

Howdy Howdy LG leaders, Leaders in Training and Coaches.

I don't know if we've told you this recently but you look good so you've got that going for you.

And on a more serious note, we love you and it's good to be in this room with you together. We look forward to the opportunity to gather and do training for our most front line leaders helping our church walk as church family on mission week in and week out in your groups.

Quick recap from last time that will set us up for tonight:

We have two primary goals we are emphasizing this semester:

- 1.) LifeGroup Leader health and longevity**
- 2.) Get people moving to help make room for hospitality.**

And the good news is that what we've seen in real time that also just so happens to align with Jesus' design for his church according to Ephesians 4:11-16 is that the key to both of the goals is actually the same thing: Getting our members practically engaged in the work of ministry. That's what Ephesians 4 says. That my job and our pastors' and staff's job is not to do all the work of ministry but to equip the saints for the work of ministry. It's an all of us project.

And so practically what that looks like for you LG leaders is having a healthy, vibrant core group and LIT's who are helping carry the weight of ministry in your LifeGroup. We talked about and self-identified as one of three levels of groups:

Level 1 - no core group

Level 2 - a core group but the burden of leadership still all falls on the Leader.

Level 3 - a fully functioning, healthy core group.

We want to help you move from toward level 3. And so we're focusing our training on making those transitions as smooth and seamless as possible for you this semester.

Last leader meeting, we landed the plane by describing 4 core areas to focus on first: Discussion leading, Welcoming New People, Hosting Logistics (Hosting and Childcare) and Prayer/Care Follow Up. We'll come back to those in a little more detail later this evening, but first... we've got a treat for ya'll tonight:

--> One of the holdups along the way to becoming a Level 3 group is some of us just don't have great recruiting skills that help empower and move people into roles of responsibility. Can be for all kinds of reasons. You feel like you're burdening people. Think it'd be easier and you'd do a better job if you just do it yourself. You ask but people say no.

So tonight we've brought in the big guns to help train us. One of our pastors who you don't get to hear teach a lot, but he's actually done a version of this training for our staff multiple times before. And I think it's one of the reasons that our church has so many helpful and engaged volunteers at every level. So if you would please give a big round of applause to Chris Kakaras as he comes up to train us tonight in "the Art of the Ask."

Chris does - Art of the Ask training.

Afterwards, walk through the four core areas.

Man, how great was that. Before you head into your coaching time tonight, I want to walk through the Job descriptions we've made for the 4 Core areas and then give you your very important homework for before next Leader meeting.

## Discussion Leading

### Big Picture

Ensure that the elements of group time are led well by reading through the guide and facilitating conversation.

### Pro-Tips

- Help set and maintain a positive, joy-filled grateful tone.
  - People of the Pages - wk 3: Leadership requires an ability to "enjoy imperfect".
  - Every obstacle is an opportunity. When someone shares something heavy or sad, you help set the tone by responding in grace, love, and prayer.
  - Your group won't pivot in one moment, but they will grow over time
- In **Catching Up on Life**, emphasize the Godward component in our circumstances ("Where did you see God at work in the midst of your highs and lows?", rather than just "What were your highs and lows this week?")
- In **Scripture and Sermon Discussion**, shift the focus away from what people liked or didn't like and toward, how they were convicted and need to grow.
- In **Engage the Heart**, emphasize gospel truth/encouragement before offering advice. (Ask specific people to encourage the sharer with a verse and/or gospel truth.)
- In **Review the Mission**, help your group take small steps. Ex: if people aren't building with others, spend time praying for relationships and opportunities. If people are building but not seeing any movement, brainstorm specific action plans.
- Keep track of the time (recommended times are on the LG guide)
  - If needed, have someone else to run the timer so you can focus on conversation.

### Obstacles

**"It takes too much prep!"** - Discussion Leading should not require pre-work re-listening to the sermon/taking notes. Use the guide and pick up social cues in the room. Of course you can go above and beyond, but don't let this be a barrier.

**Absence** - If absent, those in charge of DL should assign others to lead. The goal isn't that this person or people does all the work, but that they ensure it's being done well.

**Absent-minded** - The main skill for this role is to read the room and help everyone engage. Lead through the guide. If people are not responding, give others the gift of going second by answering first. You can also feel free to call on people to get the conversation going. If your group is really struggling, ask the LifeGroup leader for feedback as to how to encourage the Group to be more engaged..

**Letting negative people dominate the room** - Negative people are welcomed! And your job is to reign them in to make sure they don't dominate the conversation and tone.

