

ELEMENTS OF A LIFE GROUP



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THE BIG IDEA: LIFE CHANGE!

Every Life Group takes on a unique dynamic of its own. For every leader, there are just as many combinations of personalities and leadership styles. That's simply how God uniquely designed us! But the coolest thing is that He uses the uniqueness of each of our spiritual journeys, experiences, and passions to draw others one step closer to Christ! And that, in a word, is the purpose of Life Groups. Transformation... Life change!

Your charge as you lead through the semester is to encourage and challenge each person to take at least one step forward in their journey.

- For some, that might mean beginning to read the Bible for 10 minutes a day.
- For another, to seek help in a certain area of addiction.
- For another, to have the courage to volunteer or step into leadership.
- For yet another... to simply be open to letting God begin to do a new work on their heart.

At Reality Church, we exist to build a family of believers who bring pleasure to God as we love Him completely, love each other unselfishly, and have a Christ-like impact on our community and the world.

We believe our process of Focus, Risk and Impact can lead to individual life change that will help you become a person that makes an impact for eternity.

- **Focus** means fixing our attention on God. Realizing that God is the only true reality. In other words, He's the only 'real' thing. The main avenue of Focus is our weekend worship services.
- **Risk** involves vulnerability. Risking relationships with others by sharing life together. We accomplish this part of the process by participating in Life Groups. We believe attachment is better than attendance and strive to help faces in the crowd become friends in community.
- **Impact** is all about serving others within our church, our community and the world. Our goal is to provide you opportunities to use your gifts and talents to serve others. We believe that serving others is a great way for you to become a person that makes an eternal impact.

Remember — one step forward can change the entire trajectory of a person's life! But it will take intentionality on your part. Our semesters are brief so... no passive leadership allowed!

When you see folks taking bold spiritual steps in your group, please be sure to let your Coach know, so we can celebrate with you!

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR GREAT GROUP DYNAMICS

Food & Fun: It's often the times around food and fun that break down walls of self-protection. Don't dismiss the value of just 'being' together, laughing, sharing stories, and having fun. Including a special social event each semester is a welcomed break.

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Prayer: Prayer is fundamental to growing in our intimacy with God, and as a group leader, part of your leadership charge includes maintaining high expectations of your group's ability to continually go deeper in prayer. Intentionally scheduling a portion of your group time for prayer, not simply sharing prayer requests at the end of your gathering, will help you see growth in this spiritual discipline among your group members.

Icebreakers: A short icebreaker question is a great way to transition into your discussion topic. Your goal is simply to get people to open up and start talking and the more fun the question, the more relaxed they become! Often, the icebreaker will relate to some point you will later make in the group session, but again... keep it light!

Facilitating Discussions: Leading a Life Group is more about encouraging everyone's participation, than it is about teaching on a topic. Take a look at these suggested ratios. The leader should spend only 20% of their time talking, while investing 80% of their time listening and keeping the conversation flowing. Additionally, most groups will experience at least one occasion of a group member launching off into a random topic that needs to be redirected. While your group members will look to you to bring them back from needless rabbit trails, be sure to handle any redirect moments with your group with grace.

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Shepherding: Life Group Leaders are viewed as an extension of the pastoral staff. How you shepherd and care for your group is therefore, in essence, a Reality Church pastoral response. Grace, compassion, care, and prayer, combined with a phone call or hand written note mid-semester will go far to assure your group members will feel well cared for.

Serving: One of the truest marks of a disciple of Christ is their willingness to serve others. And serving alongside others you know always enhances the experience! There are numerous ways to serve – in your group, in the church, or in our community.

Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness: Your ability to offer the forgiveness of God through the blood of Christ is one of your most valuable assets as a spiritual leader. There is tremendous power and depth in the forgiveness you share with someone weighed down by brokenness and guilt. Scripture is full of passages that bring hope and healing. As leader, it would be helpful to be familiar a sampling of passages.

Crisis Care: No one is ever really prepared when an unexpected crisis hits. Whether a unexpected illness, a medical emergency, or a death in the family, your group's willingness to step in and take action to ease the pain, relieve the pressure or assist with practical care, is a testimony to what Jesus calls us to do in the Body of Christ. If you need guidance in how to respond to a specific situation, contact your Coach.

Sharing Leadership: When you share leadership opportunities with others in your group, you not only ease the strain on you as the sole leader, but you are also able to observe and identify prospective future leader/apprentice candidates.

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