



LEADER — TRAINING CONTENT GUIDE

following **JESUS** *wherever we are.*



THIS CONTENT GUIDE
BELONGS TO

IF FOUND, PLEASE CONTACT

@ _____

MINISTRY APART OF



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**MAIN
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INTRODUCTION

WHY GROUPS?
+
VISION

WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF WHY WE GATHER TOGETHER OR WE WON'T KNOW HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS.

In this training and throughout this booklet, we will dive into the purpose of gathering and will learn practical tools to create gatherings that are holy moments; gatherings that connect people to God and to one another.

THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BIG "C" CHURCH

Right after Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples were left alone, but they had each other. They were left with His example and framework for spending quality, intentional time together. This is where the foundation of groups really begin.

“

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42–47, NIV

Prayer, fellowship, and encouragement goes all the way back to the very beginning of our family history as the Church. These things are in our DNA as humans—we were created for it.

**TAKE
NOTE**

We must understand the _____ of why we gather together
or we won't know how to measure _____.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Purpose. Success.*

Jesus spent time together with His disciples. The disciples spent time together after Jesus ascended into heaven. The Early Church spent time together unpacking the apostles' teaching, praying, eating, and caring for one another.

As the Church, this is who we are. Time together is a timeless family tradition presented and exemplified by Jesus himself. Nowadays, believers around the world gather on Sunday mornings for teaching and worship. This is a good tradition, but sadly, we have let some other powerful traditions fall by the wayside. We don't spend time together like God had in mind. And, when we do spend time together, we lack the intentionality of focused, face-to-face, time together. This is why groups during the week exist. It is a time for us to circle up and sit shoulder-to-shoulder and intentionally pour into significant relationships with God and with each other. We are better together.



"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the

Day drawing near."

Hebrews 10:23-25, ESV

VISION

Encounter. Engage. Empower. These 3 E's is what Heights strives for as we pursue people for God's Kingdom. Each ministry represents the 3 E's in its own way; however, each ministry aligns with the overall vision.

TAKE NOTE

Jesus _____ with His disciples.

The disciples _____ after Jesus ascended into
heaven.

The Early Church _____ unpacking the apostles'
teaching, praying, eating, and caring for one another.

Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:

Spent time together. Spent time together. Spent time together.

- 1 **ENCOUNTER**
Creating encounters with God.
- 2 **ENGAGE**
Creating spaces for people to connect in Christ-centered, significant relationships and through discipleship.
- 3 **EMPOWER**
Taking advantage of opportunities to come alongside and partner with our neighbors, locally and globally.

Group Life Ministry focuses on engaging in our faith through engaging in significant relationships that are Christ-centered. People grow when we, the Church, provide a space for them to connect to each other and to connect to God's Word. Even though engage is the primary avenue of group life, encounter and empower happen regularly in groups. Through these 3 E's, kingdom work happens.

WHY HEIGHTS OFFERS GROUPS

As we learn from Height's past, we want to be a church that is made up of groups, not just a church that has groups. Why? Because, in groups, people are connected to God and each other. This takes time. Obviously, many things are offered at Heights, but everything strives to push individuals, couples, and families into Christ-centered, significant relationships through on-going and consistent connection. Groups are where that happens, because we are better together.

TAKE NOTE

People grow when we provide a space for them to connect to _____ and to connect to _____.

We are better _____.

ALL PLAY

When people join a group, what do they actually want?

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Each other. God's Word. Together.*

WHAT PEOPLE WANT

Simply, people want to be known by God and others.

When it comes to groups, 12-14 people is the sweet spot for relational connection and spiritual growth. This number provides space for leaders and group members to thrive, to follow up intentionally, and maintain a level of trust that is necessary for deeper relationships.

Larger groups quickly lose safety, vulnerability, and trust. People desire to be a name and have their story known; they do not want to be a number. The bigger the group, the harder it is for long-term connection and relational depth.

If groups are less than 7-9 people, it can be tough to keep momentum and build energy in a group setting. We have seen through experience that the longevity of groups, either larger or smaller than 12-14 people doesn't have the longevity or sustainability.

**TAKE
NOTE**

NOTES + THOUGHTS



1

CATCH THE VISION

**CONNECT PEOPLE TO GOD
+
TO EACH OTHER**

BE ENCOURAGED + INSPIRED

- You have been recommended and sought out by other trustworthy leaders and staff. You have what it takes to lead!
- You will never be asked by us to do or handle anything you can't handle. However, you can do and handle a lot more than you realize.
- You have a support system behind you. Your ministry leads are always available.
- Leading is easier than we think. It is hard work, but well worth it.
- Leading takes practice. Regardless of what leadership position we sit in, we can all constantly learn and grow. Have an open mind and open hands. Sit in a posture that is willing to grow and be refined.

MYTHS OF LEADERSHIP

- 1 You have to be perfect and have it all together.
- 2 You have to have the answers.
- 3 You have to be a biblical scholar.

If these were true, this room would be completely empty. God wants to use you, use us, as we are, and sanctify us from there.

You are leaders unifying as one body. You are a part of something much bigger, just like the folks in the Early Church in Acts 2. Allow God to use you in this movement, regardless of the ministry you serve in. You are in the front lines of ministry, you are pastors and shepherds caring for a flock.

**TAKE
NOTE**

ALL PLAY

What are YOU most looking forward to in becoming a leader or caring for people? What are you most nervous about? Why?

ALL PLAY

What makes a good or successful group meeting?

As a leader, you cannot evaluate success on these things alone. This drives us to a _____ goal.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Measurable.*

HEAR FROM EVERYBODY, EVERY TIME YOU MEET, AND KEEP GOD'S WORD IN THE MIDDLE.

The goal stated above is measurable. If this goal is hit for the whole session, then growth automatically happens; being cared for and being heard happens for every person.

A LEADER'S KEY ROLE

A leader's key role is to create an environment where significant relationships can be developed and God's Word is at the core. Significant relationships cannot happen without introspection and reflection. Leading people takes awareness and understanding of what the leader's role is versus what God's role is.

WHAT IT TAKES TO LEAD

A LEADER'S ROLE

*Leadership Skills
Shepherding Skills
Facilitation Skills*

GOD'S ROLE

*The Holy Spirit
Growing People*

“

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3:6-7, ESV

TAKE NOTE

Hear from _____, every time you meet, and keep
_____ in the middle.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leading, not dominating or _____.

SHEPHERDING SKILLS

Coming alongside and _____.

FACILITATION SKILLS

Get people to _____. The goal is not to _____; however,
there are teachable moments.

You cannot make anyone _____—that's God's role.

Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:

Everybody. God's Word. Dictating. Support. Talk. Teach. Grow.

LEADER REFLECTION

As a leader, you will need to be introspective and lean into constructive feedback. If you are not hearing from everyone, every time you meet, ask yourself why. Are you, as a leader, engaging everyone? If so, how? If not, what can you do differently?

YOU CANNOT MAKE ANYONE GROW—THAT'S GOD'S ROLE.

WHAT PEOPLE NEED

In order to thrive, especially in a group setting, people only need four things.

- 1 A safe place to build trust.
- 2 Consistency—variety is good, but seek overall consistency.
- 3 Enjoyment and laughter in togetherness—life is hard, having fun is good and necessary.
- 4 Belonging—a place where people want to be and can actually belong.

TAKE NOTE

THE 4 THINGS PEOPLE NEED

- 1 A _____ place to build trust.
- 2 _____—variety is good, but seek overall consistency.
- 3 _____ and _____ in togetherness—life is hard, having fun is good and necessary.
- 4 _____—a place where people want to be and can actually belong.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Safe. Consistency. Enjoyment. Laughter. Belonging.*

**TAKE
NOTE**

NOTES + THOUGHTS



2

DESIGN YOUR TIME

**CREATE LIFE CHANGING
CONVERSATIONS**

**LIFE CHANGING CONVERSATIONS
OFTEN DON'T HAPPEN ONCE, BUT
INSTEAD, THEY HAPPEN OVER TIME.**

A GROUP MEETING IS A HOLY MOMENT

Simply, God is at work.

Life changing conversations often don't happen once, but instead, they occur over time. This is why the #1 Goal is so important. Hearing from everybody, everytime you meet builds relationships over time. When God's Word is kept in the middle, spiritual growth, maturity, and accountability happen.

Groups are holy moments because we need one another to encourage us in our faith. When it is just us and God, it is good, but it is not enough—we need each other. Satan wants us alone; he wants us in loneliness and isolation. That is where he plants lies and does his divisive work. All throughout Scripture, God points us to be together; Scripture is our baseline example.

“

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV



**TAKE
NOTE**

Life changing conversations often don't happen once, but
instead, they occur over _____.

Gathering as a group is a _____.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Time. Holy Moment.*

BIG PICTURE GOAL

The big picture goal of groups is two fold and meeting these two goals requires work, preparation, and effort on our end.

- 1 To ENGAGE with Jesus through intentional time with Him on topics and insights the Holy Spirit brings about.
- 2 To ENGAGE with each other through fellowship and study.

**THE GOAL IS NOT TO GET
THROUGH A BOOK, TO ANSWER
ALL THE QUESTIONS, OR TO
SOLVE SOMEONE'S PROBLEM.**

PREPARATION IS FUNDAMENTAL

Leading requires more involvement than simply attending the group. Involvement and leadership require work and preparation.

- 1 Find a quiet place to study and prepare for the upcoming lesson, even if you don't have the actual lesson content; prepare your heart to lead.
- 2 If you are studying the sermon, listen to the sermon. If you are reading a book, read the book.
- 3 As you are listening or reading, write down thoughts, questions you have, or additional questions for the group.
- 4 Give other examples, other things for people to grasp on to. You are creating a space for encountering Jesus and connecting people.
- 5 Apply answers and responses to yourself first. Speak in regards to how God is speaking to you. As you apply, can you add additional questions for your group to discuss? Your group will be as vulnerable and open as you set them up to be. You are an example.

- 6 Eliminate questions that do not fit the personality of your group or refine questions accordingly.
- 7 Connect with leaders, co-leaders, and hosts. Make a plan together. Stack hands and set clear boundaries and expectations.

**TAKE
NOTE**

The goal is _____ to get through a book, to answer all the questions, or to solve someone's problem.

Preparation is _____.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Not. Fundamental.*

LEADER REFLECTION

As a leader, pray and prepare through where you want the discussion to land and how you plan to get there.

Ask yourself these questions as you prepare:

- *Do I need to lead my group through every single question? Why or why not?*
- *Do I need to add additional questions? If so, what questions?*
- *Which questions will we focus on most? Why?*
- *How long will we spend on each question?*
- *Who do we need to hear from? Just a few people or everyone?*
- *How will I ask questions to draw people out?*

TOOLS FROM TEACHERS

These are ideas and tools for you. Use them as you see fit.

1

Start by answering the question in pairs before sharing with the whole group.

- Helps people prepare and practice their answers before talking in front of more people, especially helpful for introverts.
- Helps people think through their responses.
- Ensures 100% participation.

2

Mix up the types of questions and how they are asked. This will speak to people differently.

- Anyone Answers: Extroverts jump first, introverts are often left out.
- Go Around the Circle: Ensures everyone participates. Don't always land here; pursue creating discussion and conversation.
- Direct at One Person: If it is a tougher question, choose someone you know can and will respond appropriately then go from there.
- Piggy Back Questions: Base responses or additional questions off what someone else said that would bring a good point.

TWO TYPES OF QUESTIONS

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Could create unnecessary tensions or could cause people to lie to create an answer to fit in or to impress.

EXAMPLES:

Why were you not at church on Sunday? What is your favorite type of pizza? What National Parks have you been to? How can I help you?

★ CLOSE-ENDED QUESTIONS

A simple yes or no. That is it! But it allows space for explanation. If someone's answer is one word, ask them why or to expound.

EXAMPLES:

Did you go to church on Sunday? Do you like pizza? Have you been to the Grand Canyon? Do you need help?

TAKE NOTE

Create _____ for responses. This keeps dominators in line.

With group discussion questions, start _____.

During group discussion, get _____ with how and when you ask questions.

Just because someone isn't _____, doesn't mean they have nothing to say.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Time Limits. Small. Creative. Talking.*

LEVELS OF QUESTIONS + BASEBALL

As a leader, understand and be aware of the risk level of the question that is being asked.

LEVEL 1: LOW RISK

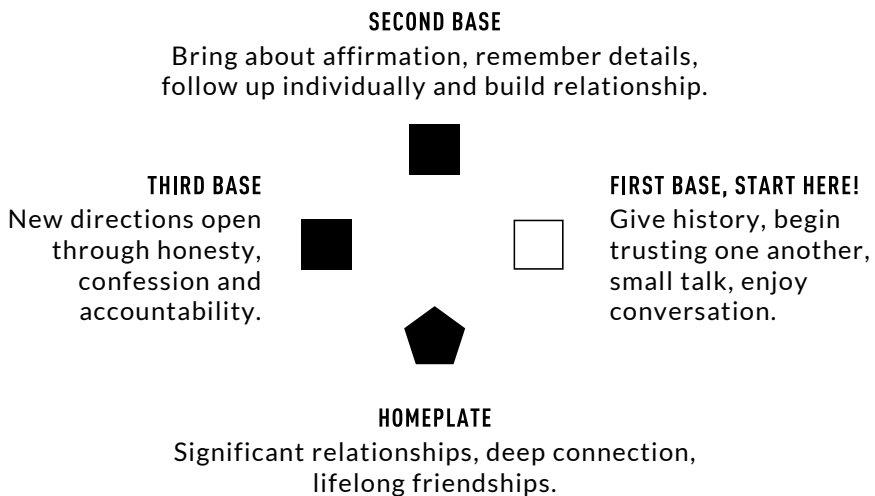
These are “get-to-know-you” questions that are casual, fun, and easy to talk about. They mostly contain facts, hobbies, pastimes, or give history. These questions happen a ton at the beginning of a group or relationships and they should never disappear from conversation.

LEVEL 2: MEDIUM RISK

These questions are informative. They give opinions, beliefs, or interpretations of situations. These questions also give insight on what was found, felt, or thought. These are more personal.

LEVEL 3: HIGH RISK

These are questions that meet individuals in their growth areas, or points of weakness. They produce confession, specific application, accountability, or share soul requests and desires.



TAKE NOTE

The purpose of a group is not to create a circle of _____, but a circle of people who do life together—like a _____.

LOW RISK QUESTIONS: FIRST BASE

These "get-to-know-you" questions mostly contain facts, hobbies, pastimes, or _____. They should _____ disappear from conversation.

MEDIUM RISK QUESTIONS: SECOND BASE

These informative questions give opinions, beliefs and interpretations. They give insight on what was _____ or _____.

HIGH RISK QUESTIONS: THIRD BASE

These questions meet individuals in their growth areas. They produce confession and _____.

Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:

Best Friends. Family. Give History. Never. Felt. Thought. Accountability.

GROUPS ARE EQUALLY A PLACE FOR SOCIAL CONNECTION AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

EXPECTATIONS + GROWTH

At the beginning of each session, and each time you meet, groups should be social and enjoyable, then move towards depth and content from that point. Depth and growth come from First Base and Level 1 questions, which should always be the natural starting point.

PRAYER

Prayer is the glue that holds groups together. Always have a time set aside for intentional prayer—even if it is only a social time. This is vital to individual and group growth. It provides a space to share praises, reflect on God’s goodness, and to invite people into specific requests.

Closing in prayer is different than linking arms and praying for and with each other. Prayer is intended to be relational with us and God and with us and others. Here are some ideas to use within groups. If you need more ideas for your group or for you individually, reach out to your ministry for resources.

These ideas apply differently to each ministry; contextualize specifically to your ministry, or speak with your ministry leadership.

IDEAS

Create a time and space to share prayer requests and praises—every time you meet. In groups, it is often helpful to have a secretary of some sort to write down notes on prayers and praises then share those specifics with the group so everyone can have them. This invites and allows groups and individuals to link arms with each other prayerfully throughout time apart.

PRAY AS A GROUP

Pray together as a large group.

PRAY ALONE

Create a time and place for individuals to pray independently.

PRAY IN PAIRS

Split into pairs for prayer and have each person be intentional about following up with their partner the upcoming week.

PRAY WITH A SPOUSE

Have couples pray together. Separate into different parts of the house, or go on a walk.

MEN + WOMEN PRAY APART

Dividing genders breaks down many unspoken barriers. In this space, women and men can share, connect, and pray differently than in a larger group.

PRAY IN SMALLER GROUPS

Separate into smaller groups of 3 or 4 people.

MINISTRY SPECIFIC IDEAS



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

MAKE YOUR FIRST MEETING GREAT

IMPACTS OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

1

7 SECONDS

Studies show it takes about 7 seconds to set expectations and solidify first impressions. First impressions create an energy and a feel. Create an environment that is upbeat, warm, welcoming, and thoughtful.

IDEAS

BROAD

Be warm and welcoming with a smile, notice little things, play soft background music, have name tags, offer snacks or drinks. Be relaxed and easygoing.

IN-HOME SPECIFIC

Light some candles, have balloons out front, turn outdoor and indoor lights on, bake some cookies, have a place to put jackets and purses.

MINISTRY SPECIFIC IDEAS

INTENTIONAL DISCUSSION

Think through the uniqueness and intentionality of your very first discussion as a group. This first meeting will set a tone and the standard for following meetings. Have people share why they are here, their hopes, and expectations. Deal with talking time limits (dominators) before they become a problem.

SUPPORT + FOUNDATION THROUGH COMMITMENT FORMS

The Commitment Form helps dictate, redirect, or reset the direction and health of the group. All groups and ministries are highly encouraged to start here on the first meeting. Each ministry has a version of the Commitment Form. Walking through this form can be informal or formal, you and your ministry decide, but use it to set expectations and lay a solid foundation.

IDEAS

- Set group expectations (logistical, relational, and otherwise) through conversation with the guidance of your ministry's Commitment Form.
- Keep study time focused and intentional, discuss the marks of a healthy group (connecting relationally, growing spiritually).
- Lay a foundation of "okay topics" and topics that are "off the table" (politics, direct advise, etc.)

MINISTRY SPECIFIC IDEAS

ALL CONVERSATION IS IMPORTANT CONVERSATION

Conversations that happen over food, before the group begins, or after the group is over are equally as important as the formal study and meeting discussion.

Icebreaker questions are fun, light-hearted, casual, Level 1 questions. These questions open the door for participation and enjoyment. Studies show that once someone speaks once, they are more likely to speak again. If you do an icebreaker first and everyone shares, most people will likely share again.

IDEAS

FIRST

Intentionally welcome everyone through a potluck, food, or social time. Have icebreaker questions and/or mixers ready. "Organized fun" is important for the flow of the meeting; it provides a launching pad.

SECOND

Give a 5 minute warning. Explain what to expect and what is coming next. This gives people a chance to prepare themselves (grab coffee, go to the bathroom, etc.)

"Hey everyone, in about 5 minutes, we are going to gather in the living room for the discussion and study. Grab coffee, go to the bathroom, then we'll get started."

THIRD

Lead/facilitate the discussion. Be aware and respectful of people's time—start and stop on time.

MINISTRY SPECIFIC IDEAS

**TAKE
NOTE**

NOTES + THOUGHTS



CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT

**YOUR MEETING PLACE
IS HOLY GROUND**

REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU MEET, CREATE A SPACE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO BE.

TEAMWORK

Leaders, co-leaders, and hosts are a team. This team is helpful to make your meeting time the best it can be. Be intentional with your team and give reflective feedback. Process, reflect, and refine your meetings together. When conversation falls flat, jump in and help each other keep the conversation going. It is helpful to sit across the room from each other so you can communicate through eye contact.

ACTUAL SPACE

The ministry you serve in will determine the space you meet in. However, naturally and instinctively, people gravitate towards homes. When you walk through the front door of someone's house, unspoken walls are brought down. Connecting relationally and growing spiritually can and should happen regularly, regardless of the actual space you meet in. Pursue meeting in a home in some capacity—regardless of what ministry you serve in, whether that is for study, discussion, or social gatherings.

ENVIRONMENTS TO CREATE + PITFALLS TO AVOID

Launching and creating a healthy group begins with creating a desirable environment that is conducive to relational connection and spiritual growth. Healthy spaces foster healthy individuals, which leads to healthy groups. Compiled are some ideas in creating environments that will guide you in leadership.

**TAKE
NOTE**

NOTES + THOUGHTS

ENVIRONMENTS TO CREATE

Be Predictable	▶	<i>Timing and flow of each meeting</i>
Know Names	▶	<i>Name tags and intentionally use names</i>
Create Atmosphere	▶	<i>Thoughtfulness and preparedness</i>
Welcoming + Comfortable	▶	<i>Picked up, places available to sit, hospitable</i>
Enough Seating—in a Circle	▶	<i>Folding chairs, couches, camping chairs, pillows</i>
Ample Lighting	▶	<i>Add lamps if necessary</i>
Odors	▶	<i>Don't be nose blind, light a candle, open a window</i>
Attract from the Outside	▶	<i>Balloons, lights, signage, or you</i>
Attract from the Inside	▶	<i>Flowers, table centerpieces, homey feel</i>
Refreshments or Potluck	▶	<i>Always offer something—even if it's small</i>
Meet Practical Needs in the Group	▶	<i>Help moving, bring meals, make visits</i>
Vulnerability by Example	▶	<i>Members will be as vulnerable as leaders are</i>

PITFALLS TO AVOID

Cleaning for
Show or Approval



Remember, people live in their homes. Give yourself and others plenty of grace.

Kids



Kids are great. Kids can also be a distraction. Adult connection and spiritual growth must be a priority. In the end, this sets an example to kids that godly relationships are vital.

Phones + Electronics



Minimize distractions and simply be aware. Silence mode phones or leave them in the car.

Animals



Just like kids, animals are great, but can be a distraction. Put animals away. Also, be aware of allergies.

Alcohol



Nope!

MINISTRY SPECIFIC IDEAS



5

EMBRACE CHALLENGES

**LEAD WITH HEART
+
BACKBONE**

**THE HONOR OF STEPPING INTO LEADERSHIP
IS WALKING ALONGSIDE OTHERS. IT IS NOT
OUR ROLE TO FIX THEM OR MAKE THEM
PERSONAL PROJECTS; IT IS OUR JOB TO
LOVE THEM WHERE THEY ARE.**

THE CHALLENGE: PEOPLE ARE DIFFICULT

People are difficult and we are those people. We are broken; broken people are sharp and must be handled with care.

“

*“Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops
come by the strength of the ox.”*

Proverbs 14:4, ESV

“

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials
of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith
produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you
may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks
wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without
finding fault, and it will be given to you.”*

James 1:2-5, NIV

“

*“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and
disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with
everyone.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:14, NIV

**TAKE
NOTE**

People are _____; broken people are _____.

*Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:
Broken. Sharp.*

THE CHALLENGE: SOLVING PROBLEMS

When people are involved, problems will arise. It is our response to those problems that will shape and lead those around us. By asking the Four Questions below, you will gain insight on how to move forward and uncover the root of the problem.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

- 1 How long have you been dealing with this?
DURATION OF ISSUE
- 2 Who else knows?
INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS
- 3 Have you received any advice or counsel on how to deal with this?
PURSUIT OF HELP
- 4 Do you have any plans for the next step?
MOVEMENT FORWARD

From gathering insight into these responses, more direction is given and you are empowered to lead. You don't have to counsel, decide, or give specific advice or direction, but you can lead. Limit your actual responses and allow them to respond. Remember, you are supported by your specific ministry staff.

THE CHALLENGE: LIVING IN COMMUNITY

All groups will have challenges. Living in community compiles people and their baggage into one space. Problems can be boiled into 3 different categories:

- 1 **LIFE CRISIS**
Death, Tragedy, Unexpected Event
- 2 **SIN ISSUE**
Addiction, Pride, Insecurity
- 3 **GROUP DYNAMIC ISSUE**
Dominators, Group Size, Meeting Flow, Expectations, Communication

TAKE NOTE

THE _____ QUESTIONS

- 1 _____ have you been dealing with this?
DURATION OF ISSUE
- 2 _____ else knows?
INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS
- 3 Have you received any _____ on
how to deal with this?
PURSUIT OF HELP
- 4 Do you have any _____ for the next step?
MOVEMENT FORWARD

LIVING IN _____

- 1 **LIFE** _____
Death, Tragedy, Unexpected Event
- 2 _____ **ISSUE**
Addiction, Pride, Insecurity
- 3 **GROUP** _____ **ISSUE**
Dominators, Group Size, Meeting Flow,
Expectations, Communication

Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:

*Four. How Long. Who. Advice or Counsel. Plans. Community. Crisis. Sin.
Dynamic.*

THE CHALLENGE: RELATING + RESPONDING

Relate, listen, and respond accordingly. Keep these tips in mind. Do not be afraid of responding.

- ▶ Watch for clues that something deeper is going on. People will throw big things out. Step in and be proactive through following up and pursuing individually.
- ▶ Respond slowly. Go back to the Four Questions.
- ▶ Keep your eyes on the whole group. The group shouldn't suffer because of one. Be flock focused, not lamb focused. Care for the lamb individually, but set boundaries within the group. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct.
- ▶ Make use of the people and support system around you. Call your ministry team and go over the responses to the Four Questions, decide next steps together.

From these keys, decide what the next action step is. Who goes to follow up and follow through?

- **I GO**
I (as the leader) will handle it and go alone and keep the ministry team apprised.
- **YOU GO**
You (as the ministry lead/staff person) will handle it and go alone. Ministry lead will be in communication with leader.
- **WE GO**
We (as the leader and the ministry lead/staff person) will handle it and go together.

THE CHALLENGE: OWNERSHIP

Leadership is not equivalent to independence; leadership steps out and empowers others to serve and have ownership. Share the load, ask for help, and empower people to serve. Simple things like having a co-leader or facilitator during discussion time, rotating host homes, or giving the people in the group roles each week will ease your load as well as

TAKE NOTE

From the Four Questions and responses, decide what the _____ step is.

- _____ GO
I (as the leader) will handle it and go alone and keep the ministry team apprised.
- _____ GO
You (as the ministry lead/staff person) will handle it and go alone. Ministry lead will be in communication with leader.
- _____ GO
We (as the leader and the ministry lead/staff person) will handle it and go together.

Fill-in-the-Blank Answers in Order of Appearance:

Next. I. You. We.

entrust others with tasks. Along with these things, as a leader, intentionally pursue an apprentice. An apprentice is someone you see leadership or facilitator qualities in who you are intentionally discipling and training up to share the load OR to send out and start their own group.

THE CHALLENGE: DOMINATORS

Dominators are individuals who monopolize, take over, overpower, or dominate conversation and discussion.

- Dominators are the #1 problem in groups!
- Address dominators before they become an issue. This happens through the Commitment Form.
- Watch how people respond to dominators within your group.
- If you do not know who the dominator is...it's probably you.
- Address dominators one-on-one and case-by-case, never in front of the whole group. Make it easy, simple, and conversational.
- Contact the ministry you serve in for specific "how to's".

“

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

James 1:19-20, NIV

IDEAS

Dealing with a dominator depends on the level and persistence of the person. These ideas are not a one-size-fits-all; it is case-by-case, relational, and 100% conversational.

MILD CASE

Have a conversation along the lines of:

"As a leader, I am trying to get every person to talk, everytime we meet. Could you help me pursue that? This means each person gets a little bit of time to talk rather than one person getting a lot of time and others having none."

OR

"I am noticing that you are speaking a lot more than others in the group. As you prepare for the group, rather than being quick to respond to a question or jump in on conversation, be quicker to listen and slower to speak which will help others share and we will hear from more people."

EXTREME CASE

WEEK 1: No talking, reevaluate as a leader, then reconnect 1-on-1

WEEK 2: No talking, reevaluate as a leader, then reconnect 1-on-1

WEEK 3: Answer 1 question, reevaluate as a leader, reconnect 1-on-1

WEEK 4: Answer 2 questions, reevaluate as a leader, reconnect 1-on-1

MINISTRY SPECIFIC IDEAS

THE CHALLENGE: POLITICS

During official group meetings, political discussions should be completely off the table. If a conversation must be had, meet outside of the group to talk about it one-on-one. Pray for local and federal leaders and government, but be alert for the attitude behind the prayers, either heartfelt or update.

TYPES OF PRAYERS

HEARTFELT PRAYERS

Vulnerable, genuine, and communicates thoughts, feelings, fears, or weaknesses.

UPDATE PRAYERS

Presenting a prayer through intentional information giving, updating, or making a specific point.

THE CHALLENGE: CREATING GOOD CONVERSATION

SHARE FROM THE HEART

- Before diving into deep topics, spend a little time at the shallow end of the conversational pool with Level 1, First Base questions.
- Go beyond surface topics like sports, the weather, or TV shows and into the realm of opinions, thoughts, and feelings.
- Avoid gossip.
- Spend less time convincing and arguing and more time encouraging and connecting. It is not about forcing a change in someone, but instead, sharing experiences.
- Be honest and transparent.
- How something is said is just as important as what is said. Be aware of volume, tone of voice, and body language.

LISTEN ACTIVELY

- Be genuinely interested in what others are saying.
- Give signals that say “I’m listening” like eye contact and nodding your head.

- Focus on who is speaking, not on your response, personal experiences, or being heard.
- After they have finished a statement, rephrase what you have heard back to them to make sure you understand them.
- Be aware of non-verbal cues. Folded arms could mean the other person is upset or not interested. Tone of voice can say everything from sadness, to anger, to sarcasm.

ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

- Limit questions with yes, no, or maybe answers, or, ask them to expound.
- Start with questions that build rapport.
- Ask questions that uncover commonalities and build on those.
- Embrace differences and seek to understand the other's perspective.
- Find enjoyment in getting to know others, rather than being driven by a goal or ulterior motives.

“

“Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”

Colossians 4:6, NLT



LET GOD GROW YOU

LEADING FOR THE LONG HAUL

LEAD FROM YOUR STRENGTHS AND GROW IN YOUR WEAKNESSES.

NOBEL GROWTH PURSUITS

COMPETENCY: PURSUE EFFICIENCY

- Competency in your leadership role is important, but it is not the most important. What is valued is how you are growing spiritually and connecting relationally.
- Be intentional about inviting feedback and welcoming constructive criticism. Have open hands and a posture that invites growth and refinement.
- Pursue excellence; excellence is not perfection.

CHARACTER: OUR INTERNAL STRUCTURE

- Invite and allow God to change and grow you and your responses to Scripture and to others.
- Seek to be people of deep rooted character:
 - HUMBLE: Being humble means you value meekness and humility before God and others. You understand that pride is the opposite of humility and you know humility leads you to the understanding that you are not God and that you need a Savior. You willingly submit your life to follow Jesus' model (Philippians 2:1-5, Proverbs 16:18).

“

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 2:3-5, NIV

- **THIRSTY**: Being thirsty means you cultivate a hunger and thirst for God, His Word, and His righteousness. You see growing in your relationship with Christ as a consistent necessity. You make a regular practice of sitting at His feet. (Matthew 5:6, Matthew 6:33)

“

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33, NIV

- **PEACE-SEEKING**: You seek to bring peace to those around you. You act as an active ambassador for Christ—bringing people together and people to Christ. (Matthew 5:9, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

“

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Matthew 5:9, NIV

- **LIFE-GIVING**: Giving your life away intentionally to others in your home, church, and marketplace. You allow God to use your time, talent, and treasure to build His Kingdom locally and globally. (John 15:12-17, Matthew 5:13-16)

“

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

John 15:12, NIV

CHEMISTRY: COMMUNION WITH GOD + CHEMISTRY WITH OTHERS

- Pursue unity with God and others.
- This time of gathering, growing, and moving together should add to your intimacy with God...not hinder it.
- You can have a Mary group OR you can have a Martha group.

“

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Luke 10:38-41, NIV

**THE KEY IS VALUING AND
PURSUING THE ACTUAL
RELATIONSHIP, JUST LIKE JESUS.**

LEADER REFLECTION

How might God grow YOU through this experience of leading others?

What are current strengths you can confidently lead from?

What are areas within leadership that you can grow in? In those areas, what are a few practical next steps you can take to grow in these areas?



CONCLUSION

**CLOSING STATEMENTS
+
MINISTRY BREAKOUTS**

“

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47, NIV

**TAKE
NOTE**

NOTES + THOUGHTS



MINISTRY BREAKOUTS

Ministries Represented Alphabetically:
Life Groups + Young Adults, Men's, Recovery,
Women's, Youth 5th-HS



**LIFE
GROUPS
+
YOUNG
ADULTS**

Ministry Specific Breakouts

MAKE THE MOST OF RESOURCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

TEAM SUPPORT + REPORTING STRUCTURE

We have created a team to support you—be intentional about leaning into the support system that surrounds you. You are not alone in leadership.

LIFE GROUPS TEAM + LAY COACHING STRUCTURE

- On the Life Groups Team, you have one main contact person to report to and connect with (either a staff member or a lay coach). That person is readily available for phone calls, emails, texts, etc.—for big questions and small questions alike.
- Heights provides counseling, at no cost, which is available for you or those in your group when necessary.

LEADER, CO-LEADER, + HOST TEAM

Rely heavily on these people in your group. If you do not have these people nailed down, we highly encourage you to actively pursue them. When you have them finalized, let the Life Groups Team know. Having these people in place will add to the longevity, health, and perspective of the group. We need each other.

- Leader's Role: Facilitate the conversation of the group, provide direction, and protect the group as a whole.
- Co-Leader's Role: Support facilitating with the leader and model healthy communication and responses that will create unity and trust within the group.
- Host's Role: Opens their home as a meeting space that is inviting and has enough space to accommodate the group.

APPRENTICESHIP

Intentionally be training someone up with the intent to co-lead with you, lead in your absence, or (ideally) launch their own group. Life Group leaders are based solely on relationships and referrals and we are constantly seeking new leaders to launch new groups because of the high need for group life within the church. Apprenticeship is a specific way in which the Body of Christ expands outward and grows deeper.

QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN AN APPRENTICE OR POTENTIAL LEADER

GOOD WITH PEOPLE

Easy to talk to, enjoyable and fun, others lean in when they speak, real and authentic

GROWING IN CHRIST

Open and honest, faithful and committed, humble, thirsty, peace-seeking, and life-giving

HOW TO INTENTIONALLY RAISE UP AN APPRENTICE OR POTENTIAL LEADER

This pursuit is covered in prayer and happens through building relationships one-on-one. After each one of the steps below, have an intentional conversation with them in order to walk through group scenarios, ideas, specific next steps, or answer any questions they may have.

- PRAY: Cover the pursuit of an apprentice or co-leader in prayer throughout the whole process.
- LEARN: Have them observe you leading for a week or two by writing down specific things they like, things they would do differently, or things they have questions about.
- CO-LEAD: For a week or two, facilitate the group together, meeting beforehand to discuss the lesson.
- LEAD IN YOUR PRESENCE: For a week or two, have them lead the group by themselves with you still being

there as a part of the group, but you not being the leader.

- **LEAD IN YOUR ABSENCE**: Have them prepare and lead the group when you are not there.

Specific amount of time spent on each step will depend on the individual you are pursuing. The Life Groups Team is available for support and guidance.

GROUP MEMBERS

They are your given flock—care for them well within the group setting and on a one-on-one basis.

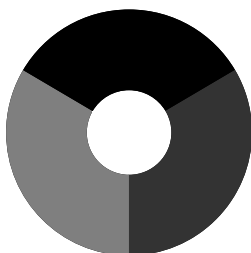
3 PILLARS: TO GATHER, TO GROW, + TO MOVE

Newly launched groups and groups at the start of each session will lean heavier into the “To Gather” pillar (gathering, eating, socializing, and fellowshiping). As relationships are built upon and deepened, pursuing each of the 3 Pillars equally is the goal throughout weekly meetings and throughout the life of the group.

TO GATHER

RELATIONSHIP

Discipleship occurs best in the context of relationship. Significant relationship happens when we shoulder up by sitting in a circle. Gathering happens weekly and through intentional individual and group pursuit.



TO MOVE

SERVICE

Once we know God’s heart, the question becomes: “How can we NOT be the hands and feet of Jesus by being faithful neighbors?” Service is a posture of the heart, rather than an item on a check list. Start by serving in the group, then expand from there.

TO GROW

STUDY

Building the study of God’s Word and prayer into relationship creates growth and intimacy, which in turn makes relationships significant. Growing through studies and prayer happens weekly.

STUDIES

Studying is built weekly into Life Group gatherings in order to grow spiritually together, as well as to foster and support individual growth outside of meeting as a group. There are three different avenues to lean into as your group studies and grows together.

- 1 Better Together | A Book Paired with a Weekly Leader's Guide Podcast
- 2 Sermon-Based Questions (SBQ's)
- 3 Topical Books and Studies (Library)

BETTER TOGETHER

A BOOK PAIRED WITH A WEEKLY LEADER'S GUIDE PODCAST

Better Together is a recommended study for all Life Groups, especially for newly launched groups.

- Better Together is a book written by the Life Group's Team, created to lay a solid foundation for why groups are vital in the life of the church. This book gives specific ideas on how to connect relationally and grow spiritually through the context of Scripture. This book is a guide of sorts to align individual expectations and lay a foundation of biblical, communal living which will lead to a healthy and strong Life Group.
- The Life Group's Team created a podcast that pairs weekly with Better Together in order to support leaders through the study. This leader's guide walks through each chapter of the book—week-by-week. The podcast will guide leaders through planning each gathering as well as preparing for the study itself. This podcast is available on our website under Leader Resources or it can be emailed to you directly by the Life Groups Team.

SERMON-BASED QUESTIONS (SBQ'S)

- SBQ Purpose: SBQ's coupled with conversation in Life Groups flesh out and dig deeper into weekly sermons. Each week, the Life Groups Team creates content that pairs personal stories, individual reflections from the sermon, additional Scripture, quotes, and practical application for day-to-day living. These components support and exemplify the biblical foundation for what it means to do life together as a group.
- SBQ Layout: SBQ's are separated into three sections.
 - My Story (low risk questions). Fosters relational connection.
 - Digging Deeper (medium/high risk questions). Fosters spiritual growth.
 - Taking it Home (medium/high risk questions). Fosters spiritual growth.
- SBQ Priority: SBQ's are highly encouraged for all Life Groups to study throughout each session together. We believe there is true value in linking arms, studying Scripture, and practically applying sermons as one body. By digging deeper into Sunday's sermon each week individually and collectively, it gives opportunity to iron out practicalities and puts flesh on the message.
- SBQ Tension: The Life Groups Team operates each week within the tension of writing SBQ's prior to Sunday's message. Often, the questions composed do not fit seamlessly with the sermon preached. As you step into leadership, one way you can partner weekly with the Life Groups Team is by intentionally and adequately preparing for weekly meetings in order to help those in your group connect dots from the sermon, to the SBQ's, to their day-to-day lives.
- SBQ Leader's Guide: While in session, the Life Groups Team will provide a Leader's Guide each week of Sermon-Based Questions. This guide is a weekly resource that gives you a window into our thought processes and also includes announcements, upcoming dates, and need-to-know notes.

TOPICAL BOOKS + STUDIES (LIBRARY)

These books and studies are available to do as a group on a “need to know, need to grow” basis. The Life Groups Team has a library of approved titles and studies available for check-out upon request. All books, outside studies, and resources must be approved by the Life Groups Team prior to presenting to your group as a study option.

Please refer to section two of the Content Guide: "Design Your Time" under "Preparation is Fundamental" for specifics on how to prepare.

LEADER RESOURCES + WEBSITE NAVIGATION

Included in this book and on the website, under Life Group Leader Resources, the resources below are at your fingertips for viewing and printing. The resources listed online will be constantly up-to-date and provide a layer of support for you as leaders.



**SEE SPECIFIC LEADER RESOURCES ON
FOLLOWING PAGES**

New Member Initial Contact

These step-by-step instructions offer the best way we have found to connect with a new member of a Life Group. This goes for both newly launched groups as well as existing groups.

NEW MEMBER INITIAL

C O N T A C T

INITIAL WELCOME EMAIL INCLUDE ALL LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Start the email with a short introduction that includes the leaders name, the groups stage of life, day, and time of gatherings and a simple "Welcome to the group!" Give a brief explanation of what to expect for the first meeting; this should include start time, meeting address, and what to bring. Lastly, ask them to respond!

FOLLOW UP TEXT MESSAGE

SEND THIS TEXT

I'm _____, your Heights Life Group leader! I just sent an email with group details. Respond when you get it, thanks!

FOLLOW UP PHONE CALL GIVE A FEW DAYS SPACE

If there is no response to the email or text in 2-3 days, call and check in with them. Leave a voicemail if they don't answer.

NEXT STEPS FROM GROUP MEMBER RESPONSES:

Committed to Group: Continue as planned.
Not Going to Join Group: Let the Life Groups Team know.
No Communication or Response: Let the Life Groups Team know.

Commitment Forms

Provided are two versions of the Commitment Forms, one for leaders and one for group members. The leader version has notes, thoughts, and additional Scripture to use as a guide; the group member version does not. The Commitment Form should be completed and discussed on the first night of each session to (re)establish expectations and boundaries. For newly launched groups and for existing groups, the Commitment Form should be completed each group launch, 3 times per year.

COMMITMENT FORM: LEADER'S VERSION

Life Group Commitment Form

Leader's Guide: Highlighted notes indicate additional information for leader's. The group member version will not have any of the highlighted parts.

This form is downloadable on the website.

The purpose of **Life Groups Ministry** is **To Gather** by connecting relationally, **To Grow** by engaging spiritually, and **To Move** by serving local and global neighbor's faithfully.

Leader's Name:

Your Name:

Life Groups: The Purpose, the Heart, and What to Expect

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through significant Christian relationships. This happens best through Life Groups 3 Pillars: To Gather, To Grow, and To Move. (Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-24, Hebrews 10:23-25, Acts 2:42-47)

Life Groups thrive on participation and investment. The purpose of the Life Group Commitment Form is to help discuss and clarify the group's goals, expectations, and commitments. Start by reading the verses above together and praying. This Commitment Form lays groundwork for the future, whatever issues arise or otherwise.

To Gather | Connect Relationally

- SHARE
 - Each week, we will take time to share what is happening in our lives. There will be some get-to-know-you questions, intentional questions focused on personal and spiritual growth, and we will spend time reading Scripture together.
 - The target for each time the group meets is to hear from everybody, every time you meet, and keep God's Word in the middle.
- SUPPORT
 - Each week, we will learn how to care for one another as Christ commands. This kind of care can take many forms such as: prayer, encouragement, listening, and challenging one another. (Scripture: John 15:9-13)
 - Read the verse above together.
 - Group Discussion: What other forms of caring for one another are there? How do you feel most cared for?

To Grow | Engage Spiritually

- STUDY
 - Each week, we will study a section from Scripture that relates to the previous week's sermon or a book study.
 - The weekly priority during the study is to keep God's Word at the center of our conversation.
 - The goal is to interact personally on the topic and discuss how we can practically follow Christ. This may be a good place to define "interacting personally". Encourage

COMMITMENT FORM: LEADER'S VERSION CONTINUED

your group to be quick to listen; this creates a safe environment for people to share honestly. Do not give specific advice or ways to "fix it" unless specifically asked.

To Move | Neighbor Faithfully Through Service

- SERVE
 - Being spiritually healthy is not a benefit only for ourselves, but for others too. Throughout the session, it is our hope that you can pursue service as a lifestyle—individually and as a group.

The Marks of a Healthy Life Group

For a Life Group to be healthy and to thrive, we commit to:

- Hearing from everybody, every time we meet, and keep God's Word in the middle.
- Connecting Relationally by:
 - Accepting one another. (Scripture: Romans 15:7)
 - We all connect differently with different people; embrace people's differences.
 - Treating one another with respect. (Scripture: Ephesians 4:25-5:2)
 - Be quick to listen and slow to speak.
 - The goal is to listen, not to give specific advice. Advice is given only when it is asked for. We are not here to judge or fix it, unless someone invites us in to share wisdom. On the other hand, that does not mean we can't question what someone said or what they are doing.
 - Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator. Be careful. As the leader, I may have to help guide you or remind you to be slower to speak. Address the dominators early on to support and combat any future issues.
 - Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "We need to pray for (someone's name) because they are doing..."
- Engaging Spiritually by:
 - Making spiritual growth a priority. (Scripture: 2 Peter 1:8)
 - Tangents are okay sometimes, but we may need to be refocused. We need to keep spiritual growth a focus and stay on topic with discussion.
- Serving our Neighbors Faithfully
 - Taking care of one another. (Scripture: John 13:34, Acts 20:35)
 - When a crisis happens, we will commit to supporting, encouraging, listening, praying, bringing meals, etc.
 - Serving is an overflow of our hearts from being in relationship with Christ. Serving individually and as a group shouldn't be just an item on a checklist, but rather, a posture of our hearts. As a group, we can pursue service together and help keep each other accountable in being the hands and feet of Jesus to our neighbors.
 - Start serving and meeting needs in your group, then expand from there.

Life Group Commitment and Guidelines

Leaders, we encourage you to have this portion mostly nailed down prior to going through it with your group. Some things, your group may need to weigh in on. Inviting your group members in to help make decisions will cause them to be more invested because they have a say and ownership; however, some things should already be set by you as the leader. Use your discretion.

1. **Dates** Fill in the blanks.
We will meet on _____ for _____ weeks.
Our final meeting of this session will be on _____.
2. **Time** Fill in the blanks.
We will arrive between _____ and _____ and officially begin at _____ and end at _____.
You can clarify to your group if it is okay for them to show up early or linger after the group ends; if you want that as a leader.
3. **Kids** Fill in the blanks.
Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome.
If you as the leader or your group comes up with a different plan for childcare, discuss that here. Even though kids are great, boundaries must be created to prioritize adult connection. Adults are the focus.
4. **Study and Homework** Fill in the blanks.
We will study _____ and will do the required homework or reading ahead of time.
 - New groups launching will study the book *Better Together*, written by the Life Groups Team. If your group has already completed this study, you can choose between Sermon-Based Questions or a topical book study.
 - Emphasize the importance of preparation and having reading and homework done prior to meeting as a group.
 - We highly encourage Sermon-Based Questions. If you have new members in your group who have not ever completed *Better Together*, it could be beneficial to have a conversation with them separately to touch base on the content or give them a brief overview.
5. **Prayer**
We will pray for and with one another regularly.
Remember, being forced to pray in a group, or just the idea of it, can cause people anxiety or to not want to come. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like, "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. Praying out loud can be new or intimidating. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Prayer should not be gossip. Prayer can happen at each meeting differently. For example, you can pray as a group, one person can pray, you can partner off, or break up in smaller groups or couples, etc.

COMMITMENT FORM: LEADER'S VERSION CONTINUED

6. **Attendance** Fill in the blanks.

Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to attend each meeting. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and special events. But coming to group needs to be a priority.

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____.

Commitment is key to a healthy group. Make sure everyone stacks hands on this because this creates ground to stand on down the road. Ask something like, "Is this what we want to pursue? Do we agree to being committed?"

7. **Food, Drinks, and Dessert**

Do not allow all the food, drinks, and desserts to fall on the leader or the host every time. Have people sign up to bring things to help out—people want to be involved.

8. **Service**

Emphasize the importance of serving individually and as a group. Have some ideas as to how you can serve as a group. Chat about how individuals are already serving. Remember, start with the folks in your group.

9. **Safe Place and Confidentiality**

Make this your motto: "What is said here stays here." This is a safe place, but please know that if something is shared that might be harmful to yourself or someone else, as the leader, I will seek counsel from Heights staff as to how to respond to the issue.

Formal Versus Informal Commitment Form:

As a leader, (whether you lean to the formal or informal version), you should collect verbal commitments from each group member. Don't make them say it right there in front of everyone—give them time to process the Commitment Form and respond to it individually. But it is important to collect some form of commitment from the individuals within a week or so of the initial Commitment Form overview. This will provide a foundation and reference point if anything arises in the future.

- ★ **Informal:** Go through the Commitment Form step-by-step, discussing each part. Ask the folks in your group to think it through and pray it over, then to communicate with you as the leader if this is something they want to be a part of.
- **Formal:** Go through the Commitment Form step-by-step, discussing each part. Have people leave with the forms to pray through and think through the commitment. Then, request they sign the physical Commitment Form or verbally commit to them between the time you went over the forms and the next meeting.

COMMITMENT FORM: GROUP MEMBER'S VERSION

Life Group Commitment Form

The purpose of Life Groups Ministry is **To Gather** by connecting relationally, **To Grow** by engaging spiritually, and **To Move** by serving local and global neighbor's faithfully.

Leader's Name:

Your Name:

Life Groups: The Purpose, the Heart, and What to Expect

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through significant Christian relationships. This happens best through Life Groups 3 Pillars: To Gather, To Grow, and To Move. (Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-24, Hebrews 10:23-25, Acts 2:42-47)

To Gather | Connect Relationally

- SHARE
 - Each week, we will take time to share what is happening in our lives. There will be some get-to-know-you questions, intentional questions focused on personal and spiritual growth, and we will spend time reading Scripture together.
- SUPPORT
 - Each week, we will learn how to care for one another as Christ commands. This kind of care can take many forms such as: prayer, encouragement, listening, and challenging one another. (Scripture: John 15:9-13)

To Grow | Engage Spiritually

- STUDY
 - Each week, we will study a section from Scripture that relates to the previous week's sermon or a book study.

To Move | Neighbor Faithfully Through Service

- SERVE
 - Being spiritually healthy is not a benefit only for ourselves, but for others too. Throughout the session, it is our hope that you can pursue service as a lifestyle—individually and as a group.

The Marks of a Healthy Life Group

For a Life Group to be healthy and to thrive, we commit to:

- Hearing from everybody, every time we meet, and keep God's Word in the middle.
- Connecting Relationally by:
 - Accepting one another. (Scripture: Romans 15:7)
 - Treating one another with respect. (Scripture: Ephesians 4:25-5:2)
- Engaging Spiritually by:
 - Making spiritual growth a priority. (Scripture: 2 Peter 1:8)
- Neighboring Faithfully Through Service by:
 - Taking care of one another. (Scripture: John 13:34, Acts 20:35)

Life Group Commitment and Guidelines

1. **Dates**
We will meet on _____ for _____ weeks.
Our final meeting of this session will be on _____.
2. **Time**
We will arrive between _____ and _____ and officially begin at _____ and end at _____.
3. **Kids**
Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome.
4. **Study and Homework**
We will study _____ and will do the required homework or reading ahead of time.
5. **Prayer**
We will pray for and with one another regularly.
6. **Attendance**
Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to attend each meeting. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and special events. But coming to group needs to be a priority.
If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____.
7. **Food, Drinks, and Dessert**
8. **Service**
9. **Safe Place and Confidentiality**

Icebreakers + Mixers

Compiled below are some of the Life Groups Team's favorite go-to icebreaker questions, games, and mixers. Do not reinvent the wheel—use these resources that are available to you! The Resource Section of the Life Groups Book, *Better Together*, also includes icebreakers, mixers, and games.

INDIVIDUAL QUESTION MIXER

Give each person a pen and a piece of paper, or have them use their phones for notes. Have each person talk to 3 different people and ask them a few questions. These questions can be silly or more in depth. Have everyone write down the name of the people they talked to and their responses. This should take anywhere between 15-20 minutes. When everyone comes back together, have the leader go to each person in the group and ask what was learned about that person; everyone who talked with that person shares what they learned.

SPLIT THE ROOM MIXER

Divide the room into two: one half is **NO WAY** and the other half is **NO PROBLEM**. Read some of the statements below, or come up with your own then have people move to the side that best describes them. Ask a few people individually why they chose that side. Here are some statements to start with:

- *I would like to travel internationally.*
 - *I'm happy with the vehicle I drive.*
 - *I enjoy eating strange, exotic foods.*
 - *I am comfortable in any situation.*
 - *I have been to Europe.*
 - *I have had more than 1 car accident.*
 - *I would never break the law.*
 - *I would hold a snake.*
 - *I love spicy foods.*
 - *I am a "Lord of the Rings" fan.*
 - *I have been arrested before.*
 - *I have peed in a pool before.*
 - *I have clogged the toilet at someone else's home.*
 - *I have to go to a party where I don't know anyone.*
 - *I want to go skydiving.*
 - *I have passed gas in public and not said anything or blamed it on someone else.*
 - *I had/have the best parents in the world.*
 - *I have broken a bone before.*
 - *I would do a zip-line.*
 - *I have said a bad word in the last week.*
 - *I must deal with a conflict at work.*
 - *You are asked to live alone.*
-

THE QUESTION GAME

Everyone starts with a piece of paper. On that paper, everyone writes down one question. Pass all the papers around the circle until everyone has answered all the questions. From there, read questions and answers aloud and guess what answer belongs to who. Here is a list of some questions to get you started, or you can make up your own:

- *What is your most embarrassing moment?*
- *If you could have any super hero power, which one would you pick?*
- *What is your favorite movie?*
- *What is something that you resent paying for?*
- *What was your favorite vacation?*
- *What was your worst injury?*
- *What is the best practical joke you've ever seen or been a part of?*
- *What movie can you watch over and over without getting tired of?*
- *Who would be your celebrity crush?*
- *What is your best cure for hiccups?*
- *What was the worst date you've ever been on?*
- *What was cool when you were growing up, but is not now?*
- *What is one thing that you would like to change about yourself?*
- *Who is your biggest hero? Why?*
- *What is the greatest way you've seen God move in your life?*
- *What is your biggest worry for kids growing up in today's age?*
- *Would you consider adopting or fostering a child? Why or why not?*
- *How often do you read your Bible?*
- *What is your proudest accomplishment?*
- *What is your biggest regret in life?*
- *Have you been in a Life Group before? If so, what was it like?*
- *If you could talk to one person in the Bible, who would it be and what would you talk about?*
- *What are your hopes for this group?*
- *How can this group help you?*
- *If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would you say?*

THE NEWLYWED GAME

Use the questions below, or create your own, and have each couple record their responses separately. Split the wives and husbands into different spaces while they respond to the questions. Then, take turns having each couple be in the hot seat. Ask each question to the couples and compare their recorded responses. If the answer's match, they get a point!

- *Where was your first date?*
- *Who is more likely to deal with a spider?*
- *If you could toss one article of his clothing, what would it be? Hers?*
- *What is her guilty pleasure in spending? His?*
- *What was the first movie you saw together?*
- *What is your most frequent disagreement?*
- *When and where was your first kiss?*
- *What is her dream date?*
- *Who hogs the bed? The covers?*

THREE ON A COUCH GAME

Designate one person to be the leader; this person will host the game.
Follow the steps below to host the game:

1. Pass out a small piece of paper, or note card, and a pen to everyone.
2. Have everyone write down their first and last name and their most embarrassing moment on the paper. Give the paper to the host.
3. The host will quietly and independently read through the papers and choose the best embarrassing moment.
4. The host will then choose 3 people to sit on the couch; one of those people must be the real story teller whose name is on the card; the two others are chosen at random.
5. The host reads the embarrassing moment aloud to the room.
6. All 3 people on the couch must act like the embarrassing moment is their story to tell. They must give information and details to support the embarrassing moment to make it believable. Obviously, only one person is telling the truth.
7. The host, and everyone, asks the 3 on the couch specific questions regarding the embarrassing moment and all 3 must answer each question.
8. After enough information is gathered, have everyone vote on who they think the real story teller is.
9. To end the game, the host asks, "Will the real story teller please stand up?"

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

Use these topics and questions to start conversation. Every conversation has the potential to be great, to inspire us into action, to build significant relationships, and to connect us to each other.

- In your opinion, what are the 7 wonders of the world?
- If you could appear on any reality TV show, what would you choose?
- What pets have you had in your life?
- If you could be any athlete for a single game, who would you choose?
- What do you love most about your hometown?
- When you're down, what makes you feel better?
- How will life be different in the next 50 years?
- What is the worst job you've ever had?
- What are the most important qualities in friends?
- If you owned a boat, what would you name it and why?
- If you could have a front row seat to any concert, what would it be?
- What fashion trend did you follow that was cool, but is ridiculous now?
- What do you miss about childhood?
- Which is more important: intelligence or common sense? Why?
- What have you lost that you would like to find?
- What makes a house a home?

- Who was your favorite teacher? Why?
- Would you rather visit a big city or the countryside?
- In what era would you have liked to grow up in?
- Who is the most optimistic person you know?
- What book(s) are you currently reading?
- What is your favorite quote? Why?
- In what activity would you like to learn from an expert?
- What is your favorite part of Thanksgiving dinner?
- What would you love to find at a yard sale?
- What is something on your bucket list?
- Which event in the past, present, or future would you like to witness in person?
- What do you complain about more than anything else?
- If you had to change your name, what name would you choose?
- What do you admire most about your parents?
- What remains undone that you have wanted to get done for a while?
- If you could donate one million dollars to a charity, what would you choose? Why?
- Have you ever purchased anything from a TV infomercial? If so, what?
- Who would you like to trade places with for a month?
- Would you rather live by the beach or in the mountains?
- How do you define success?
- If you could master one instrument, what would it be?
- Who taught you how to ride a bike?
- Do you tend to live in the past, present, or future?
- Would you stop eating junk food to live longer?
- If you had to get a tattoo, what would you get and where would you put it?
- What has been the best TV sitcom ever?
- What takes up too much of your time?
- Have you ever performed in a talent show? If so, what was your act?
- What is your favorite smell?
- What is your favorite personality test? Why?
- What would you choose to sing at Karaoke night?
- Do you like or dislike surprises? Explain.
- What is the most unusual thing you have ever eaten?
- If you had a warning label, what would yours say?
- Who knows you the best? Why would you pick that person?
- Do you regift things? If so, what have you regifted?
- Did you ever cheat in school?
- If cars or planes didn't exist, what would be your preferred means of transportation? Why?
- What is your favorite thing about your career?
- What is your favorite sport to watch and play?
- Describe your perfect Saturday.
- What has been the most memorable celebration you've been a part of?
- Would you notify the police if your child committed a crime?
- Would you write a reference letter for someone who you feel is poorly qualified?
- Have you ever pretended you were sick to get out of something?
- If you could have any view from your back porch, what would it be?
- Who do you think is the most inspirational person alive today?

End of Session Feedback Form

This feedback form provides a platform to celebrate strengths and evaluate and refine needs improvements within the Life Group Ministry. This feedback form is confidential and will only be seen by Heights Staff—not leaders or group members. Everyone involved in the Life Groups Ministry will have the opportunity to complete this online form at the end of each session—a total of 3 times each calendar year. Even though this form is online submission only, included is a hard copy version for your reference.

End of Session Feedback Form

Online Form Submission Only.

*The purpose of Life Groups Ministry is **To Gather** by connecting relationally, **To Grow** by engaging spiritually, and **To Move** by serving local and global neighbor's faithfully.*

Leader's Name:

Your Name:

Date (MM/DD/YYYY):

We are constantly working to improve the Life Groups Ministry and we need your help. This information is important as we continue to refine this ministry. Please answer candidly so we can evaluate both strengths and needs improvements. This feedback form is confidential and will only be seen by Heights staff, not leaders or other group members.

On a scale of 1-5, please rate the following. Add additional comments if necessary.
(1 is poor; 5 is outstanding, include an "additional comments" for each question)

1. Overall, how was your Life Group this session?
2. How would you rate the relational connections you made in your group?
3. How has your spiritual growth been impacted through your group?
4. If you did Sermon-Based Questions, how would you rate the study questions and discussion?

Please answer accordingly and check all that apply.

5. One goal of Life Groups is to Empower service locally and globally. How are you serving?
- ☐ I serve individually, apart from my Life Group.
In what ways do you serve?

- ☐ We serve as a Life Group.
What did your Life Group do this session and how was your experience?

6. For the next Life Group session, I am planning on:

- ☐ Continuing in the same group.
☐ Taking a break from Life Groups.
☐ Trying a new Life Group.
☐ Other. If other, please explain:

7. Briefly, how have you seen God at work through your Life Group this session?

8. Please include any additional comments, questions, concerns, or feedback for the Life Groups Team.

Library Check-Out System

As leaders, if you choose to lean into a topical or book study, Heights Life Groups has a library that you can utilize for your group. When looking for an outside study, have your starting point be the provided library, then go from there. There are specific expectations and guidelines for the library. Please review the attached document for further detail and instruction.

HEIGHTS CHURCH LIFE GROUPS IN-HOUSE TOPICAL LIBRARY

LIBRARY CHECKOUT

01

PICK A STUDY

Choose a study on any of the bookshelves. The library is organized alphabetically by author's last name.

02

REMOVE THE CHECKOUT CARDS IN EACH ITEM

Once you pick your study, remove the checkout cards from EACH ITEM. Every item (book, workbook, DVD) has a pocket with a checkout card in the front cover. Remove ALL the checkout cards from the pockets from ALL the books.

03

FILL OUT EACH CHECKOUT CARD

Once the checkout cards are removed, Fill EACH CARD out. The title and author will be at the top of the card. Put today's date in the "date loaned" box and your first and last name in the "borrower's name" box. Please write legibly.

04


LEAVE THE CHECK OUT CARDS ON THE SHELF


After you have filled out a card for each item, leave all checkout cards in a pile on the shelf and the books are checked out in your name. These books must be returned in mint condition as they are Heights property.


Primarily, the Life Group's library houses a maximum of 5 copies of each title. These titles are available for checkout only. If a group needs more than 5, leaders and group members are responsible for ordering or purchasing additional copies.

Return study(s) within one week unless you plan to use them for the session. In that case, return upon completion of study.

Please email lifegroups@heightschurch.com with any questions.

 *Leader's Guide for Sermon-Based Questions (Handout)*
Included is an example of what the Leader's Guide version for the Sermon-Based Questions look like. This leader's guide allows you, as leaders, a window into our thought process as we create the weekly questions. This guide is a weekly resource that also includes announcements, upcoming dates, and need-to-know notes. This is a helpful and consistent tool as you spend time preparing for your group.

 *Yearly Calendar (Handout)*
Our calendar is in accordance with the public school system calendar; operating yearly from August to late May or early June. We release an updated yearly calendar each year in early summer.

 *Weekly Attendance (Handout + Walk Through)*

- Attendance is helpful in keeping track of numbers, however numbers are not the why behind attendance. The why behind attendance is to have a system that best cares for and stewards the people God has placed in our care.
- Attendance opens the door for pastoral care to happen efficiently and effectively. When people are connected in a Life Group, it is their Life Group that steps in first to offer care and support. If people are not connected in community, staff initially steps in. Pastoral care and support can happen through tragedy, in celebrations, or throughout the day-in and day-out of life.

The Accounting Department keeps track of every penny that comes in and goes out—literally every penny. If people are more important than money, then we, The Life Groups Team, also want to be precise and accurate when it comes to individuals, their hearts, and how they are connecting relationally and growing spiritually. It is a part of your role, as a leader, to help us succeed in that.

Q + R

LIFE GROUPS QUESTIONS + RESPONSES

YOUNG ADULT LIFE GROUP SPECIFICS

YOUNG ADULTS | AGE RANGE: 18-30

At Heights, the main connection point for Young Adults is through Life Groups. Our prayer is that through these smaller groups, young adults will make intentional, relational connections with others in a similar stage of life as well as pursue spiritual growth with the support and guidance of the leaders in the Young Adult Ministry.

The activities listed below have been designed to connect existing Life Groups to one another and to provide a place for inviting others in, as a form of outreach, within the young adult community. Through these activities and events, a safe, welcoming, and enjoyable environment is established for young adults to encounter Jesus, maybe for the first time, and to get connected relationally in a community that will grow them in Christ and support one another over time.



YEARLY CALENDAR OVERVIEW

FALL

*Life Groups Launch
In Session through Thanksgiving
Quarterly BBQ*

SPRING

*Life Groups in Session
Quarterly BBQ*

WINTER

*Life Groups Break for Holidays
Life Groups Relaunch in January
Travel Trip
Quarterly BBQ*

SUMMER

*Life Groups Break for Summer
Life Groups Relaunch in the Fall
Travel Trip
Quarterly BBQ*



YOUNG ADULTS QUESTIONS + RESPONSES



MEN'S

Ministry Specific Breakouts

CULTIVATING THE SOIL OF MEN'S HEARTS

MISSION OF MEN'S MINISTRY

Men's Ministry exists to see men engage deeper in their relationship with Jesus, becoming imitators of God through intentional time in God's Word and environments that allow for solid friendships.

FOUNDATION: HOW GOD'S WORD + GODLY RELATIONSHIPS WILL CULTIVATE THE SOIL OF MEN'S HEARTS

“

“Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Mark 4:15-20, NIV

- It is God's Word that produces tremendous fruit in the life of a person whose heart accepts it, therefore God's Word must be the focal point of our studies.
- The enemy employs many ways to steal the Word from our lives.
- He steals it immediately through distraction, ill-will, or ignorance.
- He steals it later through persecution as a result of following God, or later through the cares of this world lying to us that what he has is better than what God has for us.



“So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ” See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

Hebrews 3:7-13, NIV

-
- In our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we have all been subject to hard hearts. We need each other speaking the truth of God's Word, in love, into each other's lives to soften our hearts.
 - We must work together, in relationship, to care for each other, develop trust with each other, spur one another on, and admonish one another with God's Word so that we can grow to be conformed to the image of Christ.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO GET TO THE HEART

Keeping Mark 4 and Hebrews 3 in mind, we center our hearts and our relationships around Jesus and His Word.

BIBLE STUDIES

GOD'S WORD + GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

Men's Bible Studies are the primary way Heights men fulfill the overall mission of Heights, helping to engage individuals deeper in their relationship with Jesus and each other. In the context of Men's Ministry, Bible Studies differ from Life Groups. Bible Studies operate for a fixed amount of time throughout the year, specifically emphasizing the study of the Word, while still allowing for relationship and service, and vary in who attends. On the other hand, a Life Group is an ongoing group—equally balancing the study of Scripture, fellowship, and service with the same group of people over time.

BIBLE STUDY LAYOUT

- 1 Welcome and Opening Prayer Requests
- 2 Bible Teaching with Open Discussion
- 3 Final Q + R—Focused on Application of God's Word
- 4 Next Steps Time (visitor follow-up cards, announcements, ministry opportunities)

KEYS TO DEVELOPING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS AS A MEN'S LEADER

INTERACT HUMBLY

Ask men their names, offer to pray for them, offer to follow up one-on-one with needs they might have. Gently direct

difficult conversations to a later time, say things like “That’s a great question. Why don’t we chat more about that one after so everyone can talk. I can give you and that answer the full attention it deserves.”

GOOD FOLLOW UP

Connect men with other men if they are new, help men discover the next step in their faith or ministry at Heights, if men need follow up after a Bible Study or Men’s Activity, actually follow up (through a call, text, or email, depending on the relationship).

SEND ENCOURAGEMENT GENEROUSLY

Offer to help men with something at home, give verbal praise and encouragement, text or email men encouraging Scripture or thoughts, check in on them regularly asking them below the surface questions like, “How are you doing for real?” or “We talked last time about (fill in the blank), how is that going since we prayed about it last?”

SEE A NEED, FILL A NEED


Be empowered to step in. Help set up paperwork at tables or adjust the lighting if it's too dark; in other words, if you see a need, fill a need! Help explain elements of the program or Bible Study to new men who may not understand what’s going on.

MEN’S LEADERSHIP TEAM

As a Serve Team Member, be intentional in making use of the support system that surrounds you.

Men’s Serve Team Members have one main contact person. That person is readily and easily available for communication through phone calls, emails, texts, etc. This contact person is available for big questions and small questions alike.


The Men’s Leadership Team is sectioned into two main categories: Men’s Bible Studies and Men’s Activities.

 *Leadership Org-Chart (Handout)*

OVERVIEW OF MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES, OFFERED MORNING + EVENING

- Bible Studies are a mixture of teaching and discussion.
- Bible Studies occur on campus multiple times throughout the week.
- Men can choose which Bible Study is most conducive to their schedule, as content is the same at each of the weekly studies.
- Content of the Bible Studies is written by Men's Leadership.

 *Scope and Sequence Graphic (Handout)*

NEW BELIEVERS BIBLE STUDY

- A 13-week study for men new in their relationship with Jesus.
- Meets off-campus and is available twice per calendar year.
- As an entry level study, this study provides the foundations of the Christian faith.

OVERVIEW OF MEN'S ACTIVITIES

BREAKFASTS

A quarterly gathering for men on Heights campus that includes breakfast, a brief devotional or testimony, and time to interact around tables in connection and discussion.

HEIGHTS HANDYMEN

A monthly ministry serving needs in our church family and community requiring fix-it or build-it projects.

PRAYER GATHERING

A monthly gathering for men to pray for their families, their church, their community, and their world.

ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING

As needed, lay counseling, care, and discipleship for men requesting personal help is available.

ADVENTURES

Quarterly outdoor fellowship-building activities including shooting events, off-roading, fishing, and mountain biking.

MEN'S SERVE TEAM ROLES

BREAKFAST TABLE LEADER

Table leaders facilitate table discussions at quarterly Men's Breakfasts, care for a consistent group of men, and connect them with their next step. Discussion questions are provided for table leaders at each breakfast.

BIBLE TEACHERS

Teach, as needed, at one of the weekly Men's Bible Studies. Teaching material is provided by the Men's Ministry Team. The Men's Ministry Lead will equip teachers on how to prepare and deliver lessons using the provided curriculum.

HANDYMEN

Serve monthly with a team of handymen for fix-it or build-it projects for those in need in our church and community, so that God's men grow spiritually and in character together. In the past, projects have included building decks, fences, plumbing and electrical fixes, repairing appliances and automobiles, etc.

ADVENTURE LEAD

Provide logistical support for periodic outdoor activities including shooting, mountain biking, off-roading, etc. Communicate about upcoming events, provide directions, help men learn how to do the activity, pray for, and follow up with new men visiting the event.

FACILITIES

Provide setup and teardown support for Men's Bible Studies on campus, cooking help for Men's Breakfasts, or cleanup at Men's Breakfasts.

MEDIA TECH

Provides technical support for Men's Bible Study gatherings on campus and via the internet.

ONE-ON-ONE CARE

Meet one-on-one with men who need personalized care or discipleship. Help resource them to professional counseling in conjunction with Heights if needed.

MEN'S SERVE TEAM MEMBERS (STM) LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

COMMITMENT OF SERVE TEAM MEMBERS TO HEIGHTS STAFF LEADERSHIP

- We desire STM's to have an active, growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We desire STM's to be honest individually, with the Lord, and with the leadership team about any areas of sinful struggle that may be impacting personal ability to lead other men.
- We desire STM's to commit to their Serve Team Role for a one-year time frame (January-December).
- We desire STM's to engage graciously with other men at any Men's Bible Study or Men's Activities.
- We expect STM's to follow-up with guys at the table who have needs or questions—including directing them to the proper people or staff who might be of help.
- We expect STM's to be prayerful.

COMMITMENT OF HEIGHTS STAFF AND LEADERSHIP TEAM TO SERVE TEAM MEMBERS

- We will be praying for you.
- We will be available for you, personally or with ministry needs. See your ministry team lead for direction.
- We will equip you for your ministry. In addition to the annual Leader Training through Group Life, Men's Ministry will provide Men's specific training twice per year.

- We will support and encourage you.
- We will communicate well with you weekly through written devotionals, emails, and periodic communication from your team leader.

HANDOUTS + ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Leadership Org-Chart (Handout)

This resource goes into detail regarding Heights Staff and lay leadership who oversee given specifics of Men's Ministry.

Scope + Sequence Graphic (Handout)

This resource delves into the content that is taught and discussed throughout the year.

MEN'S QUESTIONS + RESPONSES





RECOVERY

Ministry Specific Breakouts

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES

THE THREE E'S OF HEIGHTS + RECOVERY MINISTRY

ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Elements, which happens weekly, is an outreach for Recovery houses and individuals throughout the Quad-city area.

ENGAGING IN OUR FAITH

Through Elements and ongoing Life Groups, Recovery leadership is active in building personal relationships with individuals with a foundation of vulnerability, honesty, and intentionality to disciple.

EMPOWERING TO SERVE

Recovery leadership pursues building and expanding the Kingdom of God through intentional service and individualized discipleship.

MAIN SESSION RECAP WITH A RECOVERY FOCUS

ENVIRONMENT

Create and facilitate an open, safe, and judgement-free environment.

For additional information on creating an environment, see sections three and four in the Content Guide titled "First Impressions" and "Creating the Environment" respectively.

- We want to create an inclusive group environment where we come across in such a way to promote intentional life-giving relationships that connect relationally and grow spiritually.
- We do not care about where someone has been or their history; we accept them for where they are today. Our focus is on where they are going and how they are growing spiritually.

LEADER REFLECTION

What would you consider to be a safe, loving, and judgement-free environment?

What would that look like practically?

How can you be intentional to create that for your group?

ANSWER + RESPOND

Leaders should not seek to fix problems, but instead point to Scripture.

- The Recovery Ministry is not meant to fix, judge, or condemn anyone, but rather be a partner in helping redirect individuals to God, His Word, and the Holy Spirit who leads to truth.

Real Life Example: Many individuals have been met through the Recovery Ministry and were intentionally loved and discipled through weekly groups, outreach, and relational connection. Several of these individuals are now on Heights Staff or pursuing ministry in other avenues. This is the power of God's love and transformation at work.

DOMINATORS

Limit time of sharing so everyone gets a chance to speak.

For additional information on dealing with dominators, see sections two and five in the Content Guide titled "Design Your Time" and "Embrace Challenges" respectively.

- A successful group meeting is everybody shares, every time you meet, and God's word is at the center.
- This is a recovery meeting for all involved. Create an opportunity for everyone to share—whether that is asking more reserved members to share or minimizing extrovert's responses.
- Groups should not be looked at as an opportunity for a leader to teach, but an opportunity to create a setting that makes people feel a part of, included in, and provides open conversation about what God has to say about certain life topics.

PREPARE

Adequately know and understand the lesson prior to the start of the meeting.

For additional information on preparation, see section two in the Content Guide titled "Design Your Time".

- Lessons will be emailed out weekly—a minimum of 24 hours prior to meeting.
- Review the lesson in advance. This lesson is to be a guideline for your group to create easy, open conversation, not feeling force or pressure to get through each question. Going over the lesson thoroughly in advance prior to the meeting, aids in creating avenues to make it personal and, in turn, will help the group relate. As you prepare, if other questions or thoughts come up on how a personal experience can be tied into the lesson, this is the time to figure that out.
- Set time apart to review lessons with the co-leader prior to every meeting to designate roles and assign questions accordingly.

RECOVERY TEAM SUPPORT + REPORTING STRUCTURE

WE DO NOT WANT BURNOUT!

Be intentional in leaning into the support system that surrounds you.

RECOVERY TEAM

- On the Recovery Ministry Team, you have one main contact person. That person is readily and easily available for phone calls, emails, texts, etc. for big questions and small questions alike.
- Heights provides counseling, at no cost, which is available for you when necessary.

LEADER AND CO-LEADER

Leaders and co-leaders are on a team. Each week prior to the start of the meeting, meet with each other and walk through the lesson layout.

- Leader's Role: Facilitate the conversation of the group, provide easy direction, and protect the group as a whole.
- Co-Leader's Role: Support facilitating with the leader and to model healthy communication and responses that will create unity and trust within the group.

APPRENTICESHIP

Intentionally be training someone up with the intent to co-lead with you, lead in your absence, or (ideally) launch their own group. Recovery group leaders are based solely on relationships and referrals and we are constantly seeking new leaders to launch new groups because of the high need for group life within the church. Apprenticeship is one specific way in which the Body of Christ expands outward and grows deeper.

See "Qualities to Look for in an Apprentice or Potential Leader" on the following page.

QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN AN APPRENTICE OR POTENTIAL LEADER

GOOD WITH PEOPLE

Easy to talk to, enjoyable and fun, others lean in when they speak, real and authentic

GROWING IN CHRIST

Open and honest, faithful and committed, humble, thirsty, peace-seeking, and life-giving

HOW TO INTENTIONALLY RAISE UP AN APPRENTICE OR POTENTIAL LEADER

This pursuit is covered in prayer and happens through building relationships one-on-one. After each one of the steps below, have an intentional conversation with them in order to walk through group scenarios, ideas, specific next steps, or questions they may have.

- PRAY: Cover the pursuit in prayer throughout the whole process.
- LEARN: Have them observe you leading for a week or two by writing down specific things they like, things they would do differently, or things to ask questions about.
- CO-LEAD: For a time (decided by the Recovery Team), facilitate a group with the ministry director or appointed staff.
- LEAD IN YOUR PRESENCE: For a week or two, have them co-lead with ministry staff still being a part of the group to make sure this will be a healthy fit for the team.

GROUP MEMBERS

They are your given flock—care for them well within the group setting and on a one-on-one basis.

RECOVERY SERVE TEAM

OPPORTUNITIES IN LEADERSHIP BY STAFF

We are always looking to expand our resources and serve team members, if you have an idea please bring it to us for discussion and prayer.

- Leaders and Co-Leaders: Facilitators of the lesson who can lovingly lead and encounter others with a relatable personality.
- Host: A home that is safe and can accomodate the size of the group.
- Hospitality: A person who can provide meals for the group at the ministry's expense.
- Drivers: A person who can provide rides for those who cannot attend otherwise.

OPPORTUNITIES ASSIGNED BY LEADERSHIP

Recovery is an amazing ministry filled with service opportunities. Seek to involve many and grow potential leaders by their willingness to serve in other areas.

- Set Up and Clean Up: Group meetings take group effort to pull off before and after the actual meeting itself.
- Ice Breaker: Leader or co-leader may assign someone who they feel will bring a fun personality to the group before the lesson starts through a provided ice breaker.
- Prayer Requests: An individual to write down all the requests for the group and text or email to group leaders.

All people in all roles should be supported, encouraged, and empowered to do their job well. We all have something to offer to the group as God has given us all different giftings.

NIGHT OF LIFE GROUP

IN-HOME MEETINGS

By opening homes, we are showing we trust and care for individuals through intentionality and openness. The why behind the things below instills trust, acceptance, and a safe, judgement-free environment for all who attend.

- Meet in Homes: We meet in homes to share the love and acceptance we have received. We are inclusive, welcoming, and desire to build trust with all members.
- Provide Food: Providing a meal shows we care and it meets a basic need. It is attractive to those who attend, but it is not the focus. Food provides an opportunity to meet new people and intentionally seek out those we do not know during this time of fellowship to make all feel welcome and cared for.
- Seating Arrangement: Circles include everyone; no one should be sitting on the outskirts of the circle. This seating arrangement provides the ability to hear and see everyone at all times. Recovery Ministry will provide extra seating if needed. The leader and co-leader should be sitting opposite each other to create equality and balance in the group.
- Ice Breaker: This may not seem significant, but it is. Many might not be comfortable to share deep personal or spiritual things, but they can answer a fun question and get involved socially. These lighthearted interactions will open the group up to more people feeling comfortable to share at any point during the meeting. This is intentional in proceeding the lesson.
- Lesson Intro: We do not want to miss an opportunity to save a life so we choose to open the group meeting time with "burning desires". This opportunity is for things that are life or death such as, relapse type of responses. Be adaptable and willing to shift things on the fly, especially if there is a specific need—adjust accordingly.

Example: "Is there anything anyone needs to share before we start the lesson?"

- Lesson: Lessons for each week are designed for practical ways to incorporate Scripture into daily living. Our hope is to instill a new way of thinking and responding that is Scripture-based.

- Prayer: Regardless of where you are in the study, always make time at the end of the lesson for prayer requests. This is vital because it makes things real. Write prayer requests down and share with group leaders who commit to pray specifically for these requests over the week. This gives opportunity to instill hope as members come back with a testimony of what God is doing. If there is a major need, stop and pray immediately or pray privately after the group; this shows you see them and their specific needs.

INVITE OTHERS IN

Recovery Ministry is open to all and not solely based on chemically dependency. This is an open group for a reason. We desire all to participate and belong. Being inclusive and aware will open us up to how God is moving and to receive far more than we ever expected.

CLOSING

The Recovery Ministry exists because of the powerful testimony of Jesus Christ in all of our lives. We desire all of us to be spiritually fit and earnestly take care of self so we may, in turn, be able to disciple and care for others.

RECOVERY QUESTIONS + RESPONSES





WOMEN'S

Ministry Specific Breakouts

MAKE THE MOST OF RESOURCES

WOMEN'S MINISTRY + THE 3 E'S OF HEIGHTS

BIBLE STUDY

Our Bible Study program is for women to engage in their faith, and our leaders are empowered to serve. The purpose of Bible Study is to help women grow in intimate relationships with Jesus Christ through daily Bible Study and life application of Scripture, prayer, and building relationships through small group fellowship around tables.

VITAL MOMS

Vital Moms is a program for women to encounter Jesus, and we hope they will also begin to engage in their faith. We recognize mothers of young children have unique needs for relationship, practical instruction, personal and spiritual development, and quality care for their children during meetings. Vital Moms is not a Bible Study, but the hope is that each woman (whether she knows Jesus, or has not yet trusted Him as Savior) will make progress in some or all of six areas:

- Know God better
- Trust Him more
- Experience the hope and freedom of finding identity in Christ
- Gain a desire to read and learn God's Word
- Obediently live by faith
- Reflect Jesus by serving those around her

Vital Moms is NOT intended to provide a substitute for attending Bible Study, counseling for serious issues or circumstances, business networking, financial resources, or babysitting resources.

CONNECTION, EVENTS, + CONFERENCES

These programs are intended for women to encounter and engage with Jesus. Heights is a large church, which can be a challenge for women as they try to meet and connect with other women. Through connection ministries like the Women's Monthly Luncheon, Teacups (widows ministry), and other casual activities like hiking, kayaking, or shooting—women have an opportunity to meet other women in smaller settings. Women's Ministry is committed to offer at least one conference or major event each year to encourage and equip women spiritually.

SERVE TEAMS

Women's Ministry is committed to growing and equipping Serve Team Members (volunteers) and leaders through ongoing and project-based service opportunities for women to utilize their gifts through our Pathway to Service program. It is the goal of the Women's Ministry Serve Teams to provide a forum for women to serve based on their gifting. We believe God has equipped each woman with skills and talents; each one as a valuable part of the Body of Christ. The hope is that each woman who desires to serve will find a serve opportunity to match their gifting and availability. Please contact Women's Ministry if you or a woman you know would like to begin the Pathway to Service process.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY + CHURCH VISION

Women's Ministry is committed to reflect Heights mission, vision, and values by intentionally providing opportunities to equip and encourage women in their spiritual growth. Our heart is to see women come to know Jesus as their Savior and grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We provide opportunities to see people encounter Jesus, engage in their faith, and be empowered to serve the Lord in the Body of Christ and our community.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY THEMING

Each year, Women's Ministry chooses a theme to anchor into. All Women's programs highlight and focus on this theme throughout the school year in studies, devotionals, meetings, etc.

DEVOTIONS

We ask all leaders to write a devotional; some will be asked to present their devotional during the program in which they lead.

Writing and presenting a devotional is doing three things that may cause fear and anxiety: writing something personal, possibly standing in front of an audience, and sharing it aloud. If you would like help, support, or guidance during this process, please reach out for additional materials or a one-on-one meeting.

The purpose of us giving devotionals is two-fold:

- 1 As leaders, we want to be seen as authentic individuals who are just like the women sitting at our tables. We are all in the process of being sanctified and desire to be seen as "works-in-progress", leaning into God's renovation of our hearts.
- 2 We want to encourage women that God is always faithful. We have seen His power in our lives; it has helped us and changed us.

WHAT IS A DEVOTIONAL?

You are sharing a short 3-5 minute story of a moment in time when God met you in a way that influenced you. It could be a time when God met a need, a time when you felt God's love, or a time when you saw His faithfulness in your life.

A devotional is NOT a testimony of your life or how you came to know God.

HOW TO WRITE A DEVOTIONAL

Include a Scripture verse or short passage that helped you, encouraged you, or convicted you.

Have a short story that demonstrates when and how you experienced God move in your life that demonstrates how the verses you chose impacted you.

Remember, you are not giving a testimony, but telling about one specific incident or event.

INTRODUCTION

- Give a little background or history.
- Start with a dialogue or share a feeling or an action.
- How did that event start?
- What was the problem?

BODY

- What are the events of what happened? Tell them chronologically, remembering that you're only telling things that are a part of this moment.
- Use dialogue, feelings and insights as you explain what happened to you.
- Include what you learned about God, how He met your needs, or how you felt His love or faithfulness in your life.
- Use Scripture that helped you, encouraged you, convicted you, etc.

CONCLUSION

- How did you see God show up, meet your needs, or feel His presence?
- How does this impact you today? How are you different today because of this?
- What can your listeners take away from your story? Summarize it in a one sentence take-away.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS IN WOMEN'S MINISTRY

BE WELCOMING

- Smile: A smile is the light in your window that tells others you are approachable.
- Be Welcoming and Inclusive: Make sure every woman feels welcome, accepted, and valued by greeting them, recognizing the inherent worth of each woman, and treating them without partiality. Seek to sit by different women each week. Encourage women to wear name tags and be a stepping stone for women to connect with each other.
- Notice: Seize every opportunity to affirm what a woman is doing well. Show compassion to her circumstances and appreciate her strengths.
- Be Sensitive: Please respect the diversity that exists among the women at your table. Pursue bringing balance into your conversations by encouraging the table to intentionally give space for each woman to share. We value everyone—their journey and opinions. Encourage the table to remember the “whole”, meaning we may not always agree on everything. We can love and represent Christ even through differing opinions.

BE APPROACHABLE

- Be Authentic: The most attractive spiritual life is one that makes mistakes, laughs, cries, and expresses fears and uncertainties—all while seeking God.
- Listen: Give your whole attention with eye contact and body language. Listen and be aware of what is beneath the words for possible discouragement, fear, needs, or faulty thinking about God and/or Christianity.
- Practice Humility: Keep the attention on the ladies at the table and their issues, not your own. We are not leaders to give advice, but to partner with women in their journey. Create a judgement-free place that is safe for all. Unless specifically asked, it is best to refrain from imposing your values and opinions regarding eating habits, dieting, exercise, the way you keep house, etc.

BE ENCOURAGING

- **Be Alert:** Be aware of women who may be hurting or discouraged; offer to talk and pray with her or for her.
- **Use Questions:** Asking questions can help reveal underlying issues as well as aid women in gaining perspective—of herself, of God, of others, and of her situation.

Examples: Is there a safety issue? Do you have friends, family, or others who are walking with you? Are there practical resources you need? What is true of God and His character that you can anchor into in this situation?

- **Be Ready:** If or when the time is right, be ready to share your story of how Jesus met you in a time of need or weakness, how He answered prayer, refined your character, or changed your life!

SPECIAL + INTENTIONAL CARE

Be alert to any woman who is chronically sick, consistently depressed, especially fatigued, or possibly abusing a substance. Be alert to any signs of verbal or nonverbal abuse that may be taking place at home. Take note of anything a woman says that may indicate she would consider harming herself or taking her own life.

If you suspect any of these issues, please see Women's Ministry immediately; we are here to help you!

TAKE NOTE

Please keep in mind these simple “do’s” and “don’ts” as you step into Women’s Ministry. The two charts provided give insight into Women’s Ministry: Women’s Programs and Women’s Tables.

WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR:

- Studying God's Word and applying it to everyday issues of life
- Meeting and getting acquainted with other women interested in seeking God
- Developing friendships with other women in a relationship with Jesus Christ
- Encouragement in their relationship with God

ARE NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR:

- Counseling for serious issues or circumstances
 - Business networking
 - Financial resources
 - Babysitting resources
-

WOMEN'S TABLES

WALKING WITH A WOMAN AT YOUR TABLE MAY INCLUDE:

- Encouraging her to trust God to meet her needs
- Praying for her
- Praying with her
- Sharing encouragement from Scripture or your own journey
- Since each table serves as a small group, you may choose to help provide meals during times of special need (after a surgery, delivery, adoption, death in the family, etc.)

WALKING WITH A WOMAN AT YOUR TABLE SHOULDN'T INCLUDE:

- Giving gifts or financial resources (outside of the predetermined Vital Moms annual gifting)
 - Attending "Tupperware"-like parties, buying from home-based businesses, or other events
-

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD + THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR STUDY

As we journey through life, our faith and trust in God is strengthened the more we know Him. While we will never fully comprehend God this side of heaven, He has revealed Himself to us through His Word and creation. As humans, it's hard to develop intimacy with another person if we are only briefly acquainted with them. When we spend time intentionally getting to know a person, deeper intimacy and trust develops over time. It's similar with God; as we learn His attributes and meditate on His Word, His character is revealed. When we learn to trust Him more, our intimacy with Him deepens.

PRACTICAL TIPS

MEDITATION: FILL THE MIND WITH TRUTH

- Meditate on one of God's attributes and the corresponding verses (provided on the following pages). Incorporate an attribute each day, week, or month and cycle back through them over time.
- While resting in meditation, ask God to help you have a tender and receptive heart as you learn more of His character. Our role is to press into the truth of who God is; knowing there will always be some mystery because He is God and we are not.

WORSHIP: ADORE GOD FOR WHO HE IS MORE THAN WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHES

- As you pray, incorporate God's attributes through praising and adoring God. We were created to worship—He delights when we simply praise Him for who He is.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD | PARTIAL LIST

Borrowed from Moms in Prayer: Resources

Attribute of God: Concise definition with synonyms (Supporting Scripture passages throughout the Bible)

God is Supreme: Highest in rank, power, authority; superior, highest in degree; utmost

(Genesis 14:19, Job 11:7-9, Isaiah 44:6-8, Hebrews 1:4, 6, Deuteronomy 10:14-17, Psalm 95:3-7, Acts 17:24-28, Jude 24-25, Nehemiah 9:6, Psalm 135:5, Colossians 1:15-18, Revelation 4:8)

God is Sovereign: Holding the position of ruler, royal, reigning; independent of all others; above or superior to all others; controls everything, can do anything

(1 Samuel 2:6-8, Job 42:2, Psalm 93, Isaiah 46:9-10, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13, Psalm 33:10-11, Psalm 135:6-7, Matthew 10:29-30, 2 Chronicles 20:6, Psalm 47:2-3, 7-8, Isaiah 40:10, Romans 8:28)

God is Omnipotent: All powerful; having unlimited power or authority; almighty

(2 Chronicles 32:7-8, Psalm 147:5, Habakkuk 3:4, Ephesians 3:20, Psalm 62:11, Isaiah 40:28-31, Matthew 19:26, Colossians 1:10-12, Psalm 89:8-13, Jeremiah 32:17, Ephesians 1:19-20, Hebrews 1:3)

God is Omniscient: Having infinite knowledge; knowing all things

(Psalm 44:21, Psalm 147:5, Matthew 6:8, Romans 11:33-34, Psalm 139:1-6, Isaiah 65:24, Matthew 10:30, Colossians 2:3, Psalm 142:3, Daniel 2:22, John 6:64, Hebrews 4:13)

God is Omnipresent: Present at all places at all times

(1 Kings 8:27, Psalm 139:5-12, Matthew 28:20, Colossians 1:17, Psalm 31:20, Isaiah 66:1, Acts 17:27-28, 2 Timothy 4:16-18, Psalm 46:1-7, Jeremiah 23:24, Romans 8:35, 38-39, Hebrews 13:5)

God is Immutable: Never changing or varying; unchangeable

(Numbers 23:19, Psalm 100:5, Isaiah 40:6-8, Hebrews 6:17-19a, 1 Samuel 15:29, Psalm 102:25-27, Isaiah 51:6, Hebrews 13:8, Psalm 33:11, Psalm 119:89, 152, Malachi 3:6a, James 1:17)

God is Faithful: Constant, loyal, reliable, steadfast, unwavering, devoted, true, dependable

(Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 119:90, Lamentations 3:21-24, 2 Timothy 2:13, Psalm 33:4, Psalm 145:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 John 1:9, Psalm 89:8, Psalm 146:5-8, 2 Timothy 1:12, Revelation 19:11)

God is Holy: Spiritually perfect or pure; sinless; deserving awe, reverence, adoration

(Exodus 15:11, Psalm 99, Isaiah 57:15-16, 1 Peter 1:15-16, 1 Samuel 2:2, Psalm 111:9, Luke 1:49, Revelation 4:8, Psalm 77:13, Isaiah 5:16, Acts 3:13-15, Revelation 15:4)

God is Just: Right or fair; impartial, upright, lawful, correct, true; righteous

(Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 89:14-16, Isaiah 30:18, Romans 3:25-26, 2 Chronicles 19:7, Psalm 119:137-138, Zephaniah 3:5, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7, Psalm 9:7-10, Psalm 145:17, John 5:30, Revelation 15:3-4)

God is Wise: From the root word to know or to see, but wisdom goes past knowledge to understanding and action; having keen perception, discernment; power of judging rightly; always making right choices

(1 Chronicles 28:9, Proverbs 2:6, Isaiah 55:8-9, Romans 16:27, Psalm 92:5, Proverbs 3:19-20, Daniel 2:20-22, Colossians 2:2-3, Psalm 147:5, Isaiah 28:29, Romans 11:33-34, James 3:17)

God is Eternal: Without beginning or end; existing through all time; everlasting

(Exodus 3:14-15, John 8:58, Nehemiah 9:5b, Psalm 93:2, Romans 1:20, Exodus 15:18, Psalm 45:6, Isaiah 26:4, 1 Timothy 1:17, Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalm 90:1-2, Jeremiah 31:3, Revelation 1:8,18)

God is the Creator: The one who brought into existence the universe and all matter and life in it

(Genesis 1:1, Psalm 104, Jeremiah 10:12, Colossians 1:16, Psalm 95:3-7, Psalm 148:1-6, John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2, Psalm 100:3, Isaiah 42:5, Acts 17:24-28, Revelation 10:6)

God is Good: Virtuous, excellent; upright; God is essentially, absolutely and consummately good

(Psalm 25:8, Psalm 119:68, Jeremiah 33:11, John 10:11, Psalm 34:8, Psalm 136:1, Nahum 1:7, 1 Timothy 4:4, Psalm 86:5, Psalm 145:9, Mark 10:18, 2 Peter 1:3-4)

REQUIRED FORMS

TABLE LEADER COMMITMENT FORM

Clarifies expectations and responsibilities of all leaders and are signed at the beginning of each semester.

TABLE MEMBER COMMITMENT FORM

Clarifies the expectations of all table members with the hope of creating a safe and intimate group to study God's Word and share with one another. Table Member Commitments are required to be signed at the first meeting of each semester.

ATTENDANCE

Allows leaders to gather information for personal awareness and to pass information along to Women's Ministry. Please take attendance at every meeting and return the attendance sheet in the folder appropriate to the program you serve in.

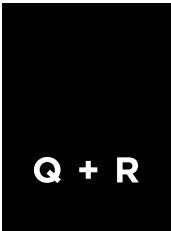
SNACK SHEETS

Aid in keeping track of who will be bringing snacks to each meeting. This form is yours to keep for your records. Please send a reminder to the woman bringing snacks a few days prior to your meeting.

Food and drinks are equalizers for people and aid in making individuals feel more comfortable. Through offering snacks, we can create a welcoming environment, show intentional hospitality, and allow women to lean into specific gifts God has given them. We encourage you to remind the women at your table that this is a snack, not a meal. We want to be aware that for some, it can be intimidating or overwhelming to spend money and time on food. Serving in this way should be a blessing, not a burden.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

From the Garden, the enemy has lied and twisted the truth to try to get us to question God and His goodness. Spiritual warfare is the spiritual war that is happening constantly in the unseen spiritual realm. It is a reality that we, as ministry leaders, can't ignore. As a leader, the enemy does not want you to grow in your faith, nor does he want you to help other women grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. This is not something to be fearful of, but rather, an opportunity to grow in understanding and learn tools so you can fight spiritually. If you or a woman at your table is experiencing spiritual warfare and would like additional resources and prayer, please contact Women's Ministry for help, support, and guidance.



WOMEN'S QUESTIONS + RESPONSES



YOUTH 5TH-HS

Ministry Specific Breakouts

IT TAKES A VILLIAGE

INTRODUCTION

This breakout will cover five different logistical areas specific to Youth Ministry. Each of the five areas will have one BIG question that the Youth Team will give insight to and discuss deeper.

AREA ONE

TWO PARTS OF TRUST

Trust is built by creating a safe environment, surrounded by safe people.

TRUST PART 1: EMOTIONAL SAFETY

HOW IS TRUST CREATED?

- 1 Through Us (Leaders + Staff) and Parents
- 2 Through Us (Leaders + Staff) and Students
- 3 Through the Environment

THROUGH US (LEADERS + STAFF) + PARENTS

Leaders and Heights Staff come alongside families to support parents and guardians in raising kids—we desire to be a part of the village it takes to raise godly children. Constantly pursuing a relationship with parents and guardians is vital; as well as being aware of their needs, just as much as the children’s needs.

- Consistent communication (through calls, texts, or emails) with parents and guardians to keep them informed and apprised on what the group is doing and when.
- Communication must be a two-way street. As a leader, ask parents and guardians for insights into their child and ask how you can best partner with them in prayer, action, and accountability.

THROUGH US (LEADERS + STAFF) + STUDENTS

Leaders and Heights Staff come alongside students and pursue intentional relationships with them through sharing experiences and growing spiritually together. As adults, we cannot live for students, but we can partner with them in their journey. Being intentional in getting to know students aids in building a foundation of trust. They need to know we care not only by our words, but also through our actions and reliability over time.

TIPS FOR BUILDING TRUST WITH STUDENTS

REMEMBER NAMES + INTERESTS

One of the most important things a leader can do is simply remember a student—a name, a hobby, an interest, etc. This foundation of remembering builds history and trust. Without these, productive movement forward and growth are not possible.

For additional information on remembering specifics and history giving, see section two in the Content Guide titled: Design Your Time under the section “Levels of Questions and Baseball.”

SHARE EXPERIENCES

Make an effort to be a part of students' lives outside of weekly meetings. Set an event day for the whole group (at least once a month) and pursue one-on-one relationships regularly. Keep in mind these shared experiences are not meant to meet the needs of leaders, but to meet the needs of students. Remember, even if only one student shows up, that is a success and will build trust through sharing experiences. Team up with parents and guardians, too.

Ideas: Show up at their sporting events, band concerts, extra-curricular activities, or take them out to coffee. Go hiking, see a movie, hangout, go on a walk, etc.—get creative.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We want to meet each student where they are in their relationship with Christ. We want to guide them and walk with them through their next steps. For students, the starting point in a relationship with Jesus may begin from the place of “never had one” or the opposite, “grew up with one”. From here, we see needs and meet them accordingly.

Ideas:

“Never had one.”—Partner with them by doing a daily devotional for accountability or teaching them how to read and study Scripture.

“Grew up with one.”—Dig deeper with them Scripturally. Ask “why” questions. Memorize verses with them.

OPEN MINDEDNESS

When talking with students, speak with them, not at them—they have a voice that needs to be heard and need a safe place to process.

LISTEN

Be quick to listen and slow to speak. Respect what they have to say. Seek to understand the student(s), not to be heard or understood.

LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY

Love students regardless of what they do, how they respond, and even when they fail. You exemplify Jesus.

SOCIAL MEDIA + COMMUNICATIONS

When using social media, or any other form of communication, we ask leaders to be above reproach, to be mindful of what is posted, and represent Christ regardless.



SOCIAL MEDIA + COMMUNICATIONS

TEXT

Use group chats to communicate regularly with the group as a whole. Avoid private messaging with a student—always include a co-leader. If private messages are sent, save the chat to show the ministry leader at the next meeting for accountability.

SNAPCHAT

Since Snapchat does not save communications, do not use this avenue without the accountability of a group chat.

INSTAGRAM

Do not make this the norm for communication. If a message is sent show the ministry leader at the next meeting for accountability.

THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENT

We believe we can set an atmosphere that will build trust with our students. When students enter, there must be a presence of safety and acceptance. As a staff, with the help of leaders, we strive to create an environment where all feel welcome and have a sense of belonging when they step into an event or on campus.

- **Staff's Role:** Greet on campus. Set up and provide: video games, outdoor games, indoor games, coffee, food, drinks, etc.

- Leader's Role: Connect students with other students. Connect with students who are alone; reach out even if they are not in your specific group. Build new relationships intentionally each week and build upon existing relationships. Be a part of all aspects of the event from games, to the message and worship; be amongst the students.

TRUST PART 2: PHYSICAL SAFETY

HOW ARE WE KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE?

- 1 LAW ENFORCEMENT**
Police officers are present on campus for all events.
- 2 HEIGHTS SAFETY TEAM**
Heights Safety Team protects foot and car traffic on and off campus. The Safety Team knows who specifically should and should not be on campus and responds accordingly.
- 3 LEADERS**
Leaders are empowered and trusted to make in-the-moment decisions to protect the physical safety of all students. If you see an issue gently speak into it and redirect.

Example: If you see kids going off to other buildings or into the brush, simply ask them to return to group events and see to it that they do.

AREA TWO

HOW WILL WE STAY IN TOUCH?

TWO-WAY ACCOUNTABILITY

Communication is a two-way street. The Youth Team will contact you regularly to keep you informed on what is happening within each grade level ministry. We commit to leading students to the best of our ability. We must show up and be an active participant; this will allow God to use us in creating a desirable and healthy youth program which supports relational connection and fosters spiritual growth.

HEIGHTS STAFF TO LEADERS

- Leader Support: The Youth Team is here for you, just like we are there for students. We want to walk alongside you in what you are going through—the good, the bad, and the ugly. This relationship is built on openness and honesty and requires that foundation in order to move forward.

Remember, just because you are a leader does not mean you have to be perfect, nor do you have to be a Bible scholar. God will use you, just as you are.

- Meetings: For meetings, show up—regularly and on time. The Youth Team is available between scheduled meetings—we are here when you need us.

LEADERS TO HEIGHTS STAFF

Contact the Youth Team in advance if and when you won't be able to make it to a gathering or an event. Give us as much warning as possible so we can best care for the students in your absence.

LEADERS TO YOUTH MINISTRY

Prepare in advance, prior to every meeting.

- Take time to review the message and Bible references for that week's topic. Go over discussion questions by answering them and adding additional questions if necessary. Being prepared will make discussion fluid and conversational during group time.

See point below as well as section two in the Content Guide titled "Design Your Time".

- We desire you to make the group your own by adding questions to that week's discussion. Pray over what would be good conversation based questions. You know the students in your group best, so as you create questions, keep them in mind. The goal is not to answer all the questions, but to grow spiritually, connect relationally, and hear from every student, every time you meet. Process through relatable and additional questions ahead of time that will help the conversation flow more naturally in the moment.

Things to Think About: What will stir up good conversation, not just one word answers? What can everyone answer? How can we dig deeper into this topic? How can we hold each other accountable?

- Be confident in where the Holy Spirit is leading and where the students are answering naturally—lean into that. We desire to pursue authentic discussions, not formulated by us, only led by us.

AREA THREE

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT ON THE "NIGHT OF"?

NIGHT OF

Youth evenings typically occur in this order:

LEADER WALK THROUGH

Each week, leaders must attend a walk through of the night's events and what is expected for the meeting. This happens one hour prior to start time. In this Leader Walk Through, we will review the entire schedule to best prepare you for the night.

MEET WITH CO-LEADER

After the Leader Walk Through, you will have time to briefly meet with your co-leader to pray and go over the upcoming group discussion. When leaders and co-leaders meet, answer the questions below and discuss these topics.

- Who will lead what portion of the group time? Who will ask specific questions? Discussing these questions will provide a space for natural conversation. Knowing when you are to jump in or lead helps in ease of group flow and conversation.
- Decide prior to the group, who will step out if a student needs a few minutes of one-on-one time—whether that is behavioral, personal, or emotional. Seek to speak to the root of the issue privately. Knowing this ahead of time will provide less distraction for the whole group.

MEET + GREET

Be available and welcoming as students arrive. Engage in conversation with all students. Be a part of games going on and include others. Make an effort to ask questions and get to know something new about students.

LARGE GROUP GATHERING

Everyone meets together for worship, message, and games. Part of your role is making yourself a part of the entire group—jump in and be with the students, do not stand on the sidelines. This also helps in keeping students focused and a part of the events to maintain group unity.

Examples: Sit amongst the students for worship and the message; do not separate yourself by standing at the back or the side of the room. Cheer students on in games, put them in the spotlight.

LIFE GROUPS

- **Split:** Break out into the assigned location on campus for Life Group. A familiar environment is helpful in providing comfortability in deeper conversations.
- **Ice Breakers:** Always start with an easy fun ice breaker question to set everyone at ease and get them involved conversationally. Remember, students will have an easier time sharing on deeper issues after speaking out loud when answering a light and fun question. This sets the tone for the group to be a fun, open, and inviting experience.
- **Individual Check-Ins, Highs + Lows:** Go around the circle and ask everyone to briefly share their high and low for the week. This helps in opening up the conversation for honesty and vulnerability. Some students may take this portion seriously and others may not get as deep—both are more than acceptable. Take notes of the details students share, then follow up with them in the upcoming week. This supports relational trust and sharing experiences. Be intentional with the information students share and use it to make the group experience authentic.
- **Lesson:** Having the structure of the lesson based off of the message gives insight into real life topics students face. The lesson offers a way leaders can come alongside students. Allow this to be a non-judgmental space where students can be free to ask questions or share whatever is on their hearts. Openly ask and discuss, making it conversational rather than “getting through the questions.”
- **Prayer:** End in prayer. Not just closing in prayer, but intentionally create a space to pray with and for one another. Always ask if there are prayer requests. Utilize the group chat to follow up with requests and praises throughout the week. Encourage students to text to the group chat if prayer needs or praise come up throughout the week. Be willing to pray specifically for issues that

arise and speak about what God is doing through those real life experiences. This instills the importance of prayer in their own lives.

AREA FOUR

WHAT IS “100% HONESTY WITHOUT 100% DISCLOSURE”?

HONESTY + DISCLOSURE

HONESTY

The realness and authenticity you give to students, other leaders, and staff. Be yourself.

DISCLOSURE

The amount of information you give to others based on the age and maturity of the students you are working with.

Filter things through the lens of disclosure. Students likely do not need to know the ins and outs or the specific details.

Take Note: Your Ministry Lead can give you specific information regarding honesty and disclosure in the context of the grade level you lead. View the following page for an age-based case scenario.



SEE POTENTIAL SCENARIO ON FOLLOWING PAGE

POTENTIAL SCENARIO BASED ON STUDENT AGE

EXAMPLE: STRUGGLING WITH A RELATIONSHIP

Leader(s) discussing with a student(s) about having a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship while the leader was in high school. The relationship went too far physically and it affected the leader emotionally and physically.

5TH + 6TH

"I had a relationship in high school where we struggled and crossed boundaries we shouldn't have. These actions hurt us both and caused emotional scars."

State more details of how it affected you, not specifics of the boundaries you crossed.

7TH + 8TH

"I dated someone in high school and we went further than we should have. It was traumatic and hurt us both."

Students will fill in the details for themselves, but you can share how you felt, how you struggled with decisions, or how those choices had lasting effects.

HIGH SCHOOL

"In high school I struggled with relationships and we physically went way farther than we should have; it deeply affected us."

Students will fill in the details behind what you said for themselves, but you can share how you felt, how you struggled with decisions, and how the choices you made had consequences. You can also offer biblical solutions.



The point is, we can be honest, transparent, and relatable without going into specific details of who, what, where, when, why, and how. This tactic actually keeps us more relatable, as the more details we disclose, the more people we will exclude by those exact experiences. Allow students to be drawn in by how it has affected you emotionally and how you can help them by sharing practical tools to overcome. Remember, we want to be truthful and honest with students in a healthy way many can relate to without divulging too many specific details.

AREA FIVE

WHEN YOU HAVE AN ISSUE OR NEED TO HAVE A SPECIFIC CONVERSATION,
WHERE DO YOU GO?

REPORTING STRUCTURE

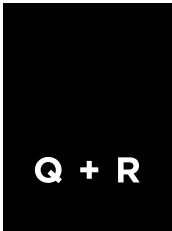
Within Student Ministry Specifically:

- Student Issue or Specific Conversation: Leader goes to Ministry Lead, then discusses how to proceed accordingly with the student.
- Leader Issue or Specific Conversation: Leader goes to Leader and Ministry Lead, then discusses how to proceed accordingly.
 - This encompasses a specific personal issue, a big picture issue, or an issue with another leader.
 - Openness and honesty are foundational in relationships. The door is open for Ministry Leads. We are here to support you.

ENCOURAGEMENT + CLOSING

God does the work and the growing of ourselves and students—we do not. We are just the tools that God uses.

Change happens over a life-time and your connection, friendship, and example to students, as leaders, could also last a life-time. We are invested in students and individuals for the long haul.



YOUTH QUESTIONS + RESPONSES



