

Life Group Leaders Training Packet



1.1 Introduction – What & the Why lead a Life Group

Bible Study groups, typically sermon-based. Always life giving.

Life groups exist to help people connect deeply with each other in God's word transforming them into fully devoted disciples of Christ.

- Life Groups are not Dinner Groups on steroids; they are the daily expression of the life of the church!
- Life Groups are not small groups for teaching; they are collections of people in community being disciplined!
- Life Groups are not primarily for learning; they are for transformation and community.
- Life Group leaders are not teachers who impart their wisdom primarily, they are friends ensuring shepherding.

WHY SERMON BASED?

- Easy to scale, easy to lead.
- You don't have to be a teacher or a gifted writer to lead a discussion surrounding questions from the sermon.
- We already have a team researching deeply on the topic and text for that week to provide content and direction for questions.
- It encourages people to remain connected to Sundays either in person or online, building unity.

1.2 Leader Expectations

General Qualifications

- Committed to Christ.
- Committed to the vision and values of Disciples Church.
- Committed to integrity, Godly character and spiritual transformation.
- Committed to their call as a missionary to their group.
- Skills/abilities/gifts
 - Leadership, shepherding and/or facilitating.
 - Strong ability to keep discussion on track and kindly redirect hijackers.
 - Social skills – strong evidence of relating/connecting well with others.

Prepare for your weekly “meeting”

- Listen/watch the sermon
- Work through the homework questions

Track & initiate care of group members

- Obtain a good pulse regularly on how members of your group are doing in life.
- Communicate special needs to pastors.
- Care for members and their families.
 - Initiate meals/care for those ill or hospitalized.
 - Visit and/or stay in touch with those who are absent.
- Take attendance weekly & forward to michelle@discipleschurch.net
 - Send off your attendance report BEFORE you go to bed after Life Group.

Serve as a significant and contributing member of Leadership Community.

- We will use these as “half time” meetings as Life Group Leaders.
- We will plan for upcoming season(s)
- We will adjust/tweak/improve how we serve our people in groups.

1.3 Host Expectations

General Qualifications

- Committed to Christ.
- Committed to the vision and values of Disciples Church.
- Committed to integrity, Godly character and spiritual transformation.

Provide a clean and comfortable home

- Is my house clean?
- Do I have enough comfortable chairs (if not, arrange to get some from church)
- Do I have ample lighting?
- Do I have extra Bibles out?
- Is my house free of strong pet odors or allergens?
- Do I have a plan to keep us free of child interruptions?

Provide support, engagement and feedback for the leader

- Be engaged in the study as best you can while hosting.
- Keep an eye on the leader to be sure she/he has what they need during discussion.
- Provide honest, loving and helpful feedback on how the discussion went following group each week.
- Organize the groups meal/snack schedule(s).

Cooking every week is NOT necessary.

A large beautiful home is NOT necessary.

Season Schedule

Weeks	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
1	Promo Life Groups	4- Labor day weekend Final Sign-ups	2 – Leadership Community	Oct 30-nov 5 (Trunk or Treat)
2	Promo / sign ups	11- week 1 (kickoff of Pray Like Jesus series)	9-	6- FINAL WEEK
3	Promo / sign ups		16-	13- Optional – group party
4	Promo / sign ups		23- Anniversary Celebration	20- Thanks giving week
Dec		Jan 2017	Feb	Mar
1		NEW YEARS GATHERING	Jan 29-4 WEEK 1	5
2		8- Promo begins	12	12
3		15 - Promo/sign ups	19	19
4	NO SUNDAY GATHERINGS	22 - Promo/sign ups Leadership Community	26	26
Apr	Apr	May	June	July
1	2 – FINAL WEEK	Apr 30-may 6	May 28-Jun 3: Grad weeks; Promo/sign ups	2-
2	9-15 Optional – Group Party	7- Promo begins	4- Promo/sign ups	9-
3	16 – Easter	14- Promo/sign ups	11- week 1	16- FINAL WEEK
4	23-	21- Promo/sign ups	18-	23-Optional – group party
5			25-jul 1	



Dealing with Issues in your group

Someone is in crisis...FOUR Q's

1. How long have you been dealing with this? When did this first occur?
2. Who else knows?
 - a. Have you talked to anyone else? How often? When was the last time you talked this through with someone else? How did they respond?
3. Have you received any advise or counsel?
4. What are your next steps?

