

Breakout Session: Welcoming New People

Intro and Vision Recap:

- Introduce yourself. How long have you been involved in LifeGroups? What are your favorite parts of LG/ways you've seen Jesus work through LGs?
- In your own words, recap the big picture vision of what we're doing. Work from this copy:

"Our vision for LifeGroups is to be little Jesus-Centered Families on Mission spread all over our city. Based out of Ephesians 4, we know that the work of ministry is an all of us project. Our job as pastors/staff is to help train you up for the work of ministry.

Practically speaking for LifeGroups, this looks like healthy core groups where the weight of ministry leadership is being shared by a number of people instead of a LG leader trying to do everything on their own. And when this is functioning well, we accomplish two huge things:

- 1.) **Our LG leaders don't die.** Quite the opposite. They thrive and sustain for a long time.
- 2.) **Everyone grows in maturity which makes room for hospitality.** As you take on weight you grow in your spiritual maturity and leadership development. And that means your group is better equipped to welcome in new people and to plant new groups so more people can enjoy all the good that our church family has to offer.

Vision for Your Core Area:

Big Picture

Create a system to ensure that new people are welcomed into your LG smoothly!

- This is an area of strength to a fault for me. Open life. Invite everyone in. Come over to our house. Come over for dinner. Come live with us and be adopted.
- I love people. I love meeting new people. I find people and their stories and their backgrounds fascinating. You may be like me in that regard. You may not. Doesn't matter.
- The biggest question for this role is: "What would I need to know if I was brand new?" The biggest obstacle is the curse of knowledge.

Pro-Tips

- Communicate with new people as soon as they sign up (within the first week)
 - Connecting with different kinds of people, communicating clearly and narrating well are the most important skills for people in this area.
 - Narrate a simple explanation for what LifeGroups are:
 - LifeGroups are a group of people committed to loving, and helping each other grow toward Jesus. We meet weekly to catch up on life, study the Bible, pray and encourage each other!
- Meet with them within their first week and narrate how your LG operates and expectations at Group night (i.e. "the first time, you can be a fly on the wall!").
 - **Sample text within the first 48 hours of signing up:** "Hey _____, my name is _____ from Midtown Fellowship. I'm reaching out because you expressed interest in joining our LifeGroup! Welcome! We meet weekly at [address] at [day, time], are you able to be there this week? Look forward to meeting you!"

- **Sample text day of LifeGroup:** “Hey _____, this is _____ from the LifeGroup. Just wanted to check and see if you’re still planning to come tonight? If so, let me know and I’d be happy to wait outside for you, introduce myself, and introduce you to the group. Looking forward to it!”
- **Sample text a couple of days after their first LifeGroup or two:** “Hey _____. It was great hanging out with you at LifeGroup. Real quick: we’re hanging out [mention your rhythm] and our next LifeGroup is []. If you’d like to grab coffee in the next week, let me know your availability. Would love to hangout, get to know you a little more and hear your thoughts about LifeGroup so far!”
- **Sample in-person convo after they attended 2-3 LifeGroups:** Since you’ve come around for a bit, now that you know what we’re all about as a LifeGroup - would you be interested in joining our GroupMe chat?

Obstacles

Too many new people - Like all of the core areas, the object isn’t for you to do all the work, but to make sure it’s getting done. Assign another Core Member to make contact and make sure they know how to welcome in new folks smoothly!

No new people - Coordinate with LG Leader and Groups Team to create more open spots for LG and/or work with whoever is running Review the Mission time.

If new people don’t return - If people don’t come back or are silent over text and email, feel free to follow up a few times, then don’t sweat it. Use it as an opportunity for “autopsy without blame.” I.e. What happened and how can we improve?

- Were expectations communicated well? Were they followed up with on time? Did they feel comfortable at LifeGroup?
- Also, you might have communicated everything well and they were looking for something different. That’s ok! It’s still worth assessing for ways to improve!

(Optional) Case Studies - What’s good? How to grow?

To get your breakout participants more engaged, consider giving them some hypothetical situations and see if they can recognize what’s off and how to course correct:

These are examples from the Discussion Leading Breakout:

- Your LG Leader assigned Billy to help lead Group Discussion. He enthusiastically said “yes.” At LifeGroup during Sermon Discussion, Billy pulls out his journal and shares his insights on the passage and thoughts on the sermon since Sunday.
- Peggy is the Discussion Leader and during Engage the Heart, some people share very heavy things. The Group responds with with silence.
- There’s a brand new person/couple checking out LifeGroup for the first time. The Discussion Leader goes around the room asking everyone to share their name and a fun fact. After that, it’s business as usual, working through the four elements of group time with no narration.

If Time Permits, Make Room for Q+A.