

LIFE  
GROUP  
LEADER  
GUIDE



<b>LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE</b>	<b>1</b>
What is a Life Group?	<b>3</b>
<b>4 MARKERS OF A HEALTHY LIFE GROUP</b>	<b>7</b>
Marker 1: Living in the Freedom of the Gospel	<b>8</b>
Marker 2: Being Givers vs. Takers	<b>9</b>
Marker 3: Creating Space for Others	<b>9</b>
Marker 4: Taking the Next Step	<b>10</b>
<b>LEADING A LIFE GROUP</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>RHYTHMS OF A LIFE GROUP</b>	<b>15</b>
Get the Life	<b>16</b>
Experience the Life	<b>18</b>
Give the Life Away	<b>18</b>
Group Dynamics	<b>21</b>
<b>FAQ's</b>	<b>23</b>

LIFE  
GROUP  
LEADER  
GUIDE

Thank you for your courage and willingness to serve God and His people as a Life Group leader. We're praying that God will move mightily on your behalf as you assume this new leadership role.

Our Life Group team will walk with you to offer encouragement and help ensure that you are fully equipped to thrive in all that God is calling you to lead in this new season.

# WHAT IS A LIFE GROUP?

A Life Group is a group of people striving to live out the Gospel together. These are the people who care about you, your family, your dreams, life's disappointments, and all of the big and little things that happen in your life.

Life Groups come together to live in a growing relationship with the Lord and one another and to reach and serve people in a variety of places. Life Groups create transformational communities where you and your group will be stretched to, not just study God's Word, but to live it out in tangible, practical ways.

Life Groups have different passions and people, but the heartbeat remains the same, to love and help people where they are by connecting them to the extraordinary life found in Jesus.

# MISSION

To see people connecting people to the extraordinary life found in Jesus - one person, one family, one community at a time.

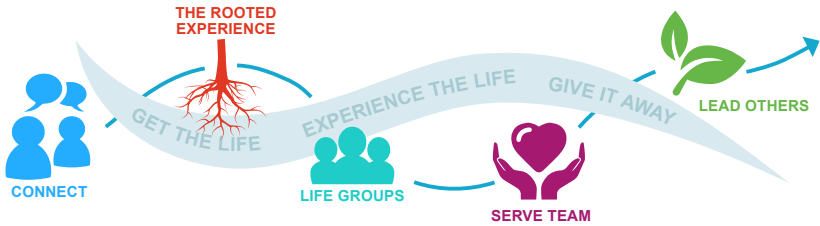
---

# VISION

We see generations transformed by the Gospel as groups are intentionally planted to carry out mission where they live, work, and play.

That's a big vision statement, but we believe this is the future for God's people. Jesus calls us His disciples. At Faith, we define a disciple as someone who gets the life of Christ, experiences the life of Christ with others, and obeys Jesus' command to give the life away.

# HOW ARE WE TRANSFORMED?





# HOW CAN WE LIVE THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE?

## GET THE LIFE - RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- I grasp the life, death, and resurrection of Christ for me (confession)
- I strive to live a Spirit-led life (worship and devotion)
- I strive to live in the identity I have in Christ

## EXPERIENCE THE LIFE TOGETHER- RELATIONSHIPS WITH FELLOW BELIEVERS

- Through Faith's mission and vision
- Through a Life Group
- Through people who challenge me to grow spiritually

## GIVE THE LIFE AWAY- RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW JESUS

- Engage in Gospel conversations
- Invest in and engaging with our neighbors and nations
- Live generously for Kingdom work

4 MARKERS  
OF A  
HEALTHY  
LIFE  
GROUP

## MARKER 1: LIVING IN THE FREEDOM OF THE GOSPEL

- a. We desire that everyone be transformed by the Gospel
- b. We start and end with Jesus and His Word
- c. We place relationships before ritual in worship and daily life

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE GROUP?

As a Life Group, it is easy to get caught up in habits or rituals based on how things have gone in the past. A healthy Life Group will look different in different seasons. This is because relationships must stay flexible to be healthy.

