovery Bible Study flow.
  - Use the passage to discover and use the language in it to direct your prayer in a 2 way conversation with God.
  - About God: Pray thankfulness and praise for who God is (His character) and what He does (His works)
  - About People: Declare to receive a promise or Truth deeper personally or repent from something that is not God's best for us.
  - About me: Ask for the Holy Spirit to reveal more understanding of God to me and ask for more power to follow Jesus.

### How to coach *Talking with the Lord*

- When you pray scripture, speak:
  - ◊ slowly and softly
  - ◊ briefly, using short phrases
  - ◊ minimally, listen more than you talk
- The key is connection with the Holy Spirit as we pray.
- Make it accessible so everyone can pray by simply praying the scriptures, and using the flow of Agree, Declare, Ask.

### Some *Talking with the Lord* scriptures

Deuteronomy 6:1-8	Matthew 6:9-15
Psalms 23	Romans 1:8-17
Psalms 27	Ephesians 1:15-23
Psalms 34:1-18	Ephesians 3:14-21
Psalms 91	Philippians 2:1-11
Psalms 103	Colossians 1:9-20

### Next Steps

As you engage in this experience, look for ways to spur on your group and to grow personally and in community.

1. Disciple making relationship (D-group)
2. Read this book
  - *Reset* by Bob Sorge (20 Day Prayer Challenge)

3. Attend a CrossBridge Prayer Gathering:
  - Sunday prior to services
  - Thursday Intercessory Prayer meeting
  - Jesus Hour
  - Talking with the Lord class



### THREE: *Listening to the Lord for Loving Others* (1 Corinthians 14:3) ←

1. Watch the corresponding Core Experiences video on our LG Leader Website or give a brief intro with vision.
2. After the DBS, remind people of the New Testament definition of how we listen to the Lord for loving others, also known as prophecy, that is found in 1 Corinthians 14:3. We listen to the Lord for the sake of strengthening, encouraging, and comforting one another.

Some ways to experience *Listening to the Lord for Loving Others*:

After the DBS, choose one of the following options:

1. **Loving in Needs:** Break into smaller gender groups of three and share a struggle or challenge in your life. Don't pray yet, and then go back to the big group for an extended time of worship with music. As the spirit prompts, go to one or more of your group members and pray for the Lord to strengthen, encourage, and comfort him/her.
2. **Loving through Blessing:** Take a couple of minutes after the Vision and Announcements to pick an individual, couple, or family, and pray prayers of blessing. When doing this, be sensitive to a picture in your mind the Lord might give you to share with them and what it means, a sense or feeling about God's heart for them, or a way you see Jesus evident in their lives. Thank the Lord for his goodness over them, and bless them with more of his presence.
3. **Loving through Prayer:** Spend time as your Core experience praying for your *oikos* (the church, your lifegroup, neighbors, co-workers, family, etc). During that time, ask the Lord for his perspective on what he is doing in those spheres, and speak those words of life and encouragement over the people you are praying for.
4. **Listening and Loving Others During Worship:** Listen to the Lord for encouragement for others during worship, or an extended worship and prayer ministry time. Here are some steps to follow:
  - a. **Vision:** Right before starting the music, share the vision in your Lifegroup how loving God with our praise and encouragement to Jesus is an upward expression of our worship, and loving God's people through encouragement and prayer is an outward expression of our ministry to his people. We give God glory in worship when we pray and encourage others!
  - b. **Directions:** Explain that during the worship time the group will pray and minister to others, or they can also receive prayer and encouragement by going up to someone.
  - c. **God's Perspective:** Make sure to not only pray for needs, but ask Jesus, "How do you feel about \_\_\_\_? What are your thoughts about \_\_\_\_ that would encourage and bless them?"

- d. **Tip:** If there are some people in your group who feel more comfortable praying over people for encouragement, ask them before Lifegroup if they would initiate praying for others to strengthen momentum to move about the room. Find someone new each week to ask, and encourage them to do the same.

