LIFE GROUPS

SHARE·STUDY·SUPPORT·SERVE

Hello Leaders and Hosts!

Welcome to a new quarter of Life Groups! We are so grateful for your leadership and willingness to serve your group. In this packet, you will find helpful information to prepare you for this quarter of Life Group meetings!

- **First Night Agenda** to help you have a great first meeting
- **Life Group Commitment** to help set the expectations for your group
- **Leader's Guide Commitment** to help you walk through the Commitment with your group
- **Counseling Card & 4 Q's** with information about our counseling services at North Coast and four questions to ask when someone is struggling with something in your group
- **Community Service Card** to help you find the right project for your Life Group

Any additional resources you may need can be found on our **Life Group Leader Tools** page at l**ifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools**.

Thanks so much for all you do! We are praying for a blessed quarter for your group.

The Life Group Team
North Coast Church

LIFE GROUPS

FIRST NIGHT AGENDA

FIRST NIGHT PREPARATION

Leaders/Hosts – Check your rosters online and **CONTACT ALL MEMBERS** one week before the first meeting and welcome them to the group. Provide the location and time of your group, as well as any entrees to bring for dinner/dessert.

GOALS FOR THE FIRST MEETING

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

ITEMS NEEDED

- Dinner / dessert plans decided
- Beverages set up
- Life Group Commitment
- Nametags *(especially if you have new members)*

THREE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF YOUR EVENING

#1 WELCOME, MINGLE AND TALK WHILE YOU EAT

- ☐ Leader/Host greet members upon arrival with music.
- ☐ The first seven seconds after arrival are critical for new members. Make a great first impression!

#2 FIRST GROUP DISCUSSION

- ☐ Sharing Activity: "Getting to know you" questions and/or Getting to know
- ☐ you game like 2 Lies and a Truth.
- ☐ Worship (optional): This is a great way to connect spiritually with your group.
- ☐ **REVIEWING THE COMMITMENT IS CRUCIAL**: Digging Deeper #1 and Taking
- ☐ it Home in the homework set up your time to go over the Commitment.
- ☐ Closing Prayer: Dedicate the quarter to God.

#3 KEEP IN MIND, YOUR DESSERT CONVERSATIONS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR MEETING DISCUSSIONS.

LEADERSHIP TIPS

⇒ ***1:*** Never underestimate the significance of the time after the meeting.
⇒ ***2:*** Use the Commitment to set the standards for your Life Group.
⇒ ***3:*** Visit the Leader Tools for additional tips at lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools/

LIFE GROUP COMMITMENT CONVERSATION

Lead proactively: *give clear direction, invite participation, and stay flexible.*

FIRST-NIGHT GOAL Help everyone understand what Life Groups are for, what they can expect from one another, and what healthy participation looks like. This should feel like a conversation, not a contract reading.

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

Start With the "Why"

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).

You might say: "We want this to be a place where we can grow in our relationship with Christ and with one another. Tonight, we'll talk through a few expectations that will help us build a healthy group together."

What We Do Together

SHARE	We make room to talk about what is happening in our lives. As trust grows, sharing usually becomes more natural and personal.
STUDY	We engage God's Word, usually connected to the weekend message or a relevant growth topic. The goal is not to answer every question; it is to discover how to follow Christ in everyday life.
SUPPORT	We care for one another through prayer, encouragement, listening, appropriate challenge, and practical help when needs arise (John 15:9-13).
SERVE	We grow not only through what we receive, but through how we serve. We want to discover and use the ways God has designed us to make a difference in the church and community (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Five Marks of a Healthy Group

1. **Make spiritual growth our priority.** We can enjoy tangents, but we will help one another return to what helps us grow (Romans 8:29).
2. **Accept one another.** We will have different personalities, preferences, backgrounds, and perspectives. We choose grace and acceptance (Romans 15:7).
3. **Take care of one another.** When someone is walking through a difficult season, we respond with prayer, encouragement, listening, and practical care (John 13:34).
4. **Treat one another with respect.** One person talks at a time. We listen before advising, avoid fixing or judging, make room for quieter voices, avoid put-downs and gossip, and handle personal sharing with care (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
5. **Keep our commitments.** Consistent attendance and preparation help build trust and make the group stronger (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).

A word about confidentiality: What is shared in the group should be treated with respect and discretion. Leaders should never promise absolute confidentiality when there is concern that someone may be harmed, or when a leader needs appropriate pastoral guidance to respond wisely.

Agree on the Practical Commitments

COMMITMENT	WHAT TO CLARIFY TONIGHT
Meeting rhythm	We meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Final meeting: _____.
Time	Arrive between _____ and _____. Begin at _____. End around _____.
Children	Group members arrange childcare unless your group has communicated another plan. Clarify what works for your group before the evening ends.
Study & preparation	Our studies focus on the weekend message or an appropriate growth topic. Everyone is encouraged to complete the discussion questions prior to group so everyone can participate well. Our goal is to hear from everyone every night and keep God's Word at the center, NOT to answer every question.
Prayer	Prayer is an important part of group, but no one should be pressured to pray out loud. Let new members know they can participate at their comfort level while they learn how group prayer works.
Attendance & communication	Ask members to make weekly attendance a priority. When someone cannot attend because of illness, travel, work, or another significant conflict, ask them to communicate with the leader/host. If absent, contact: _____.
Food / hospitality	Decide together how your group will handle snacks, dessert, or meals. Keep it simple and shared so hospitality does not fall on one person.
Social & service	Plan opportunities during the quarter to enjoy one another outside the regular meeting and to serve together. **Leaders/hosts:** bring a few ideas and possible dates so the group can decide together.

Invite Agreement, Not Just Compliance

Before moving on, pause and make sure the group is with you. ***Ask:*** "Does this feel like the kind of group we want to build together?" Invite questions and clarify anything that feels unclear. Healthy commitment grows when people understand the purpose behind the expectations.

Close the Conversation

Leader checklist:

- Confirm meeting details
- Clarify prayer expectations
- Identify a social/service next step
- Confirm how absences are communicated
- Decide on a hospitality plan
- Answer questions

Our commitment: Together, we will pursue spiritual growth, care for one another, participate consistently, and honor the trust we build as a Life Group.

We agree to honor this commitment throughout the quarter.
(To be decided by each person on or before the third week of group.)

LIFE GROUPS

The Four Q's

Four key questions to ask when someone comes to you with any issue they're experiencing. Getting the facts and context usually makes the next steps relatively straightforward on how to support them or the kind of help they need.

1. How long have you been dealing with this?

When did this first occur?

2. Who else knows?

Have you talked to anyone else about this? If so, who? When was the last time you talked to someone about it?

3. Have you received any advice or counsel on how to deal with this?

What have those you've talked to said about it? Have you sought any other help or resources regarding this issue?

4. Do you have any plans for your next steps?

What do you think might be your next step? Would you like me to check on some other resources? (Don't make the calls but give them referrals, etc.)

NORTH COAST CHURCH

Counseling Center

WHETHER YOU NEED A QUICK TUNE-UP OR MORE IN-DEPTH WORK, WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

- Depression & Anxiety
- Addictive Behaviors
- Grief & Loss
- Conflict Resolution
- Trauma
- Pre-marital & Marriage Counseling
- Parenting Skills
- Anger Management

WE OFFER PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING AT REDUCED RATES FOR:

- Individuals
- Couples
- Children and Adolescents
- Families

For more information, including our counselor bios, visit northcoastchurch.com/counseling

To schedule an appointment with one of our counselors, call Member Care at (760) 724-6700 x239

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