



REAL LIFE

GROUPS

LEADERSHIP RESOURCE GUIDE



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REAL LIFE

MINISTRIES

THE VISION

We will reach the world for Jesus Christ one person at a time.

Based on Matthew 28:18-20

THE MISSION

We will create Biblical disciples in relational environments.

Based on Matthew 28:19-20

THE PROCESS

We will make disciples who make disciples of Jesus.
Share, Connect, Minister, Disciple (SCMD)

Based on Acts 2:42-47

PURPOSE OF GROUPS

The purpose of small group is to help people grow in spiritual maturity in relationship.

Based on Acts 2:42-47

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

*And he said to them, "Follow me,
and I will make you fishers of men."
Matthew 4:19*



HEAD

Committed to
Following Jesus



HEART

Committed to being
Changed by Jesus



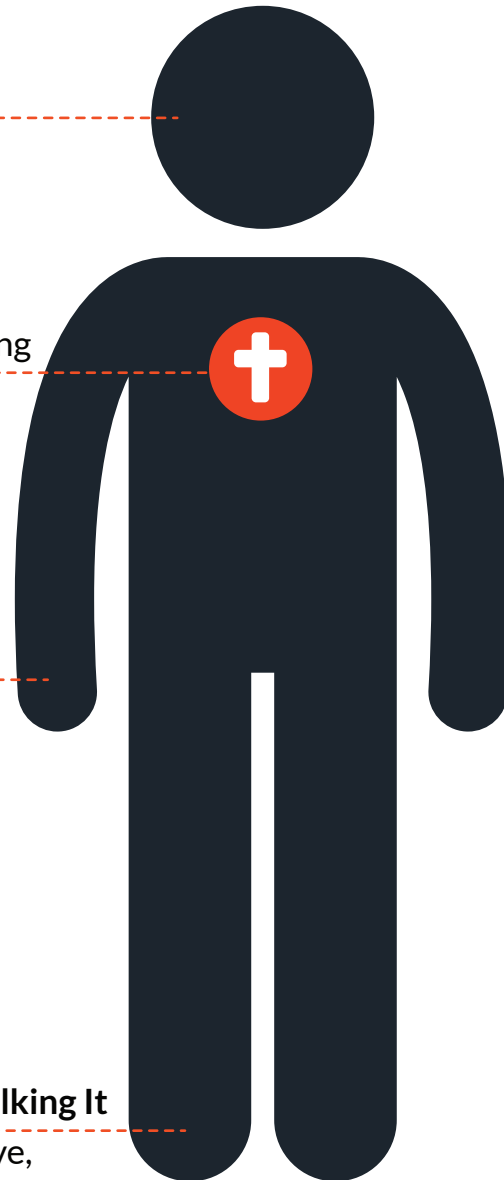
HANDS

Committed to the
Mission of Jesus

