



Groups
Leader Training



Leader Training 2 for Life Group Leaders

Session 1: Authenticity & Vulnerability

Session 2: Rooted in the Scriptures

Session 3: Rooted in Prayer

Session 4: Facilitating Group Time

Session 5: When Groups Get Messy



Session One | Authenticity & Vulnerability

Trust as the foundation for every true relationship

"Why admit your own failures publicly? First, doing so invites others - by the Spirit's prompting - to look more honestly at their own need for forgiveness, freedom, and courage. It also removes the dividing wall of hierarchy and false assumptions about people in power and gives the leader who humbles himself or herself the opportunity to be lifted up by God."

*- Dan Allender, **Leading with a Limp***

Authentic Biblical Community: a place where we are able to be honest with _____, _____ and _____ - and in doing so, have the greatest potential for encountering God's transformative power.

"Heroes of the Faith" Quiz

Can you guess who these great **leaders** were that we read about in the Scriptures?

- _____ allowed his wife to be taken (twice) to bed with another man out of fear that they'd be jealous of her and kill him.
- _____ committed adultery with (possibly raped) another man's wife, and then murdered that man to cover up his sin.
- _____ abandoned his best friend out of fear when he was needed the most
- _____ was beyond vengeful, killing hundreds in his anger.
- _____ murdered a man and then ran away to save his own life.
- _____ played favorites with his wives, and then played favorites with his sons
- _____ stole his brother's birthright, was deceitful, manipulative, a liar and, like his father, played favorites with his children.
- _____ orchestrated and helped in the murder of Christians.

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst." - 1 Timothy 1:15

Three categories of vulnerability & authenticity:

- A. Fears (My _____ and _____ don't measure up)
- B. Failures (my _____ don't measure up)
- C. Weaknesses or Shortcomings (my _____ don't measure up)

Questions to Discuss

1. Why is it essential for a leader to model vulnerability and authenticity?

2. What do you think might happen if you choose vulnerability and authenticity?

How to lead from this place for the sake of others

- 1. Establish an expectation of _____
- 2. Know your _____
- 3. Be _____ - everyone enters trust at a different pace.

*"Paul calls leaders not merely to be humble and self-effacing but to be desperate and honest... We are called to be reluctant, limping, chief-sinner leaders, and even more, to be stories... more than just a figure on a flannel board. He calls us to be a living portrayal of the very gospel we want others to believe... A leader is both a hero and a fool, a saint and a felon." - Dan Allender, **Leading with a Limp***

*"You cannot stay **hungry** for Jesus if you don't recognize and embrace your **constant, never-changing, absolute dependence on him**. You don't grow out of this as you mature - In fact, the opposite is true. You become **MORE AWARE** of it. This is the Apostle Paul's secret: he is not a worse sinner than the rest of us. He is just more aware of his need for Christ than everyone else around him."*

Session 2 | Rooted in the Scriptures

Encountering the Voice & Presence of God through Scripture

A few housekeeping items on Scripture

- We don't expect you to be _____ or know all the answers
- Even if you DO know all the answers, _____.

The Scriptures are: *God's Inspired Word, given through human authors who wrote in a particular time and place, with a particular culture and context and language (Human + Divine)*

The Scriptures are for: *Hearing God's Voice, Understanding Him, His World, Humanity and the course of history; Transforming our way of thinking, feeling, speaking and doing in God's world; ultimately, making us more like Jesus.*

To Keep In Mind When Facilitating Conversation Around Scripture

1. *Two different ways people engage with the Scriptures:*
 - _____ - **exegesis** is a technical term for reading the text of Scripture carefully and in a detailed way – often with the intention of finding the meaning of the original author.
 - _____ - *what is the text/God saying to me.* This kind of reading leads to a more free, loose interpretation of meaning of the text that is rooted in 1) listening for God's voice to us, and 2) its relevance for everyday life.
 - **So Which one should we promote?** _____ Without exegesis, we misinterpret the Bible horribly. Without devotion, the Bible never takes root in our hearts and lives.
2. *Know how _____ typically approach Scripture, and where you can grow.*

Practical Strategies

- *Questions ought to be _____ - _____.*
- _____ *often means people are thinking, or they simply need time to be encouraged to share.*
- *When you get stuck on the meaning of a verse, look for clues in the surrounding _____: what do the nearby words, verses, paragraphs, chapters, and book say?*
- *Embrace the phrase " _____, but I can find out and get back to you."*



When facilitating a discussion about the Bible:

3-4 simple, guided questions that we can ask.

1. *What does this say about _____ and his character (explicitly or implicitly)*
2. *What does this say about _____ or _____ (either human nature, or the specific characters of the story/passage)*
3. *What does this mean for _____ and my life?*
4. *What is _____ prompting me to do/pray/think/say about this?*

Video Discussion: *How does this video strike you? Do you resonate?*

How Do We Read The Bible?

- ***What was one takeaway from this video for you?***

- ***What's one thing it taught you about reading the Bible individually versus with others?***

- ***What did it teach you about how to think and feel when you don't understand something?***



Session 3 | Rooted in the Prayer

Encountering the Voice & Presence of God through Prayer

Understanding Prayer as a two-way conversation between your soul and God. Prayer at its core is about the relationship between your spirit and God's Spirit - and fostering that relationship so that your heart is aligned with God's heart for you, others and the world.

Personal Prayer

On a scale of 1-10, how much do you look forward to praying? Explain.

Common ways people grow in Prayer

- *Input from others (this requires honesty and transparency)*
- *Resources & Reading about other's experiences*
- *Practice & Discussion*
- *Exploring the unspoken hurdles that prevent us from growing deeper*

Values & Guidelines when praying with Others (Launch Guide p.9)

What stands out from these values or guidelines that is something God might be inviting you to further explore with prayer?

Prayer & Group Member Ownership *If you find someone in your group who has more or different experiences in prayer than you, I would JUMP on the opportunity to talk with them, learn from them, listen to them, and even empower them to facilitate times of prayer.*

Best Practices

Do:

- leave room for _____
- _____ with prayer - God is please with our heart's desire to know him, talk with him, and hear him
- pray for your group members _____ of Group
- keep your prayers _____ - we're not recording a podcast here

Don't:

- pray _____ into people
- over-_____ your prayers
- get stuck praying in a certain way 'just because'
- be afraid to spend longer times in prayer
- limit prayers to _____

Keep in mind: there are no experts in prayer - even Jesus' closest friends:

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them,

"When you pray, say this - Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

- Luke 11:1-4

"Silence is God's primary language; everything else is a poor translation."

- Thomas Keating



Session 4 | Facilitating Group Time

To Include at your first night

Food | Light snacks, coffee, dessert; ask about allergies; see if anyone wants to bring something on week 2, and take sign-ups!

Atmosphere | For a new group, provide ways to take the pressure off of people filling every moment with conversation:

- Background Music
- Fireplace
- Air Freshener & TP in your bathroom

Ice Breakers | These can be very helpful at getting people comfortable with one another.

- Two Truths & a Lie
- Cell Phone Pic Story - have people choose a photo from their phone/Instagram, pass the photo around, and tell a quick story about what happened that day.

Basic Principles for Facilitation

- Start in the _____ before going _____
- Let your Group know about your hopes and expectations based on the _____ for Life Group
 - _____
 - _____ & _____
 - Care & Support
 - _____ & _____
 - Fun & Friendship
- Get _____ from them on these ideas

_____ is not a Four-Letter Word (Good conversation for week 2 or 3)

- Talk through the significance of commitment
- Talk through expectations you have
 - Ask feedback from the group about how they feel
 - No last-minute cancellation policy



Conversation Facilitation

- Resist the urge to "_____ " or _____ for people too quickly
- Embrace the _____ Silence
- Ask _____ Questions
- Listen Well, & Ask _____ Questions
- _____ the Conversation around
 - 30% Rule

What Past Experiences have been really valuable for you In a Small Group?

Notes

Session 5: When Groups Get Messy

Getting to know your Group: *what kinds of people will join your group?*

The _____ Struggler will need:

- Equal-Mindedness & Straightforward Conversation
- Biblical Truth given in a palatable fashion

The _____ Christian will need:

- Encouragement
- Action Steps

The Saved _____ will need:

- Patience & a Listening Ear
- Wise Counsel, when requested

The _____ Conversationalist will need:

- Time & Space to explore
- Ability to ask questions without judgment

The Christ-Following Disciple will need:

- Reminders that they are partners with you in the group
- Reminders that they have a crucial role in the group to care for others

Typical Challenging Group Members

The _____

- Don't be afraid to interrupt politely.
- Sit next to them
- Don't make eye contact with them too much
- If it can't be managed, consider a 1:1 meeting with a complement sandwich

The _____

- Don't force them to open up quickly or even share anything
- Ask them out for coffee - they may be more comfortable 1:1 with sharing

The _____

- Meet with them outside of group to talk about the impact it's having on group
- Reformat prayer requests if they use that time to rehash the same old wounds
- If their level of need is high, talk with co-leader or leadership team about options.

The _____

- Study the passage outside of group if needed
- Don't be afraid to call an audible & pause the discussion
- You may need to call this to their attention, as the purpose of the group isn't simply "healthy discussion" (what they likely perceive is happening), but discipleship to Jesus.



Common Group Member Issues

- *Irregular Attendance*
- *Being Chronically Late*
- *Breaking Confidentiality*
- *Constant Disruption*

General Tricks of the Trade when group gets messy

- _____ *In 1:1 coaching conversation*
- *Prayer*
- *Resourcing for difficult circumstances: Pastoral Care Cards*
- *When someone shares something particularly painful, traumatic, or challenging, start with _____:*
 - ***Duration: How long has this been going on?***
 - ***Disclosed: Who else knows?***
 - ***Discussed: What advice have you received?***
 - ***Decision: What are you going to do? Do you have a plan?***

****In extreme circumstances, a group member may need to step out of a Life Group for the sake of the integrity of the group. Please contact Jesse & Ellie before making this decision.***

Notes

"And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you In Christ." - Ephesians 4:32