

Generations HOUSE OF WORSHIP

Life Group Leader Guide

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Life Group Leadership Guide

Why Life Groups Exist

Life Groups exist to find freedom in Christ, to connect with each other and to grow together. We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the full life He intends for us. (Genesis 2:18, Galatians 6:2)

We believe life change (finding freedom) happens in the context of relationships. Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Life Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you and to the people around you.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Generations House of Worship Life Groups Model

We believe our church needs to grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus Christ on Sunday's. We grow smaller by gathering in Life Groups throughout the week to build community and care for people.

We base our Life Group model on the early Church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

Acts 5:42 "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah."

You'll find a combination of three elements present in any healthy Life Group.

Prayer and Protection

1 John 3:16 "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters."

We believe everything we do should be saturated in prayer. It is through life together, that our problems become smaller, as God uses others to bring support, encouragement and prayer to our lives. Remember, Isolation is fertile ground for the enemy to attack.

Relationships

1 Corinthians 9:22 "Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him."

God created us for community. Life Groups provide a place for people to get real and take their masks off. An amazing thing happens when we connect with others, God starts to work in us and through us in ways we would have never thought possible.

Personal Growth

Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

All individuals grow to be more of who God made them to be. This occurs as a result of being around the others in the group.

What a Life Group Looks Like

1. Our groups are “free market.”

“Free market” simply means group leaders are free to use their gifts and interests to determine when and where their group meets and what they meet about. From soccer groups and lunch groups to Bible studies and coffee meet-ups, our groups are as varied as we are. Groups fall into one of six hubs:

Men • Women • Marriage and Family • Freedom • Students • Co-Ed

2. There are three semesters every year.

Life flows in seasons, and we want to make it easy for you to be in the right Life Group each season. This is why we have new groups that start and stop three times a year in what we refer to as “semesters.” Our group semesters are spring (February-May), summer (June-July) and fall (September-December).

3. Anyone can join a Life Group.

Our hope is for every person at Generations House of Worship to be connected in a meaningful community through a Life Group. With so many groups to choose from, we are confident there is a group that is a great fit for you. To find the right group for you, simply visit ghow.net to search our online directory of groups.

4. You can lead.

We believe everyone has areas of strength and gifting that can benefit others, and leading a Life Group is a great way to make meaningful connections. The first step toward becoming a Life Group leader is

to go through Growth Track. Growth track is held at both campuses on the 1st Sunday of each month after service. Lasting around 1 hour and 45 minutes. Once completed, you can become a member of Generations and join a team and become a Life Group leader. The second step is to join a Life Group. Attend a group before leading your own to get immersed in the culture. The third step is to attend a Life Group Leader Training. These trainings give you an overview of how simple it is to start a group. You'll discover that it's easier than you think.

Group Structure

Groups meet weekly during each semester between 8 - 12 weeks.

Groups meet in a variety of places like homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops and office buildings.

New groups start every semester making it easy to build community and enjoy several types of groups.

Each Life Group session should encourage and include ESPN:

E: Encourage

S: Share scripture

P: Pray

N: Nest steps (Sunday service, growth track, gen teams, first Wednesday's, Thursday morning online prayer, baptisms, child dedications, start tithing, all hands on deck, serve day, outreach, go on a mission trip, etc)

Remember: People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take.

Life Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics
- Alcohol, tobacco or drugs

Your Role as a Life Group Leader

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Life Group Leaders come alongside the pastors, staff and elders of Generations House of Worship to help care for people.

Ephesians 4:11-13 "Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ."

The primary role of a Life Group Leader is to help group members move one more step in their walk with God.

Proverbs 27:23 "Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds."

How to succeed as a Life Group Leader

Throughout the history of our church, hundreds of people just like you have stepped up to the plate to lead. Over time, common characteristics that define successful Life Group Leaders have become very clear. So here's some advice to you on how to succeed.

1. Have a plan and prepare for your Life Group meetings.

Send a message to group members introducing yourself! Be sure to remind them about your first meeting and give them a time and an address.