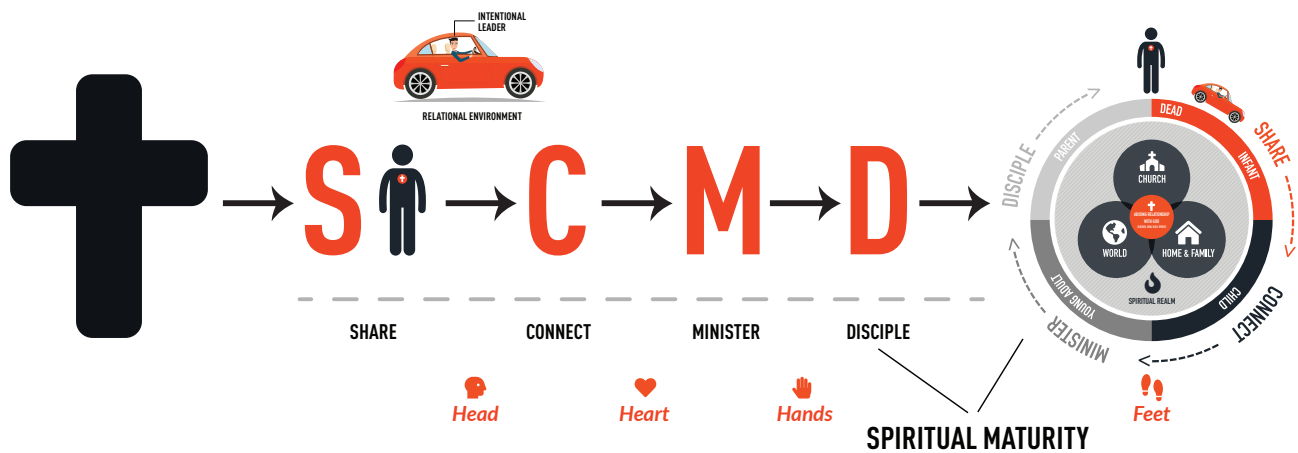
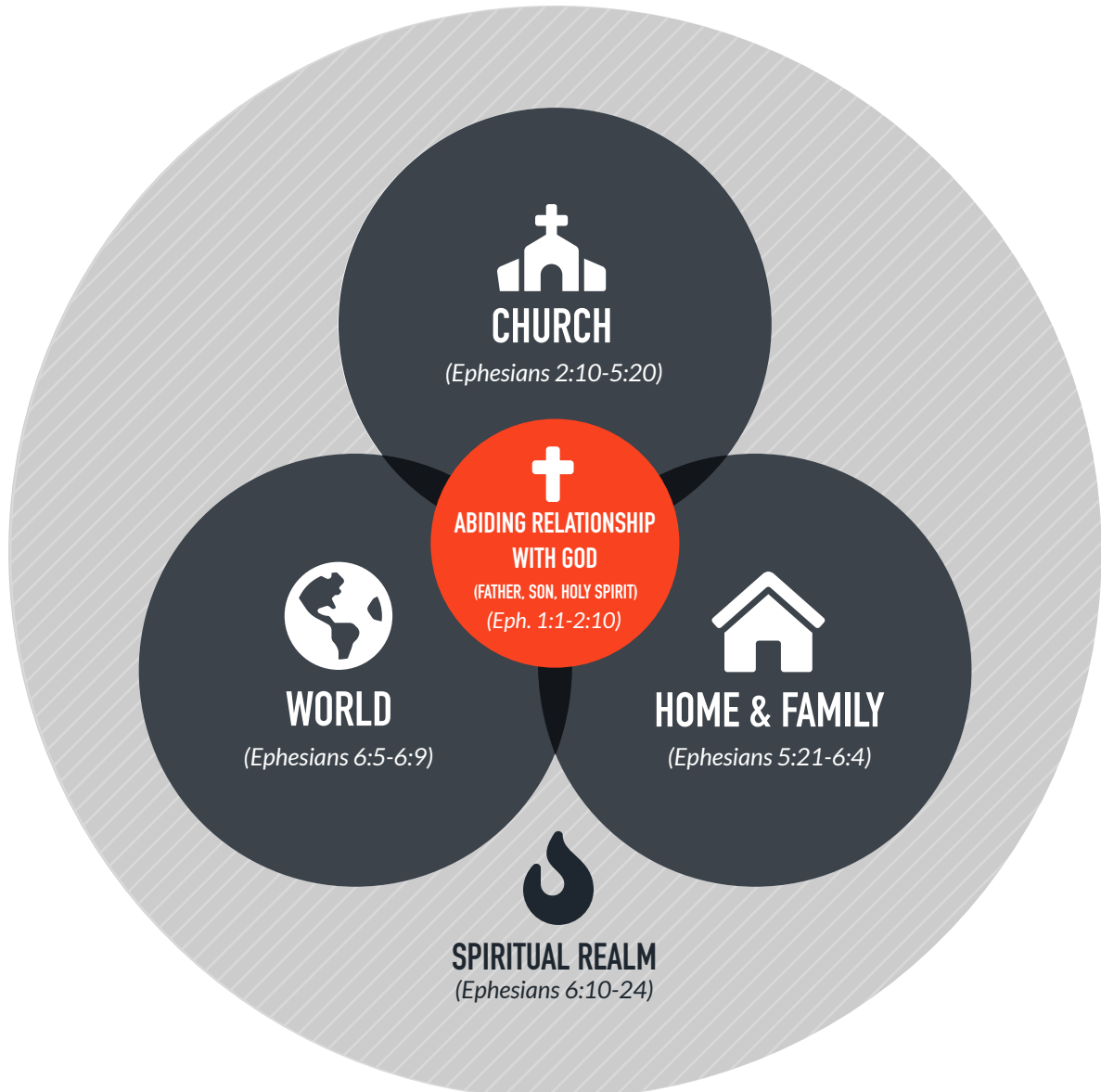


FEET

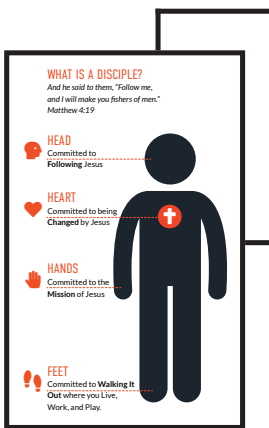
Committed to **Walking It
Out** where you Live,
Work, and Play.



THE FIVE SPHERES



THE SCMD PROCESS



One who is committed to **FOLLOWING** Jesus - **HEAD** level

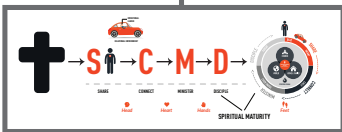
- Accept and acknowledge Christ as both Lord and Savior
- **ABIDE** in relationship with God through time in prayer and the Word
- Place ourselves under the authority of Christ
- Be obedient to what God's Word and the Holy Spirit tell us

One who is committed to being **CHANGED** by Jesus - **HEART** level

- **ABIDE** in Christ by bearing fruit (John 15:5, 8; Galatians 5:22-23)
- Give up old habits
- Re-prioritizing our lives to live out God's command to love Him and love others
- See ourselves and others more and more through the eyes of Christ Jesus

One who is committed to the **MISSION** of Jesus - **HANDS** level

- **SHARE**: share the gospel with the lost, and share our lives with others
 - **REACH THE LOST**: Pursue opportunities to share the gospel
 - Listen and asking questions in order to hear their story
 - Invest time in another's life
- **CONNECT**: connect believers with God and other believers
 - **CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED**
 - Invite others to church, to group, or to meet one-on-one
 - Invite them into our lives, homes, etc.
 - Invest in their life
 - **CHASE THE STRAYS**: pursue those who are missing
- **MINISTER**: shepherd and care for people, and train others to do the same
 - Minister and care for those in need
 - Invite someone to join us as we help others
 - **SHEPHERD TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY**
- **DISCIPLE**: disciple others as we identify, equip, encourage, and release them to make disciples that make disciples of Jesus
 - **IDENTIFY, EQUIP, AND RELEASE LEADERS**
 - Encourage people to use and grow in their God-given gifts and talents
 - Intentionally equip and develop others to use their gifts and talents
 - Empower and release them to do the same with others
 - Constantly encourage unity and help others **FUNCTION AS A TEAM**

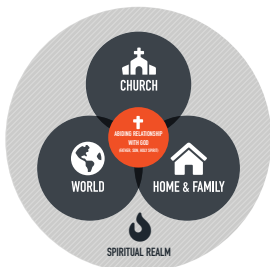


The words in **ORANGE** are known as our **"7 Essentials."** These are essential guardrails as we encourage and equip our people in living out the Vision, Mission, and Process as they mature as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

One who is committed to **WALKING IT OUT** where one lives, works and plays - **FEET** level

- **FIVE SPHERES**: Growing in, and living out, Spiritual Maturity in every area/sphere of our lives:

- as we **ABIDE** within relationship with God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
- within the **CHURCH** (groups, ministry, family of God, conflict resolution)
- within the **HOME & FAMILY** (spouse, parents, children, singleness)
- within the **WORLD** (employee/employer, hobbies, friends, neighbors)
- within the **SPIRITUAL REALM** (we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, Armor of God)



THE SEVEN ESSENTIALS



1. ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

JOHN 15:4-6

Every person in our church will have a personal relationship with God (father, son, and holy spirit) that transforms the way they live in the church, home, and the world.



2. REACH THE LOST

LUKE 19:10 & MATTHEW 18:12-14

Every person in our church can and does share their faith with those who do not know Jesus, and we celebrate what God has done when people make decisions for Christ.



3. CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED

ACTS 2:42-47

Every person is connected to Jesus and connected to the congregation as a whole as they consistently worship together on the weekends. That they are connected in intentional relational environments for the purpose of becoming a disciple of Jesus.



4. CHASE THE STRAYS

EZEKIEL 34:4

Every person who has strayed from Christ will be valued, noticed and pursued. (Example: strayed from their relational environment, strayed from the weekend services, etc.)



5. SHEPHERD TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

COLOSSIANS 1:28

To help our leaders, and those who are in our groups, grow up through the stages of spiritual growth. We want to know where our leaders are spiritually and design trainings and intentional personal time with them on their journey towards spiritual parenthood and in some cases leadership.



6. IDENTIFY, EQUIP & RELEASE LEADERS

EPHESIANS 4:12

We will fulfill the command in Ephesians 4 to equip all God's people for service and release them to be all God has created them to be.



7. FUNCTION AS A TEAM

JOHN 17:21-23

We will be unified as it states in John 17, and that we will function and work as a team in submission to God's plan as a church.

DISCIPLESHIP WHEEL: *Stages of Spiritual Growth*

SPIRITUAL PARENT:

In this stage, the parent has a solid understanding of God's Word and a deep, abiding relationship with the Father. They are living out God's Word in their lives daily. They are others-centered and God-dependent. They are able to reproduce mature disciples of Christ by inviting others to follow them as they follow Christ.

TRAITS:

They are mature disciples of Jesus, but continually growing and developing in their personal relationship with God and as a disciple of Jesus Christ. They are skilled at assessing where others are in the discipleship process and getting personally involved to help them grow and develop. They understand their role as one who needs to intentionally invest in others -- making disciples who can make disciples. They are becoming a coach who develops other players/leaders.

PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

"I'm taking Steve with me the next time I visit Bob in the hospital to help him learn how to minister to others."

"I have a couple good potential leaders in my home group that I'm going to personally invest in."

"Larry is a fine home group leader, and he has really matured in his faith. I'm going to ask him to pray about becoming a coach."

SPIRITUAL YOUNG ADULT:

In this stage, people are making a big shift from being self-centered to more others-centered. They're beginning to understand their role as a giver, rather than a taker. They are ministering to others, and putting others first. They are being doers of the Word.

TRAITS:

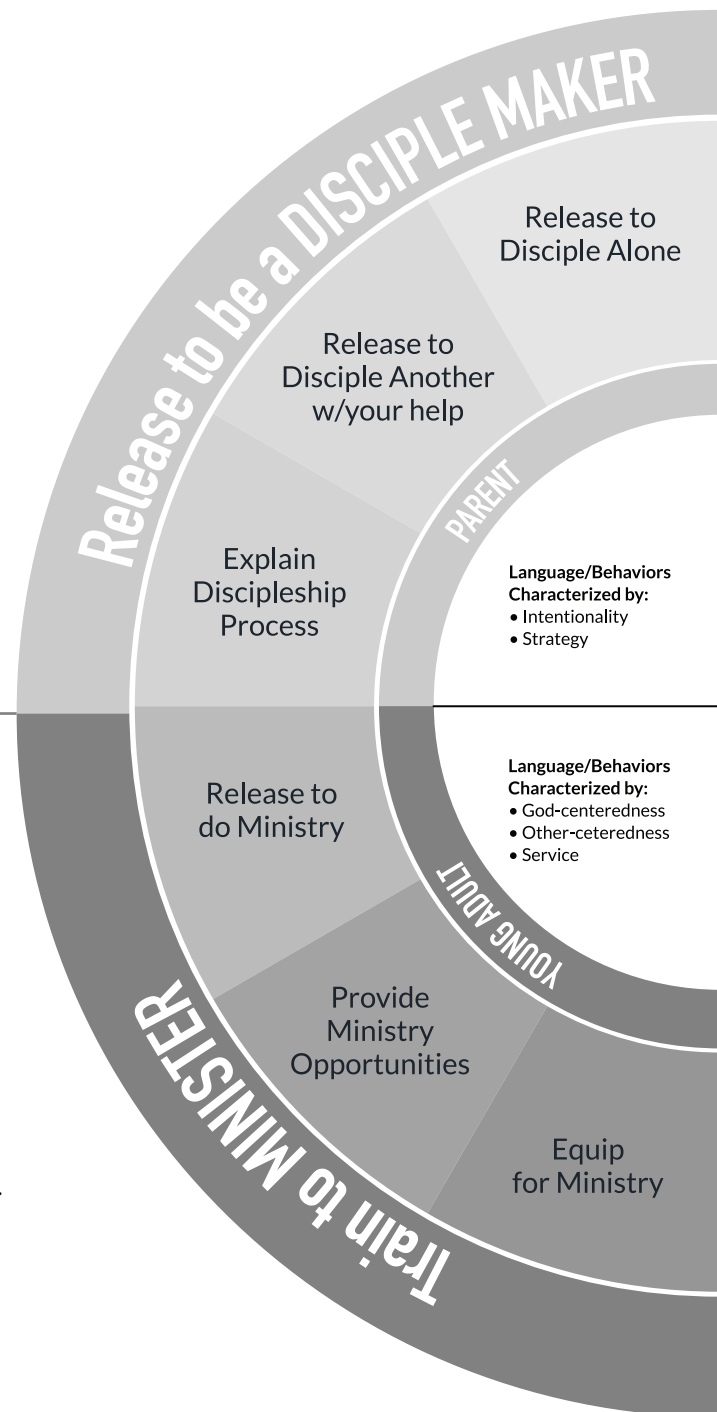
They are being less self-centered and more others-centered. They are beginning to see themselves as ministers. They are tithing and giving of their time from a place of thankfulness and love. They understand the Kingdom purpose of branching their small group.

PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

"I'm going to visit Bob in the hospital tonight rather than going to the movies."

"I'm serving in the nursery so that parents can attend service."

"I need to branch my small group, but no one else is ready to lead."



DISCIPLESHIP WHEEL: *Stages of Spiritual Growth*

SPIRITUALLY DEAD: People in this stage have not yet accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. They may completely reject God, or they may be seeking God. They may be “spiritual,” and they may even claim to know God or be a Christian. In reality, they are their own god.

TRAITS:
 They are broken. (aware or unaware)
 They are lost and unaware of it.
 They are living out their feelings.

PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...
 “I believe there are many ways to heaven.”
 “I’m a good person.”
 “I think there may be a higher power.”

SPIRITUAL INFANT:

In this stage people have accepted Christ, but haven’t moved much past that point. They can be new believers, or they might be stagnant, long-time Christians. Life is generally all about them and their needs.

TRAITS:
 They are the lord of their life.
 They are confused about what truth is or they are beginning to learn the truth.

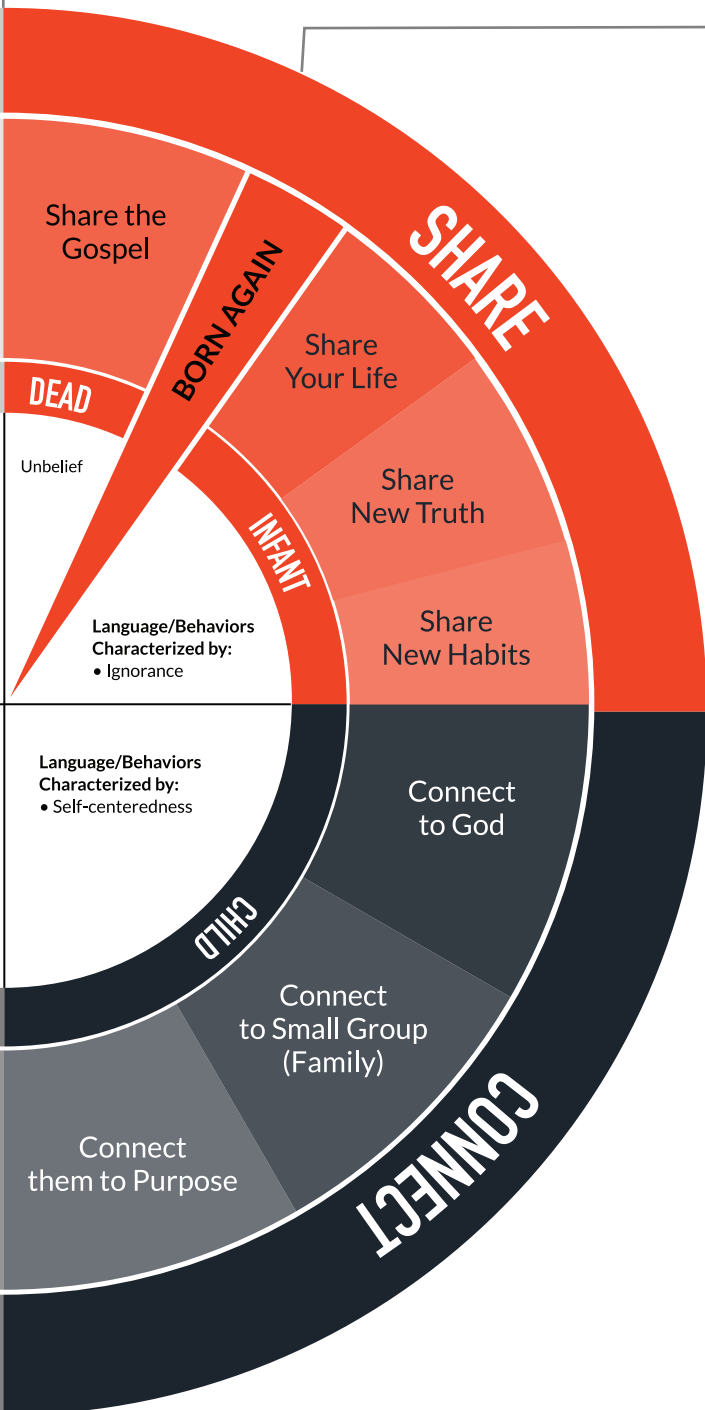
PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...
 “Christians are hypocrites.”
 “I’m a good person, a loving God would never send me to hell.”
 “The Church just wants my money!”
 “I’m too busy for a small group.”

SPIRITUAL CHILD:

In this stage, people are growing in their relationship with God, and are also beginning to grow in their relationship with other Christians. They are applying God’s Word in their lives and allowing others to walk beside them in their journey following Christ. However, it’s still mostly about them -- their needs, comfort, etc.

TRAITS:
 They are growing in their relationship with God.
 They are building relationships with other believers.
 They are developing habits of Bible study and prayer.
 They are plugging into relational environments for the purpose of discipleship (small groups).
 They are giving of their time and money.

PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...
 “I love my church because I feel like I belong.”
 “My small group is great. They make me feel welcome.”
 “I’m upset about having to branch our small group. I just started making friends.”



SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP EQUIPPING STRATEGY

TRAINING

How to Lead a Great Small Group

Annual Discipleship Training

301

Podcast

Additional Resources

LEADERSHIP HUDDLES

Celebrate
Challenge
Build Leadership Community

COACHING

1 on 1
1 on Few
Live

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP EQUIPPING STRATEGY

TRAINING

HOW TO LEAD A GREAT SMALL GROUP

This class is 8 weeks of interactive small group training designed to help you become a great leader! Topics covered include facilitation, disciple-making, assessing the growth of yourself and others, and more.

PODCAST: realliferesources.org/?s=RLGLP&id=842

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: realliferesources.org/?s=GLR&id=842



LEADERSHIP HUDDLES

Lead by the Groups team and key Coaches. The purpose of leadership huddles are to:

- Celebrate what God is doing
- Build community with other leaders
- Challenge leaders for the upcoming season

COACHING

- Regular check-in
- The coach will evaluate the Small Group & Leader utilizing: one-on-one conversations, New Groups, and live coaching
- Small Group Leader will be coached based on evaluation
- The coach will respond to questions and crisis

GROUP PURPOSE & LEADER EXPECTATIONS

The purpose of small group is to help people grow in spiritual maturity in relationship.

The role as a Group Leader or Women's Leader has significant value. We want you to have an outstanding group this year! Your Groups Pastors and Women's Discipleship Leaders are

LEADER EXPECTATIONS:

- There will be expectations from you as a leader and there should be expectations by you from your **GROUPS TEAM.**
- The role as a Leader has significant value.
- Lead with the authority of the Groups Team, in your group.
- 301 is **REQUIRED.**
- Align is **RECOMMENDED.**
- "How to Lead A Great Small Group" and "How to Disciple Your Small Group" are **REQUIRED.**
- Competent level of Facilitation & Shepherding

PLEASE KEEP YOUR COACH INFORMED ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Group Attendance
- Baptisms
- New People/Visitors
- Group Members in Crisis
- Conflicts
- Member in Hospital
- Members who have left the group or church
- Win Stories
- Host Home Changes
- New Apprentices
- Any Help Needed

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

John 10:14

GROUP LEADER PREP GUIDE

BEFORE GROUP: Your role as leaders before group starts

- Read through the curriculum and discussion passages.
- Be aware of what God is showing you personally.
- Pray for your group members. What do you see God doing in each of them?

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Be sure to make announcements that would benefit your group members. Also, use this time to give any announcements that are specific to your Life Group. You can find church announcements in a few places:
 - The Real Life Ministries App
 - The Digital Bulletin (*linked each week on your attendance text reply from Real Life*)
 - Website

AFTER GROUP: Your role as a leader after group

- Input Group attendance in Rock
- Who am I intentionally praying for this week?
- What needs can I or others meet?
- Do I need to have a follow up conversation with someone from group this week?
- Who was absent from group or from service?
- Where are your people at in the Stages of Growth?
 - What is your part in helping them grow?

THE GAME PLAN

The Game Plan gives you a road map to follow in your Group.

- It gives you a plan that ORGANIZES your curriculum, fun/relational events, breakouts and weeks that you might be off due to holidays etc.
- The people in your Group will have a calendar and know what to expect.

MEN/WOMEN BREAKOUTS

- At least once a month, plan to break out into same GENDER groups.
- Review your curriculum in advance to see what weeks would be most beneficial to a breakout and make those a part of your Game Plan.
- Communicate with your men and women breakout leaders head of time, when you are planning to do a breakout during Group, so that they are PREPARED.

BASIC GROUP TEMPLATE

GROUP MEETING DATE: _____

VISION:

WELCOME:		<i>Welcome and introduce any new people.</i>
OPENING PRAYER:		
GROUP GUIDELINES:		
PURPOSE OF A GROUP:		<i>The purpose of small group is to help people grow in spiritual maturity in relationship.</i>
ANNOUNCEMENTS:		
ICE BREAKER:		
MAIN IDEA:		<i>The target for today's group discussion.</i>
TODAY'S PASSAGE:		<i>Setting the stage for today's passage.</i>
HEAD LEVEL:		<i>Head: These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.</i>
HEART LEVEL:		<i>Heart: These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.</i>
HANDS LEVEL:		<i>Hands: These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into our everyday realities.</i>
FEET LEVEL:		<i>Feet: These questions help us understand how to apply what we are learning as we grow in Spiritual Maturity where we live, work and play.</i>
RECAP:		<i>Ask someone to recap, or summarize what was discussed in the lesson.</i>
PRAYER TIME:		<i>Close in prayer. Share personal prayer requests & give everyone an opportunity to pray.</i>

WELCOMING NEW GUESTS

Intentional leaders create Christ Centered Relational Environments where strangers become friends and Disciple-making can happen. As new guests are placed or invited into our groups, it is important to keep in mind that if relationship is established from the beginning, the guest's likelihood of returning increases exponentially. If we are willing to be flexible and set aside our own/group agendas, we can help our new guests to feel welcomed, comfortable and included.

INVITE (BEFORE GROUP)

- Begin with an encouraging and helpful phone call inviting them to group
- Explain to new guest what happens on a typical group night, including start and stop times
- Bring the new guest up to date on what curriculum the group is currently going through, prior studies and any upcoming events

DURING GROUP

- Upon arrival, be welcoming and friendly. Offer coffee/beverages, snacks (if applicable), and point out where the bathroom is located.
- Open group in prayer.
- Have each member of the group introduce themselves. Include name, family, job and/or hobbies.
- Have new guest do the same.
- Read group guidelines.
- Play an icebreaker game, or choose 3-5 icebreaker questions from page 16.

FOLLOW-UP (AFTER GROUP)

- Call new guest within 2-3 days to check up on them, ask if they have any questions about the group, and let them know that you are looking forward to seeing them again next week.

BASIC GROUP GUIDELINES

Though we call these Basic Group Guidelines, these are also essential in all relationships and environments. These should be observed whether in a 1-on-1 conversation or in a group discussion.

- Guidelines give boundaries for people to operate within.
- They help with the flow and pace of the discussions.
- They help us value one another.
- They help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.

THIS IS A SAFE GROUP

Confidentiality is key, what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment: words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

NO CROSSTALK

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, checking phone, responding to text or email, etc.

LISTEN

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

NO RESCUING OR FIXING

We are not here to fix each other, Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

USE "I" STATEMENTS

It's easy to talk about the issues of others or respond with "we", "us", "the church". But for us to grow as disciples and build relationship we want to use "I" statements.

DON'T OVER-TALK

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

FIGHT FOR RELATIONSHIP

It's not 'if' conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but 'when'. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to that person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

TIPS FOR ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS: The following questions are examples that will help you have a base to begin with and will give you ideas for developing your own questions.

 *Be intentional to ask all four types of questions (head, heart, hands and feet) as you lead your discussion.*

HEAD: These questions help us to examine what the word shows.

- What do you see God doing, saying, or showing about himself?
- Who are the people and what is going on with them?
- What stands out to you in this passage?
- What do you think the main point is?
- What does this show us about _____? (You can fill in the blank with - God/man/or the topic of discussion such as worship)

HEART: These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- What do you see about yourself?
- Have you known anyone who is an example of this?
- What has it looked like when you have or have not known/believed/lived this in your life?
- What questions does this raise for you?


HANDS: These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into our everyday realities

- What is one way you can apply this truth to your life this week?
- What are you challenged to think/believe/do differently because of this passage and our discussion?
- How can you use this to disciple others?
- How does this impact you? Your relationship with _____? (Fill in with - family, fellow believers, work-place or community)

FEET: These questions help us understand how to apply what we are learning as we grow in Spiritual Maturity where we live, work, and play (The 5 Spheres).

- How does what I'm learning apply to the Abide Sphere
- How does what I'm learning apply to the Church Sphere
- How does what I'm learning apply to the Home & Family Sphere
- How does what I'm learning apply to the World Sphere
- How does what I'm learning apply to the Spiritual Realm Sphere

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS: Asking a question after hearing someone's response helps people process and gives everyone better understanding.

 *Follow up questions come from a heart of being interested, curious and seeking to understand and draw out. They are not intended to grill or corner people.*

- What has brought you to that understanding?
- What would be an example?
- Explain a little more.
- What might be another way to look at it?
- How does _____ affect _____?
- What does _____ mean?

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

- Listening **VALUES** people but active listening lets them know that you heard and understood what they're saying.
 - *Husband and wife example: husbands might listen to their wives but not actually understand them.*
 - Are we **CURIIOUS** enough about our people to use active listening to show we value them?
- **Body Language:** There are some body positions that show you to be listening and engaged as a Leader and some that show that you are not.
 - *Look around the room. Everyone, for the most part, has a little different body language but all of it is saying something.*

Model this:

- **Eye Contact:** Gives permission to speak, therefore you might want to sit directly across from the under-talker. Sit next to the over-talker because you don't need to make eye contact with them.

Ask a question and then look at someone in the room directly until they answer. Then ask why did they answer?

- **Paraphrasing:** This technique verifies that you are listening and gives the opportunity for verification or correction.

Model this, have Derek paraphrase back everything you say.

- **Bridging:** Connecting 2 things they've said either from that evening or from previous groups.
- **Silence:** What type of silence are you dealing with, counting ceiling tiles vs. Holy Spirit silence? Watch THEIR body language.

Tell about asking a question in your group and someone, after awkward silence asking "I don't understand what you're asking." How many of the rest of you don't understand the question?

- **Rabbit trails:** When someone, other than the person talking, starts to rabbit trail it can spin out of control totally losing the original trail that person was on. This makes the original speaker feel totally devalued.
- **Appropriate Transparency:** It is good to be transparent to either validate what someone else has said or to get the conversation started. Inappropriate transparency goes too far and shares too many personal details that aren't needed or wanted.
- **Discernment:** A Leader needs to be constantly discerning as they are listening. Sometimes things need to be addressed on the spot when something is shared and sometimes it is better to take up the subject in private after group.

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

1. The first time I tried to play hooky?
2. Greatest peer pressure as a teen?
3. How do you handle peer pressure?
4. What is your favorite worship song?
5. How do you react when people sing "Happy Birthday" to you in a restaurant?
6. Who is your favorite singer?
7. What is your favorite musical instrument?
8. What three things do you believe without any doubts?
9. What was the high point of last week? The low point?
10. What color best describes last week?
11. If I had a million dollars to spend for the benefit of mankind...
12. The thing that causes me the greatest satisfaction is...
13. When was the first time you kissed a member of the opposite sex?
14. Describe an experience when the Holy Spirit has been your comforter.
15. When was the first time you became aware that God loves you?
16. What are your strongest convictions about God?
17. If you could hear God say one thing to you, what do you think He would say?
18. If you knew God could hear you, what one thing would you most want to say?
19. What single question would you most want God to answer for you if He would?
20. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
21. If someone were to write a book about you, what do you think the title would be?
22. What things make your life complicated?
23. In one line what is life all about?
24. Of all the material possessions you have what gives you the most pleasure?
25. If some one could give you anything in the world for your birthday, what would you like it to be?
26. Give three words to describe how you feel right now.
27. What feelings do you have the most trouble expressing
28. What is your favorite song?
29. Describe your life at age 70?
30. What do you like most about yourself?
31. Share a big let down in your life.
32. Think back, what can you identify as a turning point in your life?
33. What bit of advice would you give to someone about to get married?
34. Describe the 'ideal husband'.
35. Describe the 'ideal wife'.
36. Share a time in your life when you were embarrassed.
37. Do you ever feel lonely? When?
38. Share frightening moment.
39. What would you like to become famous for doing?
40. What kind of store would you like to own and operate?
41. What would you do if you had a 'magic wand'?
42. How do you feel when someone laughs at you?
43. What do you think about when you fall asleep?
44. What would you like to invent to make life better?
45. What are the three most important things in your daily schedule?

RESOURCES



The Real Life Website: www.reallifeministries.com

Great place to find the following:

- Life Group Leader Resources
- Ministry Specific Pages & Info
- Events/Calendar
- Watch Live Links
- Watch Archived Sermon Links



The Real Life Ministries App

Great place to find the following:

- This Week at Real Life
- Sermon Notes
- Life Group Leader Resources
- Campus Specific Events/Calendars
- Giving Links
- Watch Live Links
- Watch Archived Sermon Links
- A Variety of Connection Links
- Links to a Variety of Resources
- Attendance



The Rock: www.rock.reallifeministries.com

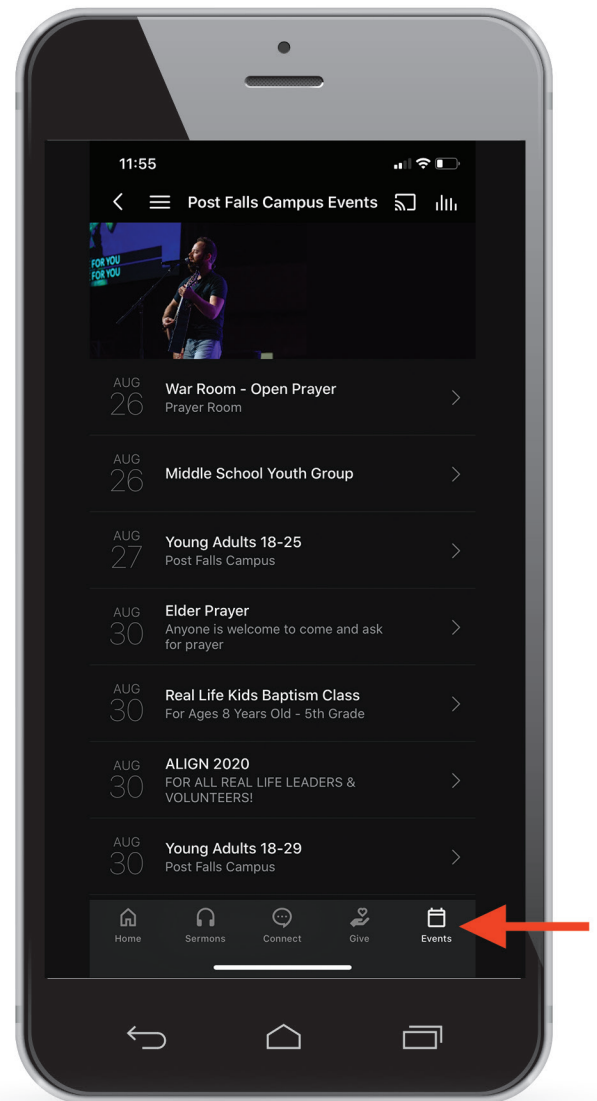
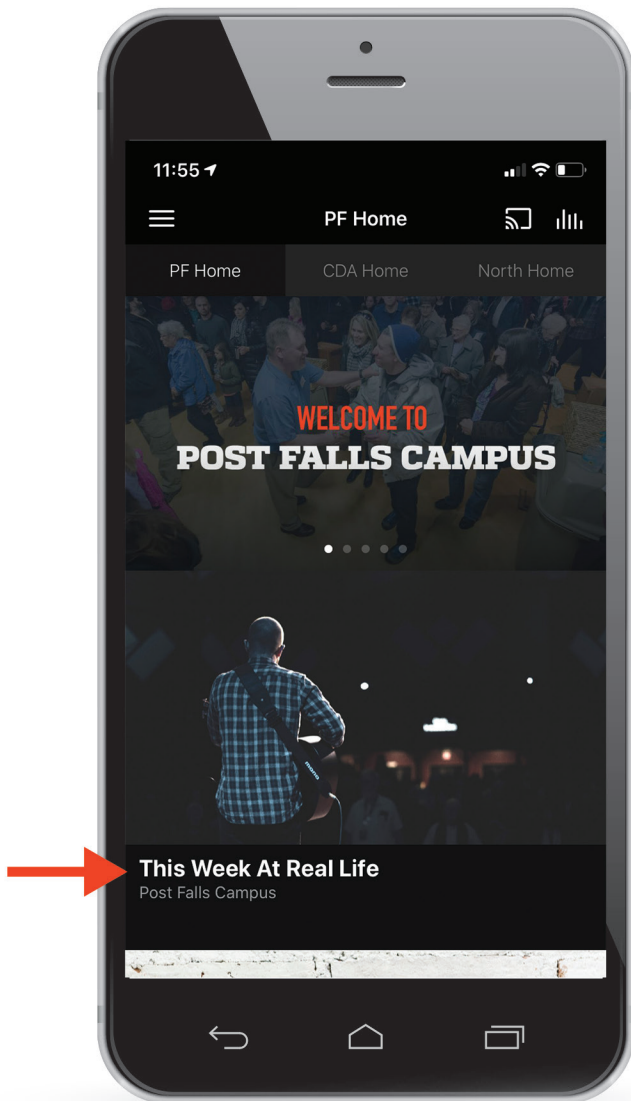
Where to record your weekly group attendance

LOGIN INFO

Username: _____ Password: _____

RESOURCES

*Use the Real Life App
to find Sermon Notes, and information about events and
weekly/monthly ministry opportunities to keep your group
informed and engaged with what's going on at Real Life and how
they can get or remain connected!*



GROUP GAME PLAN

FALL

Be sure to consider the following holidays in your planning process:
Labor Day | Halloween | Thanksgiving

SEPTEMBER - Week of :

OCTOBER - Week of :

NOVEMBER - Week of :

WINTER

Be sure to consider the following holidays in your planning process:
Christmas | New Year's Eve | New Year's Day | Valentines Day

DECEMBER - Week of :

JANUARY - Week of :

FEBRUARY - Week of :

SPRING

Be sure to consider the following holidays in your planning process:
Palm Sunday | Good Friday | Easter | Mother's Day | Memorial Day

MARCH - Week of :

APRIL - Week of :

MAY - Week of :

SUMMER

Be sure to consider the following holidays in your planning process:
Father's Day | Independence Day

Weekly gatherings are not required in the summer.
We encourage you to plan a few fun get togethers!

JUNE - Week of :

JULY - Week of :

AUGUST - Week of :



REAL LIFE
GROUPS

LEADERSHIP RESOURCE GUIDE
2023

*Real Life Ministries • 1866 N Cecil Rd • Post Falls, ID 83854
208.777.7325 • reallifeministries.com*