# Welcoming New People

## Big Picture

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

## 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!

# Hosting Logistics (Hosting + Childcare)

## Big Picture

Make decisions and communicate in a way that helps new and established people be able to participate in your LG as easily as possible.

## Pro Tips

- Communicate simply and consistently (email, groupme, etc.)
  - Double-check beforehand with the house host. And then communicate that over GroupMe/email in a regular and timely manner.
  - If possible, create a doc/spreadsheet of where to meet weekly for the semester.
- Childcare: If needed, work with your LG Leader to figure out your LG plan kids.
  - For options see “How to Be Intentional with Children in LifeGroup” at [midtownlifegroups.com](http://midtownlifegroups.com)
  - Does Core Group pool money together for childcare funds?
  - Do you need to create a list for potential childcare options?
- Assess and plan LG rhythms in conjunction with LG Leader
  - Are rhythms successfully engaging missionally? Are new people coming in? Is there a low entry point for people to meet people in your group?
  - Consult “Is Your Rhythm Set Up For Mission?” at [midtownlifegroups.com](http://midtownlifegroups.com)
  - Communicate with the LG Leader the rhythm plan, and then notify the LG after.

## Obstacles

**Overvaluing everyone’s preferences** - Your job is to make the best plan that works for the most amount of people. It isn’t possible to cater to everyone’s preferences. If you try to cater to everyone, you will end up stalling when a decision needs to be made and often won’t land on the best plan for the group at large.

**Childcare logistics** - consult this tool with your LG Leader to discern what your Group does with kids and go from there. If still running into issues, consult our Kidtown Director Ryan Shults. LifeGroup childcare can be difficult, but it’s not impossible to find a solution that works for your group!

**Rhythm logistics** - Rhythms may not have much buy-in or actually reach non-Christians. In which case, consult “How to Be Intentional with Children in LifeGroup” at [midtownlifegroups.com](http://midtownlifegroups.com).

# Prayer/Care Follow-Up

## Big Picture

During the week 1.) Make sure prayer requests are followed up on and 2.) Those who are hurting know they are known, loved, and challenged with Scripture.

## Pro-Tips

- Keep a record of prayer requests and confession during group time. Follow up options:
  - Low-barrier - Put the prayer requests in the LG GroupMe later that day/week. "Hey here's what we shared. Take some time to pray for each other today and if you have any updates, let us know."
  - Bring up an issue the following week. Ask the person for an update.
- For momentum, consider spending 15 min sending follow-up texts after Group Time:
  - "Hey \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for sharing that. I appreciate your honesty."
  - "Hey \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for how you responded to that person!"
  - "Hey \_\_\_\_\_, this person shared this, will you follow up with them this week?"
- If heavier matters are shared, stop and ask someone to pray for the person right then.
  - Notify the LG Leader if more urgent concerns arise throughout the week.
- Remember to point those who are hurting to Gospel truth first. Potentially use the Gospel Fluency tool or the Digging Deeper chart. Both can be found at [midtownlifegroups.com](http://midtownlifegroups.com)
- If your LifeGroup has a ton of single-gendered folks, consider pairing them up once every other week so they can check in with each other.

## Obstacles

**Solo care person** - The job is to create the culture, not do it all. This role does not necessarily need to be filled by a "priestly-wired" person. The job is to ensure people are cared for as needed. It's an all of us job, not a one person superhero job.

**I feel underequipped** - Make sure they know how our coaching tree works and to consult our LG Training website for specific questions ([midtownlifegroups.com](http://midtownlifegroups.com))

**Enmeshment** - Keep your identity and okayness separate from any of the issues you are helping with. Keep the focus on Jesus and His ability to heal, not your own strength. We are here to help in their healing process but we have to remember that Jesus is the ultimate power in their healing and they are responsible to take the steps they need to take to find healing in Him. Refer to Galatians 6:1-5.

## Homework:

Your homework is to pick 1-2 people or a couple to oversee each of these four areas, recruit them using everything we learned in the Art of the Ask training from Chris tonight, and invite them to our third LG Leader meeting coming up on **November 14th**.

- We're doing something totally different to help train up your people so that your group can thrive. It's gonna be a blast!
- Use the one page job description to help make recruiting easy. Present an easy ask. Ask them as soon as possible so they can get it on their calendars.
- How do I know exactly who to invite? Lean towards inviting more rather than less. But don't necessarily invite them just because they have the coregroup title. Gotta get people moving.