No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of four things:

1. Casual Fellowship- Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other. Have fun and create an enjoyable environment for your group and do an ice breaker. Ice breakers are a great way for people to feel more comfortable and open up. If you are leading at your home, have some snacks and worship music playing as people come in. Be sure to respect people's time by beginning and ending your group on time. If you want to continue your conversation after the group ends, that's fine. Just make sure to pray and dismiss your group on time for those who have to leave.
2. Activity or Discussion- This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like biking or a discussion about an approved book or Sunday's message.
3. Prayer- Ask for prayer requests from group members and always open up in prayer at the beginning of your group and close with prayer at the end. Pray daily for your group and ask if anyone has prayer requests.
4. Spiritual Component- Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the

group or talking about a verse you read that week or a win you had.

You can begin by asking yourself these questions:

- What is the vision for my group, and what type of group will it be?
- How will I recruit people for the group? (neighbors, co-workers, family, friends?)
- What curriculum or learning content will I use? What activities will I do?
- How would I like to see people grow because of my group?
- How will the community be affected because of my group?

Conversation starters to help get people talking as your group gets to know each other:

- A. How did you learn about our group?
- B. What are your hobbies?
- C. What are you looking forward to this year?
- D. What brought you here?
- E. What are you hoping to get out of this Life Group?

Basic Life Group Do's and Don'ts

- Don't Be Afraid of Silence

Let the people in your group sit for a moment and think. Silence isn't always a bad thing.

- Don't Feel Like You Must Know All the Answers

We are human, and it's good for the people in your group to see that you are limited. You are, but most people don't think so.

- Don't Read Questions Word-for-Word off the Discussion Guide

Understand the questions and be prepared to ask them in your own terms. Feel free to generate your own questions during your preparation and even on the spot

- Don't Talk More Than the People in Your Group

Ask questions to generate discussion. Ask people to explain their answers and go into more depth. Allow multiple people to respond even if the first person gets the "right answer".

- Do know what is going on at GHOW

Stay up to date by reading the newsletters and watching the genfo before services. Join in as many events as possible and invite your life group with you!

If your Life Group falls on a day that our church is having a service such as First Wednesday Communion and Worship, be sure to let your group know that your group will be attending the service that week.

- Do Ask People if They Have Questions

Create an environment where people feel heard and have the freedom to ask questions.

- Do Keep the Group Focused and on Purpose

If conversations start to get side tracked beyond reason, bring them back in. If one person seems to take the lead on talking, call on others by name for them to have a turn to talk. Don't go down a rabbit trail and leave the topics and/or scripture passages unless something "big time" comes up (i.e. Family Crisis). Be sensitive to the Spirit (but that is not an excuse to let the group wander).

- Do Require and Maintain Confidentiality

This allows people to open up because they feel their environment is safe. However, don't keep potentially dangerous information to yourself (i.e. abuse, suicidal, homicidal, destructive intentions, etc. When in doubt, please tell a staff member or your Life Group coach).

- Don't be Discouraged

If you have a bad night don't be discouraged. There is not a Life Group leader in the world that hasn't had bad nights.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do we do on the first night of Life Group?

We suggest starting off with an icebreaker or a relationship building exercise. Your group might need to spend some time getting to know one another. Introductions can help create a relaxed social atmosphere that enables them to be open with those around them. Don't forget to have fun! We encourage you to create a place where laughter happens often. People may be more inclined to share and participate in group discussions when they feel relaxed and can laugh together.

2. How do we handle childcare needs in our group?

As a leader, decide whether or not the group is suitable for children to be at. If you can accommodate kids at your home or not. If the answer is no, then you can make the option for children allowed a "No."

3. What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?

It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully, we can find guidance through mentors, God's Word and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them at your next Life Group meeting. Do some personal research and call your life group coach to get advice.

4. What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me (or the group) that requires attention beyond what I (or we) can provide?

If you encounter a difficult situation within your Life Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer, encouragement, and support. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask your coach or the Life Group director.