### 5. Other Options:

- a. Have each person write their name on a note card, and the leader collect them. Next, everyone randomly draws a card with someone else's name on it. Ask the Lord for a scripture, an encouraging word, or a picture for them. Write it down and then everyone gets their card back to read. Share feedback with each other.
- b. Break out men and women in groups of three, and share encouragement for the person on your right.

## How to coach *Listening to the Lord for Loving Others*

1. When receiving a word of encouragement from someone else, we can walk in obedience to scripture on how God instructs us to respond to words shared with us such as the following:
  - a. *"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good."* - 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22
  - b. When someone comes in humility with a word they feel is from the Lord, don't dismiss it. Instead, ask the Lord if it is meant to bless you, and if you are to receive the encouragement. If not, then let it go.
2. To test prophetic encouragement, ask:
  - a. Does it align with scripture and God's character?
  - b. Does it strengthen, comfort, and encourage?
  - c. If you're not sure, submit to a trusted believer for confirmation (1 Corinthians 14:29).
3. Humility is our anchor for growing in listening to the Lord for loving others. We can acknowledge that "We know in part, and prophesy in part" (1 Corinthians 13:9). That means sometimes we get a word wrong. If we can share and receive in humility, then we make room for stumbling as we learn to grow in this gift, and extend grace when it occurs.

### Some *Listening to the Lord for Loving Others* scriptures

John 1:43-51	Acts 9:1-19
John 4:6-29	1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 10:1-18	1 Corinthians 14:1-3
John 10:22-30	1 Corinthians 14:26-3
Acts 2:14-21	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

### Next Steps

As you engage in this experience, look for these ways to spur on your group and to grow personally and in community.

1. Disciple making relationship (D group)
2. Sign up for Prophetic Prayer Ministry

3. Attend the Prophetic Conference
4. Come to Jesus Hour
5. Listening to the Lord for Loving Others class



#### **FOUR: Talking with Others About the Lord** (Acts 1:8) ←

1. Watch the corresponding Core Experiences video on our LG Leader Website or give a brief intro with vision.
2. Share the Vision: *Talking with Others About the Lord* is the opportunity and calling of every believer to represent Jesus to those around us. We often use radiating circles of influence to envision this for us in order:
  - Our family and Lifegroup family
  - Our *oikos* (sphere of influence includes neighborhood and workplace)
  - Our community
  - Our world

Some ways to experience *Talking with Others about the Lord*:

(The specific tools you will impart each time are in **bold**.)

1. Have a group discussion on what keeps us from sharing our stories and the gospel. Then pray into these for us to be more bold and aware of opportunities to share Jesus. (**Include Me Prayer**)
2. Walk through the acronym **iLOVE**
  - i**: Initiate (Ask questions)
  - L**: Listen
  - O**: Offer Jesus (Be Jesus to them: pray for, serve, etc.)
  - V**: Visual (Bridge illustration)
  - E**: Engage in DBS



You can walk through iLOVE in multiple weeks, breaking it down or just spend one week on how to share the Bridge illustration. (*This is what is covered in Kindle.*)

3. Practice sharing your **Fifteen-Second Story**.
4. Learn how to share the **Bridge Illustration** that communicates the gospel and provides an easy way to share with others to receive salvation.
5. Look for spiritual conversation entry points. Pray for common struggles, ask the **Miracle Question**, and follow the Spirit's prompts.
6. Discuss creative ways to engage your *oikos* and bless them. Break into smaller groups to pray for your *oikos* and the lost. (**Prayer/Care/Share**)
7. Go on a **Prayer Walk** together in someone's neighborhood or serve together in an outreach.
8. Share **God Stories**. Let everyone know ahead of time so they are prepared to share how God included them or what he is doing in their lives. Be attentive to areas shared that

the Spirit may prompt you to pray for that person. This is an especially meaningful Core activity to do when you have guests. It helps them see how real and present Jesus is in each life.

