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BRIDGE GROUP
LAUNCH
LEADER GUIDE

DYNAMIC LIFE

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LEADER

INTRODUCTION

We want to thank you for committing to lead this Bridge Group over the next two years. We're very excited about what God will do in the lives of you and your group members.

As you get started with your new group, we've developed a discussion guide to help your group members get to know each other, understand Bridge Groups, and be on the same page. Feel free to choose what option is best for your group. There are two options:

1-Week

The 1-week guide is the fast track option that may be beneficial for bi-weekly meeting groups, groups that want to bypass the get-to-know you opportunities, or if you and the participants have all been in groups before.

3-Week

The 3-week guide would be ideal for groups that meet weekly, want to use the guide as a way for group members to get to know each other more, if you are new to leading, or the participants are new to groups. [Access the 3-week guide and other resources.](#)

As you proceed through this guide, we've included a **leader meeting outline** to give you ideas and suggestions to help you lead. For additional tips on relationship-building ideas, refer to the Appendix. We pray this study will get your Bridge Group launched well. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to your campus staff contact.

LEADER

MEETING OUTLINE

- » **Choose 2-3 of the Icebreaker questions to begin your time together:**
 - If you could vacation anywhere, where would you go?
 - What famous person would you most like to meet?
 - What is the best meal you've ever eaten?
 - As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
 - What subject or topic are you currently interested in?
 - What is one invention you don't want to live without?
 - What is your favorite month of the year?
 - What stresses you out?
 - What is the best advice you've ever received?
 - Who do you look up to?

- » **Brief Weekly Reading Recap**

- » **Discussion Questions**

- » **Leader Stories Set-up**

WHAT ARE BRIDGE GROUPS?

WEEKLY READING

When was the last time you went on a trip where you took a flight? Was it work related, a vacation, or to see family or friends?

The common stages of a plane ride are: take off, the flight, and the landing. These stages offer a great analogy that will help as you think about the different stages your group will travel over the next two years together.

» Take Off: 1st 90 Days

Chart your course / Align expectations / Prioritize relationships

» Flight: Middle Months

Stay on course / Avoid routine / Plan the landing

» Landing: Last 90 Days

Talk about the group ending / Talk about what's next / Celebrate successes

TAKEOFF

FIRST 90 DAYS



CHART YOUR COURSE

Create an environment where your group members can connect and grow. Think about studies, resources, and experiences to help them take the next steps.



ALIGN EXPECTATIONS

Remind group members to show up, join in, and be real.



PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIPS

Groups that enjoy one another tend to grow. Tell your stories, serve together, and have fun.



FLIGHT

MIDDLE MONTHS



STAY ON COURSE

Remind your group that your goal is to grow personally and to eventually make space for others to join a group. Keep track of where you are and where you're headed.



AVOID ROUTINE

A predictable environment helps everyone feel safe. Plan interruptions to the normal rhythm of meetings by organizing socials, retreats, and bridge building opportunities.



PLAN THE LANDING

If you launched your group without an apprentice, consider who could serve in this role and make a plan to involve them.



LANDING

LAST 90 DAYS



TALK ABOUT THE GROUP ENDING

Not talking about multiplication sets you up for a bad experience. Be intentional about celebrating, encouraging, and having fun.



TALK ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT

Encourage and challenge one another to take next steps. Connect your apprentice and other potential leaders to a campus discipleship staff.



CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Point out growth when you see it and then celebrate it. Take time to remember everything you've shared.



Introduction to Bridge Groups

Bridge Groups are small groups where people meet regularly to grow in Dynamic Life in Christ. In Bridge Groups, everyone will have the opportunity to: **Experience** the gospel, **Engage** in community and **Equip** one another as bridge builders.

Experience the Gospel—The Good News is foundational to Christian belief through salvation and the life-long process of Christian growth. (examples: Bible studies, learning scripture, praying, group discussion)

Which of the following descriptions most closely expresses where you are in your spiritual journey?

- “ Not really sure.
- “ Curious about Jesus but not yet at a place I consider myself a Christian.
- “ Consider myself a Christian but I haven’t been actively pursuing growth in my journey.
- “ Consider myself a Christian but still have significant questions about Christianity.
- “ Consider myself a Christian and have pursued opportunities personally and with others to continue to grow in my experience and understanding of the Christian faith.

Engage in Community—relational intentionality and gospel-centered with the goal to love the Lord and love one another as God loves us. (examples: vulnerability during group discussion, enjoying a meal, celebrating fun occasions, helping through challenging times, hosting group meetings and cookouts for neighbors.)

