

LGL Manual

LIFEGROUP LEADERS MANUAL

LIFEGROUP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere thanks to the team of Elders, Network Coaches and staff for creating and compiling materials for this manual.

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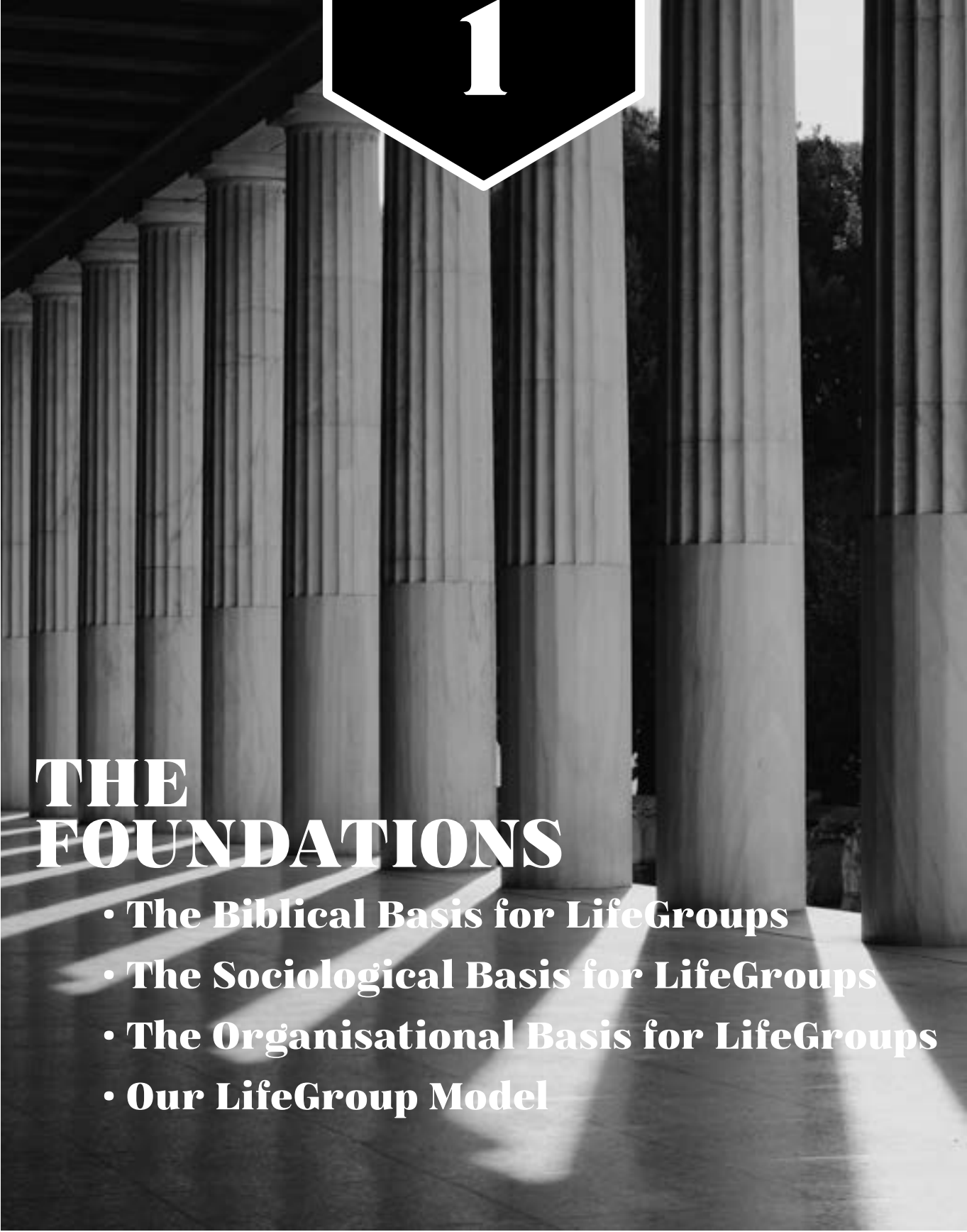
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Printed in Singapore
1st Edition, 2023

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PART 1

THE FOUNDATIONS

- **The Biblical Basis for LifeGroups**
- **The Sociological Basis for LifeGroups**
- **The Organisational Basis for LifeGroups**
- **Our LifeGroup Model**

PART 1: THE FOUNDATIONS

THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR LIFEGROUPS

Church was never meant to be something we did once a week. It was always meant to be a body of believers who came together in community to walk alongside one another in every aspect of life and through every season. That's why we call our small groups - LifeGroups. It is with whom we do life together.

LifeGroups are not our idea; they are God's idea.

It is in the Godhead (Genesis 1:26, John 1:1-3).

Scriptures paint a clear picture of a God who not only lives in community but who also embraces and seeks after it. He sought it first with Adam (Genesis 1:26), then with the people of Israel because community is found in the Godhead itself (John 1:1-3). Since God Himself lives and works in community, and you are made in the likeness of God, then you too are created to live in community.

If you think about it, the Trinity is already a community perfectly satisfied in itself, in that the Father, Son and Spirit exist in complete unity, one with another. However, as an act of grace, they opened up the innermost of inner circles and allowed humanity in. Not healed, whole, holy humanity, but humanity in its broken state, where it still fails to meet God's exacting standards. But the Holy Spirit does His work of sanctification so that we can grow into the likeness of Christ in the graced presence of the Godhead. As we gather in groups, we gather as Spirit-infused people, fulfilling God's ultimate desire to dwell in the midst of His people. In that sense, Christian community is not just vertical – between God and man, but horizontal – men spurring each other towards Christ-likeness.

**LifeGroups are
not our idea; they
are God's idea.**

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" - Genesis 1:26

In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him, nothing was made that has been made. - John 1:1-3

It was modelled by Jesus (Matthew 1:23, Mark 3:7-10, 13-14).

Jesus and the disciples modelled community. Christ Himself came and lived with us (Matthew 1:23); He then called a small group of disciples to live and walk with Him (Mark 3:7-10, 13-14). Jesus knew the masses had great needs, but He chose to minister to the Twelve. By walking with and training a select few, He could ultimately touch many.

A community united together is Christ's highest dream for us. It is seen in His prayer for us that we may be one - just as He, the Father and the Holy Spirit are one (John 17:11). Furthermore, Christ sees our unity and community as our message to the world that He, Christ, did come and that He is love; and if we, the body of Christ, fail at living out this community, we fail at our mission (John 17:21, 23)

It was modelled by others in the scripture.

I. Moses

Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."
- Exodus 18:17-23

- Ministry was always meant to be shared with others. Our LifeGroups provide a platform and space for others to partner in the building and caring of a community.
- LifeGroups are a place where the Word of God is taught and instructed.
- LifeGroup Leaders have delegated authority.
- In sharing ministry, people will be better ministered to.

II. Daniel

To these four young men, God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. - Daniel 2:17-18

LifeGroups are places where mutual support can be built, where like-minded believers can spur one another to keep following God's ways, in the midst of living in 'Babylon'.

III. Early Church

You see evidence in the Book of Acts (Acts 2) of a community that was devoted to gathering both in the "Temple Courts" (for worship) and "House to house" (for fellowship). They were a group living out God's reconstructed 'new community' as a people infused by God's spirit. They shared. They gave. They ate together. They added. And they were also removed. They were disciplined, and held one another accountable. This early church became the catalyst of a worldwide movement that took the Good News of God's Kingdom to the ends of the earth.

IV: Through Paul

Beyond sharing the Lord's Supper together, the agenda for house church meetings was flexible. Paul wrote to the house church in Colossae, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God"* (Colossians 3:16). Paul wanted the house church believers to encourage one another, share transparently, and rejoice in God's goodness. The members enjoyed each other's presence, laughed together, and drew near to Jesus.

PART 1: THE FOUNDATIONS

THE SOCIOLOGICAL BASIS FOR LIFEGROUPS

Human beings are social creatures. We are designed to exist and function in groups, as unpleasant as that can sometimes be. We inherently understand the need to be in community with others, whether it is to share knowledge, for safety or pool resources to build something larger than ourselves. Whether we know it or not, our sense of self and identity often is shaped by the group we are a part of - whether in family, ethnic groups or nations. That is also true for the church. God designed us to flourish when we're planted with like-minded people. Here are some reasons why.

There is a Human-shaped vacuum in our lives.

Just as God designed us to live in community with Him, He designed us to be communal and have relationships with others (Genesis 2:18, Ephesians 2:19, Mark 1:35).

There is a human-shaped vacuum in people's lives. The vacuum determines how people connect with others. Therefore, when it is empty, life can be meaningless and void. People often seek to fill the void through endless activities. But human beings actually need relationships for survival.

Dr Robert Waldinger, an American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst from Harvard, conducted the world's longest scientific study of happiness. In his study, he tracked the lives of 724 men for over 80 years to understand how childhood experience reaches across decades to affect health and well-being in middle age. He argues that about 80% of the life satisfaction of human life emanates from the quality of relationships people have with others. (Waldinger, 2015)

**God designed us
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people.**

Meaningful connections among human beings help to create a deep sense of connection. People communicate to create good associations with others.

The human-shaped vacuum always longs for perfection in loving and enduring relationships. On the other hand, engaging in unhealthy relations leaves people grieving and wanting.

The connections people depend on to achieve completion often create places of emptiness and raw edges (Veerasamy et al., 2015). As a result, the need for spiritual fulfilment tends to be more profound, and the need for relationships turns out to be even more urgent. The vacuum in the human heart can be filled with good relations. The soul often craves relationships, and it is the one that facilitates satisfaction in human life.

References:

- A. Veerasamy, C., Sambasivan, M., & Kumar, N. (2015). *Life Satisfaction Among Healthcare Volunteers in Malaysia: Role of Personality Factors, Volunteering Motives, And Spiritual Capital*. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 26(2), 531-552.
- B. Waldinger, R. (2015). *What Makes A Good Life? Lessons from The Longest Study on Happiness*.
-

God designed marriage because He recognised that man could not live alone. This idea of communal living also applies to the church. (Ephesians 5:29-30)

Once we enter a life of interdependence with God, we also enter into communal life with each other. There is power in being part of a spiritual family.

The biblical record shows that true community offers four blessings:

- We obtain the strength to weather life's storms (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).
- We receive wisdom for making good decisions (Proverbs 15:22).
- We experience accountability, which is vital to spiritual growth (Proverbs 27:17, 1 John 1:7).
- We find the acceptance that helps to heal our wounds (Proverbs 18:24).

Life change happens best in small groups.

From the OT wisdom of “iron sharpens iron” to modern sociology and psychology, we know that it is through being in a community that we are formed (for good or for bad). We become who we hang out with. Author and pastor, John Ortberg wrote: “God uses people to form people. That is why what happens between you and another person is never merely human-to-human interaction—the Spirit longs to be powerfully at work in every encounter.” The goal of LifeGroups is to create environments where Spirit-driven, life-giving experiences can flourish.

Impact is multiplied.

“If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.”

Nearly every individual has the desire to find a group of people that they can relate to and interact with. Group membership is an integral part of the human condition, and the lack of such memberships can have harmful effects on people's mental and physical health. Research has shown that individuals who are more socially integrated tend to live happier, healthier, and longer lives. Social integration promotes well-being by affording individuals a sense of meaning, purpose, and security, as well as a source of social support during times of stress or crisis. We tend to provide help and support to members of groups with which we identify, and we tend to receive help and support from them in return.

We see these instances all around the world in various schools, churches, work institutions and many other places. People are drawn to each other and in some cases forced together so that contact and interactions are inevitable. Preparation for group participation is a key part of life that we all must face and that many can grow from. The interactions and lessons that are shared amongst group members can create lasting relationships that people will hold onto for the rest of their lives and cherish.

LifeGroups can also have a key impact in shaping and impacting people in their lives. Everyone brings their own unique personality and story to the table and in the LifeGroup setting, we are called to accept and love every person despite their faults and sins. The purpose of small groups in the church is to allow people to know one another intimately and encourage and develop spiritual growth. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 shows us that we need to encourage one another and build each other up; that is a calling card of LifeGroups. We use small groups as an important part of transforming attitudes, values, and personality of those within the group through the dynamic social interactions between the members.

PART 1: THE FOUNDATIONS

THE ORGANISATIONAL BASIS FOR LIFEGROUPS

It is impossible for everyone in the church to receive the same amount of care if we merely meet for the Weekend Service. LifeGroups ensure that everyone is looked out for (Acts 6:1) and that no one stands alone. In order to accomplish this, LifeGroups are based on a principle known as the ‘Span of Care’.

The Span of Care principle involves breaking large, complex groups into smaller, more manageable units, and then assigning leaders to the individual units – so that everyone’s needs are met. We first encounter this historic pattern of leadership and communal living in Exodus 18 when Moses appointed leaders to serve the needs of smaller groups. Later, Jesus came to reach the world but focused His ministry on twelve disciples. As the apostles planted new churches across Asia Minor, they followed the Span of Care principle. They appointed elders and deacons to meet the needs of smaller groups. Paul, for example, instructed Timothy and Titus to “...*straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town*” (Titus 1:5).

Members of One Body

Each of us has a part to play as a member of one body—the body of Christ; precisely because of this, the church cannot become what Christ intends unless each member accepts responsibility. Life Groups offer the best way for everyone to play a part and become transformed through working together (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:3-7; 11-16).