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:1

We see in scripture that being in a community of believers is a primary way that God transforms us, Life Groups are essential. Walking alongside one another in the highs and lows of life is important. Your Life Group should be a place that can share pain and grief as much as the good things in life. Every Life Group should be engaged in scripture as a group, as well as on their own. While God speaks to us in many ways, His word remains the most important revelation.

## MARKER 2: BEING GIVERS VS. TAKERS

- a. We believe that Life Groups should give away the life of Jesus, by serving their community
- b. We believe every Life Group should strive to model generosity, care, and concern for one another.
- c. We challenge each other to take the next step on our giving journey

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE GROUP?

While we have freedom because of the gospel, we recognize from scripture that we are not called to live inwardly.

*For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Galatians 5:13-14*

While taking care of one another is an essential part of being a Life Group, we recognize that God has called us to serve those around us. We can do that in a variety of different ways.

## MARKER 3: CREATING SPACE FOR OTHERS

- a. We make room in our lives, homes, and Life Groups for others
- b. We want our spaces to be the most relevant, fun, and welcoming places in our community
- c. We invite people to “come and experience”

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE GROUP?

Despite living in a culture that lacks hospitality and friendliness, as

communities of believers, we want to live out our faith by showing hospitality wherever we go.

*Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:9*

We want to create time and space for organic relationships to blossom. It is important that meals are shared, questions are asked, and people feel welcome, so our homes become safe places for people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and walks of life.

#### **MARKER 4: TAKING THE NEXT STEP**

- a. We continually invite people to take the next step in becoming a disciple
- b. We seek to replace ourselves on every level by identifying and training future leaders
- c. We are sent by the power of the Holy Spirit and authority of Jesus Christ

#### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE GROUP?**

Being a follower of Jesus is a process. As Life Groups, we get to grow alongside one another. We also are called to multiply as groups. That only happens when we are challenging one another to take the next step as a disciple.

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Hebrews 10:24-25

LEADING

A

LIFE

GROUP

We want to thank you for your willingness to lead a Life Group here at Faith. Because Life Groups are integral to our church, we recognize this is no small ask. However, we do want to ease the burden on you by providing simple and clear expectations, as well as lots of support along the way.

We will assign each Life Group a coach to provide encouragement, help discern how God is working in your group, and find options for expanding your vision of where God is leading.

### **A LIFE GROUP LEADER IS:**

1. A passionate follower of Jesus. A disciple who has the life of Christ is living in a community of believers and seeks to give the life away
2. A committed part of the Faith family in service, presence, and giving
3. Willing to learn. Comes to any leader training and regularly meets with their coach
4. Committed to an atmosphere of encouragement and support, praying for each other on a regular basis, and united with the goal of seeing people grow in their relationship with Jesus
5. Committed to building relationships with group members through time, investment, and consistency

I, certify that I have read, understood, and am committed to all the above responsibilities and that failing to follow the terms of the agreement may result in my dismissal as a leader.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LIFE GROUP COVENANT

It is our desire to promote a safe environment for people to reveal openly and confidently the broken areas of their lives without judgement or condemnation. We encourage openness, vulnerability, and intimacy during discussion and prayer times. In order to ensure a safe haven for personal sharing, we ask that each Life Group participant enter into an agreement of confidentiality.

In order to get the most out of this experience, our hope is that you make a committed effort to attend all Life Group meetings and participate in group discussions. If you cannot be there, group dynamics can be impacted.

I agree to make it a priority to attend all group meetings and to keep all things shared by my group members confidential at all times.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## GETTING STARTED

There are three ways that individuals can form or join a Life Group.

1. By experiencing *The Rooted Experience* together and continuing on as a Life Group



2. By joining a Connect Group to discover more about being a disciple in community and then deciding to carry on as a Life Group and go through *The Rooted Experience* together
3. By being invited into a Life Group by those who have built relationships with them

## **YOUR FIRST MEETING**

It is key to build shared ownership and excitement from the first meeting. Create an environment that is welcoming and safe. You may want to consider a shared meal.

Build with the end in mind. Successful groups are highly relational, while also developing hearts that are outward focused. Here are some questions you may want to consider for your first meeting:

- What is God currently teaching you about Himself?
- What are you hoping to gain from our time together?
- What passions has God placed in you for serving others?