5. What should I do if I encounter the following types of personalities in my group?

Dominators Definition: have an answer for every question and every answer seems to go on forever. Dominators are usually very knowledgeable and kind-hearted. They just don't always have the social skills needed to help you keep things on track. Some dominators are able to talk for a long time. You need to have the courage to help the dominator wrap things up. One of the best methods is to simply acknowledge the dominator's thought, then quickly call on someone else to speak.

What a life group leader can do: The secret to dealing with dominators is to remember that the group is usually desperate for the facilitator to do something. You should begin by working to draw others out. Look for a quick breath, no matter how short, to jump in and allow others to contribute. Dominators aren't the enemy. In fact, dominators will bring profound points to the conversation. Turn dominators into allies by talking to them after the group. Compliment the dominator's quick thinking and openness, explain the goals for drawing everyone into the discussion, and ask the dominator to help draw out everyone during future discussions.

Hiders Definition: are easy to ignore because they are so quiet. In fact, they seem to be quite good at being ignored and missed. When someone in your life group is a "hider" and tends to be quiet, it can be challenging to engage them fully.

What a life group leader can do: Ask open-ended questions that allow them to share at their own pace. For example, "What stood out to you in this passage?" rather than "Do you agree with this?" Start with lighter, less personal topics to help them warm up before diving into deeper discussions. Understand that some people may need more time to feel comfortable sharing. Don't pressure them to speak before they're ready. Meet with them outside the group to build a relationship. This can

make them feel more comfortable speaking up in the group setting. When they do share, acknowledge and appreciate their input. This can encourage them to share more in the future. By showing patience, understanding, and genuine interest in their thoughts, you can help create an environment where even the quietest members feel valued and heard.

Problem Solvers Definition: have a tough time seeing others in pain or confusion. With great intentions, the problem solver tries to fix other group members, often offering answers and solutions. Remind your group that each friend is in the process of discovery and needs time to work out his or her questions.

What a small group leader can do: If a problem solver gives a pat answer that's received as judgmental or insensitive by a group member, don't panic. Quickly respond by showing empathy for the person with the problem or question. You might say, "I'm sorry you're going through that. We'll do our best to support you along the way." Ask questions that encourage self-reflection, such as, "What do you think God might be teaching you through this situation?" or "How do you feel led to respond?" If a problem solver doesn't seem to catch your hints and redirection, talk to him or her after the group. Tell the problem solver that you appreciate his or her wisdom. Then remind the problem solver that you want everyone to have the freedom to talk, discover, and even work out struggles by talking about them in the group.

6. What if I can't make it to every Life Group as the leader?

Get a co-leader! A co-leader is your person who can help if you need to miss for any reason. Have a plan with your co-leader prior to the group to have a plan if either of you have to miss. Life happens, and sometimes you may need to cancel a group. Just communicate with the group so they're aware, and try to stay engaged with the group in other ways that week.

7. How are life groups different from Sunday services?

Life groups offer a more intimate setting for deeper discussion, personal sharing, and relationship-building. While Sunday services are larger and more focused on worship and teaching, life groups allow for more interaction and practical application of biblical principles

8. Can I invite friends to join the group?

Yes! Inviting friends is usually encouraged, as life groups are meant to be inclusive and welcoming to new members.

Tools for Prayer

- Our Divine Helper: (The Holy Spirit): John 14:16-17, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:30, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, Ephesians 3:16 and Galatians 5:22-23.
- Purpose of Prayer: Hebrews 4:16, John 10:3-4
- The Lord's Prayer: Utilize the Lord's Prayer as a reference guide.
- Pray Privately: Jesus went away to pray on his own (Luke 9:18 and Mark 1:35).
- Pray Regularly: Jesus made prayer a daily rhythm in his life. Through prayer, he demonstrated a vibrant relationship with our Heavenly Father through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).
- Pray Genuinely: Don't focus on trying to impress others or God with your prayers. God wants to hear your prayers from your heart and he wants them to be genuine (Matthew 6:5-7).
- Praise: Throughout the Bible, our God is praised over 350 times. When we praise our God, we are acknowledging how great our God is and all He has done for us (Psalm 9:1-2).
- Repent: To repent means to confess our specific sin to God and turn away from doing them again (1 John 1:8-9).
- Ask: We serve a God that encourages us to come to Him and ask what is on our mind. Jesus wants us to learn how to ask and understand what our heavenly Father wants to share with us (Matthew 7:7-11).
- Listen: Once we've made our request known to God, we must become great listeners to carry out His instruction. We must regularly position ourselves to take time to listen to the voice of God. This can serve as an encouragement in building our faith when we remember what God has done in our life due to our obedience.