## How to coach *Talking with Others About the Lord*

1. Encourage your Lifegroup to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), which requires being missional in everyday life. Be the hands and feet of Jesus! Each of the tools will propel them forward in revealing Jesus to the world.
2. Be aware of introverts, and speak to ways everyone can engage no matter their personality type.
3. *Talking with Others about the Lord* can easily be forgotten. You must be intentional to experience this consistently in Lifegroup.
4. Utilize the Missions team to help you get started or use these tools.
5. Pray for the Missions teams, someone in your group going on an Outreach, and periodic CrossBridge missional outreaches: Spark Bible Nights, local ministries, retreats, and camps.
6. After this experience, make sure the following week to celebrate what God did by sharing their experiences with others in Lifegroup.

## Some *Talking with Others About the Lord* Scriptures

Matthew 28:16-20	Galatians 4:4-7
Mark 1:14-20	Ephesians 6:10-20
John 1:9-18	Colossians 4:2-6
Acts 1:1-8	1 Thessalonians 1:4-10
Acts 4:5-20	Titus 3:3-7
Romans 5:1-5	1 Peter 2:8-10

## Next Steps

As you engage in this experience, look for these ways to spur on your group and to grow personally and in community.

1. Disciple making relationships (D groups)
2. Kindle (local Outreach)
3. CrossBridge Mission Outreach Teams
4. CrossBridge Discipleship Accelerator
5. Being Missional Basics class

## What if someone struggles to experience the Lord?

### Listening to the Lord for Freedom (Galatians 5:1)

1. Before the meeting, decide which one of the three freedom areas your group will address: wounds, sin, or ungodly beliefs.



2. As you begin, cast vision for the importance of going after freedom by sharing Galatians 5:1 and the Lord's desire for freedom, or by having someone share a testimony of what pursuing freedom has meant in their life and walk with God.
3. Do a DBS based on living in freedom or a passage that directly addresses the freedom issue you have chosen for that day.

### **Wounds**

- Matthew 18:21-22
- Matthew 18:23-35
- Ephesians 4:31-32

### **Sin**

- Luke 5:27-32
- Acts 3:17-19
- 1 John 1:5-10

### **Ungodly Beliefs**

- John 8:31-32
- John 8:44
- Ephesians 1:3-5

4. After the DBS, while you're all together, take a minute or two to be quiet and still before the Lord. Ask one of the following questions and give time for people to listen to the Lord:

### **Wounds**

*"Is there someone you want me to forgive today?"*

### **Sin**

*"God, is there any place in my life that is currently not yielded to your authority?"*

### **Ungodly Beliefs**

*"Are there any lies I'm believing about myself or God?"*

5. Break into small groups of three. This is where you will pray with each other about what God has revealed in the steps above. Everyone will have an opportunity to go after freedom. So, have one person volunteer to go first as the one who engages Jesus in prayer to exchange the wound/sin/lie with whatever good thing God has for them. One person will lead the person through this and the other intercedes quietly in prayer. We make this exchange by doing the following out loud and together:

### **Wounds**

- Acknowledge the hurts and give them to Jesus.
- Choose to forgive like Jesus does.
- Ask him for something better for your heart to hold.

## Sin

- Tell Jesus what you've done and receive his forgiveness.
- Ask him to change your heart and show you a better way.

## Ungodly Beliefs

- Acknowledge the lies you believe and reject them.
- Ask Jesus what is true and receive it in faith.

## How to coach *Listening to the Lord for Freedom*

- It may be helpful to give your group some examples of what common sin/wounds/lies might look like. For example:
  - Wounds** - A boss not recognizing our hard work or a family member that takes you for granted. Bitterness or any unforgiveness.
  - Sin** - Anger, greed, lust, etc.
  - Ungodly Beliefs** - I'm a failure. God is disappointed in me.
- Make sure to have one strong person in each breakout group.
- Allow for at least 30 minutes for the exchanges portion so all 3 people can participate.
- Any bigger issues can be referred to Freedom Prayer ministry or counseling.

