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BRIDGE GROUP

# LAUNCH

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

DYNAMIC LIFE

BRIDGE

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OU  
PS



**EXPERIENCE**  
the gospel



**ENGAGE**  
in community

**EQUIP**  
one another  
as bridge builders



# 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



# BRIDGE GROUP FLIGHT PLAN

## 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.





## NOTES



## 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)

Forest Hill envisions a greater Charlotte area transformed by its connection to Christ instead of formed by its divisions and led by disciples inspired and released for Kingdom impact. Everyone becomes a bridge builder.

[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.

### » **Bring our Best**

We believe we must steward and leverage all that God has entrusted to us. So out of devotion to the goodness of God, we do everything for His glory and commit to generosity, volunteering regularly in a Forest Hill ministry and serving often in our community.





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.





## ***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.)





**FOREST HILL**  
CHURCH