**God’s work
brings all these
various ‘whosoever’
together.**

Essential but insufficient

It is equally important to recognise that although LifeGroups are an essential part of the church, it is still important that we are part of the larger Church community. The table below shows the difference between the purpose of corporate gatherings (i.e. church services) and LifeGroups.

Corporate	LifeGroups
Celebration	Assimilation
Preaching of the Word	Sharing of the Word
Direction	Discipleship
Equipping	Encouraging
Building and Edification	Expanding (Evangelism & Multiplication)
Acts 1:14, 2:1,41,45, Hebrews 10:24-25, 2 Chronicles 5:11-14	Acts 20:20, Romans 14:7, Hebrews 3:13, Matthew 28:19-20, 1 John 3:14-18

Source: *Being Rooted Disciple's Manual*, "The Family of God".

LifeGroups cannot adequately reflect Christ's "manifold wisdom" (Ephesians 3)

As Paul writes, it's through the church that *"the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places"* (Ephesians 3:10). And what is this wisdom? That, through the gospel *"Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body"* as ethnic Jews (Ephesians 3:6). Jesus has smashed the seemingly unbreachable wall between Jew and Gentile. The Gospel reaches all kinds of people, from all kinds of backgrounds and generations. Often our LifeGroups can become small communities of somewhat similar people. By not engaging with the larger Body of Christ, we fail to experience both the beauty and mystery of God's church.

We live in a world where we are identified by a variety of labels - geek, elderly, sporty etc. In church, even our groups can bear these labels - young adults, young families, elderly etc. God's work brings all these various 'whosoever' together. That larger vision is lost if we only engage at the level of LifeGroup, and not as a partner or member of the larger Body.

LifeGroups, being small, will not be able to have the variety of gifts that make up God's church.

The LifeGroup cannot do what is meant for the whole church to do. We do need one another, and that one another is part of a larger community. Every person needs a family. But that person also needs an extended family, teachers, shop owners, police officers etc. This is also true of us as God's Church.

PART 1: THE FOUNDATIONS

OUR LIFEGROUP MODEL

Goal of LifeGroups

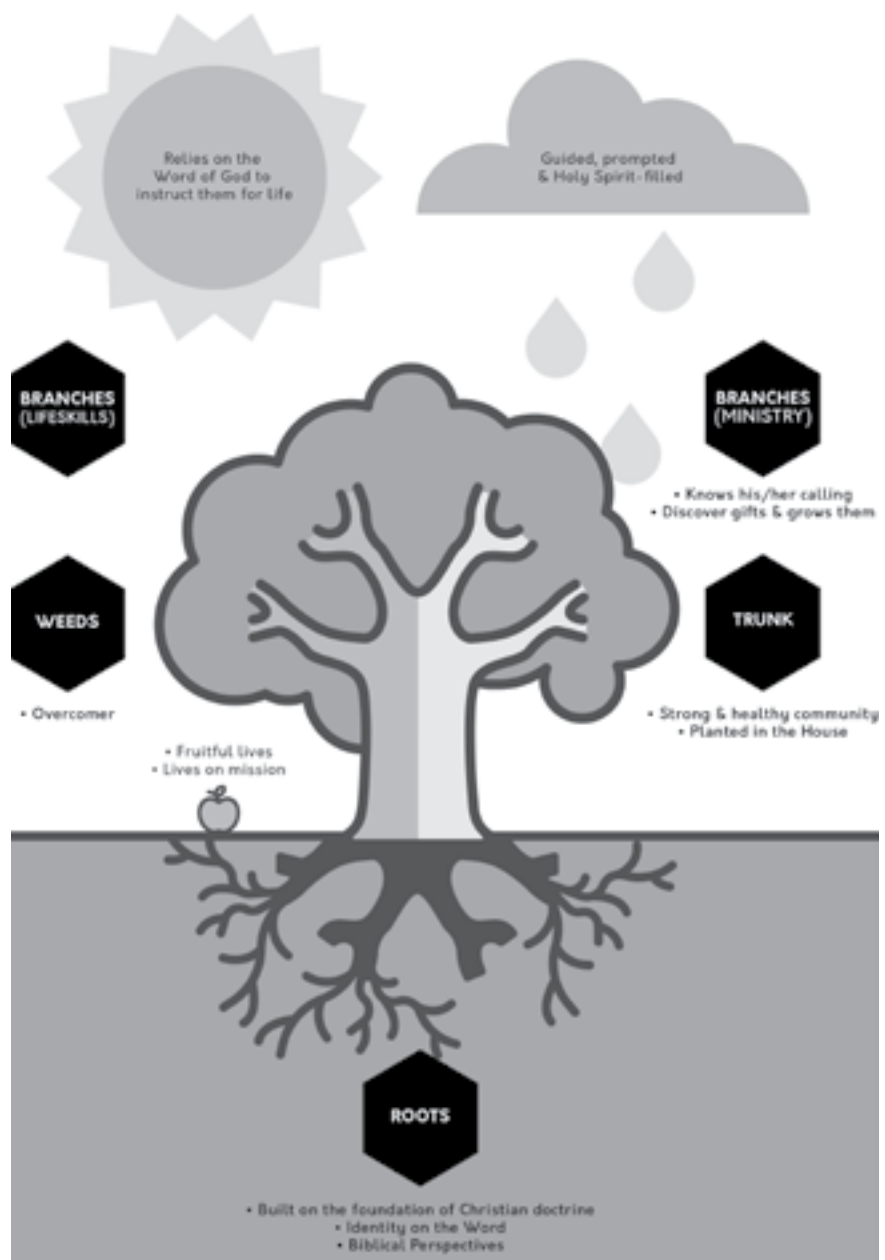
The main purpose of LifeGroups, as the name suggests, is to do life together. To live as believers in a world that may not have the same values or purpose can be discouraging or downright difficult at times. LifeGroups encourage and strengthen each other as we attempt to live “*in the world but not of the world*”, as John 17:14-15 says. This can look like getting into the Word together, sharing a meal in fellowship, being accountable to one another with challenges, or even providing care to one or more people in the community as a group. LifeGroups are the best place to connect with other believers, and they can also be a great way to reach out to those who are yet to know Christ together. LifeGroups become the environment where we get to live out God’s mission for us, that is, to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

Outcome of LifeGroups

LifeGroups are more than social gatherings or special interest groups. They are where we experience true Christian love, are confronted by the truth in the Word of God, and are safe spaces for us to repent and change the way we think and behave. This is often known as the process of transformation.

Being born again into God’s spiritual family allows us to grow up in grace. We are to mature and rightly reflect Christ to the world around us. As fully devoted disciples of Christ, we are committed to being transformed into the image of Christ.

In FGA, we use the Tree Diagram to illustrate what a transformed life looks like. There are eight components in the Tree Diagram that helps us assess if we are spiritually healthy and growing Christians.



Seed - Seed does not grow on its own. Seeds need to be planted. Like seeds, we too need to be planted in a local community. Active participation in the local church is vital for us to grow.

Roots - Roots will develop as the seed is planted and grows. To be spiritually strong, we need to have good roots. These roots represent our understanding of Christian doctrine and the Word of God. It will represent our spiritual disciplines and our identity that is built on a biblical foundation.

Trunk - As the seed grows, it will shoot upwards. The trunk will grow. The trunk represents community. Without community, we cannot be challenged or encouraged to follow God's will and His ways.

Branch (ministry) - As the tree starts to grow, it will form branches. One branch has to do with our ministry. As we discover how to use our gifts and exercise our gifts, we can reach far and wide. Our gifts will minister to God and people around us. Where your gifts can take you, make sure your roots can keep you. Our character has to be built on God's Word.

Branch (life skills) - The other branch has to do with life skills. God invites us to follow Him in all things. We want to know God's way and the biblical truth to apply in all areas of our lives, e.g. money management, time management, parenting, marriage or relationships. These skills are vital and essential for us to rightly reflect Christ to the world.

Weeds - Even though we are born again, we have bad habits or ungodly thinking or addictions that can hinder us from achieving our full potential. The tree will never grow to its full potential if the weeds are not removed. We need to uproot the weeds and remove the weeds in our lives so that ultimately, we will be a fruitful tree.

Fruit - Our lives are impacting others and making a difference. A tree never enjoys its own fruit. Someone else comes and takes its fruit and enjoys it or the fruit falls onto the ground, a seed is planted and another tree grows. This speaks of us as people who are serving and fulfilling our kingdom assignments in the world.

Rain - It is God's spirit that causes us to live in God's holiness and guides us to apply His truth in our lives. It is God's spirit that helps us become all we are designed to be. We need the Holy Spirit in our lives to reflect Christ.

Helpful Tools

The Tree Diagram Checklist is a helpful tool to have conversations with your LifeGroup members about their spiritual growth. Ask the Holy Spirit which areas of the tree diagram that He wants you to deal with in the current season of your life.

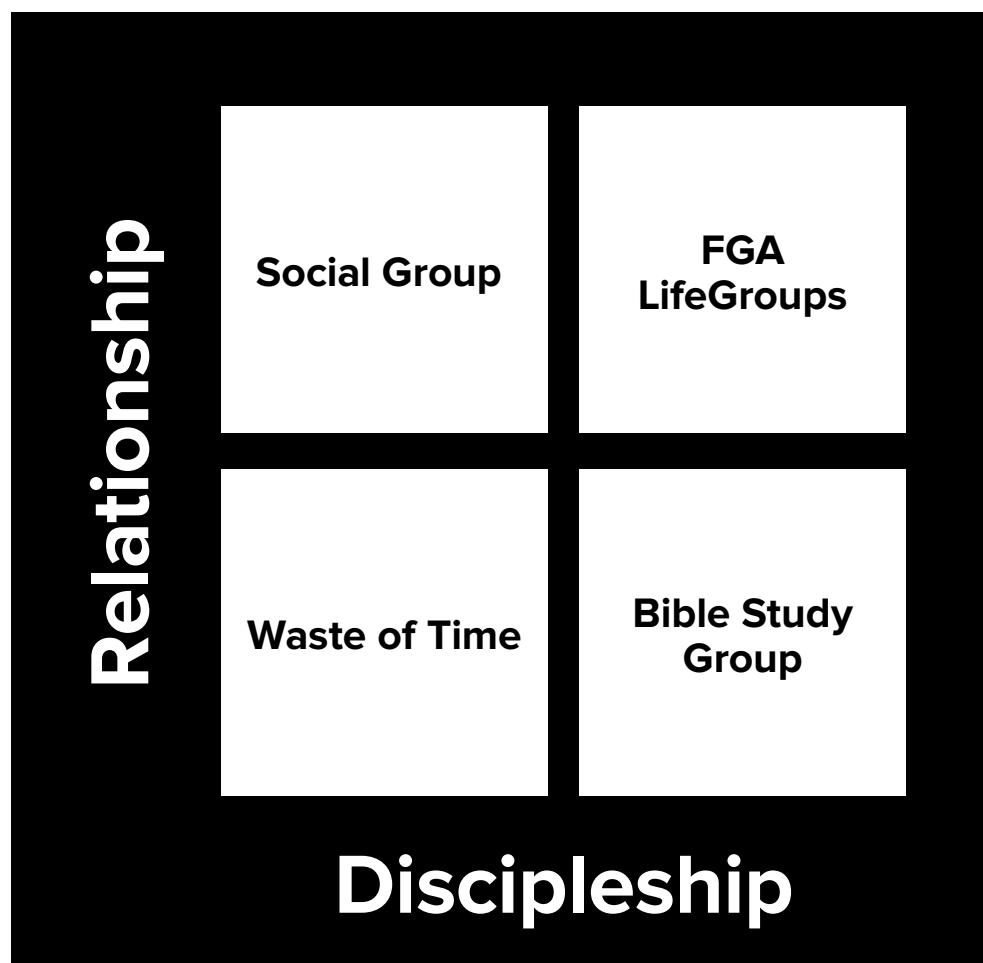
[Watch the explanation of the Tree Diagram](#) | [Download Tree Diagram Checklist](#)



Dynamics of LifeGroups

Relationship and Spiritual Growth

Any time a group of people come together for an intentional purpose, there will be a new set of dynamics to consider which will be quite different from our typical everyday one-to-one interactions. Groups over time develop norms and it is important as leaders to set those norms and social guidelines straight from the get-go, so that LifeGroup is not just a great place for those in the group, but also a great place to invite new friends and family to. Take advantage of the natural need we all have to conform to the group so that we fit in, and reinforce the kind of group cohesion and climate you want to set for your LifeGroup.



Helpful Tools

The Tree Diagram Checklist is a helpful tool to have conversations with your LifeGroup members about their spiritual growth. Ask the Holy Spirit which areas of the tree diagram that He wants you to deal with in the current season of your life.

[Watch Life Group Series: The Environment](#)



Organising Principles for LifeGroups

The way your LifeGroup is organised can often indicate what your members expect when they come to a meeting. Groups that have too many similarities like age, life stage, family dynamics (e.g married with children) or even special interests may not be able to take advantage of the fullness of the Christian community, or even lose focus on their purpose. Following are some suggestions that you may wish to consider when putting together your LifeGroup.

■ Open Groups

- Differences

- The value of diversity in age, background, and experience in a group for growth and discipleship.