## Next Steps

As you engage in this experience, spur on your group to keep going deeper in freedom through:

- Freedom Prayer (sign up on the website)
- Freedom Day
- Freedom Foundations class
- Freedom Groups
- Professional counseling



## 7 LEADER ESSENTIALS >>>

Being attentive to these essentials will facilitate the life-giving experience and greatly enhance your Lifegroup's reproducibility. These strategies are foundational so every group functions in a healthy way, makes kingdom impact, and grows to multiplication. If you sense your group is stagnant or stuck, revisit these basics to assess if you've gotten away from them.

### 1. Rotate homes

This is a non-negotiable for Lifegroups. Consistently remind people it's not about having a big home. This makes it reproducible as potential leaders don't feel the weight of one person hosting every time. Something special happens when we come into each other's homes, look at photos and feel a part of their family.

## 2. Create a strategy for blessing the children (Section 7)

Here are some basic ways to make the most of this opportunity:

- Whoever is hosting Lifegroup is encouraged to share their house rules and expectations, so respect is given and safety is considered.
- Include kids in meal times. Teach the adults how to include the kids at the table and talk with them. Super powerful!
- Include the children in worship for one song and consider having a family Lifegroup once a month where kids are in the whole time. Caring for the kids is the whole group's role as a spiritual family.



### ▶ Life Drain Alert

If you don't have a strategy, the kids may be seen as an annoyance or obstacle.

## 3. Have a group administrator

It's amazing how much this adds life to the group. Let the person with the gift of administration use his/her gift! Here are some key administration functions:

- Thinking ahead six to seven weeks with a hosting rotation and upcoming events
- Leverage group texts to foster connection through the week.
- Utilize the Lifegroup Vision Card to share with guests after their first visit explaining what we do and how we do it. Make sure to let them know group details for next week and follow up within 24 hours after their visit.



### ▶ Life Drain Alert

Don't think that you need to do the scheduling because you're the leader. If you're not administrative, it will drain life from you and the group.

## 4. Be a good time manager

- Start on time and end on time. It communicates respect and value.
- Encourage people to be on time, though some simply can't due to work.
- Don't let the fellowship/meal time dominate. Shoot for no longer than 40-45 minutes.
- Give a two-minute warning to allow people to wrap up conversations and head to the central gathering space.

## 5. Coach others to lead

Remember, you're leading reproducibly, so let others lead the parts of the flow. Use the member leading tips to send ahead of time.



▶ **Life Drain Alert**

If you don't coach others to lead, no one will ever step up and, even worse, you'll feel an increasing weight to make the group life-giving.

## 6. Keep inviting people

Never stop inviting others. It needs to be the culture of your group. Your group will become excited about the outward vision as the group grows and they see their group making a difference in the lives of others. There is an unstated value that bonds your group together with a unified focus on welcoming and ministering to guests that come.



▶ **Life Drain Alert**

Stop inviting and the group loses kingdom impact and multiplying becomes highly unlikely or divisive.

## 7. Work toward a multi-generational group

The most obvious reason for multi-gen groups is that older people often provide wisdom and younger people often provide life, but there are other important benefits:

- You don't get over run with children in a multi-gen group. Young parents have others who will love to hold their baby.
- Remember, the goal of Lifegroup (the Church) goes way beyond being a place for friendship. We're the family of God on a rescue mission.



## BLESSING CHILDREN IN LIFEGROUP >>>

Our aim is to bless, model, and help our kids experience Jesus each time we gather, not simply to have “adult” time and babysit the kids. Therefore, we need to cast a vision for the adults as to why blessing and equipping the children in Lifegroup is not only valuable but necessary. Here are a few key tenets we embrace:

- 1. Every life counts.** As parents, it’s our responsibility to help our children embrace the significance of their identity in Christ. This occurs when we embrace our role and responsibility as spiritual leaders for our children. We are the primary source for them understanding God’s love, and we model this in the home and in Lifegroup. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
- 2. We love who Jesus brings.** When every Lifegroup looks unique in terms of ages and stages, we look like the Church when we include every person who Jesus brings to us, including children. This can make the Lifegroup feel chaotic, loud, distracting, etc., but children belong and are a part of the Church as much as we are. This will require flexibility, patience, grace, and forgiveness.
- 3. The Holy Spirit dwells in our children.** For children who have received Jesus as their Savior, we must recognize that they have the Holy Spirit too, and that there is no “junior” Holy Spirit. Can you imagine what the future generation will look like if there was a generation of kingdom shakers who started as children laying hands on the sick, praying for others, and sharing the gospel? Let’s partner with God in what He is already doing in raising up a generation of passionate followers of Christ.

## Lifegroup Flow Including Children

Each week choose a way to integrate them into the parts of the Flow and/or choose to host a Family Lifegroup to include kids into the whole gathering time once a month.

### 1. Fellowship

- Spend time talking to kids besides your own, asking about their interests, and getting to know them.

### 2. Vision

- If teens/children are in your Lifegroup time together, as a part of the Vision go around the group allowing each teen/child to share one thing they love about Lifegroup. Have children read the scriptures of Vision for Lifegroup.
- Use hand motions to recite the Acts 2:42-47 passage with the parents and kids together.

### 3. Worship

- Include children during worship. Sometimes this might be with all the families together, and other times they have their own worship time depending on the setup of the house, childcare, etc. Value that parents are modeling authentic worship for their kids.
- Options you can include that help engage the kids are:
  - ◇ Dancing or playing basic instruments.
  - ◇ Using a book to briefly share a story about Jesus before the music (The Jesus Storybook Bible),
  - ◇ Utilizing YouTube Kids dance/worship videos (Bethel, Hill Song).
  - ◇ Teaching them basic motions to the music.
  - ◇ Choosing songs with fewer words and repetitive phrases will make it easy for the kids to sing along.
  - ◇ Asking the kids to share what they love about Jesus.

### 4. The Core

- **Family DBS:** Break into smaller groups of two or three families with kids to participate in a DBS together. Model how to engage the text. Each person can share observations around the questions. Then provide a space to be still and listen to God and what he wants to say to them. (Be flexible to time, basing it on ages and attention span.)
- **Family Core Experiences:** Lead them into one of the Core Experiences helping them understand the relational nature of God, and how they can connect to God and others in this. (Shorter kid-friendly time like 10 minutes.)
- **Childcare Led:** Kids can lead themselves or be led by an adult or teen. Disciple the Childcare leader to lead a mini DBS. Use The Jesus Storybook Bible and basic Bible stories.
- **Use the Kid's Core Link:** Each week, send the link to the person leading the kid's time.

\*\*\* After the Core time with the children, make sure you leave time for them to play or watch a RightNow Media video. We value children having fun and connecting with their friends too.

## Logistics

- **Host Home Rules:** Be consistent to cover house rules as you honor the host home. Parents, set the tone with the children that the sitters are in charge of the kids during this time and they are in charge of their own behavior to have:
  1. Good attitudes.
  2. Obey right away!
- **Rotation Options:**
  - ◊ **Childcare Rotation:** Choose what works best for your Lifegroup to hire childcare: Every week, once a month, bi-weekly, etc. You can have a parent rotate in when the sitters aren't present.
  - ◊ **Teen Discipleship:** Equip your teens who want to disciple by investing into kids with the Children's Flow/Core. They will learn more by what's caught than taught.
  - ◊ **Parent Discipleship:** Rotate through a sign up for adults/couples who will do the Flow/Core with kids. Make sure this doesn't fall only on the moms, but husband/wife serving together for those that can.
- **Solo Parents:** Take special care of the single moms/dads, and those who have a traveling/working or an unbelieving spouse not in attendance. Make sure they don't feel isolated by only addressing people as "couples."
- **Size Factors:** For groups with fifteen kids or more, you need two babysitters depending on the ages of kids. If needed, break up younger and older. One group inside and the other outside and then switch or use rooms instead of outdoors.
- **Childcare Money:** Have someone regularly tracking and gathering childcare money to pay the sitters. This person will also communicate with guests the cost for childcare. Typically kids under twelve need childcare.
- **Food:** Have options for snacks/drinks for kids if you don't eat dinner together.





