

# LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of January 12, 2020

*This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.*

## Welcome to the Winter Quarter of Life Groups!

*This week we kick off our Winter Life Group Quarter. Your first meeting will include a potluck dinner and time to get acquainted, as well as time to discuss your Life Group Covenant. The study questions have been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish all of this.*

*To prepare for your first meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great meeting as you come together to connect, encourage one another to grow and see how God might work!*

### LEADER NOTES

#### ⇒ AGENDA

*Looking for more guidance on your first meeting? You can find the “First Night Agenda” about how to make your first night great at the end of this document, OR on the Leader Tools page of our website. [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/make-your-first-night-great/](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/make-your-first-night-great/)*

***HOW WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESS WEEK TO WEEK: Hearing from everyone at every meeting and keeping God’s Word at the center.***

***Make sure you leave plenty of time to answer the question in the “Looking Ahead” section and spend time going over the Covenant with your group.***

- ***Welcome and Eat*** – Potluck
- ***Group Sharing*** – Discussion Note: You can transition from the Getting to Know You section to the Looking Ahead section.
- ***Study Questions Discussion*** (optional)
- ***Go over the Covenant*** – Use the last question in this Leader’s Guide and transition into reviewing the Covenant. Listen Leader audio for specific ways to go over the Covenant.
- ***Try to get to the “Looking Ahead” section with 45 minutes left in your meeting so you have plenty of time to have everyone answer and go over the Covenant.***
- *Close in prayer*
- *Eat (more) dessert*

#### ATTENDANCE

Submit your group’s attendance online at [northcoastchurch.com/attendance](http://northcoastchurch.com/attendance). If you’re not sure how to post attendance, you can check out the guide here: [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance)

Find all of our leader resources online: [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools)  
You can also follow us on Instagram and Facebook @ncclifegroupleaders

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

***Discussion Note:*** Add these questions if you have new people in your group or a completely new group. If it hasn’t happened while eating dinner, have everyone in the group share how long they have been attending North Coast, if they have been in a Life Group before, and favorite hobby.

*Have fun with this first question. Have everyone answer.*

- Would you rather...

- ... sew all your clothes or grow your own food?
- ... win the lottery or live twice as long?
- ... eat pizza or ice cream as your only food for eternity?
- ... be reborn a 100 years in the past or in the future?
- ... work in a group or work alone?

- In 2020 which one of the following do you hope to experience the most and why?

*Great question to have everyone answer. You may want to have them answer the two questions in the “Looking Ahead” section also and then transition into going over the Covenant.*

- Adventure
- Relaxation
- Challenge
- Fun
- Something else (\_\_\_\_\_)

- Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

*You may not have time to go over this question.*

### DIGGING DEEPER

***Discussion Note:*** Because of the potluck, make sure you have enough time to spend on the “Looking Ahead” section. You may not have time to cover this question this week.

The great news we heard this weekend is it’s “never too late” to follow Jesus. Many people would have thought Saul, later to be named Paul, would never turn his life toward Jesus. As you read his incredible story of change in Acts 9:1-31, what catches your attention the most and why?

Which people and situations in Saul's conversion story do you relate to the most?

Trusting that Saul had really changed was no small challenge in this story. We can all end up leaning toward one extreme or the other in regard to trusting too quickly or being too critical. Which one is your tendency?

How do the following verses help us know how to engage others in a hope-filled way and balance these two extremes?

**Philippians 1:6** – being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

**Matthew 18:21-22** – <sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

**Proverbs 14:7-9** – <sup>7</sup>Stay away from a fool,  
for you will not find knowledge on their lips.

<sup>8</sup>The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways,  
but the folly of fools is deception.

<sup>9</sup>Fools mock at making amends for sin,  
but goodwill is found among the upright.

## LOOKING AHEAD

One of the key reasons we meet in Life Groups every week is to gain the encouragement and support we each need to keep our focus on Jesus. Before you go over the Covenant in your group, take a moment and write down your responses to the questions below:

What are you looking forward to in your Life Group this quarter? Have everyone answer.