12 things to consider Praying

1. Pray for those in Authority: (President, senators, legislators and judges) Romans 13:1 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4
2. Pray for Churches: (Pastors, Staff, Gen Teams & all facets of ministry) Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 133:1, Luke 4:18, Luke 10:19, Philippians 1:27, Romans 10:14-15 and Matthew 9:37-38
3. Pray for the Lost: (all those needing Jesus) John 3:16 and Matthew 18:18
4. Pray for our City: (Mayor, council, businesses etc.) 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Proverbs 21:1 and Jeremiah 11:7
5. Pray for Military: (All branches) Colossians 2:15, Isaiah 11:9 and Acts 2:21
6. Pray for Marriages: Matthew 19:6, Romans 12:21, Romans 5:5, Philippians 2:2 and Philippians 2:13
7. Pray for Children: 1 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 5:4, Galatians 3:13 and Jeremiah 29:11-13
8. Pray for Singles & Seniors: John 14:1, 1 John 4:19 and Hebrews 4:10
9. Pray for Missionaries: Psalm 146:7, Ephesians 6:10&16 and 3 John
10. Pray for Finances: (Impact, all projects, benevolence, etc.) Deuteronomy 26:1&3, Malachi 3:10 and Matthew 12:34
11. Pray for Schools: (All grade levels, college and grad school) Colossians 3:2, Philippians 2:15-16, Acts 16:31 and Jeremiah 1:12
12. Pray for Outpouring of God's Spirit on All: Joel 2:28, Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:4

Policy for Conflict Resolution

Policy is defined as “what we always do and what we never do”

1 Cor. 1:10 NIV "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."

Conflict is inevitable but the bible teaches us how to address conflict, disputes, and disagreements among our brothers and sisters.

It's not about us. It's about the kingdom.

What do you do when anyone comes to you or you personally have a conflict, problem or concern regarding any function, activity, ministry, person, staff member or pastor within the church?

1. If someone has come to you with a conflict, problem, or concern you should let the person know up front that any information they share with you is open to the pastoral staff. If they refuse to speak further with you, inform them that you will have someone from the pastoral staff contact them. Then, inform someone on the pastoral staff, regardless of their wishes. When someone starts a conversation with, "Can I speak to you in confidence?", let them know if the issue regards the operation, staff, church members, pastors, or personnel of the church you cannot make that promise under any circumstances.

Matthew 5:9 NIV "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God"

2. If someone has come to you, direct the person to go to that person they are experiencing an issue with or the pastor or staff member in charge of that area of ministry. If you don't know who to direct them to specifically, seek out a pastoral staff leader. Refuse to address the specifics of their concerns. Give the person the confidence that their problem/concern is going to be addressed and direct them to the pastor or staff member in charge of that area of ministry to talk it out.

If you are personally experiencing a conflict, problem, or concern you should go directly to that person you are experiencing an issue with or the pastor or staff member in charge of that area of ministry.

Matthew 18:15 ^{GW} "If a believer does something wrong, go, confront him when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have won back that believer."

Psalms 34:14 ^{NIV} "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

3. If they go to that person or the leader over that area of ministry or you go to that person and the issue is still not resolved, a leader/or pastor should go with them or you and talk to that person again in hopes to bring a common resolution.
4. Always deal with or discuss issues upward within the organizational structure. Never horizontally or below. Never permit a person, regardless of how legitimate their concern or issue appears to be, place you "on their side" of any given issue or problem. Remember that without a context, things become clouded and unclear.

As a member of the body of Christ you carry two buckets in your hands, gasoline and water. Whatever you pour on an offense or an offended person will decide the outcome.

Proverbs 26:20

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