## MULTIPLYING AND STARTING A NEW LIFEGROUP >>>

**Goal:** Raise up two healthy groups with both having strong leaders, core families and healthy DNA, so each starts their new group empowered and encouraged.

### Preparing for Multiplication

- 1. Plan ahead:** Through your discipling relationships, cast the vision and ask the potential leaders to pray about leading the new group. After agreeing, spend time mentoring them in the Coaching Guide. Then, six weeks prior, begin empowering the future leaders to lead the whole group time navigating the Flow, leading the Core and delegating/coaching the other Flow parts. As they lead, coach them and discuss any concerns they have in leading.
- 2. Equip:** Give the future leaders the link to the Lifegroup Leaders Resources Web Page. Have them read the Lifegroup Leader Role Description sheet and the Lifegroup Leader Coaching Guide and set up a time to process with you.
- 3. Lifegroup Coach support:** Involve your Coach as they are partners with you in prayer and on the mission. There will be times of coaching together toward the vision of multiplication in the Lifegroup.
- 4. Lifegroup mapping:** Together with the new leaders, map your current group's locations to see geographically where your members are located and what group to place them in. While geography is

important, you'll also need to be aware of other relational factors.

- 5. Set a date:** Determine a projected date for multiplication. It's important to consider optimal times of the year. (Beginning of the fall or new year are often best.)
- 6. Cast the vision for multiplication:** Set a plan six weeks prior to the multiplication to communicate weekly about it in Lifegroup and to pray.

## SIX-WEEK PLAN AND TIMELINE TOWARD LIFEGROUP MULTIPLICATION

### Week 1

At the meeting, cast the vision for multiplication, and share with the group that you're going to discuss multiplication next week. Celebrate the growth of your group, and how previous multiplications made room for existing members to experience Lifegroup. Use scripture:

Deuteronomy 30:14-16

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 1:8

Acts 2:46-47

Acts 6:7

Acts 9:31

Hebrews 10:22-25

### Week 2

Announce multiplication, and share who the new leaders will be. Celebrate and pray over them.

- Share that we want to grow more geographically with each multiplication, and the current and new leaders will be looking at a map of where members live to see if there is a natural geographic grouping.
- Emphasize that no one is forced to be in a certain group.
- Let them know that you'll contact them in the next week.

\*\*\*Both leaders break up the calls based on your best plan to balance the groups.

In your call to each Lifegroup member:

- Ask how they are feeling about the multiplication and their concerns or questions.
- Reassure them. Pray for them. Expect that some will express sadness at the thought of the group's dynamic changing with multiplication.
- Ask them to pray over which group to be in and share your hope they will join your group based on our group's vision.

## Weeks 3-4

Continue consistency in the Flow, and share the vision for multiplication using scripture.

- Finalize the date of your multiplication celebration as a group, and the group's commissioning on Sunday morning at an upcoming Celebration Sunday.

## Week 5

Celebrate Communion, and share God Stories and testimonies about what the group has meant to them or how multiplying is hard and good.

## Week 6

Multiplication Celebration Party/Fellowship

- Set a date for the two groups to gather together for a whole group fellowship in six weeks.
- Begin meeting as two healthy groups the following week.

## Future Lifegroup's Family Tree

Seek to keep the family tree connection going by intentionally organizing reunions around:

1. Holidays: Easter Egg Hunt/BBQ, Friendsgiving, etc.
2. Churchwide events: Meet up for Jesus Hour, Freedom Day, Kindle, etc.
3. Mission or serving opportunities: Go and serve together.

## Future Leader Next Steps

1. Read the Lifegroup Leader Coaching Guide and Lifegroup Leader Role Sheet and process with the new leaders.
2. Sign up for Freedom Prayer.
3. Begin attending leader equippings.

## POST MULTIPLICATION: STARTING YOUR NEW LIFEGROUP

It's important as you begin your new groups to share God's vision and values for what this new group is about and where it is going! Lifegroup is the Church and every time a new group starts, a new church is planted! We are a house church, a new lighthouse in a neighborhood to draw people to Jesus, grow his family and expand his kingdom.

Our goal is to create an environment where the Holy Spirit is present and people experience Jesus for themselves. We've found that the two key factors to a healthy and fruitful Lifegroup are:

1. The leader's spiritual health and abiding in Christ.
2. Consistency in your group meeting and functioning in the Vision each week.

Below is a progression to help you get going with momentum and consistency as the first few months are critical in establishing your group's culture.

### For the new leader

1. Refresh your Vision by reading through the Lifegroup Leader Coaching Guide then process it with your Lifegroup Coach.
2. Pay close attention to the first six weeks as you set culture and norms while engaging new people into your group.
3. Talk one-on-one to the new core members as they step up and into more engaged roles within the group.
4. Ask the Lord to show you a potential next Lifegroup Leader. Invite him/her into a new disciple making relationship.

### For the group

1. Spend time going over the Vision and Lifegroup Card discussing the Values, Flow, and Core. Do not assume.
2. Delegate and engage in shared leadership roles with everyone hosting right from the start.
3. Invite, invite, invite. A new Lifegroup is fertile ground for guests and creates space for new families to join your Lifegroup.
4. Follow this starting path for your group.

## NEW CROSSBRIDGE LIFEGROUP STARTING PATH

### Week 1: We're the Church

- Vision: Pass out the Lifegroup Cards and discuss.
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: Acts 2:42-47
  - ◇ Practice: *Listening to the Lord*. Each person asks the Lord for his vision for the new church and a word, picture, or scripture for the new group. Share together.

### Week 2: We're the Body of Christ

- Vision: Go over the three Values (Lifegroup card)
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: 1 Corinthians 12:12-28
  - ◇ Practice: *Listening to the Lord*
  - ◇ Break into gender groups of three or four to share what the Lord spoke to each and pray. Close by connecting prayer partners to focus on throughout the upcoming week.
- Invite
  - ◇ New to CrossBridge: Come to the next Discover
  - ◇ All: Come to the next *Listening to the Lord* seminar

### Week 3: We're a kingdom of priests

- Vision: Priests bring God to people and people to God (Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9-10)
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: 1 Corinthians 14:3
  - ◇ Practice: *Listening to the Lord for Loving Others*

### Week 4: We're God's covenant community

- Vision: Go over the Communion in Lifegroup handout. (Leader website)
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: 1 Corinthians 11:23-29
  - ◇ Practice: *Listening to the Lord for Loving Others*
  - ◇ Have an extended time of worship, Communion, and ministry/prayer.
- Invite:
  - ◇ Jesus Hour
  - ◇ Sign up for Prophetic Prayer

### Week 5: We're God's spiritual family

- Vision: Ephesians 2:19 and Lifegroup Culture Stages graphic
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: Ephesians 3:14-21
  - ◇ Break into smaller groups of three or four to pray v. 16-18.
  - ◇ Practice: *Talking with the Lord*

### Week 6: We're God's ambassadors

- Vision: Ambassadors represent God to other people and build bridges of relationship. (iLOVE)
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
  - ◇ Practice: *Talking with Others About the Lord* (do an *oikos* map)
- Invite:
  - ◇ Kindle
  - ◇ Speak to the vision for disciple making relationships

### Week 7: We're freedom fighters

- Vision: Galatians 5:1
- Core:
  - ◇ DBS: 2 Corinthians 3:16-18
  - ◇ Practice: *Listening to the Lord for Freedom* (Use the Discipling Freedom cards)
- Invite:
  - ◇ Freedom Day
  - ◇ Share a testimony of Freedom Prayer