■ Sermon-based

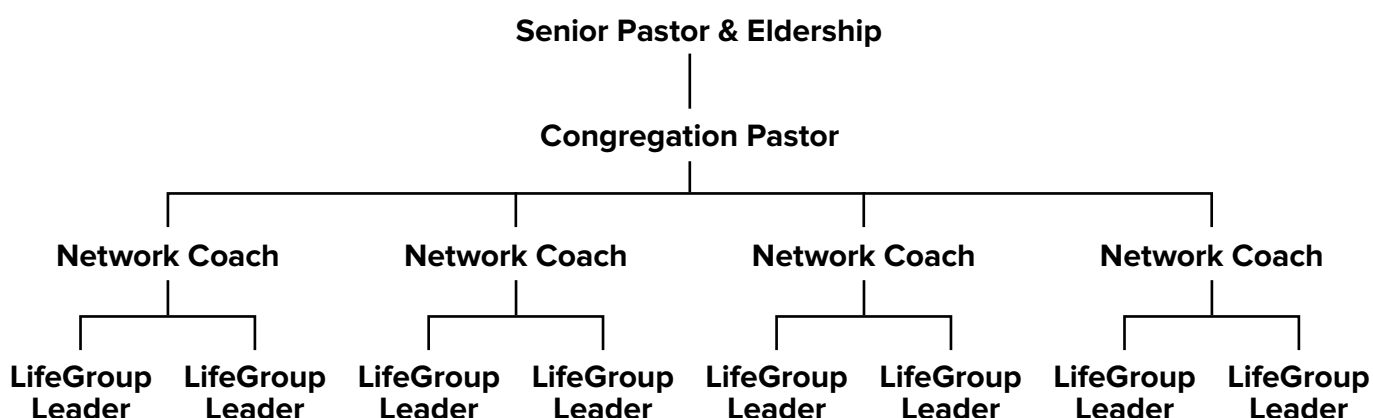
- LifeGroups are strongly encouraged to use the sermon-based curriculum to guide them in their sermon study discussion. We believe that syncing the church through a shared study promotes more cohesion, strength and community within the church at large. What is preached by our FGA preachers/teaching team is discussed in a group resulting in an application.

- The sermon curriculum is available online and emailed to all partners. You don't have to discuss every question on the curriculum. Leaders are encouraged to select the questions best suit the group. It is ideal to send out the questions you intend to process to the group in advance so they can come prepared to share their responses at LifeGroup.

During the weeks when there is no preaching or sermon series, LifeGroups can select a curriculum study that is relevant to the group. We prefer that any material used is approved by the Network Coach(es) overseeing the group.

Overall Structure of LifeGroups

Our LifeGroups are placed into networks, headed by Network Coaches who provide support and care for the LifeGroup Leaders under their care. The Network Coaches meet frequently with their congregation pastor, who updates them on Church Objectives and Goals so that every group is in alignment with the vision cast by the senior pastor and the elders.



Agenda for our LifeGroup Meetings

We may have similar objectives and long-term goals for our LifeGroups, but the way we conduct our meetings may vary, depending on various factors like meeting spaces, length of the gathering and even availability of the members. Here is a model that you may find helpful. It is called the 5Ws and it allows you to cover the main objectives of connection and transformation.

1st W → Welcome (Ice breaker)

This is when people first settle down to start the formal part of the LifeGroup meeting. The Ice Breaker is meant to help people get to know one another better, so keep it simple and easy to answer without too much mental gymnastics.

One that some of our groups have used in the past is “Share one highlight and one lowlight of the week”, where everyone takes turns to share one thing that brought them joy or a sense of accomplishment and one thing that they struggled with.



2nd W → Worship (Praise & Worship)

After the initial horizontal connections with each other, worship is a good way to quieten down everyone’s heart and orient them towards God. Choose simple songs known to everyone, and take turns to lead worship in your group. Remember, you don’t need to be a great singer or play an instrument to worship. Worship is about surrendering our hearts to God.



3rd W → Witness (Officially Welcome Visitors and Testimonies given by Members of the LG)

While everyone in your group may know each other, it may be important to have a time during the meeting that is focused on welcoming the newcomers in your midst. Encourage your members to ask questions, share stories and even give thanks to God for his goodness. This will help your visitor feel included as part of the group as well.



4th W → Word (Facilitation of the Word shared on Sunday Service, Focusing and Resulting in the Application in their Lives)

Here is where the LG Curriculum based on our Sunday messages play an important role. Take turns to facilitate the study of the Word.



5th W → Works (Visions Casting - Focusing on the Ultimate Purpose of the Existence of the Group, ie, Reaching the Lost)

One of the key objectives of a LifeGroup is to reach the unchurched and lead them to Christ. Spend some time praying over a collective Impact List or make plans to intentionally invite people to the group.



A Care System for the LifeGroup

Possible Ideas:

- Buddy system - connect every member to someone else, so that they have someone to turn to for anything
 - To build greater community among the whole group, you can rotate the buddies so that everyone has an opportunity to connect with each other.
- Engage older members to 'look after' some of the newer and/or younger members
- Engage the apprentice to shepherd a few within the group

Factors of success

We lead LifeGroups because we want people to become fully devoted followers of Christ. That also means we will be constantly looking out for people who catch this vision and are willing to serve in the Body of Christ to lead people. In FGA, we have a tool to help you called the LeaderFinder Tool. This tool helps you to assess potential leaders and see if they have the traits required to lead a group. These potential leaders could lead a Life Group or an area of ministry, and the tool helps you assess where they fit best.

Raising leaders (and sending them out into other areas - LifeGroup, ministries, etc)

Churches grow one LifeGroup at a time. Every new LifeGroup creates more space for people to become connected, and to grow in discipleship. However, it takes a new LifeGroup leader to start a small group. That's why we have to model it first so that others can watch us and do the same.

Multiplying groups

It takes leaders to make new leaders. As 2 Timothy 2:2 – *"The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."* In FGA, we call this the Apprentice Model. You select an apprentice and over a period of about a year, you share the load of LifeGroup leading and shepherding with them. This can look like hosting a LifeGroup, facilitating a bible study, leading worship, meeting other members one-on-one, or following up with a visitor. After about a year, you can nominate them for Shockwave.

Helpful Tools

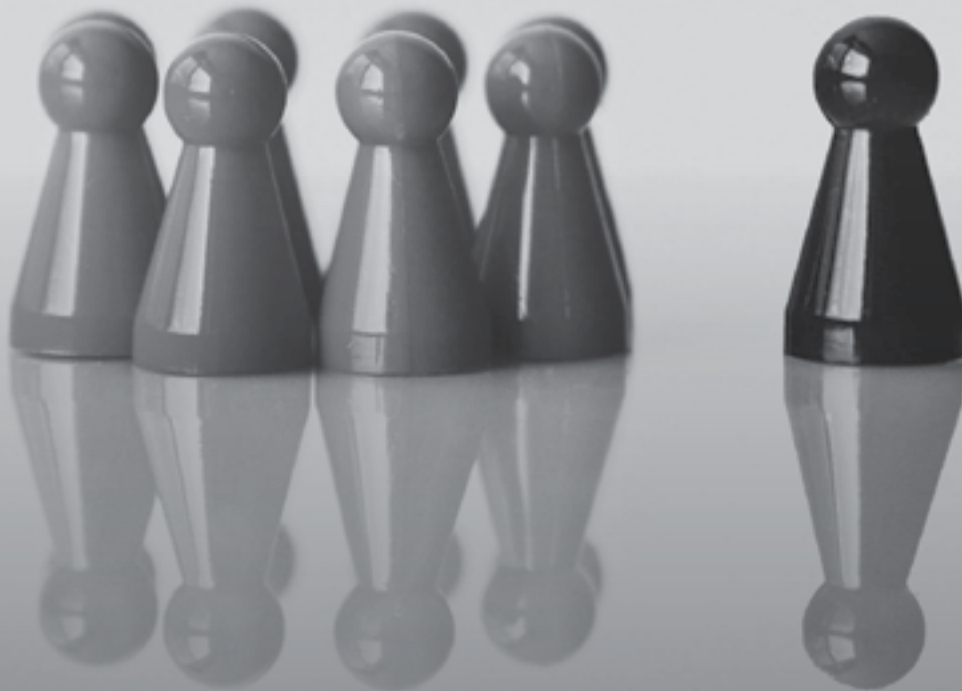
In FGA, we use the LeaderFinder Tool to identify potential leaders. This tool helps us to find the RIGHT people and making sure they are in the RIGHT SEAT.

If you have identified members in your group to be apprentices, speak to your Network Coach(es) and have them endorse your decision. Once they have given the green light, you can approach them and share your intention to raise them as apprentices.

[Download LeaderFinder Tool](#)



PART 2



THE LEADERS

- **ROLE OF OUR LEADERS**
- **SELECTION OF OUR LEADERS**
- **EXPECTATIONS OF OUR LEADERS**
- **HABITS OF A HEALTHY LEADER**
- **HOW TO BEST SHEPHERD MY MEMBERS**

PART 2: THE LEADERS

ROLE OF OUR LEADERS

A helpful metaphor for us as LifeGroup leaders is that of the family. LifeGroup leaders become spiritual parents to their members. As parents, we seek to love those in our care. We seek God's wisdom to guide and instruct them so that they grow and walk in God's ways. As parents, from time to time, we also need to discipline them, hold them accountable and correct them according to God's Word. And often this gets experienced through our ability to facilitate the LifeGroup gathering or meeting.

PART 2: THE LEADERS

SELECTION OF OUR LEADERS

While leadership styles can vary from person to person, in the end, we want every leader to succeed at raising leaders and multiplying their groups. Therefore setting expectations is vital and can greatly help leaders to successfully manage accountability and fulfil their roles as shepherds over their flock.

Process of Selection

As the group grows and matures, LifeGroup leaders need to identify mature and responsible members who can be coached to become future LifeGroup leaders. We use the apprenticeship model to identify and raise LG Leaders.

1. Identify

How do we identify? At FGA, we believe that F.A.S.T. Leaders make great leaders - Faithful, Available, Submissive, and Teachable!

"But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. - Exodus 18:21-22

● Faithfulness

Faithful leaders are reliable and consistent. We are looking for leaders who are first faithful in little things (Matthew 25:21).

● Availability

They are willing and have adequate time. God is looking for servants who are available and committed. Jesus said to His followers, *“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:62). To an audience that did not understand the cost of following Christ and the level of commitment He desires, those were hard words—they involved unreserved devotion.

Life Group leaders serve in the spirit of commitment, not convenience. It takes courage, resolve and perseverance to press on when disappointment or worries hit them. Leaders need to remain committed to Christ and to His cause.

● Submissive

There is no question that the Pastor and Shepherd of the Church is Jesus Christ. He’s our Leader. People have used this foundational truth to justify their lack of submission to the appointed leadership in a local congregation. But the bible teaches us that while Jesus is the Pastor of His church, He has appointed ‘under-shepherds’ to oversee the affairs of the local church. God has ordained spiritual leadership in His Church. There is a clear chain of command in the ministry.

“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” - Hebrews 13:17 NKJV

It’s important for us not to lose sight that in our service, we are co-labouring together for the work of the kingdom. Another way of looking at this is remembering we are all ‘under authority’. When we speak of authority, we have to remember God desires our submission to biblical authority.

In cases when there is abuse, pain, and misuse of biblical authority, submission to God takes precedence. You are under no obligation to be hurt or abused in any way, especially in the name of God. But when there is godly leadership there is also to be godly submission. Without it, there is disorder.

● Teachability

A leader should be one who understands biblical submission and is eager to learn. He can also handle criticisms and instructions from others (Proverbs 9:8-9).

No one likes a negative comment. The ability to handle criticism is part of your spiritual and leadership growth. Ultimately, the leader’s success stands or falls before God. Paul declares, *“We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts”* (1 Thessalonians 2:4-6).

Successful LifeGroup leaders keep on doing the things they know they should do. Through practice, their leadership is perfected. They are willing to do what it takes to make LifeGroups successful.

F.A.S.T. people come in all shapes and sizes. We need a mixed bag of leaders to reach different people groups.

In addition to being FAST, members identified to become apprentices should embody the following:

- Demonstrates an active, growing relationship with Christ by building spiritual habits
- Baptism in water and in the Spirit
- Vision and loyalty to the church
- Faithfulness in tithing to the church
- If he/she is married, the marriage has a strong foundation. The spouse is supportive of the apprentice taking on a leadership role in the church. We subscribe to 1 Timothy 3:1-12 principle set out by Paul for qualifications of leaders.
- Regular attendance at services, prayer meetings, leaders' huddles, training sessions/retreats and active participation at events hosted by FGA.

2. Appoint them as apprentices

Once the apprentice has been identified, make it known to the LifeGroup. Highlight that the group has to grow and multiply and the strategy to do so is to keep raising leaders.

3. Coaching apprentices

See Appendix, Checklist for selecting a LifeGroup Apprentice, pg 46.

This is a checklist of skills/spiritual disciplines to build the apprentice up so that he/she can be ready for LifeGroup leadership.

Our coaching model is simple:



The key goal at the end of the apprenticeship process is to train the apprentice to do the work of the LifeGroup leader effectively before he/she goes for Shockwave. The timeline differs from person to person and also depends on the apprentice's readiness. Some can take up to a year to become ready and some can take as fast as 3 months. No hard and fast rule about the timing. Most importantly, the leader and apprentice have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives in the process.

4. Send them to Shockwave Training

Shockwave is a 5-week training developed and run by the Senior Pastor. This allows the Senior Pastor to get to know and connect with the potential leaders and for them to know and align with God's heart, vision and values for the church.

Upon graduation, they will have a check-in with their network coaches to determine if they are willing to step up and take on leadership roles in FGA. If yes, the apprentices' leadership roles will be determined in consultation with network coach(es) and their LG leader(s).