Equip One Another as Bridge Builders—authentically build relationships with people in your personal circle, share your story of how God changed your life, and ultimately, point them to Jesus. (examples: encourage each other, share your experiences of building bridges, invite people to your group.)

If you're curious
about how you
can know God

READ THIS



BUILDING

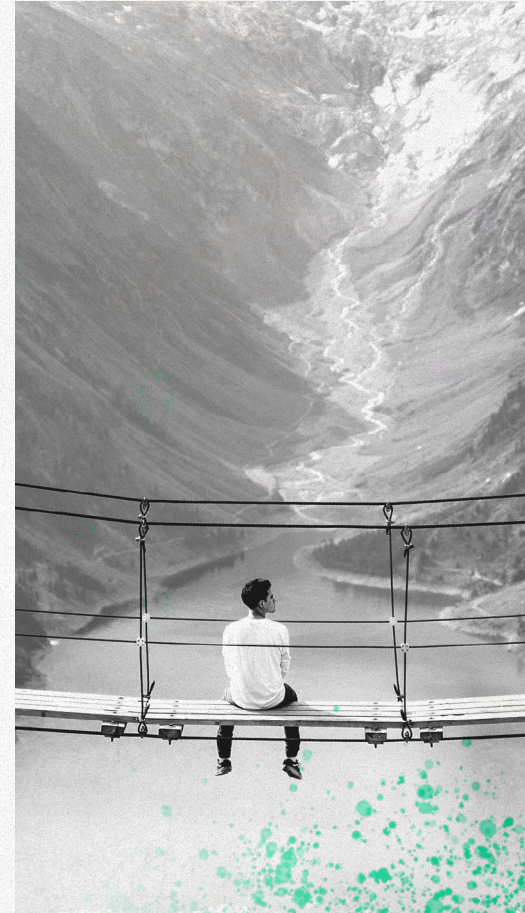


BRIDGES

WHY BRIDGE GROUPS?

God hardwired the human heart with a desire to belong to something that is bigger than itself. This design is a reflection of the relational triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and His creation of man for relationship with Him and others. Jesus modeled this community, the early church followed His lead (Acts 2:42-47), and people today continue it through the community we call “the church”.

Bridge Groups exist to provide a smaller environment within Forest Hill Church where people can grow in faith, do life together, and tell others about Jesus so they can know Him as well.





LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT FOREST HILL'S VISION, MISSION & VALUES:

MISSION (Why we exist)

Building Bridges that connect Everyone to Dynamic Life in Christ.

VISION (Where we are going)

Bringing Heaven to Greater Charlotte One Person at a Time

[Watch Forest Hill's mission & vision video](#)

VALUES (What we care about)

» Stand on the Essentials

We keep Jesus first, prioritize the Gospel, and are rooted in the authority of Scripture and led by the Holy Spirit. We believe the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are a complete and unified witness to God's character and redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Being Truth, we submit all areas of our life to it.

» Cultivate Kingdom Diversity

We believe God's love for the whole world compels us to break down barriers and be a church where all people belong. We will strive for a multiplicity in ethnicity, gender, age, culture and socio-economic status to

be reflected across our staff, elders, deacons and congregation.

» Engage Who's Next

We believe the rising generation is the future of the church, requiring us to reach and develop them as disciples and leaders. Discipling, mentoring and developing all young people—from babies through young adults-- is a top priority in our church.

» Live on Mission

We believe each person is called to live out the Great Commission to make disciples in all the places they live, work and play. With our words and our actions, we want to share the good news of the Gospel and invite others to know and follow Jesus. (Matthew 5:13-16 and 28:18-20, Acts 1:8.)

DYNAMIC



LIFE

HOW DO BRIDGE GROUPS WORK?

Healthy groups can be a great source of learning and growth, while unhealthy groups can lead to frustration and even stagnation. Setting healthy group expectations upfront creates a safe space where members can grow both relationally and spiritually. Here are a few areas to consider as you work together towards creating a healthy group:

Show up (be present)

- **Attendance:** Make group a priority. You will get out of group what you put in, and if you're not there, everyone is affected.

Join in (be prepared)

- **Communication:** Notify the leader if you need to miss a group meeting. Your input is valuable—prepare for and participate in the group discussion and keep in touch outside of group.
- **Confidentiality:** It's important to create a safe place, establishing trust, so that everyone can connect and grow. What's said in group, stays in group—no gossiping.
- **Show kindness:** Encourage one another, care and celebrate one another, support each other in difficult times, and be respectful.

- **Listen well:** This is the best posture to care and learn. Seek to understand, rather than judging or trying to fix.
- **God's Lens:** Use Scripture as the basis of Authority and truth. Everyone is created in God's image; we can learn to see and love others as God does.

Be yourself (be real)

- **Authenticity:** Be transparent, honest, and real.

Believe: You have a unique perspective and set of experiences to contribute. Use your gifts within the group.
- **Freedom:** You and your group members are likely in different places when it comes to your life circumstances, spiritual journeys, and relational experiences. Experience the freedom to be where you are in those areas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What excites you most about being a part of a Bridge Group?
2. Which one of the 3 "E" statements about groups is most appealing to you in this season of your life? Which of the 3 areas would you like to grow in over the next 2 years?
3. Who are 1 or 2 people that you can build a bridge to in your neighborhood, workplace, or community?
4. Why did God create community?
5. How is the smaller environment of your Bridge Group more conducive to engaging in community?
6. How does Forest Hill's Mission, Vision and Values relate to God's mission for the world?
7. What ways can your group practically live out the Mission, Vision and Values?
8. How does understanding your expectations help as you begin this group?
9. Why do you think it is important for everyone in your group to agree to show up, join in and be yourself?
10. How will you personally take steps to show up, join in, and be yourself?

IS THIS GROUP FOR YOU?

Hopefully, you enjoyed getting to know the people in your group and learning about Bridge Groups. Feel free to ask your leader any questions you may have as you consider moving forward with joining this group. Take time to decide if this group will be a fit for you.

If you decide to stay in this group, that's great! We're excited for what God is going to do in you and through you in this group! If you don't think this group is a good fit, please be sure to let the group leader know and ask them to help you get in touch with their campus staff contact to learn about other options.

LEADER

LEADER STORIES SET UP

- » End the group today by sharing your story (7-10 minutes) to model vulnerability and authenticity for the group. To help you shape what you share, feel free to use these questions:
 - Where are you from?
 - What is your family like? What is your relationship with them?
 - What activities are you good at or enjoy most?
 - Describe a person or event who influenced who you are today?
 - If you're a Christian, share how your relationship with Christ began.
- » Ask group members to give encouragement of where they see God in your story and/or highlight your strengths/ uniqueness.

Your group members will begin to share their stories at the next meeting and also receive encouragement from other group members. Take as many meetings as needed until everyone is able to share. (This is an opportunity to bond and get to know each other a little more.)

APPENDIX: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- » Bridge Groups are a place where we can grow to become more like Jesus. That growth happens best in community with others. Authentic relationships are not the purpose of Bridge Groups, but that doesn't mean they aren't important. Authentic relationships are the fertile ground which help us grow. In Bridge Groups we share our lives with each other, encourage, and even challenge each other to live like Christ. Doing this requires us to open up about who we really are and what we really think.
 - » In these early stages of your Bridge Group, helping your group members get to know each other is crucial to lay the groundwork for authentic relationships. Over the course of this study, you'll have a chance to do some story-telling and work together to shape this group. But, if you as the leader feel you need to focus the first week on building relationships by playing games, please feel free to do that and then begin this study the second week. Just make sure to communicate that plan to your group.
 - » There is no shortage of "getting to know you" games out there. But we've included a few of our favorites below. We pray that God will draw you and your group closer together in order to help each of you follow Him more.
- **Two Truths and a Lie:** Have a group member come up with two things about themselves or their life that is true, and one that is not true. Then, have the group guess which one is false.
 - **Hobby Guessing Game:** Have each group member write his or her favorite hobby or thing to do on a note card. Collect the cards and, without letting the person see, tape a card to the person's

forehead. Allow them to go around asking yes/no questions until they guess it right. Then match the person who wrote the card with the hobby.

- **Fishbowl Game:** Before the group meets, cut slips of paper (enough for 3 for each person). At the beginning of the meeting, have each person take 3 slips of paper and write down a question to help them get to know each other. The questions cannot be yes/no, and if they can be answered with a word or short phrase, they must include a follow-up (i.e. "What is your favorite food? What do you like about that food?") Each person folds their slips of paper in half and puts them in a large bowl. The leader then starts by pulling out a slip of paper and answering the question. After answering the question, the leader passes the bowl to the person on his or her left who takes a slip of paper and answers the question. If you draw your own question, put it back in the bowl and draw again.
- **Using Story Cards:** Story Cards are an excellent resource to consider using along with the initial icebreaker questions. They are extremely useful for helping your group to open up to more difficult topics. If you are interested in using the Story Cards, ask your campus staff for a set.



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