

# How to Facilitate a Great Lifegroup

## What happens before Lifegroup?

- **PRAY** – Ask the Holy Spirit for direction as you plan. If possible, meet with your co-leaders for a few minutes before Lifegroup to pray together for the night.
- **PLAN** – Connect with your co-leader(s) and make a clear plan for the Lifegroup meeting. If you have delegated responsibilities to other Lifegroup members, be sure they are clear concerning their roles.
- **COMMUNICATE** – Remind Lifegroup members and guests of the meeting time, location and any special information concerning food, childcare or other details they may need as they prepare to attend Lifegroup.

## What happens during Lifegroup?

*\*Refer to the next several pages for some great tips on what to do/not do regarding the different components of Lifegroup as well as some examples on how to lead a discussion and create a discipleship model for your Lifegroup.*

While each Lifegroup may look a little different, be sure to keep these key expectations in mind as you plan your Lifegroup meetings.

- **CONSISTENCY** – Be sure you are meeting regularly on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.
- **DISCIPLESHIP** – Develop discipleship groups within your Lifegroup.
- **BIG ROCKS** – Basic structure should include fellowship, the Word, worship, and prayer.
- **INCLUDE KIDS** – Be sure to create a consistent level of discipleship for kids, if applicable.

## What happens after Lifegroup?

- **DEBRIEF** - Take a few minutes with your co-leaders after the meeting to briefly debrief and provide feedback from the meeting. How did the meeting go? Do you have any suggestions for your next meeting? Who do you need to pray for? Who needs follow-up?
- **SUPPORT** - If someone expressed a need during the meeting, make sure that a Lifegroup leader reaches out to offer support.
- **FOLLOW-UP** – If any guests attended your Lifegroup, be sure to follow-up with them. Find out if they have questions. Would they like to come again? How can you help them get connected to other aspects of Antioch? If appropriate, invite them to sit with you during worship on Sunday.

# Components of Lifegroup

## FELLOWSHIP

### DO

- Create a hospitable environment
- Bring great snacks
- Set aside about 20 minutes
- Include kids, if applicable

### DON'T

- Let cliques form
- Neglect guests

## ICEBREAKER

### DO

- Get everyone talking
- Share names weekly
- Alternate between fun & deeper questions
- When possible, link to discussion topic

### DON'T

- Let 1 person dominate this time with long stories
- Ask questions which isolate or put people on the spot

## VISION

### DO

- Be brief and clear
- Repeat vision
- Prepare ahead of time
- Utilize the Word

### DON'T

- Ramble
- Assume people already know the vision

## WORSHIP

### DO

- 2-3 songs
- Introduce new songs one at a time
- Create space for ministry to each other
- Mix it up: music, psalms, etc.

### DON'T

- Play lengthy/dancing/prophetic songs
- Forget to explain experience to guests

## KIDS

### DO

- Create a parent rotation
- Plan ahead with supplies & lesson
- Have a vision & plan to disciple your kids
- Create a LG family rules sheet

### DON'T

- Fail to address behavioral issues
- Neglect safety standards

## DISCUSSION

### DO

- Let the Word speak
- Use Bible-based lessons
- Ask open-ended questions
- Embrace awkward silence

### DON'T

- Talk too much
- Teach

## MINISTRY

### DO

- Model vulnerability
- Ask Holy Spirit what He is doing
- Follow-up throughout the week

### DON'T

- Run out of time (i.e. save enough time for this)
- Neglect guests

## ADMINISTRATION

### DO

- Delegate everything you can
- Plan on a 2-3 month cycle
- Develop members to take on responsibilities

### DON'T

- Fall into the busyness trap
- Assume no one will serve

# Leading a Discussion

1. Purpose: teaching people to study and apply God's Word
2. Plan: Basic format DBS - it takes the pressure off you; the power is that the Word is our teacher. The goal is to teach everyone to be a self-feeder and reproducing follower of Jesus.
3. Our default format is DBS.
  - What did you do/obey from last week?
  - What does the passage reveal about God?
  - What does the passage reveal about us (commands, promises, challenges)?
  - What do we need to apply to our lives (get specific)?
  - Who do I need to share this with?
4. Tips
  - Avoid the urge to teach or speak too much; let the Word speak.
  - Don't worry about awkward silences; that's when people are thinking and we want them to share their revelation.
  - Gently encourage people to talk as needed; ask a quiet person what they think.
  - Let the group know that you don't have all the answers, and there's no such thing as a dumb question.
  
  - Direct the questions/responses back to the group when they are directed at you, e.g. *"Anyone care to respond? What do others of you think about that?"*
  - Ask questions in a conversational tone. Don't simply read them out or say, "What did you put for question number 5?"
  - Allow tangents, but refocus, if necessary, e.g. *"Well, let's get back to our material...what do you think..."*
5. Going deeper
  - If able, ask everyone to read the passage before the group meets.
  - Consider adding questions but be careful as this can be overwhelming!
6. Guarding discussions: It is the leader's responsibility to step in to stop inappropriate sharing. Below are a few situations to watch out for...
  - Don't allow people to confess anyone's faults (especially their spouse's) but their own.
  - Don't allow doctrinal discussion to become divisive or argumentative.
  - Don't entertain negative attitudes toward the church.
  - Don't allow one person's continual problem to be the focus of the Lifegroup.

# Lifegroup & Discipleship Structure

## MODEL ONE - STANDARD

**OVERVIEW:** Weekly Lifegroup meetings plus a separate weekly or every other week men's and women's discipleship group.

Works best for: People who live in close geographic proximity, groups with no kids, groups with preschool or younger kids.

### PROS

- Creates multiple connection points if people frequently miss the group.
- Provides solid discipleship opportunities by facilitating a focused meeting.

### CONS

- Adds travel time to the multiple meetings, especially if people live far away from each other.
- Creates extra coordinating and scheduling responsibilities for the multiple meetings.

## MODEL TWO – ALL-IN-ONE

**OVERVIEW:** Weekly meetings which combine the full Lifegroup meeting together with men's & women's discipleship.

Works best for: Families with school-age children, people with busy work schedules, people who live far apart.

### PROS

- Accomplishes everything in one evening per week, ensuring access to discipleship for the whole group.
- Connect consistently by meeting weekly

### CONS

- Necessitates a lengthier meeting to accomplish everything
- Causes kids to get tired or rowdy due to the longer meeting

## MODEL THREE - ROTATION

**OVERVIEW:** Varied meeting format focus; Lifegroup twice a month; men's & women's discipleship groups twice a month.

Works best for: Busy families, people with long-term Lifegroup and ministry involvement who need a break.

### PROS

- Provides a model for busy people
- Allows for a more low-key experience for people needing a break without getting isolated

### CONS

- Creates a challenge to maintain consistency
- Difficult to build community with new members or less-disciplined people
- Leads to disconnection if people regularly miss