With the LeaderFinder Tool, we are guided to discern where God wants them to lead (not where you want them to lead). Both apprentices and leaders have to seek God's heart and know where the best leadership place is for them. This is God's church. Not yours.

5. Release to lead

Apprentices who have graduated from Shockwave and are endorsed to be a leader will be appointed. An official announcement will be made at the leaders' meeting.

These leaders will be released to lead ministry teams or lifegroups (as determined before the announcement is made).

PART 2: THE LEADERS EXPECTATIONS OF OUR LEADERS

Heart Commitment

We expect our leaders to be committed with their whole heart to God first and foremost, for everything that they do will come out of that primary relationship. They also need to be committed to FGA's Vision and Mission and make it their own. Level 1: First to GOD, then to FGA Vision/Mission. Secondly, leaders must be committed to caring for their LifeGroup as a whole. It is only natural for us to be closer to some people as opposed to others due to similarities or just when you click. But we are expected as leaders to show equal amounts of care for those we are not as close to. To use the shepherding analogy, shepherds may have one or two sheep that they are particularly fond of, but they feed, water and safeguard all the sheep equally well so that they don't lose any to predators or natural dangers. So it is for our LifeGroups.

Time Commitment

LifeGroups should ideally and minimally have two LifeGroup meetings a month for their group, but that's not all. LifeGroup leaders are required to attend our weekend services regularly, as well as prayer and leaders meetings for their congregation. At outreach events or combined services, they are expected to reach out to and connect with new visitors.

Our Ethics in Leadership

As leaders, we agree to conduct ourselves in an upright and professional manner, always reflecting the highest standard of biblical integrity in keeping with our calling.

[Read the Leadership Commitment](#)



Our Leaders Biblical Knowledge

Leaders should be learners, and specifically growing in the knowledge of and application of God's Word to our lives.

- Growing in the word of God through personal bible reading and study
- Being able to know how to read and explain scriptures
- Be able to teach and explain the content of Being Rooted
- Ideally having worked through Christian Doctrines

Having said this, we know that the leader's role in the LifeGroup would primarily be to facilitate discussion, rather than focus on being a bible teacher.

[Doctrine videos](#) | [Being Rooted Curriculum](#)



Our Leaders Prayer Life

- Personal prayer time that is regular
- Praying for the members
- Participating in the corporate gathering to pray
 - Churchwide and Congregational prayer meetings
 - Praying the will of God

Our Expectation of what skills our Leaders should have

- **To lead and manage**
 - **Lead:** Causes the church to progress by emphasising, clarifying, and reminding people of their purpose. He is a catalyst who helps individuals to harmonise their abilities as the body of Christ, helping people to strengthen their purposefulness through a growing commitment to Christ and His kingdom.
 - **Manage:** Finds and marshals resources to develop ways and means to organise people and programs to achieve God-set goals and visions. Establishes policies and goals keeping counter-productive processes from weakening the dynamics of the local church.

- **Facilitation skills**

- See Appendix, Asking The Right Questions, pg 48

- **Shepherding**

- To identify (or facilitate the process of identification) of strengths and/or spiritual gifts in members, and to be able to encourage the growth and usage of those gifts (by sending them to Know Your SHAPE)

- **Basic counselling**

- Good listening skills

- **Basic ability to teach**

Living out our Values

Even as we want to fulfil our mission well, we also want to think about how we do it, what qualities we choose to embody that guide our actions, individually and corporately. These are what are usually known as values - basic beliefs that guide or motivate our attitudes or actions. Here are some of FGA's values that might help you understand how we would ideally like to function a little better.

1. Missional

We have a heart to actively reach out and are willing to try new methods to reach people in our communities who are far from God.

2. Caring

We are willing to draw the circle wider and include people to whom we demonstrate practical love and care.

3. Yielded

We take time to listen to and discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, and use His spiritual gifts to grow personally as well as help others move in their gifts.

4. Collaborative

We desire to work together with others from different departments/congregations/volunteers and seek to protect the unity of this Body as One Church.

5. Empowering

We actively and intentionally make disciples while continuing to be disciples ourselves.

6. Faith Filled

We are willing to be obedient to the Lord's direction, take time to hear God and 'do it afraid' if needed.

7. Enthusiastic

We bring our best energy to our Life Group or ministry work and choose to believe the best in others.

8. Excellence

We do our best in all things, while not demanding perfection. We are willing to go above and beyond expectations and think about what will bring improvement, even if it's just 1% better.

9. Big Hearted

We live with a largeness of spirit and are willing to share and give of our time, resources and energy.

10. Relational

We set aside time to connect with one another and others.

11. Transformation

We pay attention to God's work IN us, as we become more Christlike in word, work and attitude.

12. Servanthood

We are willing to do whatever is required.

Applying Wisdom in Leading

● Setting Boundaries

It is important to maintain an ethical relationship between the LifeGroup leader and LifeGroup member. This means that every LifeGroup leader should exercise wisdom and strive to establish clear boundaries that protect the well-being and autonomy of every member within the group.

In setting boundaries, the LifeGroup leader should give higher priority to creating a safe and comfortable environment for every member and should avoid situations that could be perceived as inappropriate or misinterpreted in areas of physical, financial and emotional relationships.

Here are some examples to understand what would be appropriate boundaries in LifeGroup settings.

- In a situation where there are only two members of the opposite gender present for a LifeGroup meeting, it would be appropriate to cancel the meeting.
- In an event where children are attending Life Group meetings together with adults, it would be appropriate that children are under the care of adult supervision and not left alone to themselves in order to avoid abusive situations.
- In situations where a member is going through emotional distress or feeling overwhelmed with emotions and perhaps has suicidal tendencies, it would be appropriate to contact your Network Coach or Pastor to seek pastoral counselling and or get professional help.

For any other queries on clarity of boundaries please check with your Network Coach or Pastor.

Where can I go for help? What do I do when members have a need that is beyond my ability to care for or counsel?

Approach your network coach(es) first to seek counsel.

Proverbs 11:14 says, *“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”* Depending on the severity or complexity of the problem, the network coach(es) may need to escalate the situation to the pastor/elder to get their advice.

PART 2: THE LEADERS HABITS OF A HEALTHY LEADER

As leaders, we may feel like we are always operating at high octane levels, firing on all cylinders to do the best we can to achieve what is required of us. When coupled with disappointment or frustration when things don't go as planned, this can take an emotional toll on us. If the stress from these triggers is not dealt with regularly and well, we can experience what is commonly known as burnout.

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a leadership position in the first place.

Habit #1: To Retreat Regularly

You need times of solitude. One of the terms Jesus used to describe this was “inner room” or “inner chamber” as in Matthew 6:6, *“But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”*

Whatever term you use, you must regularly turn off the music, and the computer and even turn people away so that you can get away to a deserted place. God wants one-on-one time with you. You can talk with Him anytime and anywhere, but sometimes you won't have meaningful communication with God unless you've had enough solitary time with yourself to know what you need to talk to Him about.

In Luke 10, Martha focused on productivity, but Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet. Sometimes we get so busy serving the Lord that we do not cultivate our spiritual life. What do the following Scriptures say about the importance of spending time with Him?

Matthew 14:23 _____

Luke 6:12 _____

Mark 1:35 _____

Mark 6:32 _____

Do you want to have power in your LifeGroup? Check your solitude level. The most important thing you do as a leader is to HEAR FROM GOD. When you catch what God wants you to do in your church, you move in the anointing.

Habit #2: To deal with your emotional life

What is your emotional gauge? As a leader, you are highly visible! Everyone watches you. In ministry, your work is never finished. We may not be able to change our external stress but we can change our internal stress. 95% of the battle is in our mind.

Having a great attitude means that when you have negative emotions, you make sure you deal with those things so that you don't allow them to stop you.

**Working harder
means slowing
down to connect
with God.**

- Deal with (resolve) your conflicts
 - As a leader, your priority is reconciliation, rather than being right.
- Talk to people about your internal world
 - There is something powerful when you express what's in your thoughts/in your mind.

Habit #3: Keep growing a healthy mind + a robust faith

If you stop growing as a leader, you put a lid on yourself. Most leaders have too much output but not enough input (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

Ways you can grow:

- Reading
- Listening to podcasts/sermons/teaching
- Attending conferences/Receiving formal training
- Being mentored (learning from someone better than you)
- Leading/Doing it

Habit #4: Develop close friendships (healthy social life)

Surround yourself with people (your peers) whom you enjoy sharing life with and add other dimensions to your life, like recreational activities or hobbies that can take your mind off ministry. Proverbs 17:22 says, "*A cheerful heart is a good medicine.*" Hot coals in a fireplace glow longer and more brightly together than they would separately.

Importance of Accountability

Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. *“Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”* - James 1:14-16

The bible very clearly tells us that no one is immune from the draw of temptation or the stumbling blocks of sin. The stakes are high as leaders because when we fall, we don't fall alone. There have been countless times when leaders have fallen and the sheep are scattered.

We need to help one another *“lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us”* (Hebrews 12:1). Being accountable and being held accountable by others can help us grow to be more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:1 provides great insight into this: *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.* - Galatians 6:1 ESV

**Accountability
needs high-trust
relationships to be
effective.**

Temptation loses its power when confronted with a gentle correction from a loving community that wants the best for us. We do better when we know that we are not fighting alone but with a band of brothers and sisters who care about our victory over sin as much as they care about theirs. Accountability is a practice we all should desire.

Accountability in the church is key for healthy growth as we minister to each other in LifeGroups. As leaders, we highly encourage you to meet up with your Network Coach(es) or Ministry Head(s) periodically. Accountability needs high-trust relationships to be effective. Be vulnerable and allow your leaders to be vulnerable too as they provide wisdom and speak into your life.

Proverbs 27:17 proclaims: *“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another”*. This simple proverb reminds us that no one's meant to struggle alone. Hence, in the process of becoming more Christ-like, let's also help others become Christ-like through an accountable relationship with your leaders and those you lead.

Habit #5: Keep physically healthy and fit

God made us with a spirit, a soul and a body. Your physical body determines how far you can run in your destiny. The Christian life is not a 100m sprint. It's about how far you can run and we need to finish well.

- Keep a balanced diet – you are what you eat
- Exercise regularly
- Have adequate sleep and rest

PART 2: THE LEADERS

HOW TO BEST SHEPHERD MY MEMBERS

LifeGroup leaders are undershepherds. We help our pastor to take care of the flock that has been entrusted to our church and its leadership. Therefore learning how to shepherd them well is a key function. Fortunately, you don't need any special training or skills to be able to do this. Most of us already inherently know how to care for people, as the Holy Spirit has given us the revelation to do so. It's just a matter of being intentional and keeping up with a rhythm of connection and care.

Definition of a Shepherd:

1. "A person who takes care of sheep."
2. "One who tends", also "to tend".
3. "One who has devoted himself wholeheartedly to others for the sake of their personal health, growth and maturity in both the natural and spiritual realms of their lives."

The word in Scripture is a functional word, not positional or a title.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. - Psalm 23:1-6 NIV

What characteristics of God's shepherd's heart do you see here?

- God guides us to rest and refreshment.
- God comforts in the face of difficulty.
- God assures us of his presence.

For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. - Ezekiel 34:11-16 NIV

What characteristics of God's shepherd's heart do you see here?

- God leads the sheep to places of rest.
- God searches for the lost.
- God binds up the weak.

Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father. - John 10:7-18 NIV

What characteristics of God’s shepherd’s heart do you see here?

- Jesus provides protection.
- Jesus is willing to make sacrifices for his sheep.
- Jesus is committed to the well-being of the flock.

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. - 1 Peter 5:2-4 NIV

What characteristics of God’s shepherd’s heart do you see here?

- Be willing to watch over the flock.
- Be an example to the flock.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.” - John 21:15-17

Jesus asked Simon Peter three times, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?...Feed my sheep.” An interlinear study of the Greek in this passage reveals a difference in the meaning of the words, “feed”. The first time Jesus commanded Peter to ‘feed my lambs’ in John 21:15, it simply means to feed as a herdsman. The second command, “Tend my sheep” in John 15:16, has a broader meaning. The verb “tend” in Greek means to **rule, govern, protect, lead, guide, care for and nurture**. Combining the two verbs, the final command, “Feed my sheep” in John 21:17 expresses the fullness of the pastoral task assigned to Peter.

All of these characteristics of a shepherd are not exhaustive. Essentially, our hearts as shepherds for God’s people should reflect God’s heart as a shepherd for his people. After all, we are called to be God’s under-shepherds. So as you gather to shepherd your LifeGroup Leaders, remember God’s heart as a shepherd for you! Then lead out of that same heart.