Is there anything specific in your life you want to put extra focus on this quarter to grow yourself spiritually?

*Everyone may not have an answer here. You may want to give some options like, more regular reading their Bible, praying specifically for family and friends, better witness at work/ or with friends, etc.*

**Transition Statement to Covenant:** *"It's great to hear what each of you have said about what you want out of your time in the group. One of the great benefits of being in a Life Group is the opportunity to have help from others as we seek to be strategic and intentional about our spiritual growth. The Life Group Covenant is designed to serve as intentional guidelines to help us make the most of our time together."*

*Pass out Covenants and go over them with your group. See below or you can download the [Leaders Guide to the Life Group Covenant](#), by going to [northcoastchurch.com/groups](http://northcoastchurch.com/groups) and clicking on "Leader Tools."*

**Close in prayer:** *Next week the Study Questions will include an introduction to praying in a group so if you have a new group or a lot of new members, it's suggested that you wait until week two to do any group prayer.*

**Eat dessert:** *Mingle with everyone.*

## THE PURPOSE OF LIFE GROUPS

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). Here's how it will happen:

### SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

### STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

### SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another and meeting real needs.

### SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

## It's Never Too Late

### The Gospel In A Nutshell

Ephesians 5:5-6 & Galatians 5:19-21/ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 & 1 Corinthians 6:11

- We all have a problem we can't **FIX**.
- Jesus paid the price to **FIX IT**.
- The resurrection is the proof He **FIXED IT**.

### Joseph's Story

Isaiah 53:8-9/ Philipians 2:3-9/ Matthew 27:57-61  
Mark 15:42-47 [Mark 14:53-65]/ Luke 23:50-56 [Mark 14:61-65]/ John 19:38-42

- Joseph was a **RICH DISCIPLE**.
- He was a **PROMINENT** member of Jesus's chief accusers.
- He disagreed with the council's decision, but **DIDN'T SPEAK UP**.
- He kept silent because he **FEARED** what he'd **LOSE**.
- Despite his horrible start, God didn't **WRITE HIM OFF**.
- Despite their great start, the disciples were **AWOL**.

### Three Incredibly Important Life Lessons

1. A **GOOD START** doesn't guarantee a **HAPPY ENDING**.  
2 Chronicles 26/ Matthew 13:1-23 & 21:28-32/ 1 Peter 5:9/ 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
2. A **BAD START** doesn't preclude a **HAPPY ENDING**.  
John 19:38-42/ 1 Timothy 1:12-16/ Matthew 21:28-32/ Proverbs 24:16/ 1 Corinthians 6:11
3. Never write **OFF ANYONE** – including **YOURSELF!**  
Mark 2:17/ Revelation 12:10/ 1 John 2:1-2



### COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Community Service is a ministry of North Coast Church dedicated to being the hands and feet of Jesus and showing God's love in tangible ways through service to the community. There are many options for you to serve. For ideas, check out [NorthCoastCommunityService.org](http://NorthCoastCommunityService.org)



# First Night Agenda

## MAKE YOUR FIRST NIGHT GREAT

### Goals of the First Meeting

- Rekindle relationships and meet new members
- Clarify your group's direction / expectations / commitments using the covenant
- Briefly discuss the sermon topic (if there is time)
- Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group

### Items Needed for the First Meeting

- Dinner / dessert plans decided
- Life Group covenants – small ones to handout and a large one for everyone to sign
- Nametags (host should write them out ahead of time)

### Contact Your Group in Advance

- Contact all members one week before the first meeting to welcome them to the group and inform them of the location and time of your group, as well as any entrees to bring for dinner.
- Check your rosters online

## 3 ESSENTIAL PARTS OF YOUR EVENING

### #1 Welcome, mingle and talk while you eat

- ⇒ **Leadership Tip:** Studies show that the first 7 seconds a person spends in a room can make or break the remainder of their experience in that room.
- People greeted when they arrive
  - Drinks available when people arrive
  - Upbeat music playing
  - House cleaned, phone off if possible