Do your best to ensure that your time together is meaningful and beneficial.

## **WHEN LIFE GROUPS AREN'T FOR LIFE**

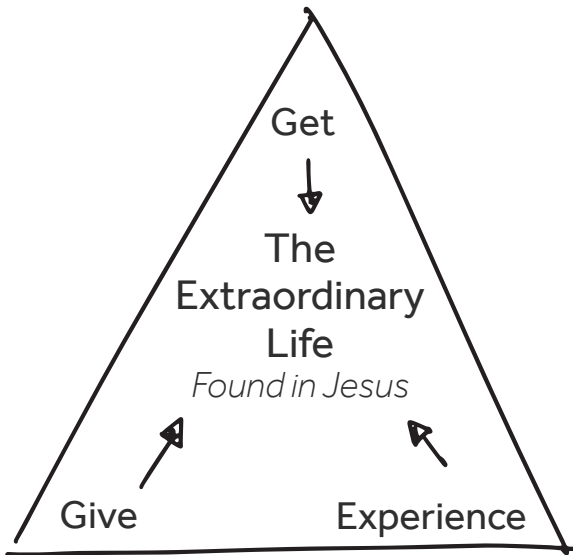
Life Groups have a beginning, and many times they also have an end. People go through different seasons in life, and it is okay to be open and flexible as a community. If your group seems to be coming to an end, talk to your Life Group coach.

RHYTHMS

OF A

LIFE

GROUP



## GET THE LIFE

Jesus gave His life for us to experience new life. Disciples understand this and strive to live their life as a thankful and obedient person in response to this completely unearned and free gift. Below are some ways that your Life Group can grow up your relationship with God.

We recommend engaging in a healthy blend of curriculums and studies following three key relationships of being a disciple.

## ONLINE RESOURCE

*Right Now Media* ([rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)) is a great resource for you to use as a group. There are over ten thousand sessions of material. You can search by author, topic, etc. With so much material, it can be overwhelming to know where to start. If you need access to *Right Now Media*, email [info@faithstl.org](mailto:info@faithstl.org).

Faith has built a custom *Right Now Media* library of materials with subchannels for getting the life, experiencing the life, and giving the life away. You can access this library via this link:  
[rightnowmedia.org/CustomLibrary/720](http://rightnowmedia.org/CustomLibrary/720)

## BOOK LIST

***66 Love Letters: A Conversation with God That Invites You Into His Story***

by Dr. Larry Crabb  
Thomas Nelson 2011

***Building a Discipling Culture***

by Mike Breen and the 3DM Team  
Crowdscribed LLC, 2014

***Group's Emergency Response Handbook: For Small Group Leaders***

by Group Publishing  
Group Publishing 2006

***Luther's Small Catechism, with Explanation***

by Martin Luther  
Concordia Publishing House 2005

***New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional***

by Paul David Tripp  
Crossway 2014

## **EXPERIENCE THE LIFE**

Jesus didn't just spend time alone, He experienced life and interacted with His creation. Disciples of Jesus follow His example by not living their lives in a bubble. They interact with others and seek ways to encourage and challenge those they do life with.

As a Life Group, we invite you to do life together. We eat meals together, support each other at family celebrations, through losses, and at kids sporting events. Pursue common interests and passions to serve together.

## **GIVE THE LIFE AWAY**

Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd was so good that He was willing to lay down His life for the sheep. A disciple understands 'surrender'. This means our stuff, our lives, everything we have belongs to God, and we are learning to give it away as the Holy Spirit leads us.

Each of us has a network of people, we call these people neighbors, that we can give the life away to where we live, work, and play. We recognize that sharing your faith story can be a daunting ask, but as we mature as disciples this will become a part of our life's rhythms. As a Life Group, your role is to support one another as you give the life away as individuals and as a group.

Giving the life away will be something that naturally comes out of who your group is.

Consider these core values as you lead your group through a local missional experience:

### BEING VS. DOING

Adopt serving opportunities that are highly relational. This means we talk to, interact with, and listen to the stories of those we're serving. Your listening ear may be the only one that person has had. It's why you're there.

