START GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

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

As you begin your new group, we've developed a discussion guide to help your group members get to know each other, understand Life Groups, and be on the same page.

We pray this study will get your Life Group started well. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to your campus staff contact.

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FIRST MEETING OUTLINE

75 MINUTES (ADJUST AS NEEDED)

- » Welcome everyone and share timeline of meeting (5 mins)
- » Choose 2-3 of the Icebreaker questions to begin your time together (10 mins):
 - 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?
- » What are Life Groups? (15 mins)
- >> Why we do Life Groups? (5 mins)
- » Mission, Vision, and 5 Marks of a Disciple. (20 mins)
- » How do Life Groups work? (15 mins)
- Share the logistics of the next meeting. (3 mins)
- » Close in Prayer (2 mins)

WHAT ARE LIFE GROUPS?

» Life Groups are small, Christ-centered gatherings of people who choose to do life together for a season. These groups create space for meaningful connection, spiritual growth, serving, and give members the opportunity to grow in the Five Marks of a Disciple.

QUESTIONS

- 1. What have been some groups that have been meaningful in your life and why?
- 2. What are you hoping to gain from this experience in Life Groups?

WHY WE DO LIFE 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. Likewise, from the beginning, people were made for community with Him and with others.

We do Life Groups because choosing community is a mark of a disciple. We believe that small groups are vital to helping the next person take their next step in their relationship with Christ while reflecting His character and His love for others.



MISSION, VISION, AND 5 MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

MISSION (Why We Exist)

Helping the Next Person take the Next Step in their relationship with Jesus.

VISION (Where We are Going)

Bring Heaven to Greater Charlotte One Person at a time.

FIVE MARKS OF A DISCIPLE



Believe in Jesus



Choose Community



Serve the Cause



Invest in the Kingdom



Live as an Ambassador

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21

- » What does Jesus Christ do in this passage?
- » What does it mean to be a New Creation?
- » Why do you think God gives us the Ministry of Reconciliation?
- What does it mean to be an Ambassador for Christ? What is the message?
- >> How do the 5 Marks of a Disciple keep us growing our faith?

HOW DO LIFE 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.

TYPICAL MEETING (75 MINS)

- Connection / Catch Up (10 mins)
- Celebrate (5 mins)
- Study (45 mins)
- Communicate (5 mins)
- Pray (10 mins)

IS THIS LIFE GROUP 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 me know and I can help you get in touch with the campus staff contact to learn about other options. Thanks for coming!

APPENDIX: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- » Life 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 Life Groups, but that doesn't mean they aren't important. Authentic relationships are the fertile ground which help us grow. In Life 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 Life 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.
- 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 answer- ing 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.