### #2 Think through the uniqueness of your first group discussion *GOING OVER THE COVENANT IS CRUCIAL*

- ⇒ **Leadership Tip:** Let people know your meeting is going to start in about 5 minutes
- ⇒ **Leadership Tip:** Why it is unique – getting to know each other, setting expectations

#### A) Sharing

- **Refer to homework** – Take time to do a few of the “getting to know you” questions
- **Sharing guidelines** – Explain the purpose of sharing exercises: Getting to know one another casually (new groups) or reacquainting with each other (continuing groups)
- **Note to returning leaders** – feel free to adapt the sharing exercises based on the number of new members. All groups are encouraged to do some of the “getting to know you” questions

#### B) Worship (optional)

#### C) THE COVENANT - SET THE EXPECTATIONS AND VISION (see Covenant Leader's Guide)

**Note: Digging Deeper #1 and Taking it Home from this week's homework will set up your time to go over the Covenant**

- Everything rises and falls on how this is communicated
- Distribute the Covenant
- Go over the Covenant (see Leader's Guide)
- MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR SOCIAL

#### D) Prayer

**For New groups or groups with new people... Ask your host to close in a brief prayer dedicating the next Quarter to God**

- Next week we'll introduce the idea of topical prayer.

**For Continuing groups...**

- Close your group in prayer as usual.

### #3 Know your dessert conversations are just as important as your meeting discussions

- ⇒ **Leadership Tip:** Never underestimate the significance of the time after the meeting. It is key to connect with people and find out more what people are all about.



## LEADERS GUIDE - LIFE GROUP COVENANT

- *DOWNLOAD this and other Covenants: [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/life-group-covenants](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/life-group-covenants)*
- *When discussing – use the proactive leadership style – clear direction, yet flexible*

Leaders \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.# \_\_\_\_\_  
Hosts \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.# \_\_\_\_\_  
Station in Life \_\_\_\_\_ Campus \_\_\_\_\_

*Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this Covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.*

### **LIFE GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE**

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

#### **SHARE**

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

#### **STUDY**

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

*Our goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not to answer all the questions.*

#### **SUPPORT**

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

#### **SERVE**

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

### **FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP**

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

- 1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).**  
*⇒ Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*
- 2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7).**  
*⇒ We will have different preferences.*
- 3. Take care of one another (John 13:34).**  
*⇒ When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals etc.*
- 4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).**  
*⇒ Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once.  
⇒ Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge or fix – unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.  
⇒ Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator – be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.  
⇒ Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ..."  
⇒ No put-downs.  
⇒ What is said here, stays here – of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.*
- 5. Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).**  
*⇒ Please give us a call if you can't make it to Life Group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.*

## GUIDELINES & COVENANT

1. **Dates** We'll meet on \_\_\_\_\_ nights for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on \_\_\_\_\_. *Fill in blanks*
2. **Time** We'll arrive between \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ and begin the meeting at \_\_\_\_\_. We'll spend approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in singing (optional), \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in study/discussion, and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in prayer/sharing. *Fill in blanks*
3. **Children** Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group!
4. **Study** Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. *Not to answer every question.*
5. **Prayer** Praying for one another. *You'll go over tips on topical prayer the second week of group. Remember - being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like this: "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Let them know you'll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray.*
6. **Homework & Attendance** Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to *attend each week and do the homework ahead of time*. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more!  
*This commitment is the key to a healthy group.*  
  
If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call \_\_\_\_\_.  
⇒ *Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (A good group starts with good preparation)*  
⇒ *Make sure that everyone is with you. (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*  
⇒ *Most weeks require 20-30 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.*
7. **Desserts** *Have everyone sign up for a night to do dessert.*
8. **Social & Service Project(s)** *Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As a leader and host, have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates. Choose a date or ask the group to bring their calendars next week. New groups are preferred to have their social by mid-quarter.*
9. **Other**

### ***We agree together in Christ to honor this Covenant.***

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

*Have the members sign the group Covenant now if they are ready. If not, they are welcome to wait until the third week of the quarter.*

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |