



IDMC
AUSTRALIA

Life Group
**LEADERS
HANDBOOK**

We are an

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLE MAKING CHURCH

We believe in authentic discipleship to Jesus Christ and intentional discipling of all nations for God's glory. For God's glory, we want to multiply Intentional Disciple Making Churches and Campuses in Sydney and in the key cities around the world.

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WELCOME

to the exciting journey of training to be a Life Group Leader! We are committed to help you to become an effective leader. This training process is designed to inspire you with the heartbeat and purpose of Life Groups as well as equip you with the skills you need to lead a life-changing group.

An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a mix of deep blue and light blue water, sandy beaches, and some greenery. The water is the dominant color, with various shades of blue and white foam from waves. The land is visible as lighter, sandy areas and some darker green patches.

Leading For
LIFE CHANGE

SESSION 1: THE HEART OF LIFE GROUPS

At the beginning of your training journey, we want you to catch the heart and vision of our Life Groups. This session is all about the why behind what we do!

1. IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Read Jesus' last command in Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:42-46, Acts 5:42 and Acts 20:20. How did discipling occur in the early church?

2. OUR MISSION AND STRATEGY

Just as in the early church, regular small group gatherings in homes are central to the life of our church. Life Groups are one of the key strategies and key vehicles to fulfil our vision of discipling.

It is primarily through Life Groups that we connect and empower people to be disciples and become disciplers. Life Groups are central and we want to see everyone in Life Church connect in a biblical community, be equipped to be a discipler and serve others in love.

Therefore fortnightly Life Groups are a key priority, just as our Sunday services remain the priority of our church.

3. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE GROUPS

In our Life Groups, we want to create an environment where participants experience authentic community and spiritual growth resulting in authentic discipleship to Jesus and intentional discipling (ADID) of a certain kind.

ENVIRONMENTS (MEETING FEB – NOV | FORTNIGHTLY)

We have 20 opportunities for life change (each meeting for 2 to 2.5 hours)

We create intentional and strategic environments to help people take their next step towards ADID of a certain kind. We create intentional and strategic environments to build community, deepen consecration, and activate calling.

*Our goal in Life Groups is **LIFE CHANGE!***

This happens as we pay attention to moving people along in these 3 key areas:

COMMUNITY – From Guests to Friends to Family

CONSECRATION – From Casual to Committed to Consecrated

CALLING – From Disciple to Disciplemaker to Disciple Mentor

“The irony is that we have actually grown numerically and spiritually by doing fewer programs and special events, choosing instead to focus our attention on moving people with various levels of commitment to deeper levels of commitment.”

QUOTE FROM IMMANUEL CHURCH, USA

SESSION 1: THE HEART OF LIFE GROUPS

WINS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- ✓ People moving from just being a guest to becoming family and having a high sense of ownership of the group (high sense of community)
- ✓ People moving from a casual commitment to being committed then consecrated (high sense of engagement)
- ✓ People moving from being a disciple to willing to serve as a disciplemaker and then being trained to be a disciple mentor (high sense of heart to disciple others)
- ✓ People coming regularly and on time and serving in an area within the group
- ✓ People having an ADID lifestyle and applying the truth for LIFE CHANGE at each meeting

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12. Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica.

Describe Paul's relationship with the Thessalonian church.

Take a few moments to describe an environment where healthy spiritual and personal growth can occur. What should Life Groups be like?

In our church, healthy Life Groups aim to fulfil the purposes of:

- ✓ Community
- ✓ Consecration
- ✓ Calling

We help people to grow as a disciple by doing these 3 things:

- ✓ Connect
- ✓ Equip
- ✓ Serve

CONNECT

It is easy to feel alone in a crowd. Life Groups are an open door into the life of our church. As the church grows larger, we must also “grow smaller” in groups so that people can connect with one another. Life Groups are the heartbeat of our church. When you are in a Life Group, you can experience the love and strength of biblical community. People grow and flourish best in true biblical community where there is friendship, warmth and acceptance.

In what practical ways can you create this sense of community and family within your Life Group?

SESSION 1: THE HEART OF LIFE GROUPS

EQUIP

How do we help members to grow in spiritual maturity?

“We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

COLOSSIANS 1:28

As Christians, our goal is to know and become like Christ. First, we need to be growing in our lives and then equipping others to do the same. That is why in our Life Group studies, there is a strong emphasis on application. “Truth alone does not change lives, but truth applied changes lives”.

We aim to equip each person to grow in maturity. Sometimes it is as simple as praying for people, taking an interest in them and asking the right questions. You do not need to know all the answers or be the source of all wisdom. Just be a source of encouragement. The Holy Spirit will help and guide you.

List some helpful questions you could ask of someone you wish to encourage in their spiritual growth:

Life Groups are the place where you can be equipped to become a disciple of Jesus and to live a faith-filled life. We want to see you grow, flourish and become all that God has called you to be.

SERVE

We believe that every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Life Groups help you to realise your spiritual gifts and challenge you to use them in serving others. Life Groups are a place where there are like-minded people who believe in you. This is how leaders are developed.

Jesus came to Earth to serve others (Mark 10:45). Service is the ultimate expression of love. In the Body of Christ, every part is called to contribute no matter how small (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

Look for the potential in people in your group. Speak life and vision into them. Ask them to volunteer in church, take a turn leading a prayer or share their faith with the unsaved. Challenge them to step out of their comfort zone. Pray for them and encourage them to serve. People respond when they know others believe in them.

From your Life Group, you can raise up new leaders who can multiply to lead another Life Group. It is important that you identify and train an assistant leader early on so that they are available to help you lead your group and you can become the disciplinemaker and multiply yourself in others.

A BALANCED LIFE GROUP

It is through a foundation of genuine connection that equipping and serving can occur. These priorities need to be kept in balance so there is opportunity to both give and receive. As a leader, you will need to be responsive to the different seasons and unique needs of your Life Group members.

SESSION 2: THE LIFE GROUP LEADER

Jesus is sitting on a beach eating fish over a BBQ and talking with his close friends. He discusses their futures: what they hope for and the things they fear (See John 21). It is a familiar scene for the band of disciples. Together, they had grown to understand the truths of the Kingdom, learnt to love one another, been equipped to serve and grown closer to Jesus.

This lies at the core of Life Group leadership. As leaders, this is what we are called to do! Have you learnt some things about God you can share with others? Can you befriend and love people and connect them together in a circle of friendship? Can you encourage someone when they are down? Are you able to believe in someone's potential? *Then you can lead a Life Group!*

ROLE DESCRIPTION

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

1 PETER 5:2-4

Life Group leaders play a very important role and are the under-shepherds of our church to help with pastoral care of the members and to facilitate the running of the Life Group meetings leading to discipleship and life change. All these are done with accountability. As the church grows larger the Pastor delegates spiritual authority to Life Group leaders to pastorally care for the members.

“The larger your church grows, the more important small groups become for

handling the pastoral care functions. They provide the personal touch that everyone needs, especially in a crisis. At our church we like to say that the whole church is like a large ship, and the small groups are the lifeboats.”

– Purpose Driven Church, Pastor Rick Warren.

LG Leaders model leadership and servanthood and have a heart to disciple and build up the House of God and not their own ministry or position.

As a Life Group leader, you are:

1. CONNECTing people in biblical community, by:

- ▶ Creating a warm “open door environment” where all people on any stage of the journey are welcomed
- ▶ Taking responsibility to ensure new people find connection in your group or within another part of the church family
- ▶ Referring serious needs to the pastoral care team

2. EQUIPping people so that they develop Christ-likeness, by:

- ▶ Facilitating spiritual growth through encouragement and loving accountability
- ▶ Praying for and with the people in your Life Group
- ▶ Helping people apply Bible teachings to daily living

3. Empowering people to SERVE, by:

- ▶ Helping them serve in the life of our church
- ▶ Helping them discover their gifting and call
- ▶ Helping them to impact and influence in every sphere of life

SESSION 2: THE LIFE GROUP LEADER

Identify ways that you could help lead others to *connect, equip and serve*.

5 BASIC COMMITMENTS WE ASK PEOPLE TO MAKE TO HELP THEM GROW:

We can help people to grow with these 5 basic commitments:

WORSHIP in a Celebration Service

GROW in a Life Group, Discipleship Group or Mentoring Group

SERVE in a Ministry Team, Leadership Team or Operations Team

GIVE generously and consistently through tithes and offerings

BRING a friend to our services and be a BLESSing

People grow in discipleship by
INCREASED STEPS OF COMMITMENT.

Help people to grow in discipleship by connecting them to each next step:

1. Attending Sunday Service Regularly – growing in relationship with God
2. Growing in a Life Group – growing in community with others
3. Serving in a ministry team –growing by serving others

WHAT A LIFE GROUP LEADER LOOKS LIKE...

With the privilege of leadership comes responsibility. In his pastoral letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul lists some standards for leadership. Read [1 Timothy 3:1-13](#).

Leading a Life Group is a key role within Life Church. A Life Group leader is:

1. Passionate about God and people
2. A person of character and integrity
3. Committed to personal spiritual growth and leadership development
4. Supportive of the leadership and vision of the church by prioritising involvement in relevant church activities wherever possible. This includes:
 - ▶ Attending Sunday Services regularly
 - ▶ Attending / Leading Life Group regularly
 - ▶ Attending Leadership training and prayer nights, Breakthrough Weekends and IDMC Conferences
 - ▶ Supporting our church financially through tithes and offerings

WHAT A LIFE GROUP LEADER DOES...

Leading a Life Group requires time and effort. As Paul says, to this end we labour - not alone - but with the *“life and energy of the Holy Spirit who powerfully works in us”* (Colossians 1:29,30)!

The rewards of leading a Life Group are fulfilling and eternal. There is nothing to compare with seeing others grow closer to God. Paul asks us, “What is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we glory in when Jesus returns? Is it not you?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). Above all else, people are our joy and glory!

Primary Objective:

Shepherding and Leading

SESSION 2: THE LIFE GROUP LEADER

A Life Group leader:

1. Cares and prays for the people of their group
2. Cares, mentors and develops Assistant Leaders
3. Reads ahead and prepares well for the lesson so that they can lead and contribute to the discussion meaningfully
4. Regularly reports on Elvanto attendance, pastoral care needs / praise points and the progress of their group to their respective Zone Supervisor fortnightly
5. Runs an inspiring and encouraging Life Group meeting
6. Takes responsibility for growing their Life Group spiritually and multiplying disciplemakers
7. Works with Assistant Leaders to facilitate social activities that encourages their group to connect with each other (in-between-meetings – IBMs)
8. To encourage members to adopt the BLESS strategy in line with IBMs and go through BLESS strategy cards twice a year (in lead up to Easter & Christmas)
9. Meets regularly with their Zone Supervisors and Assistant Leaders / Core members on alternate months for shepherding, development and overseeing purposes

Read through the list above. What are your strengths? Are there areas you can mark for improvement?

ROLE OF AN ASSISTANT LIFE GROUP LEADER

How we identify an Assistant Leader (guidelines only):

- ▶ Passionate about God and people, etc.
- ▶ Good people skills
- ▶ Able to make intentional conversation
- ▶ Good organisational skills to work with the core members to organise IBMs and organise rosters

Primary Objective:

Integrating and Facilitating

An Assistant Life Group leader:

1. Assists the LG Leader in all aspects of leading a Life Group and starts by taking on responsibilities
2. Helps the LG Leader to oversee core members in organising IBMs and connecting
3. Helps with leading discussions, pastoral care for some members, organising rosters, hosting LG in their home if needed
4. Can also assist the LG leaders in updating Elvanto for fortnightly attendance and detailed pastoral care reports
5. Reads ahead and prepares well for the lesson so that they can contribute to the discussion meaningfully
6. Follows up with the Connectors on how they are going with their assigned newcomers
7. Meets regularly with LG leader (bi-monthly)

SESSION 2: THE LIFE GROUP LEADER

ROLE OF A CORE MEMBER

How we identify a Core Member (guidelines only):

- ▶ Organisational skills
- ▶ Interpersonal skills - people & communication
- ▶ Supportive of the leadership and share the vision of the church
- ▶ Regular to LG and starting to take ownership of areas within LG

Primary Objective:

Assimilating and Organisation within the LG

A Core Member:

1. Helps with organising rosters, announcements, prayer points, etc.
2. Have potential to lead discussions (with a certain level of maturity)
3. Can assist Connectors by assimilating people into Life Group (e.g. inviting to and organizing IBMs, being proactive in connecting newcomers to LG members on Sunday and inviting / bringing them to LG)

ROLE OF ZONE SUPERVISORS

How we identify Zone Supervisors:

- ▶ Need to have heart for God's people to grow in ministry skills
- ▶ Political skills to influence for change
- ▶ Know how to steward people for life change
- ▶ Have a heart of a Mentoring-Leader to grow and develop leaders

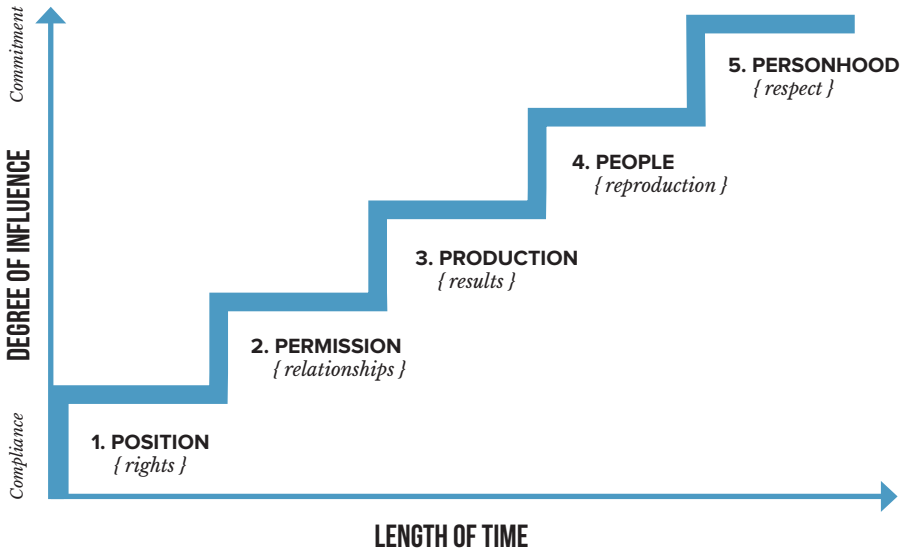
Primary Objectives:

- ▶ Shepherding, Overseeing and Developing LG leaders
- ▶ Pastorally caring for and shepherding the Zone under their care

Responsibilities:

1. Pastor / shepherd the zone - know your members well by name / face
2. To oversee the general well being of each Life Group Leader and Life Group under their care. Regularly review attendance and pastoral care reports (fortnightly).
3. Regular meetings with Leaders (bi-monthly)
4. Regular meetings with Zone Directors (bi-monthly - alternate month)
5. Visiting Life Groups under their zone regularly
6. Submitting monthly reports to Zone Ministry Directors / cc LG Pastor
7. To ensure each Life Group Leader is healthy and growing in discipleship and as a disciplemaker
8. To assist in house / hospital visitation to pray when there is newborn baby or any hospitalisation of a member and to conduct house blessing and house cleansing as needed
9. To assist leaders to intentionally move members from Community to Consecration to Calling
10. To help the LG Leader to ensure Assistant Leader is developing well (OPPAS)
11. To help LG leaders to identify potential leaders in their groups

5 LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

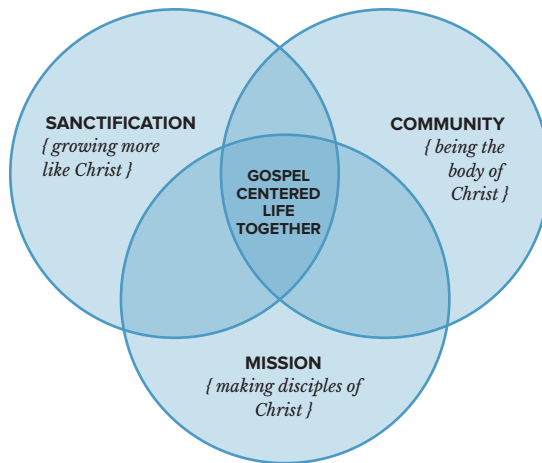


- 1. POSITION** – Title alone is not going to get people to come. Many people see Sunday as compulsory, but LG as optional.
- 2. PERMISSION** – Build relationship with all your members.
- 3. PRODUCTION** – 3 movements of people, be clear on aims to be able to reach results (ABC and ADID).

3 MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLE

- 1. COMMUNITY** – Guests to friends to family
- 2. CONSECRATION** – Disciple, maker, mentor
- 3. CALLING** – Servants, Stewards, Sons

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



How are we going to disciple / develop our people?

Problem: LGLs are currently running the night, we need to free them to move people.

1. **CORE GROUP** – Executes the logistics
2. **ASSISTANT LEADERS** – Manage the logistics
3. **LIFE GROUP LEADERS** – Move people along the 3 movements
4. **ZONE SUPERVISORS** – Shepherd the leaders / zone and multiplies the LGLs

Where does a Zone Supervisor need to be? At Level 4 – People (reproduction)

1. Shepherding, Overseeing and developing leaders
2. Pastorally caring for and shepherding the Zone under their care
3. Work with LGLs and ALs to multiply healthy groups

How? **OPPAS** (*I do, you do, I watch, you do alone but someone else watch*)

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

CORE GROUP

- ▶ Assimilating and organisation
- ▶ Rosters (snacks, worship, venue, child minding)
- ▶ Helping new members become regular members (invitations / set up IBMs)
- ▶ Organise socials / IBMs
- ▶ Lead announcements

ASSISTANT LEADERS

- ▶ Integrating and facilitating
- ▶ Shadow the LGL
- ▶ Help oversee core members in organising IBMs and connecting
- ▶ Mentor and train members to become core members
- ▶ Can help disciple new believers

LIFE GROUP LEADERS

- ▶ Shepherding and leading
- ▶ Care, mentor, develop Assistant Leaders
- ▶ Pastoral care oversight
- ▶ Grow members spiritually and multiply disciplemakers
- ▶ Report regularly
- ▶ Ensure 3 movements are happening with members

SESSION 3: LIFE GROUP ENVIRONMENTS

“Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

HEBREWS 10:25

In leading Life Church, the Pastors aims to build a church that they would want to go to. Aim to lead a Life Group meeting that *you want to go to!*

Think of a recent Life Group meeting that you really enjoyed. What made it encouraging or helpful - so that you were looking forward to the following week?

1. CREATING ATMOSPHERE

“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

MATTHEW 18:20

It is unseen, yet you know when it's there and when it's not. It's invisible yet it is perhaps the most powerful element of a meeting. It is *atmosphere*.

A positive atmosphere full of faith, hope and love inspires people to grow, facilitates healthy relationship-building and importantly allows the Holy Spirit to work. Life Groups are an expression of church in your home. There should be a culture of encouragement, blessing and unity. Your meeting reflects the heart and vision of Life Church!

SESSION 3: LIFE GROUP ENVIRONMENTS

As a leader, it is your role to set the tone and culture of your group. Atmosphere does not just happen! **How can you create an effective atmosphere that builds others up? Consider the location of your group, your preparation for the meeting and the example you can set as a leader and the spirit that you carry.**

2. THE MEETING PLAN

Life Group Leaders aim for life change by facilitating the **4 W's OF A LIFE GROUP ENVIRONMENT**:

1. **WELCOME** (COMMUNITY) - icebreakers and announcements (15 min)
2. **WORSHIP** (CONSECRATION) - CD or live music if you have able musicians, 2 songs are usually sufficient (15 min)
3. **WORD** (CONSECRATION AND CALLING) - discussion around the Word / book (1 hour)
4. **WORKS** (CONSECRATION AND CALLING) - pray for each other and the friends on your BLESS lists, encourage practical application and get them to write it down (20 min), followed by supper / fellowship (COMMUNITY)

Every part is a vital and contributing factor to
LIFE CHANGE.

To help with ownership and shared responsibility, it is advisable to set the expectations right from the first meeting that everyone will be rostered on to serve in some area within the Life Group. This helps to engage each person, equip them and also helps with increased attendance as people are more likely to come when they are rostered on to serve and are accountable.

There are many areas they can be involved: hosting, icebreakers, announcements, children's program (if applicable), supper, clean up, discussion leading, worship leading, organising socials, contacting and connecting newcomers etc.

However, only the leaders, assistant leaders and mature core members who have been identified as potential future leaders will be responsible for leading the time in the Word.

*People grow the most when they are serving and taking responsibility.
Every task, no matter how small, is an **OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE.***

A typical Life Group meeting includes:

Start and Finish

Life Group meetings are approx 2 to 2.5 hours. Please respect people's time by starting and finishing the meeting promptly. If people continually come late, please gently remind them to come on time and also feel free to start the icebreaker or worship on time without them so that your meeting does not have to start later. If some want to linger longer, make sure you officially close the meeting so that remaining members are free to leave.

Welcome – Icebreakers and Announcements

Allow approximately 15 minutes for welcoming and icebreakers. This time is

SESSION 3: LIFE GROUP ENVIRONMENTS

essential. Food always helps socially so empower people to contribute! Be a good host and try to connect with every member. You know you have a healthy Life Group when you have to curb conversations to begin the study! When doing announcements our language and communication needs to be inspiring and not merely passing on of information. Announcements are key for keeping people informed and helping people to take the next step in their discipleship journey.

Study Together

Our Life Groups all follow the same materials whether it is a book study or following Sunday sermons. This means that the whole church is moving forward in one direction. Leaders are not to introduce any other material for study or invite any outside speaker to share in their Life Group as this could cause potential disunity or may not be aligned with the teachings of the church.

How to Pray for your Group

- ▶ Pray for any requests group members share
- ▶ Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group
- ▶ Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth
- ▶ Pray for authentic community to develop
- ▶ Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well

Prayer and Spiritual Gifts

In each Life Group meeting, pray for each other's needs, our church vision and leadership as well as our related ministries including missions. Whilst we encourage the operation of spiritual gifts within the Life Group, please ensure that prophetic words given are not directive but just exhortation and edificational. Try different combinations in prayer to add variety and help new pray-ers. For example, pray in pairs, genders or small groups as well as corporately.

Church Events

Occasionally, Life Groups do not meet in homes but gather together for special church events. Aim to promote the event and create opportunity for fellowship in your group in the wider church setting. When we have multiple services, we do encourage your Life Group to go to their assigned service to help with seating purposes and fellowship with their Life Group members.

3. LEADING THE STUDY

The study time provides opportunity to discuss what we have learnt from the book or Sunday sermons, ask questions and reflect on how we can *apply* biblical truth to our lives. The early church leader James wrote: Do not just read what the Word says; *do it!* (James 1:23-25).

- ▶ Carefully prepare! Look up the scriptures. Answer the discussion questions yourself first. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. If you have any queries about the study itself, speak to your Zone Supervisors.
- ▶ Be selective in your use of the discussion questions. If people are sharing from their hearts and the discussion is fruitful, do not feel locked into completing every question. However, do remain focused on the topic and intent of the study.
- ▶ Encourage people to read from their Bibles. Model good use of your Bible.
- ▶ Conclude the study with a challenge or an emphasis on how we can apply what we have learnt in our lives.
- ▶ Not using unapproved material or inviting outside guest speakers to Life Group.

4. GROUP DYNAMICS

Your Life Group may be made up of people of all backgrounds, nationalities, and spiritual maturity. You will be sure to meet ‘Shy Sheila’ and ‘Talkative Tim’! You may have new Christians and seasoned theologians! Positioning of members such as the

SESSION 3: LIFE GROUP ENVIRONMENTS

Talkative Tim next to you may give Shy Sheila opportunity to speak.

Ask open-ended questions to encourage full participation. Avoid doing all the talking! A good guideline is the '30-70' rule. Approximately 70% of the speaking should be from members and 30% from the leader. Keep the discussion positive and discourage any critical spirit amongst your group. Carefully lead the conversation back to the topic when tangents occur. Where sensitive issues or complex questions arise in your group, follow up one-on-one after the meeting or over supper. Remember to ask for advice of your Zone Supervisors if you encounter difficulty leading your group.

5. ATTENDANCE AND PASTORAL CARE REPORTS

The shepherd knew when 1 sheep was missing from his fold of 100 (Luke 15:4). As one pastor said, "We count people, because people count!" It is important that we are fruitful with those who have been entrusted to us. Every person matters to God.

When you report Pastoral Care concerns and Attendance Records, we are able to monitor the health of our Life Groups by tracking attendance, following up our members pastorally and maintaining accurate contact details. Please remember to do so diligently within the few days after your LG meeting.

- ▶ Go after the irregulars and newcomers
- ▶ Update if they are absent - on Sundays / Fridays and the reason why if you know

After each Life Group meeting, consider the following:

- ✓ How did I go as a leader?
- ✓ How did I help my members to *connect, equip* and *serve*?
- ✓ What worked and what didn't work? Any areas of improvement?
- ✓ What effort have I as a leader, sowed into my LG members?



Leading For
MULTIPLICATION

LEADING FOR MULTIPLICATION

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 (NIV)

When leading for multiplication, it is life-on-life. Share your life, your convictions, your experiences learnt, the truths of God’s Word, the marvelous things He has done. Share the faith stories. We need to invest time and sow into other’s lives. Many of us are here because someone has taken time to journey with us.

Journey with someone over a period of at least a year. Disciplemaking happens! Multiplication happens! And the generations can be reached (including peers).

HAVE A HEART
for the next generation

“Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.”

PSALM 71:17-18

Read Judges 2:6-12. What happened? Why was the faith not being passed on to the next generation?

LEADING FOR MULTIPLICATION

When leading to multiply your group, start with investing your life into your assistant leaders. **Use the 5 step method of training with your assistant leaders for skill development, e.g. Discussion leading.**

O – OBSERVATION

The assistant is to observe the leader intentionally. *(You watch, I do)*

P – PARTNERSHIP

The leader is to involve the assistant leader in all aspects of leading a Life Group especially for discussion leading from preparation to leading a few questions for a few times. Encourage them. *(We do together)*

P – PERFORM

The assistant now takes responsibility to prepare the discussion and lead majority of the discussion whilst leader observes and gives support and feedback afterwards. Use SANDWICH principle of encouragement. Do a few times. *(You do, I watch)*

A – ALONE

The assistant now takes full responsibility for preparation and leading of discussion alone. Give them lots of encouragement and empower them to lead alone! *(You do alone)*

S – SOMEONE

Show someone else. *(Process of multiplication now starts with someone else)*

Remember **OPPAS** (*Gangnam Style!*)

For spiritual development, use these 3 key questions when meeting with your assistant leader for mentoring times:

1. What is happening in your life? (Personal)
2. What is God saying about what is happening in your life? (Theocentric)
3. What are you doing or going to do about it? (Accountability)

Uphold your assistant leader in front of your Life Group members. Empower them and support them. Release them to take on more responsibilities a step at a time.

Practical Suggestions:

- ✓ Take them with you when you plan to visit another member of your Life Group for fellowship and encouragement. Model how to turn social conversations into meaningful theocentric conversations. Model how you pray for and minister to your members before you leave their home.
- ✓ Share the Word of God with them constantly. Share what you have gleaned from your own personal quiet times or a key verse that spoke to you. Pray with and for them.
- ✓ Pray together for your group members by name. Before you begin each meeting, take a few moments and pray for each member by name. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of every person uniquely. Expect God to lead you to whomever He wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way.

“But the word of God grew and continued to be multiplied.”

ACTS 12:24

LIFE GROUP SIZE

Remember, your job is to
BUILD PEOPLE, NOT JUST LEAD A MEETING.

People's lives are like icebergs, we always only see the tip of it. How do we help them reveal more? By keeping the Life Group small.

A good size group is between 8 to 15 people as you tend to get a deeper quality of interaction between group members. People are more willing to share their lives with fewer people because it is less intimidating. Relationships finally get below the surface and that is where spiritual transformation and consecration can most easily take place.

Our normal way of thinking is that bigger is better. That is not the case in our Life Groups. There are important things that happen best when we are with a smaller number of people. Typically groups operate best when they are between 8 to 15 people. The most important aspects of our groups cannot take place as effectively once the groups surpass 20 people on a regular basis because our relationships at that level tend to be more on the surface level.

GROUP MULTIPLICATION

The "New Unity Principle" states that expansion normally happens quickest with new things. If you build a new building, attendance normally goes up. Our tendency is to think that if our group is growing, we don't want to multiply into two groups because we will lose our momentum. The opposite of that is usually true.

Forming two groups usually grows faster than one large group. This is because

larger groups tend to stagnate and make it more likely to be anonymous. Smaller healthy groups better accomplish our purposes of life change, building community, calling, consecration and evangelism. It is also true that groups usually plateau around 18 months. If groups have not multiplied at that point, chances are they won't. When groups consistently maintain 20 or more people in the group without multiplication there is a consistent pattern that tends to emerge. We feel like things are really clicking and good things are happening (after all, the group is growing) and so we resist changing the group. A group that does this ultimately becomes a fellowship group that loses track of our fundamental goals and stagnation sets in.

SUB-GROUPING IS KEY TO DEVELOPING GROUPS AND LEADERS

- ▶ Almost anyone could facilitate a group of 4.
- ▶ You could keep going and growing if you sub-grouped every week into groups of 4 to 6 for discussion and prayer.
- ▶ Whenever your group is larger than 10 people you can try breaking into smaller groups of no more than 4 to 6. With a greater opportunity to talk in a small circle, people will connect more with the study, apply more quickly what they're learning, and ultimately get more out of it.
- ▶ A small circle also encourages a quiet person to participate and tends to minimize the effects of a more vocal or dominant member. Small circles are also helpful during prayer time. People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable trying it with just two or three others. When you gather back with the whole group, you can have one person from each circle briefly share their circle's prayer requests.
- ▶ Help identify other potential assistant leaders.
- ▶ Try to avoid using the word "split" but use the word "multiply" so members so it in a positive light. Language is important.

LIFE GROUP SIZE

Example of letter / email to help members prepare for Life Group Multiplication

Dear LGL members,

Here is a recap about a few points regarding the multiplication:

Being faithful to the vision of IDMC in this church, we as a Life Group are called to be fruitful and multiply our lives in others through discipleship (Matt 13:1-23). In this, (name of) LG has been faithful to the vision and God has again blessed us to have grown to a size which necessitates multiplication. For some who are new to the church and this group, this may be new and you may be asking the question “Why do we need to multiply?” When done correctly, a multiplication has many positive benefits; firstly, it facilitates more intimate discussions and sharing amongst a smaller group (ideal size for sharing is typically 4 to 5 couples), allow leaders to lead new Life Groups and steward the leadership and shepherding of God’s people, allow for closer relationships to be formed between members and facilitate further growth for each individual group, as a smaller group also provides operational flexibility in where a Life Group can meet, conduct activities, IBM etc.

We really praise God for (name of the new LGLs) who have been obedient to God’s calling to step up and take on the privilege of leading a brand new Life Group. I think you will all agree that (name of new Life Group leaders) definitely have a heart to serve God and time and again inspired us with their obedience to living intentionally and being Christ mastered. I know that they will provide the new Life Group with strong leadership as they make the new Life Group their own. Furthermore, they will also be supported by both (name of ALs / Cores) who have also in faith have agreed to support this new Life Group. It is a blessing that there are so many strong leaders / core members who will be anchoring the new group.

As the current Life Group leaders, both (name) and I reflect on how good God has been to us and we never forget that God has given us a great honour and privilege to serve all of you over these last few years. We appreciate each and every one of you and cherish the time the Lord has put us together for this season where we could journey together and share our struggles and triumphs. If there is one thing I would remind us all is that a Life Group is what we make it; so whichever Life Group you prayerfully decide upon, I really encourage each of you to take ownership and invest yourself within these group as it can be a powerful vehicle to affect life change and transformation in our own lives as well as the lives of others. We have always and continue to believe it is only appropriate that members themselves decide on which groups they would like to journey with in the future.

The 2 groups will be led by:

1. Current (name) Life Group - (Leaders' name)
2. New Life Group – (Name of the LGLs and ALs)

We ask that over the next few weeks until the end of (dateline), that you all prayerfully seek God's guidance on which group He is leading you to be a part of going forward. So, what this means for you - please let any of the current leaders know which Life Group you decide to be a part of any time in the coming weeks but latest by (dateline). The LG will continue to meet together until (dateline). However, during this period, instead of being split randomly, we would break-up into the LG's people have chosen to be a part of for the remainder of the study sessions. And finally, when the new study commences, the new Life Group can proceed to meet in a new location. If any of you have any further questions about the multiplication, feel free to contact any of the leaders above to discuss.

LIFE GROUP SIZE

Finally, we would like to thank you all for journeying with us as a family in God and regardless of where you all decide to join, continue to believe God will bless and use each of us mightily for His glory and purposes.

Be Blessed!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What if my group members do not want to multiply but we are consistently averaging over 20 people each week?

Ideally, this should never occur because the vision should consistently be cast to each group by the group leader that we want our groups to grow and we want our groups to remain a size that is conducive for personal sharing and spiritual transformation to take place.

It should also be made clear to the group who the Assistant Leader is and that their expected role will be to take on a group once the group gets too large. With these expectations in mind, hopefully you will never run into a situation where the group doesn't want to multiply because the group should understand the purpose of our groups: discipling, leading to life-change and leading for multiplication.

If after understanding all of the above and a group still does not wish to multiply, there are some steps the Life Group Leader can take:

- ▶ Remind group members that while fellowship is very important that it is only ONE aspect of our groups.
- ▶ Remind group members that the focus is never on what they can get out of the group but what they can contribute to the needs of others. Multiplication will best

meet the needs of the most people.

- ▶ Just because a group multiplies doesn't mean that fellowship or relationships end. Remind them that the very reason they got to the size they are at is the very reason they don't want to separate from each other—they are a tight-knit group. It will happen again!

2) How long should I expect it to take before multiplication occurs?

Normally a healthy Life Group can multiply within 18 to 24 months. If multiplication has not occurred at that point, it is harder to multiply at a later stage. Keeping things fresh is important.

4 types of ways new groups can form:

1. Group divides and multiplies
2. Few key people leave the group to start a new group
3. Subgroups within same location - grows till enough people form new groups
4. A new leader is raised up from within the group and goes on their own to plant a new group, or old leaders go to plant a new group whilst the new leader stays to lead old group.

Guidelines for choosing a name for your new Life Group:

1. Pick a name that is in line with Christian or Biblical themes. Life Group names should not be contradictory to our church vision or have negative or any ungodly connotations.
2. Leaders can proposed the new Life Group name themselves or discuss with their members and propose the names to their Zone Supervisor or Zone Ministry Director for approval. Life Group Pastor will give final decision or approval if the Life Group name is questionable.

EVANGELISM IN YOUR LIFE GROUPS

Evangelism is vitally important to all of our groups. The purpose of our groups is to be a BLESSing to the people God wants us to be and carry out His mission on earth. Life Groups offer a non-threatening environment to invite others into. It is extremely important that we use our groups to bring others into contact with the Word of God and other Christians.

We encourage our group members to continue to pray for and reach out to their non-believing friends with the BLESS strategy:

B BEGIN WITH PRAYER

L LISTEN WITH CARE

E EAT TOGETHER

S SERVE WITH LOVE

S SHARE YOUR STORY

To help them think through the people in their world they could be praying to reach out to, present to them a copy of these circles and write down at least 3 to 5 names in each circle:

FAMILY
{ immediate or extended }

FELLOWSHIP
{ believers who've fallen away / not attending a church }

FRIENDS
{ neighbours, kids sports, school etc }

FUN
{ gym, hobbies, hang-outs }

FIRM/FACTORY
{ work, professional arenas }

Set an invitation goal. Your Life Group can choose a number of ways to invite new people to your group. With the “each-one-reach-one” approach, each person in the group agrees to personally invite one person from any circle every month. Or the group can focus on one circle each month and invite people from the Friends circle that month. However you do it, keep your public expectations low and don't communicate disappointment if new people don't immediately appear. Remember, people invite new people but God brings them.

An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a mix of light blue and white sandy areas and darker blue water. The word "Appendices" is written in a white, elegant cursive font, centered over the image.

Appendices

LIFE GROUP LEADER CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE LG MEETING

- Read relevant chapter
- Prepare for discussion questions
- Send discussion questions to Life Group / reminder of chapter to prepare
- Send reminder details of LG meeting
- Try to ensure each person / family is rostered to serve in an area
- Ensure newcomers and irregulars receive separate call to invite
- Confirm all on roster for serving
- Prepare in prayer for your members, assistant leaders, connectors
- Plan your environment
- Ensure all have copies of the book / material
- Print out copies of discussion questions (if not included in book)

FOR THE LG MEETING

- Host ensures welcoming environment (background music, chairs out, clean and tidy)
- Ensure to start on time
- Ensure announcements are conveyed clearly and enthusiastically
- Ensure all W's of the night are covered and do not take too long (except WORD & WORKS time)
- Ensure everyone feels included
- Convey next meeting date / time

LIFE GROUP LEADER CHECKLIST

AFTER THE LG MEETING

- By Monday, update Eivanto for attendance and pastoral care
- Phone or visit all your members at least monthly
- Organise IBMs (In Between Meetings or socials) monthly
- Meet with your assistant leaders / core team to mentor / disciple them bi-monthly for pastoral care and development

ROLE OF A CONNECTOR

ROLE OF A LIFE GROUP CONNECTOR

The role of a Life Group Connector is to help newcomers connect to the LG and assimilate into Life Church, from Guest to Friend.

Make introductions

LG Connectors visit Welcome Corner after Service. Be available for Core Connector Team to introduce them to newcomers. LG connectors in turn introduce the newcomers to their LG members. Church research states that people tend to make the decision to return to a church when they have met at least 7 people and feel welcome.

From Guest to Friend

LG Connectors help build rapport between the newcomers and the LG members, connecting them to the LG. Studies have shown that people who develop at least 7 friendships in their first few months in a congregation are more likely to stay at that congregation than those who form less than 7 friendships. Life Groups provide an atmosphere where people can make those relationships very quickly as we get to know a smaller number of people better.

Intentionally help newcomers take their next steps:

1) Join the LG

LG Connector should advocate LG and proactively invite newcomers to the LG. Be intentional especially for the first 6 weeks. We have 3 LG meetings over 6 weeks. Ensure to take each of these 3 great opportunities to invite and connect the newcomers to LG, keeping in touch with them and encouraging them to prioritize to come to LG. The task of a LG Connector is to bring newcomers to the LG and help them to settle in. After the newcomers visited the LG 2 times, LG leaders can then take over to continue journeying with the newcomers from Friend to Family.

ROLE OF A CONNECTOR

2) Attend Newcomers Welcome Tea

Encourage newcomers to attend Newcomers Welcome Tea where they can learn more about Life Church and its vision. Newcomers Welcome Tea is held monthly – details of date, time and venue can be found in our website and mobile app.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIFE GROUP CONNECTOR

	ACTIONS REQUIRED OF YOU	DESIRED OUTCOMES
Sunday Service	Visit Welcome Corner to meet newcomers. Introduce them to people around you or to your LG members.	Newcomers learn their next steps and meet at least 7 people.
First LG visit	Follow up during the week - once you receive newcomer's phone number, contact and invite them to the upcoming LG meeting.	Newcomers visit the LG within 1st and 2nd week, and find a loving community.
Newcomers Welcome Tea	Check website or mobile app for upcoming NWT. Encourage newcomers to join.	Newcomers discover the IDMC vision and are inspired by some changed life stories at NWT.
Second LG visit	Invite the newcomer to come again to the LG.	Newcomers make return visit to the LG within the first 6 weeks. Newcomers are now moved from 'Guest' to 'Friend'.

ELVANTO, CHURCH APP & OTHER MATTERS

Elvanto

- ▶ Please refer to this link for tutorial on how to submit Life Group attendance and pastoral care report on Elvanto (<https://youtu.be/OnoyPmhUT7Y>).
- ▶ LG leaders and AL can coordinate among themselves who will submit the LG attendance and pastoral care report.
- ▶ Each LG has been set up with current list of members, so please check it and contact all those for your LG regularly.
- ▶ Update Elvanto for attendance and pastoral care by Monday night as your Zone Supervisors and Zone Ministry Directors will be looking through the report.
- ▶ If a ZS or ZMD visits, please note them down in the guest section along with any other visitors to your group. Put down their names in the notes section so we know who are the newcomers that have started coming to your group for connection purposes and please welcome them.
- ▶ Please try to include any other praise reports or prayer points next to person's name each week or reason why they were away on LG / Sunday if you are aware. So that Pastors / ZS are informed for pastoral care purposes as they will be reading through your reports.
- ▶ You can also note down who ran the different segments of the Life Group and how the Life Group discussion went.
- ▶ Irregular members – still remain on your Elvanto list for pastoral care purpose so everyone is accounted for in church, still invite them with separate call, if few months they have not shown up and not willing to attend, then just invite them to IBMs, socials. If no show to Sundays or LG after 3 to 4 months, we will archive them.

Life Church App

- ▶ We have consolidated church resources into 1 platform which is the Life Church App. This is to enable members to access information and resources at their

ELVANTO, CHURCH APP & OTHER MATTERS

own convenience.

- ▶ LG announcements and materials are now found on Life Church app. They will be uploaded 2 weeks prior. LG leaders are responsible to ensure that their members have access to Life Church App. LG Leaders or Assistant Leaders are to forward to members and print out if needed.
- ▶ If any of your members have difficulty accessing the Church App for study materials, please advise them to update their mobile phone, try logging out and re-logging in or re-downloading.
- ▶ Encourage your members to utilise the Church App. Sunday sermons are available in podcasts and videos. Pastor Paul's Mentoring Moments videos resources are available on Life Church App for your own references and training. Videos on Life Group Leadership for LGLs are available in Church App, Mentoring Moments. Testimonies and Church Events are updated frequently.

Newcomers, New Believers / Seekers, Members Movements for Life Groups

- ▶ Newcomers will be added to your LG list on Elvanto as contacts and become members on your list fully after they have been to a Newcomers Welcome Tea and completed survey form. If they start attending a LG before they have attended NWT or been added as a contact, please list them as guests and include their names. Please invite them to the next NWT (held monthly).

ACCOUNTABILITY & BOUNDARIES

- ▶ Moving of members – members are welcome to try out different groups till they find one that fits. Especially if they are newcomers. The group they were first assigned to keep an eye out for them till they settle. Leaders to liaise with each other.
- ▶ Approaching members – we do discourage approaching members to join your LG if they are already settled and regular in another group. If you do want to invite someone, please do talk to their LG leader first and liaise with them if you think it's suitable for that person to move to another LG. Otherwise growth of your groups should primarily come from newcomers or outside friends you / members may invite.
- ▶ Please note for any new believers or seekers, we do encourage them to go to the Foundation Classes and Building on Foundation Classes.
- ▶ ALs and LGLs are undershepherds of the church. They are accountable to Zone Supervisors for sending in fortnightly Elvanto reports and to report any other pastoral care issues.
- ▶ For any issues or questions the flow of communication should be:
 - ▶ Any issues with members or LGL - talk directly with LGL first, then ZS if needed
 - ▶ Any new initiatives within the LG to be talked through with LGL first, then ZS if needed
 - ▶ Feedback to go up to LGL, not discussed or gossiped amongst members
- ▶ No discussing issues with members that has only been discussed at leadership level.
- ▶ As a caution with boundaries, please be advised to minister to the same gender only. Please refrain from regular texting with opposite gender. Try to redirect them to your spouse or to same sex leader / AL. Do include your spouse in the Whatsapp channel if have to text regular to opposite gender - for safety and appropriateness.

WHY LIFE GROUPS?

9 GOOD REASONS WHY PEOPLE SHOULD BE IN A LIFE GROUP

1. You will understand the Bible better in a growth group.

In a smaller group setting, you can ask questions, participate in a discussion of the text and hear others share insights and illustrations of the truth you are trying to grasp. The Bible must be applied to your personal situations and that happens best in Life Groups.

2. You will begin to really feel like part of God's family.

Over fifty times in the New Testament, the phrase "one another" is used to describe our relationship to other believers. We are instructed to love one another, encourage one another, pray for one another, accept one another, bear one another's burdens, and build up one another. The only way you can obey these commands is in a smaller group! We really do need each other. God never meant for you to go it alone in the Christian life.

3. Prayer will become more meaningful to you.

In a smaller group, you will learn to participate in prayer by having a conversation together with God. In praying together with a few others, we are drawn together and we find answers to the needs in our lives.

4. You will find a place to grow.

Life Groups are a great place to grow - not just in knowledge of the Word but also in your relationship and walk with God, and with your Life Group family. As you grow in authenticity, in sharing your lives, you will also grow in accountability, in upholding one another in prayers and encouragements, in your convictions and in your commitments to the Lord. Life Groups are also a great place to grow in using your various gifts to serve the Lord and serve one another.

5. You will be able to handle stress and pressure better.

Life Groups provide excellent support in times of crisis, change and stress. You'll have a sense of stability and security knowing there are people who really care for you and are committed to standing with you.

6. You will have a natural way to share Christ with friends, relatives and work associates.

Unbelieving friends may be open to an invitation to a casual Bible discussion in a home. In a Life Group, your unbelieving friend can ask questions and express honest doubts without feeling "put on the spot". When your friend sees the love and warmth and honesty of your group, it will make them more receptive to the Good News.

7. You will develop leadership skills you never knew you had!

The Bible teaches that every believer is given certain talents or "gifts" to benefit others in the family of God. As you share and participate in a relaxed Life Group setting, you'll discover your confidence and self-esteem rising. This will help you at work, at church and in every other relationship.

8. You will deepen your understanding of worship.

Worship happens anytime we focus on God. Sometimes that happens best in a smaller group in praying or singing together.

9. You will be a New Testament Christian!

The book of Acts is very clear about how God intends for His people to grow and have their needs met in the church!

WHY LIFE GROUPS?

Consider these verses:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Every day they continued to meet together... they broke bread in their homes and ate together... and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

ACTS 2:42, 44, 46-47

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is the Christ.”

ACTS 5:42

“Greet also the church that meets at their house.”

ROMANS 16:5

“Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord and so does the church that meets at their house.”

1 CORINTHIANS 16:19

“Give my greetings...to Nympha and the church in her house.”

COLOSSIANS 4:15

We are excited about the incredible potential of the network of Life Groups that are being built within Life Church. Groups have these eight benefits that no believer can afford to pass up.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR IN A LIFE GROUP

Questions people have:

- ❓ **Do I fit here?** This is the question of acceptance.
- ❓ **Does anybody want to know me?** This is the question of friendship.
- ❓ **Am I needed?** This is the question of value.
- ❓ **What is the advantage of joining this group?** This is the question of benefit.
- ❓ **How and what can I receive from being part of this group?** This is the question of expectation.

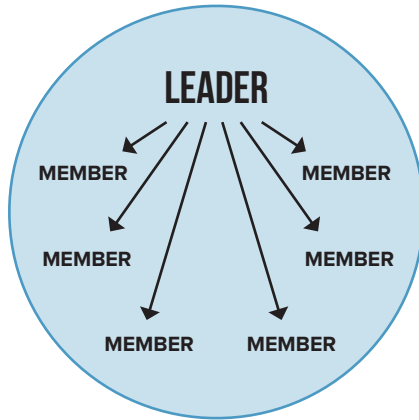
An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a mix of deep blue water, lighter blue shallow water, and sandy beaches. The text is overlaid on the image.

Growing in
LEADERSHIP

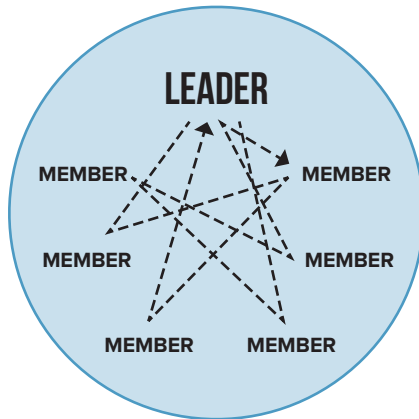
TIPS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION

- ✓ Don't answer your own questions
- ✓ Get comfortable with quiet
- ✓ Encourage more than a yes-or-no answer
- ✓ Anything else?... How about?... Someone else?
- ✓ Give affirmation whenever you can
- ✓ Try to involve everyone
- ✓ Be good listeners – provide support, not quick fixes
- ✓ Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit
- ✓ Provide transitions between questions
- ✓ Ask if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage
- ✓ Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud
- ✓ Begin and end on time
- ✓ **Don't underestimate growth moments in your group meeting**
- ✓ Remember we are to facilitate for life change
- ✓ Remember it's not just about information, but transformation

Because our groups are aimed at transforming people's lives, there are times in our groups that our discussions can get pretty personal. Because we are trying to get people to interact on a deeper, more personal level, how these moments are handled make or break a Life Group. If they are handled with compassion, care and concern for that person then they and others will be more likely to share their lives deeply in future discussions. If those moments are dealt with judgmentally and in fear then it is likely no group member will want to try that again and our relationships and discussions will remain on the surface. Be prayerful for God's wisdom in how we react and direct the conversations at such times.



UNHEALTHY MODEL



HEALTHY MODEL

Ping pong ball ...KEEP IT IN PLAY!

HOW TO CREATE GOOD GROUP DYNAMICS

Set expectations

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

Follow the 70-30 rule

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

Keep discussion positive

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your Zone Supervisors to help you respond well.

Keep the conversation relevant to everyone

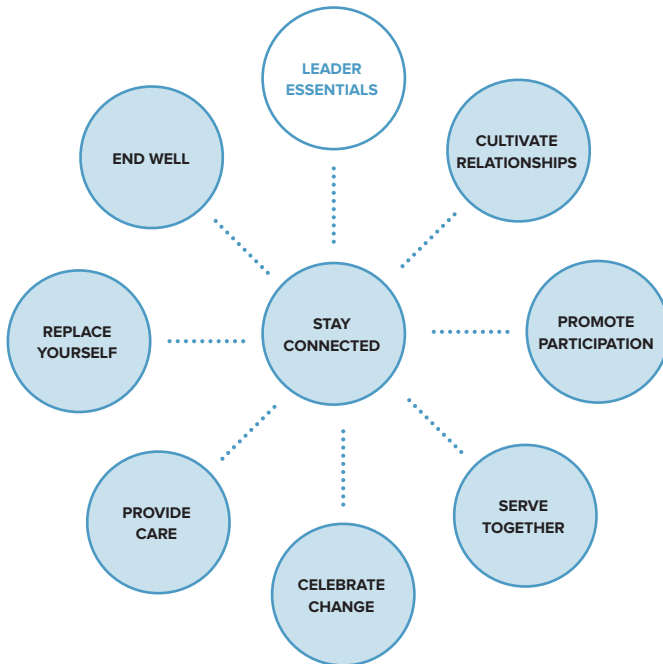
Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new churchgoers.

Respect boundaries

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Life Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

8 LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

In leading groups, we have discovered several key essentials to creating the optimum group environment for God to work in.



Stay Connected

- ▶ This essential reminds us to stay spiritually nourished.
- ▶ In John 15, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to instruct his followers to “abide.” When we stay connected to Jesus in this way, we welcome God’s work in us and through us.
- ▶ **Are you staying rooted in your relationship with Jesus Christ, realizing that apart from him you can do nothing?**

Cultivate Relationships

- ▶ This essential is focused on how we build community.
- ▶ By encouraging and facilitating connections outside of regular group meetings, you demonstrate the priority of relationships.
- ▶ **How are you and your group members connecting outside of group time?**

Promote Participation

- ▶ This essential focuses on how you involve your group members.
- ▶ Shared participation (facilitating the study, hosting the meeting, preparing the snacks, leading prayer time, planning socials, guiding the curriculum-choice discussion, etc.) creates broader ownership of the group.
- ▶ **How are you involving your group members in supporting the group?**

Serve Together

- ▶ This essential expands the focus of the group beyond itself.
- ▶ Serving those outside of the group is a great way to leverage the influence of the group while strengthening the relationships within the group.
- ▶ **Is service a consistent part of your group experience?**

Celebrate Change

- ▶ This essential helps us stay focused on the purpose of the group.
- ▶ If we truly value the life change God brings about in people, it is important that we take the time to celebrate it in our groups.
- ▶ **How do you and your group members celebrate the growth you see occurring in each other?**

8 LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

Provide Care

- ▶ This essential focuses on the big and small ways we can provide care.
- ▶ Often people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- ▶ **Do you make it a priority for your group to support and care for each other?**

Replace Yourself

- ▶ This essential challenges us to prepare others for leadership.
- ▶ By passing on knowledge, skills, and opportunities, you are preparing others for future leadership while sharpening your own.
- ▶ **How are you intentionally investing in a potential leader in your group?**

End Well

- ▶ This essential prepares us to transition our groups well.
- ▶ As all groups have a natural life cycle, leaders must work with their group members to craft a picture of a strong finish.
- ▶ **How are you planning today for a successful end to your current group?**

SAFER PRACTICES PROTOCOL

I. CHILD ABUSE

Definition according Australian Christian Churches child protection policy:

Harm to a child or young person below 18 years old that is of any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation as single act, omission or circumstance, or a series of or combination of acts , omissions or circumstances.

Types of Child Abuse

a) NEGLECT

Continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development such as food, clothing shelter, medical; and dental care and adequate supervision.

Indicators / Signs in Children:

- ▶ Poor standards of hygiene leading to social isolation or poor health.
- ▶ Inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- ▶ Extended stays at school, public places, other's homes
- ▶ Extreme longing for adult affection
- ▶ Self-comforting behaviour, e.g. rocking, sucking
- ▶ Delays in developmental milestones
- ▶ Low weight for age and / or failure to thrive and develop
- ▶ Untreated physical problems e.g. serious nappy rash
- ▶ Extreme anxiety about being abandoned
- ▶ Child not adequately supervised for their age
- ▶ Scavenging or stealing food and focus on basic survival

SAFER PRACTICES PROTOCOL

b) PHYSICAL ABUSE

Non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. Examples: beating, shaking, lacerations, burns, fractures, poisoning, attempted suffocation, physical mutilation.

Indicators / Signs in Children:

- ▶ Unexplained bruising to face, head or neck
- ▶ Bruising showing the shape of the object that caused it e.g. belt buckle, lacerations and welts
- ▶ Explanation of injury is not consistent with the injury
- ▶ Abdominal pain caused by ruptured internal organs
- ▶ Fractures of bones
- ▶ Burns and scalds (including cigarette burns)
- ▶ Drowsiness, vomiting, fits or retinal haemorrhages
- ▶ Aggression or withdrawal
- ▶ Inappropriate clothes for weather conditions
- ▶ Discomfort with physical contact, and emotional problems

c) EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Behaviour by a parent or caregiver that destroys a child's confidence resulting in significant emotional disturbance or trauma. Psychological abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception and moral development. The harm experienced is assessed to be detrimental in effect and significant in nature on the child's well-being.

Indicator / Signs in Children:

- ▶ Passive and aggressive behavioural extremes

-
- ▶ Habit disorders
 - ▶ Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
 - ▶ Inability to value others
 - ▶ Lack of trust in people and expectations
 - ▶ Lack of interpersonal skills necessary for adequate functioning
 - ▶ Bullying
 - ▶ Disruptiveness
 - ▶ Persistent running away from home

d) SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is when an adult or someone who is stronger, bigger or older (includes other children) involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over a child or taking advantage of a child's trust. Examples: sexual touching, sexual intercourse, sexual suggestions to children, including exposure to pornographic material, use of children in the production of pornographic videos or films, exhibitionism, child prostitution.

Indicators / Signs in Children:

- ▶ Child or child's friend telling you about it, even indirectly
- ▶ Describing sexual acts
- ▶ Excessive seductiveness
- ▶ Going to bed fully clothed
- ▶ Sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate for age
- ▶ Regressive behaviour e.g. sudden return to bed-wetting
- ▶ Bruising or bleeding in the genital area
- ▶ Sexually transmitted diseases
- ▶ Bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs

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- ▶ Self-destructive behaviour
- ▶ Suicide attempts / self-mutilation
- ▶ Child being in contact with a known sex offender
- ▶ Anorexia or over-eating
- ▶ Unexplained accumulation of money and gifts
- ▶ Persistent running away from home
- ▶ Unusual aversion to physical contact
- ▶ Inappropriate expressions of friendship with an adult

e) WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“A child being present (hearing or seeing): a parent or sibling subject to physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological maltreatment and / or the damage caused to person or property by a family member’s violent behaviour” (*adapted from Australian Institute of Family Studies, www.aif.gov.au*).

Indicators / Signs in Children:

- ▶ Displays of aggressive behaviour
- ▶ Development of phobias and insomnia
- ▶ Displays of anxiety
- ▶ Symptoms of depression
- ▶ Diminished self-esteem
- ▶ Poor academic performance and problem-solving skills
- ▶ Reduced social competence skills, including low levels of empathy
- ▶ Displays of emotional distress
- ▶ Physical complaints

When to Report

- ▶ **A child tells you they are being harmed** (first hand disclosure) – the fact that a child or young person tells you that they have been abused means that they have a high respect for you. Therefore, it is important that you respond appropriately
- ▶ **Another person tells you a child is being harmed** (second hand disclosure)
- ▶ **When you have a reasonable concern that a child is at risk of harm** (using the indications)
- ▶ **There are concerns that the child or young person may have been or is at risk of being harmed / abused**

Understanding Our Roles

- ▶ Your role is **not to conduct an investigation**
- ▶ Your role is to **nurture and minister to the child** and not engage in discussions around the abuse or investigations
- ▶ Everything shared is **confidential** except for those who need to know for pastoral, risk management and reporting purposes

Do's:

- ▶ LISTEN – do not add anything to what the child says (you will need to write this down exactly)
- ▶ REASSURE the child that they have done the right thing in speaking to you
- ▶ INFORM the child that you need to tell people who will try to help him / her
- ▶ ENSURE that the child is NOT in immediate danger

Don'ts:

- ▶ Start an investigation into the information, do not ask leading questions e.g. questions that may have a yes or no answer

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- ▶ Promise the child that the abuse will stop
- ▶ Tell anyone who does not need to know

Note: Keep it brief, do not have long conversation as this may be seen as you have influenced the child. Remember this is not the only time the child will have to share their story and you may actually hinder an investigation.

Process for Reporting

- ▶ It is to be noted that there are applicable forms that may need to be completed online.
- ▶ A Local Safer Churches Team is yet to be formed whose roles include: receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Child Protection concerns and keeping accurate records permanently and securely.
- ▶ If a child is at risk for immediate safety from sexual or physical abuse or a disclosure occurred at a program or event, the police should immediately be contacted. Otherwise, report concerns to and seek advice from the Family and Community Services (FACS). The Child Protection Helpline is 13 21 11.
- ▶ If a church voluntary worker is directly involved, the National Safer Churches Helpline should also be contacted for advice and assistance at 1800 070 511.
- ▶ The local Church Board is expected to implement pastoral care and support for all parties involved, including the Child or Young Person and family, as much as is practical.

Child abuse is a serious and complex problem in the lives of children and young people. Often it occurs in environments that are isolated and stressful and affects those who are most vulnerable. Abuse often occurs in situations where trust is involved and often by a person known to, and trusted by the child. Addressing the area of child abuse can be both confronting and disturbing. To begin with, the

actions of abuse themselves are a display of humanity at its worst. Researchers estimate that as many as 1 in 4 children will be sexually abused. Given the statistics of reported cases as seen above, this crime is highly underreported and research has indicated that on the average it takes 7-14 years to tell someone about their sexual abuse, whilst males take an average of well over 20 years to talk about their child sexual abuse, if they ever talk about it all.

Protection for Those Reporting

When suspicions or concerns have been reported about a child according to the legislation, then a person cannot be sued, even if the notification proved to be unsubstantiated. A notifier's identity will not be revealed to the person who they have reported, unless determined to be in the best interests by the court.

Source: Australian Christian Churches Safer Churches Manual

II. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic and family violence is a type of abuse that occurs within domestic or family relationships. This is often marked by a significant imbalance of power within the household. It is common for the perpetrator to be highly controlling. One form of domestic violence has been described aptly as intimate terrorism. Another form that occurs far less often is a common couple violence, where both adult partners hold roughly equal power within the relationship, and both, at times, instigate the violence. The term family violence recognises that within a household it is possible for there to be multiple perpetrators and victims e.g. teenage child abusing parent, parent abusing grandparent.

Domestic violence causes fear, physical and / or psychological harm. It is most often

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(but not exclusively) violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour by a man against a woman. Living with domestic violence has a profound effect upon children and young people and may constitute a form of child abuse.

It is to be emphasised that domestic and family violence is a crime.

Domestic violence can include:

- ▶ Physical Assault (including punching, slapping, kicking, pushing, choking or the use of weapons)
- ▶ Sexual Assault (being forced to have sex or participate in sexual activities, either by watching or physically participating)
- ▶ Emotional Abuse (making someone worthless, criticising their personality, their looks, the way they dress, constantly putting someone down, threatening to hurt them, their children or pets)
- ▶ Verbal Abuse (including yelling, shouting, name-calling or swearing at someone)
- ▶ Social Abuse (being stopped from seeing friends and family, isolating someone socially or geographically)
- ▶ Damaging Property (such as furniture, the house or pets in order to threaten or intimidate someone)
- ▶ Financial Abuse (taking control of money, not giving someone enough money on which to survive, forcing someone to hand over their money, not letting them have a say on how it is spent)

Supporting a Person Who Experiences Domestic Violence

There are great risks involved in confronting perpetrators of domestic violence. It is important to seek advice from agencies such as police and the Family and Community Services. It is also important not to attempt to counsel the couple together when there is active domestic violence.

If you suspect she's a victim of abuse and violence but she hasn't opened up to you about it, it may be prudent to ask "I'm concerned about your safety. I'm worried about you and how you are being treated." Remember to avoid giving your opinion. The person may deny there is a problem or avoid the conversation. If this happens, respect her right to privacy and don't force her to discuss the relationship if she isn't ready. Let her know that you care and are there to listen and support her if she ever wants to talk about anything.

When someone is ready to talk, it is important to listen to them and take the issue seriously.

When Someone is Ready to Talk:

- ▶ Believe what they tell you.
- ▶ Be empathetic, letting her know that no one deserves to be abused, beaten or threatened.
- ▶ Focus on how they are feeling and how they are coping with the domestic violence. Be patient and don't insist that she leaves her relationship or criticise her for staying. She has to make a decision herself in her own time. There are many obstacles such as cycle of violence that stop her from leaving.
- ▶ Let them know domestic violence is not their fault. She may blame the abuser's behaviour from outside factors such as financial hardship, job loss, stress, alcohol or drug use. Let her know that anger is not an excuse for domestic violence. Give her emotional support that she is a good and worthy person as often the abuser accuses her as a bad woman, bad partner and a bad mother.
- ▶ Focus on their safety and the safety of their children – the increased risk to safety of the children gives a clearer urgent indication to involve the police or child protection agencies due to strict child protection guidelines.
- ▶ Let them know you are there for them (if this does not put your safety at risk). Help

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her make a safety plan e.g. Encouraging her to keep a diary of what's happening to her, help her think about steps she can take if her partner becomes abusive again, making a list of people to call in case of emergency and / or suggesting to hide money, clothing for future emergencies.

- ▶ Let them know about the Domestic Violence Line 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732 / 1800 656 463 Family and Community Services).
- ▶ If an assault is in progress, take action by calling the police urgently.

Things to Avoid:

- ▶ Avoid blaming the person who is disclosing abuse for the domestic violence
- ▶ Avoid blaming alcohol, other drugs or mental health issues for the domestic violence
- ▶ Avoid telling the person what to do
- ▶ Avoid talking to the abuser about their behaviour
- ▶ Avoid making negative comments about the abuser
- ▶ Do not expect that the person disclosing abuse will leave the relationship

ELDER ABUSE:

- ▶ Elder Abuse occurs when there is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can include physical, sexual, financial, psychological and social abuse and / or neglect.
- ▶ Suspicions that abuse has occurred may be aroused by physical signs and symptoms or by the behaviour of the older person. It is important to be aware of any sudden or unusual changes in the behaviour patterns of their congregation members. If someone shows one or more of the possible signs of abuse, it does not automatically mean she or he is being abused. Consider the context.
- ▶ Concerns that require reporting may arise from a single event or a pattern of

series of events. The indicators of child abuse previously mentioned may be used as a guide for concerns about the elderly.

Source: Australian Christian Churches Safer Churches Manual

Church Protocol on Handling Domestic Violence Cases

The handling of domestic violence cases around the Life Group is complex and entails some great risks. Though it is classified as a criminal action, domestic violence reporting is dependent on the victim's decision unless an active incident is being witnessed or the safety of children is at risk. It is prudent to seek advice and plan of action by the Life Group leader with the Zone Leader and subsequently to the Life Group Directors for support and prayers.

III. SUICIDE

Suicide is nearly always due to untreated depression, causes widespread distress and is a waste of life years. Eighty percent of suicides are male, mainly in the age of 25-44 years old, due to propensity to use violent means and their reluctance to raise issues of emotional distress. This is a major concern as it exceeds those of younger males. Nearly every person who commits suicide has talked about it before.

Thoughts of suicide are a normal human experience, with surveys suggesting at least 3% of the Australian population have considered suicide in the previous 12 months. Comparing suicidal thoughts to actual suicide rates, it can be calculated that approximately 1 in 80 males and 1 in 400 females with suicidal thoughts will commit suicide in the next 12 months; so predicting and treating individuals at the most risk is a needle in a haystack exercise from a public health perspective.

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To emphasise how serious suicide is, patients recently discharged from psychiatric units are statistically at extreme risk of suicide for the first few weeks. Up to 50% of people will repeat a suicide attempt.

Risk Factors:

- ▶ Males
- ▶ Low self-esteem, depressed people
- ▶ Severe anxiety / hopelessness
- ▶ Patients with substance abuse like alcohol or drug abuse
- ▶ Elderly patients living alone and recently widowed
- ▶ Those with psychiatric illnesses, financial setbacks or serious health problem
- ▶ Non-heterosexual orientation
- ▶ Past suicide attempt
- ▶ Family history of suicide
- ▶ Childhood history of trauma
- ▶ Severe insomnia
- ▶ Pervasive suicidal thoughts with involved planning
- ▶ Poor treatment compliance
- ▶ Access to lethal means
- ▶ Lack of social support; impaired parental relationship; non-intact families
- ▶ Parental mental illness
- ▶ Indigenous heritage
- ▶ Impulsivity; impaired problem solving skills
- ▶ Recent discharge from the hospital
- ▶ Lack of protective factors e.g. religious beliefs, connection to the school or workplace or social supports

Ask Questions: It Saves Lives

- ▶ Are things so bad you sometimes wish you did not wake up this morning?
- ▶ Do you actually wish you were dead?
- ▶ Have you thought of harming yourself?
- ▶ Have you considered various ways?
- ▶ Have you made plans?
- ▶ Have you made any preparations?
- ▶ Have you been close to doing something?
- ▶ Have you done something?

Ascertain suicidal ideation or thoughts, intent and planning.

It is a myth that asking about suicidal ideation makes the person more suicidal; rather the evidence suggests the contrary. If a patient admits to suicidal thoughts, it is very important there and then to acknowledge their revelations, to express empathy for their suffering, and to reassure them intensely that they have a known and treatable illness which can be cured. It is illogical but extremely useful to say to the suicidal risk person that you (with or without specialist assistance) will be able to change things, if they give you enough time.

Suicidal patients are killed by hopelessness, anxiety and panic, and by insomnia, nearly always resulting from depressive illness. Intensive targeting of these symptoms will save many lives. Try to persuade patients not to use alcohol when feeling suicidal as it increases the risk of acting on suicidal thoughts.

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Principles Applied in the Immediate Management of Suicidal Patients

- ▶ An acute suicidal attempt by whatever means is an indication for immediate inpatient management
- ▶ An acute event on suicidal intent involves referring to the hospital for acute management. The problem arises when the suicidal person consents to being admitted to the hospital or not. If the suicidal person refuses admission, he / she may need to be 'scheduled' (make arrangements for the person to be admitted against his / her consent due to threat to his / her life). The assistance from the police would often only be supported by recommendations from the attending GP and / or involvement by Mental Health Service assessors from the public hospital. A good example of an urgent assessment is a current suicidal plan and intent with past history of abuse, recent life setbacks with an existing diagnosis of bipolar disorder.
- ▶ Oftentimes, having good knowledge of pre-existing risk factors mentioned above, persons with suicidal ideation may be best assessed and treatment by a caring attending GP with collaborative management by other mental health professionals such as psychologists and / or psychiatrists.

The Development of a Safety Plan

Essentially a safety plan for suicide prevention needs to be developed by the attending GP or psychologist in collaboration with suicidal person and supporting people.

Principles:

1. Identifying signs that the person is deteriorating e.g. decreasing hours of sleep, losing weight, not going to school or work, having suicidal thoughts
2. Creating a list of personalised internal coping strategies e.g. suicidal person is to make a list of reasons for living allowing review of this list if struggling;

establishing a “Hope Box” which may include pictures of previous happy events where a suicidal person may look on if struggling

3. Utilising distraction techniques involving family and friends e.g. listening to soft music, playing instruments, watching movies together, regular baths, play with their favourite pets, go for a walk
4. Involving friends and family in problem solving in a crisis – it is good practice for the suicidal person to have ready access to at least 5 people whom are ready to be called anytime
5. Identify mental health clinicians (or the attending GP) who may be accessible for urgent advice; suicidal adolescents can call KIDs Helpline 1800 55 1800
6. Restricting access to lethal means including medications

A written ‘no suicide contract’ will only apply if the attending GP has a good relationship with the suicidal person otherwise there are no merits.

Source: Practical Management of Suicidal Patient by Dr David Horgan (Australian Family Physician)

Church Protocol for Handling Suicidal Cases

The encountering of suicidal cases within the Life Group should be dealt by involving a caring GP and subsequent collaboration of other mental health physicians. The above-mentioned information should already give a good guide. The Life Group leader / members, depending how connected they are with the person, may play active roles as one of the contactable person for the suicidal risk person. The same prudence applies as in the domestic violence protocol to seek support from the Zone Leader and Life Group Director for advice and prayers.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

POLICY STATEMENT

Children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times. These policy and procedures have been developed for the protection of children and youth who are within the ministries of Life Church.

This policy outlines the overall approach adopted by Life Church in response to legislation enacted by the Government of New South Wales to stop sex offenders gaining access to children. It also outlines processes regarding screening of volunteers, Working with Children Checks the handling and reporting of complaints.

The members of this Church are committed to providing a safe environment for children to hear the gospel, grow in Christ, and for leaders to exercise their ministries.

LEGISLATIONS

At the time of the writing of this policy, the following legislations created obligations for Life Church Castle Hill:

- ▶ Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- ▶ Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- ▶ Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Miscellaneous) Regulation 2013

Please note regarding the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012: The object of this Act is to protect children:

- (a) by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work, and
- (b) by requiring persons engaged in child-related work to have Working with Children Check clearances.

The safety, welfare and well-being of children and, in particular, protecting them from child abuse is the paramount consideration in the operation of this Act.

WORD	DEFINITION
Child	“Child” or “Children” refers to those 18 years and under
Youth / Young People	In this policy “youth” or “young people” are used interchangeable with “Child” or “Children”
Kids Ministry Leaders / Youth Leaders	Any person over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of any child placed in their care in the course of a recognised ministry of the Church
Church	Life Church Castle Hill
Ministry	An organised, regular activity of the Church that relates to a specific age bracket or purpose
Elder	Church Council members
Ministry Directors	The person recognized by the Council of Elders as coordinating a ministry
OCG	Office of the Children’s Guardian
DFCS	The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

NOMINATED CONTACT PEOPLE

Persons to be contacted by the OCG if an employee or volunteer is barred:

1. Senior Pastor Paul Jeyachandran – contact: 02 9680 9144
2. Pastor Guy Lam – contact: 02 9680 9144

CHILD MINISTRY POSITIONS

The following positions within the Church have been currently identified as child-related. If a new ministry is started within the Church relating to children then this policy will be amended to include the new relevant positions.

- ▶ All elders or council members
- ▶ Senior Pastors
- ▶ Pastors
- ▶ Life Church Kids Ministry Director
- ▶ Life Church Youth Ministry Director
- ▶ Life Church Kids Ministry Teachers and Assistants, including Crèche and Playgroup Carers
- ▶ Life Church Youth Leaders over the age of 18
- ▶ Young Family Life Group leaders and Zone Supervisors
- ▶ Church employees carrying out child-related services
- ▶ Service Providers carrying out child-related services

If in any physical contact with children, leaders should take care to respect the child's feelings and privacy.

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what acceptable and unacceptable behavior is.

Leaders normally should not visit children in their homes unless a parent is present and / or another leader accompanies them.

Adults and children are expected to respect the privacy of the other during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Leaders should set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No leader shall be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

Nude swimming or other such activities is forbidden.

Initiations and secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every child-related program is open to observation by parents / guardians.

Leaders have the right to ask persons who do not have a valid reason to be present at child-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

When travelling with persons under 18, there must be at least 3 people travelling together at any given time.

When meeting with persons under 18, there must be at least 3 people present in the meeting, including meetings for purpose of mentoring or pastoral care.

There shall always be at least two approved leaders at any child-related ministry event.

If any personal counseling is to be done, it shall be carried out within sight of another leader.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

Text messages, emails and phone calls with minors should be kept to ministry-related purposes only and should be kept to an appropriate amount. Communicating on public forums such as group WhatsApp channels are generally acceptable.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR BY LEADERS

Whilst some actions are not regarded as sexual assault, they are nonetheless regarded as unacceptable behavior for Christians. These include:

- ▶ Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature
- ▶ Course language, especially that of a sexual nature
- ▶ Suggestive gestures or remarks
- ▶ Jokes of a sexual nature
- ▶ Inappropriate but accidental touching
- ▶ Inappropriate literature or video (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with younger children)
- ▶ Any act of violence committed by a leader in the course of an activity is unacceptable
- ▶ Ministry Directors ensure high standards of conduct are maintained at all times

PROCEDURE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is any sexual act and / or threat to perform such upon a child. It occurs when a person uses his or her power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve genital contact. It can be any act that erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been or is being sexually

assaulted on Church property or during a Church activity, the local Police shall be contacted immediately.

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. A child discloses that he or she has been sexually assaulted, and/or
2. Someone close to a child (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that child.

The procedures shall also apply if a child discloses a sexual assault that has occurred somewhere other than the Church (e.g. home or school).

When a child confides in a leader that he or she is a victim of sexual or other abuse, that leader will refer the matter to the Senior Pastors or other Pastors currently working within the church as soon as possible. The Senior Pastor or other Pastor shall become the liaison person with DFCS and the Police.

The Senior Pastor or other Pastor shall fill out the Complaints Record Form. Please note this form should be used to record any suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse or a complaint of inappropriate behavior.

The person to whom the original disclosure is made shall maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

- ▶ Not pushing the child to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- ▶ Assuring the child that they are understood: that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- ▶ Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the leader is already providing

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation.

- ▶ If the alleged assault has taken place recently, the police for forensic examination should retain clothing worn by the child.
- ▶ Maintain confidentiality. Only speak to a Pastor, Elder, Ministry Director, parents / guardians (unless they are the alleged perpetrators) or DFCS and Police.
- ▶ The Church reserves the right to carry out Church disciplinary procedures in accordance with policies of the Church.

UNDERAGE AND OCCASIONAL WORKERS

The church recognizes the need to use underage and occasional workers in their children's and youth programs. Therefore in these cases, and subject to the Senior Pastor / Ministry Directors discretion, it is possible to have volunteers who have not had a Working with Children Check on roster provided they are supervised by a worker who has been and have completed the Working With Children Check and has been cleared. An occasional worker is defined as a person who is not on a regular roster but is called upon to assist only where unforeseen circumstances have arisen.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The consumption of alcohol and / or illegal drugs on the Church grounds or during an activity is not to be condoned by any leader. Any child found to be under the influence of alcohol and / or illegal drugs is to be counseled and the parents / guardians contacted so the child can be returned home immediately.

Any alcohol and / or illegal drugs found on the Church grounds are to be removed and the location of such alcohol or illegal drugs reported to the Senior Pastor or Elder. Any child required to take prescription medication shall provide a letter from the parents / guardians to the Ministry Director.

EXTERNAL POLICIES

It is acknowledged that some child-related ministries in the Church might have external affiliation with other organisation. These organisations will possibly have policies governing the issues of child safety and abuse. This policy is not intended to replace or conflict with the other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with them.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy document and the conditions specified in it shall be reviewed annually. The Church shall inform the groups involved when the date of review will occur, and any changes recommended by the groups should be submitted in writing to the Church for consideration one month before the review date. Any proposed changes will be submitted to the Church for approval before being implemented.

POLICY TRAINING

Training on this policy should be undertaken when a new volunteer or employee has commenced work. A refresher of this training will be offered annually and recorded using the attached statement of understanding.

This statement of understanding provides documentation that the employee or volunteer has read, understood and agreed to the Life Church Child Protection Policy.

- (i) I am aware that the Life Church Child Protection Policy is available to me upon request and it is my responsibility to familiarise myself with this policy.

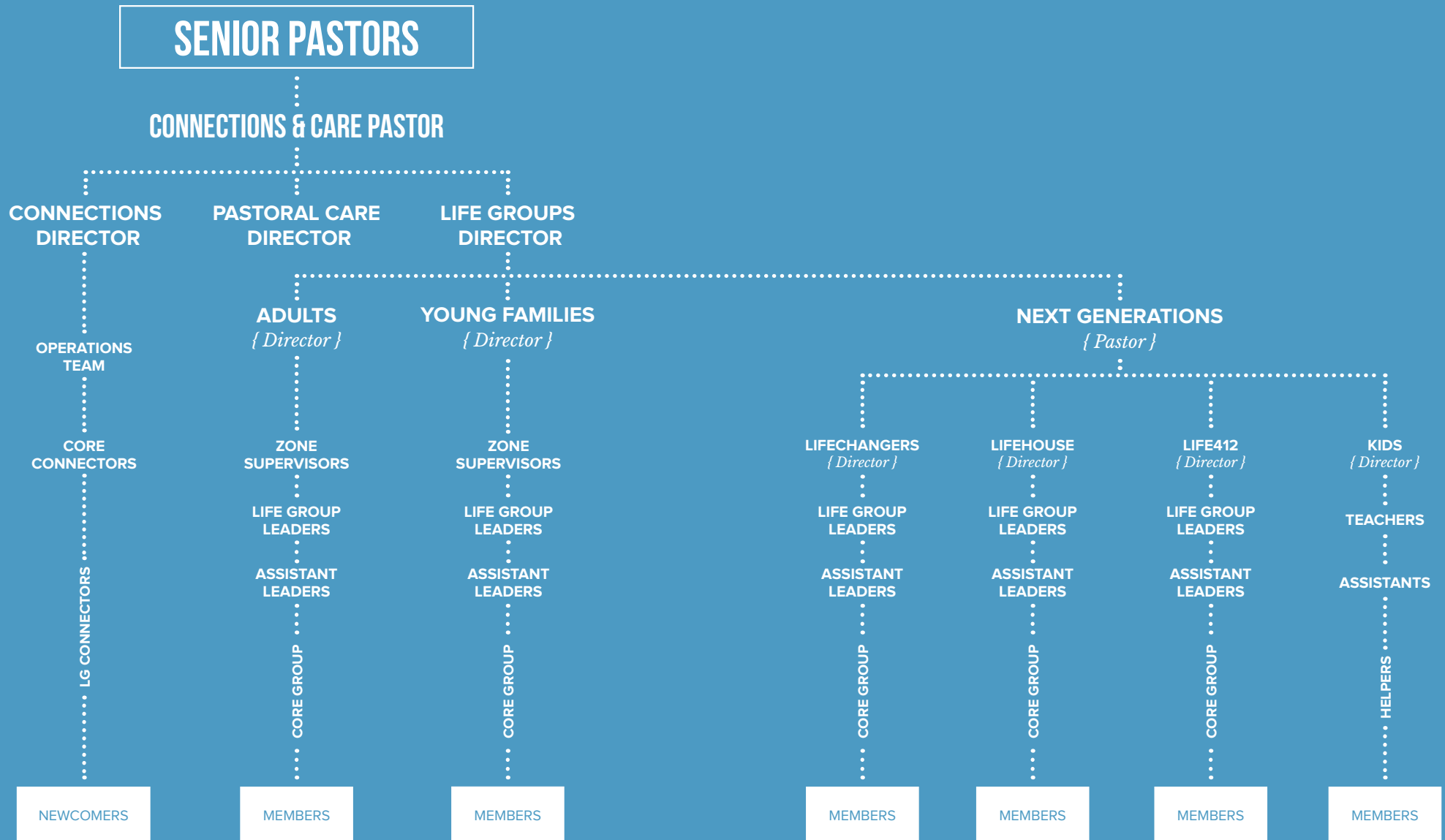
- (ii) I agree to conduct my activities in accordance with Life Church Child Protection Policy and understand that breaching these standards may result in disciplinary action.

Leader's Name

Leader's Signature

Date

LIFE GROUP ORGANISATIONAL CHART



LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT PLEDGE

As leaders we are entrusted with a great responsibility to steward the grace that is given to us and run our own race well before the Lord and His people. Hence, we ask all leaders to make the following leadership commitment!

1. I am committed to love God wholeheartedly and demonstrate that love by obeying His Word and loving His Church.
2. I am committed to personal discipleship and spiritual growth evidenced by:
 - a. Having consistent and meaningful communion with the Lord daily and deepening in consecration.
 - b. Rendering my tithes to the Lord's work at Life Church and giving generously towards the vision and mission of the Church.
 - c. Be an active participant of Life Church ministries & all significant events hosted by Life Church.
 - d. Actively share my faith with others as the Lord will enable me to.
3. I am committed to the purpose and vision of Life Church, contributing to the accomplishment of this purpose by exercising the gifts that God has given to me.
4. I am committed to volunteer to be accountable and submit to the leadership of Life Church.
5. I am committed to attending Leadership Trainings, Leaders Meetings, Breakthrough Weekends (where possible) and IDMC Conference.
6. I am committed to live out Christlikeness in my character, recognising that character comes before conduct and attitude is superior to abilities.

Thank you for joining us in building an intentional discipling church that moves people towards authentic discipleship to Jesus and intentional discipling of a certain kind!

Leader's Name

Leader's Signature

Date

“Disciplemaking is all about a certain kind of person, who is radically committed to a certain kind of purpose, who through a certain kind of process, reproduces a certain kind of product.”

REV. EDMUND CHAN



Intentional Disciple Making Church

Discover more at idmc.church