PRACTICAL

Here are some things you can do to enhance your shepherding skills:

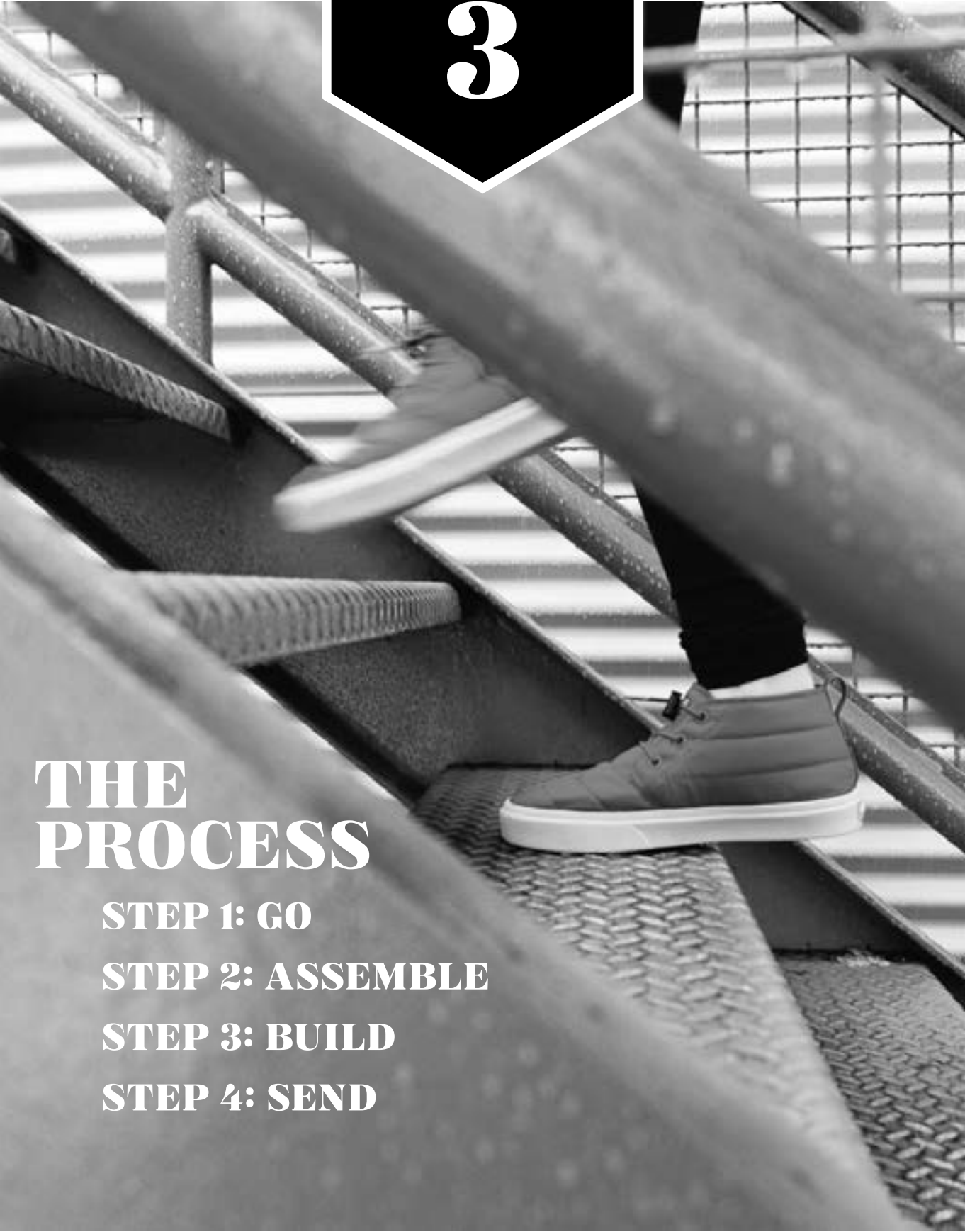
- Pray for your LifeGroup members and ask God to give you wisdom and guidance on how to best care for them.
- Spend time getting to know each member and learning about their needs, issues and dreams. We should all have the smell of sheep on us.
- Share your own experiences and offer advice for the purpose of assisting members in strengthening their faith.
- Give encouragement to your members to recognise their potential and worth in Christ.
- Hold people accountable for their behaviour in a courteous and caring way, and encourage them to develop their faith.
- Make yourself accessible to members, whom they can turn to for help and direction. It’s the little acts that earn respect from people. Do a little act of kindness. When the day of crisis comes, you are able to draw the ‘deposits’ in the bank because they trust you and you have served them.
- Celebrate your LifeGroup member’s success and accomplishments and exhort them to continue developing their faith.

Reflection

Looking back at the passages that we read above. Which characteristics do you display as a shepherd? Which characteristics would you like to/need to grow in?

Read: [Small Group Leaders are Shepherds](#) | [Learn how to Shepherd your Small Group](#)





PART 3

THE PROCESS

STEP 1: GO

STEP 2: ASSEMBLE

STEP 3: BUILD

STEP 4: SEND

PART 3: THE PROCESS

STEP 1: GO

A common mistake that people make when they read the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18 is that they interpret the word “Go” to mean that we need to leave our homes, our families and our jobs and become full time missionaries. This is far from the truth. The word “Go” in Greek (poreuō) means “to pursue the journey on which one has entered”. In other words, in continuing whatever your life journey is, make disciples!

So as we go to work, go to school, go to the army, whatever our life journey looks like, we are to look out for opportunities to share the good news of Christ. However, it is important to build and establish relationships first, so that people will be more receptive to what we have to share.

Ask the Lord to teach us how to love people and serve their needs first. Then we can look at how we can introduce the gospel. Perhaps it will be through a personal testimony. Perhaps it will be through a supernatural encounter like healing or deliverance. Perhaps it will be through a spiritual conversation, where you can ask questions that will make them think about what they believed more deeply.

Building a lifestyle culture of reaching out in your group

■ Believe for it

- Have an expectation that non-believers are welcome to our LifeGroup

■ Model It

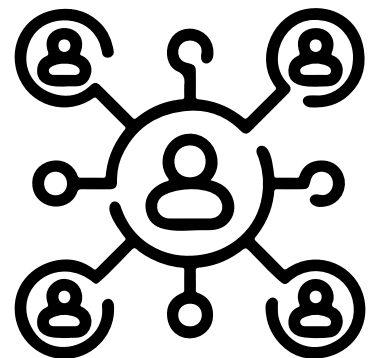
- Frequently invite friends to your group, and share your experiences with the group, even when you are not successful. Just knowing that you are practising it could encourage someone.

■ Speak about it

- At every meeting, pray for the people on your impact lists.

■ Be trained for it

- Equip LifeGroup members to engage and befriend
- Equip LifeGroup to share personal testimonies and the gospel
- Attend Emmaus Way as a LifeGroup and follow the steps listed there
 - Pray (Impact List)
 - Love & Serve (Meet their needs, care)
 - Share Personal Testimony (Before Christ, Meeting Christ, After Christ)
 - Use the Bridge Diagram
 - Invite to church/LifeGroup/events/activities



■ Celebrate it

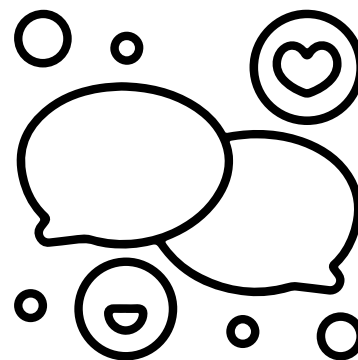
- Celebrate when LifeGroup members invite friends to LifeGroup gatherings/church

■ Structure for it

- Invite a new person to the next thing - the next gathering, next service, next prayer meeting, next event.
- Empty Chair - Add an empty chair in the midst of your gathering; pray for the person who is not there
- Frame events/activities in church as outreach opportunities and informing the LifeGroup of them
- Bring people together
- E.g. in your daily activities, think of ways in which you can bring Christian (LifeGroup members) and non-Christians together

■ Pray for it

- Pray for new visitors as a LifeGroup



Engaging in Spiritual Conversations

The key is to have a posture of listening towards the person.

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief? What are some of your spiritual beliefs?

- Listen with interest/compassion. Listen more than you talk.
- Be polite and find out where they are coming from first.

2. To you, who is Jesus? Have you ever heard about Jesus? Do you know why Christians celebrate Christmas?

- Works for religious people - people who go to church but not relational.
- Do not worry about what is going to happen next because God will do the conviction work.
- Ask the why question, find out what is holding them back.
- Use personal crisis/experience/testimony to share the gospel – how being a Christian gives hope to the situation.

3. Do you believe that there is a heaven and hell?

- Their answer is not important.

4. If you died right now, where would you go? If heaven, why would God let you in?

- Move from head to heart.

5. If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?

- If they answer 'no', then stop, and if 'yes' then we have permission to go on.
- Ask if we can pray for them.

Helpful Tools

A. Video: [How to be bold without being pushy](#)



| [Emmaus Way: Interviews](#)



B. Read: [How to turn a conversation to spiritual things](#)



PART 3: THE PROCESS

STEP 2: ASSEMBLE

Starting A New Group

Work with your Network Coach to plan as early as possible the multiplication and growth of the group. Below are 4 possible scenarios, but keep in mind that many other permutations may arise.

We strongly encourage to use the resource [42](#) to kickstart your LifeGroup.



After 42, other resources to consider are Being Rooted or Sermon Curriculum. More resources can be found in the leaders portal.

■ 4 possible scenarios

● Scenario #1: multiplying an existing group

- This scenario serves best when the group is growing. Once you have more than 8-12 members, the group should start vision casting and preparing for multiplication.
- LifeGroup Leader to vision cast with the group from the beginning that they are going to multiply.
- Create a Launch Timeline, and communicate to everyone in the group. Ideally, the new group should start within 3 months of being appointed as a new LifeGroup Leader.
- Decide on how to multiply, i.e. which members from the group will go to the new group.
- Pray for and release the new LifeGroup Leader. Involve your Network Coach in this. Start meeting as a new group.

● Scenario #2: you are sent out to pioneer a new group

- This scenario works best when the new Leader has a burden for a particular demographic.
- Work with the Network Coach, (and Assimilation Pastor IC/Pastor) to find opportunities to meet with, build bridges and invite this demographic to a group gathering.
 - Network Coach to build a rhythm of contact work between the new Leader and the demographic.
 - ◊ E.g. do contact work with young working adults at least twice a month
 - Suggested timeline: To start a group officially within 6 months

- **Scenario #3: replace the current LifeGroup Leader**

- This scenario works if and when the current leader will be stepping down.
- **Scenario #3.1: the new Leader is taking over a group that he/she wasn't a member previously**

- Note: that relationship building needs to be established.
- Network Coach to bridge the relational gap to get to know one another.

- **Scenario #3.2: the new Leader is taking over a group that he/she was a member previously/currently**

- Here the new leader already has some level of relationship with the members.

- **Scenario #4: To merge groups together**

- The scenario works best if the group hasn't been able to identify an apprentice within the group, and they can merge with another smaller group (either within the same network, or in a new network)

■ Minimum size to start a group: 2 members

Becoming a Member of the LifeGroup

- The LifeGroup Leader obtains a verbal confirmation with the new member that he/she desires and is willing to be a part of the group.
- The LifeGroup Leader to inform the Network Coach and the Assimilation Pastor/ Congregation Pastor.
- Welcome the new member to the Group (either through the WhatsApp Chat Group or other means).
- It might be helpful to distinguish between a group member and a group visitor. Group members are willing to be committed to the group gatherings. For instance, if there are some who are not able to commit to the regularity of gathering, then the LifeGroup leader should have a conversation with the person to clarify the person's commitment.

Personal Data Protection Act (2020) (PDPA)

As a church registered in Singapore, FGA adheres to the IMDA guidelines on how we can collect, use and share the personal data of our partners. Our partnership forms have a section that informs partners about our PDPA policies and practices. We respect the trust that was placed in us to safeguard their personal information and we want to be careful about sharing such information. Failure to adhere could potentially expose the Church, the Pastoral Staff, the Office Staff and Ministry Leaders to complaints, criminal charges and/or bad publicity.

Information that is considered confidential includes full name, NRIC number, photographs or video images of an individual, personal mobile telephone number, passport number or even a voice recording of an individual.

Before we share any of these, please ensure that you have the person's expressed consent. Similarly, do not share the personal information of our leaders, staff or elders without asking them first.

Assimilating a Visitor into a LifeGroup

- LifeGroup Leader to appoint a member to formally follow up with the visitor.
 - **First Contact.** Within 48 hours to connect with visitor. This can be via text message/phone call.
 - Welcome them. Thank them.
 - Objective is to move to a face-to-face meet up; contact work
 - Invite them to the next thing.
 - Face-to-Face Contact Work. Within 7 days, to meet up face-to-face with the visitor
 - Connect to 2 Others. Within 2 weeks to introduce the visitor to 2 more new relationships.
 - Invite them. Invite them to LifeGroup, to doing Being Rooted one on one, to church services.
-

The Group Covenant

Introduction on the purpose of the Group Covenant, and here are some guidelines and steps.

1. Creating the right environment for growth

- a. **safety** (trust one another, keep confidence on things what we share),
- b. **openness** (honest in communication and provide constructive feedback),
- c. **confidentiality** (what we hear and see in the group will stay in the group),
- d. **respect** (a recognition and acceptance of the inherent worth of each member, and an understanding that everyone's opinions and beliefs are valuable),
- e. **encouragement** (we should accept each group member as they are. We are to encourage each member to progress in becoming more like Christ),
- f. **accountability** (that we hold accountable for specific areas of our life), love (that we should affirm each member no matter what others have said or done),
- g. **commitment** (that we should choose to attend each scheduled meeting. That we make every effort to be present and on time),
- h. **participation** (that we will do our part to keep the discussion based on the truth of the bible),
- i. **prayer** (that we will promise to pray for others in the lifegroup on a regular basis).

2. Steps to creating an effective Group Covenant

- a. Gather the members of your LifeGroup together
- b. Discuss and agree upon the purpose of the LifeGroup
- c. Write a covenant or agreement that outlines the purpose, goals, values and behaviours agreed upon by the LifeGroup members.
- d. Specify and agree with the group expectations and guidelines: What day to meet regularly? What time to meet? Actual meeting time to begin and end the group discussion, how to handle a refreshment, if any?
- e. Have each member of the LifeGroup sign the covenant to signify their commitment to it.
- f. Review and update the covenant regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and effective for the LifeGroup.
- g. Refer to The Group Covenant in [42](#)



PART 3: THE PROCESS

STEP 3: BUILD

Our LifeGroup rhythm is to meet at least twice a month, therefore as best as possible we shouldn't cancel the meeting. If for some reason the majority of people cannot attend, then the LifeGroup should reschedule the gathering rather than just to cancel.