Someone hijacking or causing trouble repeatedly

- Redirect the discussion...
 - *"It's great to hear what you think, Bob, I'd also love to hear from some others now.."*
 - *"So if you've already shared tonight, let's not share on the next section until three others weigh in..."*
 - *"You seem pretty passionate about that point of view, would someone else have a different view to offer?"*
 - Call on someone specifically you see waiting to speak...
 - Designate an "interrupter" in the group so you don't have to shut Bob down.
 - *"That's an interesting story about your Mustang, Bob, how does that relate back to the text?"*
- Talk with your host and work through the Four Q's.
- Talk with the trouble-maker about the issue.
- If all that fails, pray it's week 8...if not, call one of the pastors.

Making your first night great!

1. Contact everyone in your group to remind them of the address and start time the week-of and ask them to bring something to contribute to a meal for week one. Buy in gets everyone in.
2. Address how you're approaching alcohol.
 - a. Listen to Stu's message on Romans 14, August 14th, 2016 and apply this as you feel led.
3. Introductions
 - a. Be sure everyone talks
 - b. Some non-intrusive info about them
 - i. Nothing intimate or separating
 1. "How's your marriage?"
 2. "Tell us how you became a Christian"
 3. "Your favorite 49er player of all time..."
 - ii. Some good opening questions
 1. Share your name, and the best thing about the city you grew up in.
 2. Name, one thing you do better than anyone in the room.
 3. Name, favorite movie of all time
 - iii. Life Group Covenant (full covenant attached)
 1. Our purpose is to connect deeply together in God's word.
 - a. Sharing – taking time each week to share what's going on in our lives.
 - b. Studying – Each week we will study a section of Scripture related to Sunday's sermon. Our goal is transformation, not simply information.
 - c. Supporting – Each week we will try to discover how what we learned can be used to support each other in Life Group.
 2. Four marks of a healthy Life Group
 - a. Disciple-making is our #1 goal together. (Romans 8:29)
 - b. Love one another tangibly. (Romans 15:7)
 - c. Take care of one another (John 13:34)
 - d. Keep our commitments to the group. (Psalm 15:1-2, 4)
 - iv. Don't skip the study!
 1. Sermon Recap
 2. Observe
 3. Interpret
 4. Apply



Flow of the discussion

3 Simple Steps for Studying the Bible

Step 1: Observation—What does the passage say?

Step 2: Interpretation—What does the passage mean?

Step 3: Application—What am I going to do about what the passage says and means?

Step 1: Observation

Observation is the first and most important step in how to study the Bible. As you read the Bible text, you need to look carefully at what is said, and how it is said. Look for:

- Terms, not words. Words can have many meanings, but terms are words used in a specific way in a specific context. (For instance, the word trunk could apply to a tree, a car, or a storage box. However, when you read, “That tree has a very large trunk,” you know exactly what the word means, which makes it a term.)

- Structure. If you look at your Bible, you will see that the text has units called paragraphs (indented or marked ¶). A paragraph is a complete unit of thought. You can discover the content of the author’s message by noting and understanding each paragraph unit.

- Emphasis. The amount of space or the number of chapters or [verses](#) devoted to a specific topic will reveal the importance of that topic (for example, note the emphasis of [Romans 9](#) and [Psalms 119](#)).

- Repetition. This is another way an author demonstrates that something is important. One reading of [1 Corinthians 13](#), where the author uses the word “love” nine times in only 13 verses, communicates to us that love is the focal point of these 13 verses.

- Relationships between ideas. Pay close attention, for example, to certain relationships that appear in the text:

—Cause-and-effect: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things” ([Matthew 25:21](#)).

—Ifs and thens: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land” ([2 Chronicles 7:14](#)).

—Questions and answers: “Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty” ([Psalms 24:8](#)).

- Comparisons and contrasts. For example, “You have heard that it was said...but I say to you...” ([Matthew 5:21](#)).