### DEBRIEF

Gather as a group at the end of your time to pray and to debrief your experience. What is God speaking to you about your life? About serving? About possible next steps? Share with the group.

### NEXT STEPS

Hopefully, you'll be asking how you can be "on mission" regularly after this experience. Most serve opportunities will have next steps presented at the end of them.

Talk early and often about the passions God has already placed in your group to be "on mission" in your local community. It is our desire for all Life Groups to be filled with people who are world changers, living out their faith in culture and impacting the communities where they live, work, and play. Ask God how your group can bless the people, place, and context He has set before you.

The Gospel message goes with us, whether at home, work, play or in a community outside our own. When we view the whole of our lives as spiritual activity, we come to understand that it's all mission. Mission isn't confined to something we do; it's who we are. We are all sent missionaries with a mission. We are fearless world changers, called to impact every aspect of culture with the love of Jesus.

#### KEEP US INFORMED

Stories are a huge part of the whole Gospel message. We believe God wants to work in and through your Life Group to bless others. Our team would love to hear what God is doing in your group.

There's no story too big or too small. We want to hear from you! A story could be an example of seeing God at work in the everyday routine of life or seeing Him completely bring freedom to someone in your group. Hearing stories of God at work fuel who we are and give us a bigger picture of who God is calling us to be.

# GROUP DYNAMICS

It's not uncommon to encounter group members who may require some specialized care on your part. Here are a few helpful tips for handling the different kinds of people you may interact within your group.

## **OVERLY TALKATIVE**

Affirm what is being said and then immediately direct to others in the group to get their thoughts. Avoid maintaining eye contact as this often signals to them to keep talking. Consider meeting them one on one rather than confronting them in front of the group to discuss the issue.

## **EMOTIONALLY NEEDY**

Offer to meet with them outside of the group for prayer and more focused support. Show healthy concern as to not minimize the person or issue. If more care is needed than the group can offer, recommend additional support instead of focusing on them for the entire group time (i.e. a counseling group or one of the other care options provided by the church).



## **THE SHY MEMBER**

Never directly call them out for not speaking, rather encourage the participant by listening to, appreciating, and affirming their comments. Bring them into the conversation by saying something like, "So (person's name), what do you think?"

## **OVERLY SPIRITUAL**

Thank them for their insight and affirm their knowledge of Scripture. Encourage them to avoid using cliché phrases and to speak from actual experiences.

## **THE "ADVICE" GIVER**

First, ask yourself whether you've been doing this too much yourself. Your group will act out on what you model. Set ground rules. People aren't allowed to give advice unless it is requested.

If a person continues to give unwanted advice, meet with them outside of the group. Thank them for their caring heart and explain the best way to care is often to simply listen. Ask how the group can pray for, and support, the individual.

# FAQ'S

## **HOW BIG SHOULD MY LIFE GROUP BE?**

The average Life Group size is 8-12 people, but every group is different. If you lead a couples group and have the space to hold 8-10 couples, great. But if your group meets in your studio apartment, you may only be able to hold six people.

## **WHERE AND WHEN SHOULD MY LIFE GROUP MEET?**

Homes are usually best as long as you are able to maintain a welcoming atmosphere. Sometimes it's not possible to meet in a home. Consider choosing a location in your community (i.e. a café or park).

## **CAN MY LIFE GROUP MEET AT CHURCH?**

While it is possible to meet on campus, it's best to have groups meet in their communities. If you have no way of making that happen, then meeting at church might be a viable option. Contact 314.846.8612 | [connect@faithstl.org](mailto:connect@faithstl.org) about reserving a room.

## **WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT KIDS?**

There are several creative ways to offer childcare for your group. Some groups share the expense of a sitter each week. Other groups will assign “point people” within the group to be the go to person for kids that week.

If people in your group have kids, the most important thing to communicate is an understanding that things might be messy at times but that you are committed to each other despite the mess. Think of ways to involve the kids such as inviting them to pray with the group. This is a great opportunity to model family and true community.

## **CAN OTHER PEOPLE JOIN MY GROUP?**

Yes. Once your group is up and running, contact [connect@faithstl.org](mailto:connect@faithstl.org) for information and resources about adding new people to your group.





**faithstl.org**  
connect@faithstl.org