The only time that LifeGroup could be 'cancelled' is if the LifeGroup meeting clashes with a church event/activity. In that case, then the LifeGroup meeting is cancelled so that everyone can attend the church related event.

Sermon Based Groups

See Appendix, The Purpose and Value of Sermon-based Group, pg 51.

Understanding what had been preached and how do we apply the Word practically. Sermon-based groups have an ability to take the Word of God preached to a congregation and make it applicable to each person to live out.

Discovery - Looking at the text. Recalling the Message point/s.

Discussion - Facilitate a discussion so that the group can understand the passage and message.

Do - Bring the discussion to a point of application.

The Format of a LifeGroup Meeting

See pg 14 for a recommended agenda for our LifeGroup Gatherings.

A suggested format will be to use the 5 W's. **Welcome** (Icebreaker), **Worship** (Praise & Worship), **Witness** (Testimonies), **Word** (Application of Sunday's Message), **Works** (Vision and Outreach).

Meeting Online

See Appendix, How to set up an online LifeGroup meeting, pg 52.

With busy work schedules, families that need our attention and even the inconvenience of travel, online meetings continue to be a good alternative to in-person gatherings.

They take place in the comfort of your homes, and there are now many video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google that allow you to easily set up online meetings. While online meetings should not completely replace face to face gatherings, they are ideal for closing the gap during times when meeting together physically becomes difficult to organise.

Members can still see each other, hear each other, share meaningful notes, videos or visuals, and hold deep discussions. They still provide connection, encouragement, bible study, and even support. For the host or life group leader, it can also mean less preparation and clean up time!

Engaging Children in your Group

If your LifeGroup members are parents with young children, you may need to find a way to keep the kids engaged so that the parents can focus on the LifeGroup and not be concerned with keeping their children quiet or occupied.

Why does this matter? Parents are already stretched by careers and hustling kids from daycare to school to outside school activities. Providing proper care and supervision for their kids would mean parents can benefit from LifeGroup while still being actively involved in their children's spiritual growth and not merely relegating it to children's ministry, a few spiritual conversations at the dinner table or even deciding to take a breather from groups.

Along with needing an intimate community, parents set the tone and teach life lessons to their children as much by what they do as by what they say. "More is caught than taught," as the saying goes. When parents participate in a Christian community through small groups, they express a value to their children through actions, not merely words. Christian parents are eager to see their kids forge healthy relationships with other kids who will encourage their faith. This becomes more pronounced as children move through adolescence. If parents want this for their kids, it's wise to model this value when their kids are small.

The most common metaphor for the church in the New Testament is family. While broad participation in the church as a whole can show children the extended family, a small group shows what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ. Family-oriented groups provide spiritual aunts and uncles and cousins for those who participate.

There are various ways to engage children in your LifeGroup gatherings. The following article is a great resource for LifeGroups to learn how to engage the children in their meetings.

[Everyone benefits by including children in Small Groups.](#)



Here is an example of how we engage the children in one of our LifeGroups: This group is made up of families with children (in fact, the children outnumbered the adults). They set up a roster and assigned 2 adults or a couple to run a children's curriculum while the rest of the adults will be having their sermon-based group discussion. Here is a brief rundown of how it is structured.

30 mins Welcome & Worship (All involved: Adults & Children)

30 mins A couple takes the children through a curriculum that they have crafted for the children in a separate room. The lesson can be creatively planned to suit the age range of the children. The lesson will usually involve scripture reading on a particular theme/story, craftwork or object lessons relating to the theme/story. There are tons of resources available online for you to choose from. Alternatively, you can pick the brains of our teachers in the Children's Ministry to give you some ideas or guide you on lesson planning.

30 mins Snack Time (healthy snack like fruits) and games/a short kid-friendly Christian clip on YouTube)

In the LifeGroup calendar for the year, they incorporate family outings e.g. picnic at the beach or park, a trip to legoland so that they can also invite other families to join them.



Example: A lesson on God's Love and that He is our Rock. The children did rock painting to express their creativity.

Preparing for LifeGroup Meetings

Creating an Annual (or Quarterly) Calendar

It is often helpful to create an annual calendar or quarterly calendar so that everyone in your group can plan for and commit to the activities of the group. Align your calendar with churchwide activities - prayer meetings, outreach events, bible classes etc.

Planning the Meeting

See Appendix, LifeGroup Meeting Planner, pg 54.

The Meeting Planner (MP) worksheet is a great tool to help you plan effectively and with intentionality. It takes you through a process of thinking through the overall purpose of your group. The MP checklist uses the acronym P.L.A.N.S., which stands for:

Point – What will the meeting accomplish?

Logistics – Is the setting for the meeting prepared?

Activities – What will happen during the meeting?

Needs – What's happening in group members' lives?

Supplication - What and who should you be praying for?

Once you have used the MP checklist a few times, you will be able to plan a meeting as you think through P.L.A.N.S. in your head. The Preparation Checklist is fairly self-explanatory. Should you have further questions on how to use it or how it applies to your particular kind of group or ministry, talk to your leader(s).

Regardless of what you do to begin and structure your meeting, you can come to the meeting with a focused mind if you have a well-organised plan for it. Because you are free from anxiety about what you intend to do, you can focus on the individuals present. You will have a sense of anticipation because you've had each person specifically in mind during your preparation.

Always bear in mind that in a LifeGroup, the study of informational content or the accomplishment of a task is not nearly as important as the receiving of God's truth and learning to apply the truth in their lives. Also, authenticity is key to open up peoples' hearts to receive. As a leader, be honest and authentic in your sharing. This paves the way for an open and honest discussion.

As a leader, some focused, diligent work on your part in meeting preparation and planning will make your group much more effective and successful. Preparation accomplishes three things:

1. Communicates to members that you have leadership qualities and a sense of direction.
2. Gives the group confidence in your overall leadership.
3. Allows you to alter the course of a meeting (if necessary) because you are able to make choices regarding what issues you will cover during the meeting.

The following are some practical steps you can take in preparing for each meeting:

- **Make time for reflection and for seeking God's guidance**

It takes quality quiet time to get ready to lead a group meeting. If you hope to be an instrument of the Lord in touching the lives of people, you need to set aside a block of time, free from distractions, to hear from God regarding your group. Ask Him, "Lord, is there anything you would like to input into the lives of the group members at this coming meeting?"

As you prayerfully ponder your upcoming group meeting, try not to think first about yourself and your own concerns. Rather, mentally review your group members face by face, name by name, and pray for them. Often, as you pray for others, the Holy Spirit will alert you to their specific needs.

- **Study the scripture/curriculum you are using and select relevant questions for your LifeGroup**

Whether it's a sermon series that you are following or a curriculum that you have picked out for your group for a season, it's important to spend time to understand the curriculum and scriptures selected for the meeting. The inductive bible study method will help you gain a deeper understanding of the text and derive personal application.

If you are using the Sermon Series Curriculum prepared for you, select 2-3 questions that you feel are pertinent to your group members and will challenge them to apply God's Word in their daily lives. It is a good practice to send them the questions early before the meeting so they can prepare their responses.

Facilitating the LifeGroup Meeting

A skilled facilitator is like the sails of a ship. They guide the team onboard where they need to go, with no objective other than to lead the team to their destination. A team can navigate a meeting without sails, but it is much easier and more effective if they have facilitation skills to guide them.

A well facilitated meeting will give a sense of purpose and prevent people from thinking that the meeting is a waste of time.

A good facilitator possesses the following skills:

- Advanced preparation (see above)
- Possess clear communication
- Practise active listening
- Asking right questions
- Good timekeeping (meeting start and end on time)
- Establishing a psychologically safe environment for sharing
- Creating focus amongst the group
- Unbiased objectivity

If you can help it, avoid these discussion-killers!

- Great distances between the seats in the room
- People sitting like ducks in a row, unable to see each other's face
- People sitting behind other people, rather than in one circle
- A telephone ringing every 10 minutes
- A vase of flowers or lamp obstructing the view of the members
- A noisy TV or radio nearby
- Dim lighting (puts people to sleep!)

Setting Ground Rules

Refer to The Group Covenant in [42](#)



Setting some ground rules at the start of the meeting may help to set the right expectations and your members will know that you are serious about LifeGroup time.

For example, if one of your members is causing distraction by frequent SMS-es or receiving calls during LifeGroup time, encourage everyone to switch their phones off or refrain from using mobiles during LifeGroup time, unless an emergency arises.

Four Key Facilitator Actions

A leader ACTS to facilitate discussions by...

Acknowledging everyone who speaks during a discussion

Also, respond to laughter or a groan or a deep sigh – remember, 90% of communication is non-verbal.

Clarifying what is being said and felt

Say, “Let me see if I understand what you are saying.”

Turning it back to the group as a means of generating discussion

Don’t be the person who answers everything. Ask, “What do others think about what was just said?”

Summarising what has been said

Offer statements like, “so far it seems like we have been saying...” or “Nancy, could you try to summarise the key components of the discussion so far?”

Read the Room: Watch for Holy Spirit Activity

As a facilitator, observe the people as they engage in the discussion. Is anyone being left out or unusually quiet? Always be in tune with the Holy Spirit to check in with Him, does He have anything to say to a particular member or to the group? Is there a word of encouragement or word of knowledge or a prophecy?

When we pick up the cues from the Holy Spirit and act on it, this changes a meeting from an ordinary one to a supernatural one.

How to face challenges and resistance from members during facilitating

Silence

Most groups include some people who are timid about sharing their opinions. They may feel unvalued, unsure of themselves or unfamiliar with the topic or process. Alternatively, they may just need time to listen, think, and formulate their thoughts. This may be a problem if they never feel comfortable sharing ideas.

Strategies:

- Use an icebreaker that involves a lot of interaction.
- Go round-robin in the group whenever appropriate, asking each person in turn to share.
- Ask the quiet person specific questions related to his or her expertise.
- Distribute cards in advance for written anonymous input.
- Give the group a few minutes to think silently before asking for responses.

Talkativeness

Some people talk a lot in groups, which may be a problem if they dominate discussions and don't let others share their opinions freely. This can sometimes cause others to drop out, thus weakening the group and diminishing its chances of success. Getting through an agenda and making decisions can also be difficult.

Strategies:

- Establish and enforce ground rules. Some helpful rules are: keep comments brief; balance participation; listen more than you talk; or, you can speak a second time after everyone has spoken once.
- Interrupt the talker and offer to talk to him or her more after the meeting.
- Put a time limit on each person's comments for each topic, and enforce it. It may help to ask someone else to be the timekeeper.
- Ask people to raise their hands to speak.
- Talk to the person privately and explain that you would like to get more people participating.

Insensitivity

Some people can pass insensitive comments in the group. This can cause others to feel uncomfortable or offended.

Strategies:

- Establish and enforce ground rules. Some helpful rules are: speak words to edify and not to tear people down.
 - Interrupt the talker before he/she goes on further and talk to him/her privately about the inappropriate comments he/she had made after the meeting.
-

Beyond the LifeGroup Meeting

Remember that LifeGroup is more than a LifeGroup Meeting. So after the meeting itself, here are a few things you can do to stay connected:

- **A**-affirm those who were there
- **C**-connect also with those who were not able to attend
- **E**-provide encouragement and/or support as needed (from matters that may have arisen during the meeting).
- **S**-supplication. Pray for the group.

Connecting with each member

Beyond the group meeting, look for opportunities to meet in one-to-one engagements. Here are a few things to note in these one-to-one meetings:

- Catch Up - listen

- Ask open-ended questions that invite the member to share their thoughts, emotions and experiences to better understand our member's perspective and needs.
- Focus on the member's words and have meaningful conversation with them. Affirm their experiences and express empathy.
- Utilise the one-on-one time to support, inspire and mentor the member. Let them know you are there for them and that you are concerned for their welfare.

- Spiritual Conversations

- Have spiritual conversations with members. Find out how their walk with God is, etc.

- Next Steps

- Engage in potential next steps in a member's spiritual growth and journey.

- Listen to meet needs

- In your interaction, listen for ways to meet this need if you can.
-

Assessing Growth

How do I know I am raising disciples in the right way?

See Appendix, The Growth Matrix, pg 57.

When disciples are living out their maturity by showing Christ's love to the world. They are becoming people who make disciples at home, love a lost and hurting world, and win people to the Lord and disciple them as they serve as missionaries in the communities where they live.

When the church starts to think of themselves as spiritual beings who begin as infants when they are born again and are to become spiritual parents in the end. They need to understand this is God's purpose for them that every believer is to be a minister who serves Jesus and others with all they have, and then eventually to make disciples themselves.

Questions to help us evaluate if we are raising disciples the right way are:

- Are we sharing Jesus with people outside our walls? Are we loving a lost and hurting world and sharing our faith with others? How do we know?
- Are our people inviting people to connect with Jesus in relational environments? Are our people in small groups? How do I know this is happening?
- Are our people biblically training our people to be ministers? Are our people becoming ministers in the corporate body and in their small groups? Are our people learning that God has gifted them to serve, and are they discovering their abilities? How do I know this is happening?

- Are our people growing in spiritual maturity, are we equipping them to make more disciples? Are new leaders who understand how to lead a disciple-making ministry emerging? Are our small groups developing new leaders who make disciples in relationship environments? How do I know this is happening?

Putman, J., & Harrington, B. (2013). DiscipleShift: Five Steps that Help Your Church to Make Disciples who Make Disciples.

Managing Life Transitions

See Appendix, Life Transitions, pg 60.

Life transitions can be difficult, but they can also bring about a lot of positive changes. Life transitions can involve anything from moving to a new home, starting a new job, going through a relationship break up, or starting a family. It's important to remember that while life transitions can be hard, they can also be a time of growth and self-discovery. It can be a great opportunity to take stock of your life, reevaluate your priorities, and make changes that will bring about positive results. No matter what life transition you're going through, it's important to stay positive and remember that you are capable of overcoming any challenge.

As a church we get to journey with people through life's transitions, big and small, but particularly there are three main moments where we get to show up and support a person through some major life change: the birth of a child, the coming together of two people in marriage and the death of a loved one.

PART 3: THE PROCESS

STEP 4: SEND

How to raise leaders

1. Identify an potential apprentice

- Assess and see if the person has the F.A.S.T qualities of a leader
- Have a conversation with them about their readiness to lead. Let them know what is expected - both pros and cons

2. Speak with your Network Coach/Pastor about them

- Your leaders have the experience and maturity to help you confirm your assessment, so loop them into the process. Paint an unbiased and accurate picture of your choice and answer all their questions honestly. Listen to their feedback and bring it back to the Lord in prayer before appointing your apprentice.

3. Appoint them as an apprentice (LifeGroup Leader appoints)

- Once you have appointed your apprentice, make clear your intentions and give them an idea of the timeline for this part of the process.

4. Go through a season of training, testing and trying out

- The 5 step model
- The LG Meeting Planner Worksheet
- The apprentice checklist

5. Once ready, they are nominated to ShockWave by the Network Coach. The readiness process can take one or two years.

6. If the Pastor, NC and potential leader are in agreement, then the potential leader is appointed.

7. Each leader is then placed in a LG Network or as part of a ministry team network.

Identification + Selecting New Leaders

How to identify an apprentice?

When selecting an apprentice, we have to make sure that they already exhibit some of the qualities of a healthy leader as outlined in Part 2 of the manual. They must be F.A.S.T. for a start - faithful, available, submissive and teachable. They must have exhibited a passion for the Lord and his church, as well as a passion to reach the lost with the gospel. And finally, we value character and attitude over their skills and talents.

In the Old Testament, we see Jethro's advice to Moses to raise leaders to help him administrative and in ministry. In Exodus 18:17-25, he urged Moses to find men who are capable, trustworthy and honest to help him, so that he can focus on teaching the Law to the people. Likewise, we seek the same qualities in our leaders.

In the New Testament, the early apostles also raised leaders to minister to the newly converted, whose numbers were growing on a daily basis. They looked for those who were known by the people, and full of faith, wisdom and the Holy Spirit. We will do well to follow their example when selecting leaders.

We believe that a strong leadership is a key indication of our readiness to grow, both in numbers and in spiritual maturity as the body of Christ. As we raise leaders who exhibit Christ-likeness and are equipped to lead others to do the same, we know that we will have fulfilled our mandate - to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

APPENDIX

CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING A LIFEGROUP APPRENTICE



Checklist		Comments (If any)	Comments (If any)
Spiritual Discipline - He/she is actively cultivating the following spiritual disciplines to grow in his/her relationship with God.			
1.	☐ Regular quiet time		
2.	☐ Strong prayer life		
3.	☐ Sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit		
4.	☐ Faithful tithing and giving		
Facilitating dynamic discussion - He/she demonstrates the following knowledge and skills.			
5.	☐ Is prepared adequately by planning ahead and researching on the topic on hand		
6.	☐ Creates a safe place that allows members to share openly and honestly		
7.	☐ Paves the way to openness by being transparent with their own struggles		
8.	☐ Able to draw out the quiet ones and pull back the ones that over-talk		
9.	☐ Able to listen more than he/she speaks		
10.	☐ Able to ask the right open-ended questions to connect to the biblical text/ topic and help others to apply the text		

Checklist		Comments (If any)	Comments (If any)
Pastoral Care - He/she demonstrates a shepherd's heart, genuinely cares for others and is willing to give of themselves to serve them.			
11.	☐ Manages contact work* well and follow up with members one-on-one to deepen relationship		
12.	☐ Shows empathy - displays good listening skills and ability to read/understand peoples' feelings/emotions		
13.	☐ Offers biblical counsel to common care issues e.g. finances, relationships		
Evangelism - He/she has a heart for the lost and is reaching out to bring others into the spiritual community.			
14.	☐ Displays a heart for the lost by praying for them and reaching out intentionally		
15.	☐ Is confident in sharing the gospel message to pre-believers or seekers		
16.	☐ Is confident in leading a person to Christ when he/she is ready to make a decision e.g. teaching him/her to pray, following up on the next step to help them get rooted in their faith		

*Contact work refers to the meeting up with individuals in person to connect deeper and to encourage them in their faith journey, to minister to one another as the Spirit leads.

APPENDIX

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Solomon said in Proverbs 20:5, “*The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.*” Each person has the heart of “deep waters”.

If you want to influence the lives of your LifeGroup members more effectively, you will need a toolbox of good questions that “draw out the deep waters” of a person’s heart. Good questions will challenge convictions, reveal partial truths or outright lies in thinking patterns, expose feelings, inspire hope, and can help lead a person to the truth. Here are some examples:

Questions	What is it?	Examples
Opening Questions	An opening question is used to help the group warm to each other, get to know one another better, and to let them hear their own voices. Opening questions are speculative and thought-engaging.	“What do you look forward to as you grow older?” “What is it that often drives us to fear intimacy with one another?” What can we do as a group to diminish this anxiety?”
Launching Questions	Knowing the goal of the discussion, the group leader prepares launching questions designed to generate group interaction and feedback. These questions are typically designed to answer the question, “What do I know, what do I feel and what should I do?”	“What do you think/feel about God?” ”What is your reaction to his remark that Jesus is the only way to God?” “What do others in the group think about the statement: all religions are the same?” “Why do you say that Christians are hypocrites?” “After hearing tonight’s discussion, we all agree that we are somewhat “stuck”. What steps can we take to develop greater trust levels with each other?”

Questions	What is it?	Examples
Launching Questions	Some questions do not necessarily launch a discussion. But they do solicit responses and feedback. There are 2 kinds of launching questions: those that are leading and those that are limiting. i) Leading questions usually produce a short answer. ii) Limiting questions indicate that you have a specific answer in mind. They do not promote much discovery. However, they can help clarify facts.	“Would you be tempted in this situation?” “Do you agree or disagree with this statement?” “What 3 commands do we find in this passage?” “What 2 things does Paul say we must do?”
Guiding Questions	Even the most well prepared leader will need to guide discussions spontaneously at times.	Rephrase the question: “You seem to be asking, “How can we develop trust as a group?” OR “Let me see, John, if I understand what you are saying...” Personalise the question: “How would you respond to Jesus if He asked you that question?” Test for consensus or decision, “Are we saying that everyone must obey this command?” “Do you all agree that Jesus’ resurrection is a proven fact?”

Questions	What is it?	Examples
Summarising Questions	Summarising after a series of questions allows the leader to acknowledge group members' contributions while maintaining biblical integrity and direction.	An affirming comment can be made with good eye contact and a smile by saying, "Thanks for sharing that" or "That's a good point" or "Okay, that is a response worth considering; are there other thoughts as well?" A summarising response might be, "So what we see in this passage is..."
Redirecting Questions & Comments – To encourage dialogue	Redirecting encourages group participation and draw attention away from facilitator	"What do the rest of you think about that?" "What do the people over on this side think?"
Referencing Back	Referring back to something one of the group members said earlier	"That seems to relate to what Jim said earlier. Jim, what is your response?" "That seems to contradict what Jane has said, how do these 2 ideas tie?"
Application Questions	The goal of the LifeGroup study is not just information but transformation. The leader can help members apply what they have learned by asking application questions.	"What changes will you make this week as a result of our discussion tonight?" "What difference does this make to you or me?"
Probing – To go deeper	Probing is used to find out more information and to keep someone talking, as well as to open the group up to more honest sharing.	Non-verbal: nodding, direct eye contact, remaining silent Verbal: "Oh, I see..." "What makes you think so?" "Tell us more about it..." "Explain what you mean by..." "Could you be more specific?" "What happens next?"

APPENDIX

THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF SERMON-BASED GROUP

Sermon-based group also include elements of fellowship and fun, but the main focus is to discuss the message and the scripture on the weekend service. This allows people to process and internalise together as a group so that it will lead to life change.

Here are some reasons why sermon-based groups:

1. Sermon-based Small Groups Make it Easier to Lead the Discussion

Sermon-based groups are helpful for group leaders who may not feel like they are gifted in terms of communication. They are free to facilitate, but do not have to bear the burden of preparing a lesson or curriculum for bible study as the sermon series curriculum is prepared for the group. This also allows people to prepare their responses beforehand, for discussion. Basing the discussion around the sermon also cuts down on preparation time.

2. Sermon-based Small Groups Increase the Impact of the Message

Instead of listening to the sermon preached on the weekend and forgetting about it, people come back to it again. They are forced to consider the application to their own lives, and ask, “How does this change what I believe, how I act, or how I think?”

When hearing the sermon, it is a one-way communication. Sermon-based small groups start a conversation, which increases the impact of the sermon. So give people a voice and an opportunity to ask questions and interact around what they are learning on Sunday inside their small groups.

3. Sermon-based Small Groups Create Consistency

Finally, a sermon-based small group creates a consistent experience for group members. Week in and week out, the groups have a roadmap to follow. It also encourages people of different faith stages and ages to connect. People can talk about how the issue affects their lives and receive different perspectives.

BUT

As we move towards being an outward looking church that seeks to invite people to LifeGroup, it may not serve our best interest to fixate on only having meetings where you discuss the sermon. Then, visitors who are not regularly attending service will not be able to follow along, much less someone who is not yet a Christian. To help overcome this hurdle, it may be useful to have regular social events that your group can invite friends to. Plan these in advance, so your members can work towards inviting people to these gathering and not the straight up bible study ones.

APPENDIX

HOW TO SET UP AN ONLINE LIFEGROUP MEETING

Want to know how you can create an environment for meaningful connection with a LifeGroup you're leading virtually? Here are some ideas for you.

1. Communicate the purpose

Make sure the group members know why you are meeting. Is it for a bible study? Sharing and encouragement? Prayer? If it's a combination of all three, make sure they know ahead of the meeting so you can plan the time well.

You can do this through a group whatsapp or email ahead of time or during your first virtual meeting together.

2. Help them prepare

Send a meeting invitation with a weblink to the meeting in it and explain anything they may need to do to prepare, e.g. read the curriculum, or watch the sermon beforehand. If you are going to discuss a question or specific content, it will help the group's internal processors to see that ahead of time.

Remind them of the meeting 24 hrs before. You can send them a text reminder with an encouraging message or cute gif to make it memorable!

3. Give technology coaching to those who need it

Yes, it may seem like the circuit breaker has made us all experts at video conferencing, but there may still be some Life Group members who may not be experienced with virtual meetings. You could even have a practice run with them before the meeting to build their confidence.

4. Get there early

As the leader of the group, sign on five minutes before the designated time. This allows you to welcome people as they arrive and act as a host. Smile and look them in the eye (the camera lens). It makes a difference!

5. Begin and end with prayer

This is a great way to centre the group and transition from waiting for people to join to actually starting the meeting. Don't forget to speak loudly enough to be heard.

6. End on time

Respect their time. Make sure you end the small group on time each week so those who need to sign off can do so. Others who are able to can choose to stay and hang out afterward (you may even want to encourage it).

7. Agree on some ground rules

Knowing what to expect is always reassuring to people, and it helps create a positive environment. When you have a set of agreed upon rules, it helps everyone have accurate expectations and helps provide accountability that the entire group can own together. Here are some examples of common rules:

Confidentiality — What is shared in the group stays in the group.

Camera — Everyone will use their camera and keep it on their face during the meeting.

Quiet — Everyone will mute their microphones when they are not talking. You will be surprised how loud moving a paper or adjusting your chair can be when your microphone is on.

Focus — Everyone will stay focused on group participation. We won't multitask! Encourage everyone to turn off notifications for other apps on the device they are using for the meeting.

Contribute, don't control — Everyone will participate in the conversation and encourage the participation of others.

Connect — In between meetings, everyone will take the initiative to check in on one another. Don't let the small group be the only point of contact.

Give and receive grace - Participating in a virtual bible study will be a difficult skill for many people. It will be awkward at times. It helps to acknowledge that it may take some getting used to and that you're all in this and learning together!

APPENDIX LIFEGROUP MEETING PLANNER



Leader _____ Meeting Date _____

Agenda

Start	Finish	Item	Who
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____

Notes

THE PLAN: MEETING PLANNER

Desired Outcome

I want my group members to KNOW...

I want my group members to FEEL...

I want my group members to DO...

I want my group members to PLAN...

Post-meeting Summary

Agenda

What worked well?

Personal Stories

Things we celebrated:

What was weak?

Concerns:

MEETING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Point

☐
☐
☐

What will the meeting accomplish?

Write out KNOW, FEEL, DO, PLAN statements

Write out the meeting agenda

Logistics

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Is the setting for the meeting prepared?