- Literary form. The Bible is literature, and the three main types of literature in the Bible are discourse (the epistles), prose (Old Testament history), and poetry (the [Psalms](#)). Considering the type of literature makes a great deal of difference when you read and interpret the Scriptures.

- Atmosphere. The author had a particular reason or burden for writing each passage, chapter, and book. Be sure you notice the mood or tone or urgency of the writing.

After you have considered these things, you then are ready to ask the “Wh” questions

Who? What? Where? When?

Who are the people in this passage? What is happening in this passage? Where is this story taking place? When in time (of day, of the year, in history) is it?

Asking these four “Wh” questions can help you notice terms and identify atmosphere. The answers will also enable you to use your imagination to recreate the scene you’re reading about.

As you answer the “Wh” questions and imagine the event, you’ll probably come up with some questions of your own.

Asking those additional questions for understanding will help to build a bridge between observation (the first step) and interpretation (the second step) of the Bible study process.

Step 2: Interpretation

Interpretation is discovering the meaning of a passage, the author’s main thought or idea.

Answering the questions that arise during observation will help you in the process of



interpretation. Five clues (called “the five C’s”) can help you determine the author’s main point(s):

- **Context.** You can answer 75 percent of your questions about a passage when you read the text. Reading the text involves looking at the near context (the verse immediately before and after) as well as the far context (the paragraph or the chapter that precedes and/or follows the passage you’re studying).
- **Cross-references.** Let Scripture interpret Scripture. That is, let other passages in the Bible shed light on the passage you are looking at. At the same time, be careful not to assume that the same word or phrase in two different passages means the same thing.
- **Culture.** The Bible was written long ago, so when we interpret it, we need to understand it from the writers’ cultural context.
- **Conclusion.** Having answered your questions for understanding by means of context, cross-reference, and culture, you can make a preliminary statement of the passage’s meaning. Remember that if your passage consists of more than one paragraph, the author may be presenting more than one thought or idea.
- **Consultation.** Reading books known as commentaries, which are written by Bible scholars, can help you interpret Scripture.

Step 3: Application

Application is why we study the Bible. We want our lives to change; we want to be obedient to God and to grow more like Jesus Christ. After we have observed a passage and interpreted or understood it to the best of our ability, we must then apply its truth to our own life.

You’ll want to ask the following questions of every passage of Scripture you study:

- How does the truth revealed here affect my relationship with God?
- How does this truth affect my relationship with others?
- How does this truth affect me?
- How does this truth affect my response to the enemy, Satan?

The application step is not completed by simply answering these questions; the key is putting into practice what God has taught you in your study. Although at any given moment you cannot be consciously applying everything you’re learning in Bible study, you can be consciously applying something. And when you work on applying a truth to your life, God will bless your efforts by, as noted earlier, conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ.

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Some other great places for study resources:

www.discipleschurch.net/lifegroupleader

Life Group Covenant

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

THE PURPOSE:

Life groups exist to help people connect deeply with each other in God's word transforming them into fully devoted disciples of Christ. We will do this by focusing on

- Sharing** – Taking time each week to share what's going on in our lives.
- Listening** – We will be a group of listeners, knowing we are better when we all weigh in and sharpen one another.
- Studying** – Each week we will study a section of Scripture related to Sunday's sermon. Our goal is transformation, not simply information.
- Supporting** – Each week we will try to discover how what we learned can be used to support each other in Life Group.

Four marks of a healthy Life Group

1. Disciple-making is our #1 goal together. (Romans 8:29)
2. Love one another tangibly. (Romans 15:7)
3. Take care of one another (John 13:34)
4. Keep our commitments to the group. (Psalm 15:1-2, 4)

Dates

We will meet on _____ nights for nine weeks. Our final meeting of this season will be on _____.

Time

We'll arrive between ____ & ____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend _____ minutes on sharing, then study for _____ minutes, then pray for _____. Our group will all leave from our host home by _____ at the latest.

Children

Our plan for childcare is _____. To ensure we get the most out of our discussion we are committed together to not have kids running through the middle of group interrupting our discussion. Nursing babies are, of course, welcome in the study.

Attendance

We are committed to journey together as a group for the next nine weeks. IF I cannot make it I will call _____ so the group can be praying for me.



Life Groups

We all agree together to honor this covenant:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