Seating

Distractions eliminated (phones, noise, people)

Open chair in place

Temperature

Lighting

Refreshments

Background music during arrival

Childcare arrangements

Location of future meetings set

Activities

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

What will happen during the meeting?

Come up with ice-breaker/group mixer

Special skill training

Group prayer

Game/Social activity

Gather or prepare materials

Bibles, pencils, paper, etc available

Announcements that need to be made

Needs

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

What's happening in group members' lives

Unresolved problems between members

Financial needs

Tough decision to make

Health concerns

Family issues

APPENDIX

THE GROWTH MATRIX

Criteria	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
	Exploring Christ + Christianity	Growing in Christ	Close to Christ	Christ-centered
What's needed	Relationship with a maturing Christian Group Encounter	Mentor Group	Spiritual Direction, Challenge Encounter	Like-minded Group
Ownership	Questions the Faith	Eager and/or curious to learn about the faith	Takes active steps in the living the faith	Takes active steps in helping others live the faith
Scriptures	May not have much personal knowledge of scriptures, but has been influenced by society's perceptions of the bible. But open in reading the scriptures.	Reads scripture irregularly	Reads scripture regularly. Makes an effort to learn more. Attends CLASSES, reads books or self-directed learning.	Scripture reading is a normal part of life
Spiritual Disciplines	No spiritual disciple practised	Starts to read scripture and prayer	Consistent spiritual disciplines	Willing to engage the life of the Spirit with other spiritual disciplines
Community	Not usually involved in a Christian community	Attends a group	Recognises the value of Christian community and is beginning to engage personally in community	Maintains a healthy rhythm of community life - open + transparent, works through conflicts

Criteria	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
	Exploring Christ + Christianity	Growing in Christ	Close to Christ	Christ-centered
Church Involvement	Not involved or is on the fringe.	Participates and engages in church activities.	Rooted in a church.	Rooted in Church; with a kingdom mindset.
Desire for growth	May not have a personal desire for growth yet.	Has a desire to grow.	Hungry for growth.	Growth and sanctification as a lifestyle.
Priorities	Doesn't prioritise faith.	Starts to prioritise the faith.	Faith increases in priority.	Faith is first place.
Focus	Self	Self	Starts to focus on others.	Others
Surrendered or Submitted	Cautious about surrendering.	Willing to surrender to God in some areas.	Seeks God as an early response to circumstances. Beginning to depend on God.	Fully surrendered to God. Seeks God wholeheartedly in all aspects of life. Willing to pay the price for obedience.
Application	Doesn't apply because isn't aware.	Willing to apply the faith.	Desires to apply revelation received.	Consistently applies revelation received.
Evangelism	NA	Doesn't often think of sharing the faith or might be willing to invite others to the faith because of his/her encounter	Willing to share the faith.	Ready to share.
Responding to challenge/suffering	Resorts to personal resources to cope.	Struggles sometimes to make sense of God in difficulty But learns to trust God.	Has hope in the midst of suffering. Trusts God.	Has joyful hope in the midst of suffering Relies on the resources of the gospel to journey through.

Criteria	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
	Exploring Christ + Christianity	Growing in Christ	Close to Christ	Christ-centered
Discipleship	No understanding of discipleship.	Looks to be disciplined.	Might start discipling others.	Disciples others consistently.
Tithing and Giving	Can be nervous around church talking about money.	Might start giving.	Gives regularly.	Willing to give generously.
Others	Might see himself or herself as a Christian. Possibly a 2nd generation Christian.		Testified about Christ occasionally. Loves others.	Contented. Selfless service of others. Set apart from the world/carries a different spirit. Testifies about Christ regularly. Love others, even at personal cost.

APPENDIX

LIFE TRANSITIONS

LifeGroup environment provides the best care and support for people going through major life transitions. We have documented some of these life transitions and how LifeGroups are involved in journeying with the individual through these transitions.

Funerals

1. Pastoral Care

1.1 Not everyone is at ease with people who are dying or with those who have been bereaved. This guideline hopes to help us minister to the bereaved family and help them in time of need.

“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.” - James 1:27 (NLT)

1.2 It will be most useful if the first visit can be as soon as possible after the death. It might be appropriate for prayers to be said with the family, possibly in the presence of the deceased. The cause of death will be one of the factors determining how the family, or individual, will respond and in what state they will be. There may be sadness with greater acceptance of an older person's death; shock and possibly great distress if there has been an accidental or sudden death or the deceased is a young person. Some knowledge therefore will be necessary of how the cause of death affects the reactions of those bereaved.

1.3 The basic purpose of the visit is to listen, comfort, and offer practical help, assess any particular problem requiring attention and gain information on the level of support available. Prayers and scripture readings will depend on individual circumstances and practice. The minister needs to have sufficient information to advise bereaved people where to register deaths, obtain documents, getting the services of the casket company, prepare for the funeral services, making the announcements in the newspaper, etc.

1.4 If the minister is conducting the funeral, discussion about it will be part of this early visit. It is often helpful if the procedures are explained.

2. Funeral Service/Wake

2.1 A thorough understanding of the processes of bereavement will help us with the conducting of a funeral. We will appreciate that the funeral is not only a significant rite but also an important and necessary part of grieving. A funeral is the closing of one chapter in the grieving process and the threshold of another. Until the funeral is over, bereaved people find it difficult to organise their lives in any realistic way. A funeral sensitively conducted can aid grieving and recovery. A funeral indifferently handled can hinder this process.

2.2 In the preparation of funeral, we must start by arming yourself with the right attitude. Making the funeral arrangements will be less of a weight if you recognise that it can actually help the bereaved through the grieving process.

In a passage brimming with comfort, the apostle affirms that “*to be absent from the body*” (i.e., be dead) is, in reality, “*to be at home with the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Begin thinking of the service as a celebration of the person’s life. It should be dignified and respectful without being depressing and morbid. Along with mourning, there should be room for expressions of joy—even laughter.

2.3 The funeral should be personal, with the deceased and closely bereaved mentioned by name. The service should be dignified but not formal. The worship should touch, acknowledge, express and validate the feelings of those present. The minister should speak gently and comfortably about death and the natural sadness it brings.

2.4 The service should put into words feelings not only of loss, but of gratitude. It should encourage continuing support for the bereaved, and mutual support among the family. It should assist the bereaved to begin to work through their grief. It should offer Christian reassurance, comfort and hope and see it in the context of God’s eternal purposes.

3. The Flow Process

3.1 Normally when death occurs, the deceased family member will contact a friend in FGA, the Life Group leader, Network coach or the church office. The information will be directed immediately to the respective Network coach and the Bereavement Coordinator, Ps Maureen.

3.2 If the deceased or the bereaved is not from any of the network, the Bereaved Coordinator will call the bereaved to get more information. The following information is necessary:

3.2.1 Name of the deceased and relationship to the bereaved.

3.2.2 Date of birth of the deceased (age), and the day of death

3.2.3 Where does death occurred; home, hospital, etc

3.2.4 Normally we do not encourage the funeral wake to be more than 3 days (2 nights). It can be very tiring and costly for the family.

If Death Occurred at Home

Preferably, call a doctor to examine the body and issue a death certificate.
Otherwise, call the ambulance to send to hospital (autopsy maybe required).

At the same time, call one of the funeral directors;

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Resting Place | 6533 1787 |
| 2. Hosanna | 6352 7797 |
| 3. Shalom Funeral Servs | 9177 5315 or 6475-6070 |
| 4. All Saints | 8321 3377 or 63967117 |
| 5. Singapore Casket | 6293 4388 |

If Death Occurred in Hospital

Get one of the family members to bring the deceased NRIC for collection of the death certificate. At the same time to bring the best suit of clothing for the deceased to wear after embalming, others like false teeth, bible, shoes – to hand over to the funeral director.

Go to the ward to get a letter to collect the death certificate at the Emergency Department.

While waiting for the death certificate at the Emergency Department, call one of the funeral directors to come to the hospital to collect the body for embalming.

3.3 The Network coach/LG Leader will prepare the song sheets for the wake, coordinate with the Bereaved Coordinator to conduct the services and the worship leaders for each of the services. May need to enlist the help from the Church worship team to lead the worship segment.

The Network coach will normally conduct the funeral services with the help of other network coaches, pastors and elders of FGA.

3.4 The funeral director will expertly guide you through the process, from legal documents, preparing a photo of the deceased, preparing an obituary, choosing a casket or cremation, and every element of the memorial service and burial.

4. Others

You will want to speak with the person responsible from the bereaved family for coordinating the funeral to go over details, such as arrival times, flower arrangements, audio and visual needs, reception arrangements, etc.

Eulogy

A typical eulogy is about 5 minutes in length. It is recommended to leave the emotional elements for the end of the eulogy. Any additional tributes given by family or friends should be limited in length to keep the service from going too long. Young children and family members may want to write down a few sentences to be read aloud by the minister or the person giving the eulogy.

Guest Book

This record of attendance is usually very meaningful to family members, so ask someone to be responsible to bring a guest book and a nice pen.

Length of Service

The entire length of the funeral service often depends on the number of guests. Time should be allowed either before or after the service to greet your guests and give them a moment to say their good byes to the deceased. It is recommended to keep the actual service length anywhere between 30-45 minutes.

At the end of the service and before the guests say goodbye to the deceased, it is good to pray for the family. The prayer is to comfort them and to assure them of the love of God.

After the Funeral

It is good to visit or call the bereaved family a day or two after the funeral. Sometimes, they need to talk to someone to share their sorrows or to seek advice to the problems relating to the death. Always pray for them.

Weddings

I. Solemnisation or Blessings Service

1. Marriage is a gift of God and a means of His grace, a holy mystery in which a man and a woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that the couple shall be united in the same love as Christ is united with His Church (Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her).¹

2. Solemnisation and registration as a single complementary event: Couples are strongly encouraged to have their marriage solemnised at the church wedding. Couples planning marriage are not encouraged to opt for a two-stage process of marriage; that is marriage solemnisation and registration either at the Registry of Marriage or elsewhere, to be followed by a church blessings ceremony at a later date. (See Para II, 6 below)

3. The option of a Blessing Service: Solemnisation and registration of marriage in FGA basically, are for couples that have not gone through a civil wedding. For those who have already gone through a civil wedding, a Blessings Service may be arranged, but this is not the norm. Whatever the case may be, the couple must see the Campus Pastor for pastoral counsel and advice at the earliest opportunity before deciding on a 2-stage process of marriage, that is, solemnisation followed by a Blessings Service.

4. Church affiliation: Couples planning to get married are strongly advised to do so in the church where they intend to belong to (to be a part of that church body) after they are married.

II. Eligibility for Solemnisation or Blessings

1. For the couple seeking to be married in FGA:
 - Both must be **single and baptised believers**.
 - At least **one of them must be a confirmed member of good standing² in the FGA**.
2. It is compulsory for the couple to be prepared for marriage by attending our **Premarital Counseling Course** (PMC).
3. No solemnisation or blessings ceremony will be conducted in FGA if either party is a divorcee.

4. FGA will also not conduct a Blessings Service where the couple has already consummated their marriage and living together as husband and wife.

5. On no account should the couple get married at the ROM first without the approval of FGA. FGA understands the circumstances may legitimately require the couple to be legally married before a church wedding. In such cases, FGA may marry them in church provided that the couple does not stay together, does not consummate their marriage and the church wedding date does not exceed six months from the ROM civil marriage date.

6. Couples planning to get married in FGA have to inform the church office at least six months before the date of wedding.

III. Guidelines for Filing Notice of Marriage in FGA

1. Pastoral requirements

- a. All applications will be processed and approval given by the Campus Pastor
- b. All preparations for the wedding may start only after the application is approved.
- c. Upon approval, an officiating minister will be assigned to each couple to provide pastoral advice for the Solemnisation and Registration or Blessings of the marriage.

2. Use of FGA Sanctuary for Wedding

- a. The use of FGA premises for wedding is generally a privilege for members of FGA only.
- b. There will a service charge (optional) payable to FGA Private Limited for the use of FGA sanctuary.

IV. A Matter of Accountability

The Pastor conducting marriage ceremonies must faithfully abide by the above guidelines. Should it be necessary or when it is not clear, the Pastor is required to consult the Chairman of the Board. The Pastor holding conducting marriages is required to keep the Board informed of applications for marriage and submit a summary report of all marriages he has conducted every 6 months to the Board.

IMPORTANT: For couples intending to have their marriage solemnised in FGA, they are to file a notice of marriage at the Registry of Marriage (ROM) 3 months before the date of marriage in church. The License will be ready after 21 days from the day of filing of notice of marriage.

¹ *Marriage reflects the faithfulness of God. The bible repeatedly warns us about the sin of sex outside marriage, i.e. fornication and adultery. It is essential for those to be married to seek pastoral counsel and prayer if they are guilty of acts of fornication and adultery.*

² *Confirmed member of good standing in FGA refers to registered members of any of the various congregations (ministries) in the FGA. They are active and tithing members who are on the membership register of FGA for at least one year before the date of application for marriage in FGA.*

Births

Births are joyous occasions to be celebrated by the family of God as much as one's natural family. FGA usually marks the birth of a child by sending the parents a gift, either to the hospital or to their homes, and making an announcement via whatsapp to the church body. LifeGroup leaders should contact their congregation pastors when one or more of their members has an addition to the family.

Leaders are also to advise the couple that while FGA does not believe in infant baptism, we do conduct child dedication services once a year (usually around Children's Day), where parents may dedicate their child to the Lord and pledge to raise them in godly ways until they are old enough to make a commitment to the faith themselves.

