

# Preparing for LifeGroup

1. Prepare for each LifeGroup session by praying for:
  - A. Each group member
  - B. That God would make His Word (the Bible) clear to people in the group.
  - C. That God will help you as you lead
2. Personally prepare for the LifeGroup Discussion by:
  - A. Reading through this LifeGuide and becoming familiar with the content.
  - B. Make sure you take time to read and study the Scripture that is used in this LifeGuide.
3. Create a positive LifeGroup Environment by:
  - A. Serving Food! (Snacks or a meal – rotate who provides) - \*optional
  - B. Arranging the seating where everyone can see everyone's face
  - C. Setting the room temperature @ 69 degrees (cold keeps them awake)
  - D. Placing pets in another room
  - E. Supervising and placing children in a remote room
  - F. Keeping room bright with natural and artificial lighting
  - G. Having light/fun music playing (low to medium sound volume)
  - H. Having pens available
  - I. Keeping extra Bibles on hand
  - J. Making sure everyone knows each other
  - K. Making sure you don't go too long. (Try aiming for 30 minutes of fellowship at the beginning and 1 hour of group time.)

**Now you are ready for group time!**

# LifeGuide for *July 4<sup>th</sup> Weekend*

## Ice Breakers

Use one or more of the following “Ice Breakers” to get them talking:

- A. *Do you look forward to July 4<sup>th</sup>? Why?*
- B. *What are your favorite BBQ/Picnic foods?*
- C. *How would you describe the state of Christianity in the USA? How about your community?*

### **Leader Tips:**

Remember that the purpose of the ice breakers is to get everyone involved and ready to talk. Try to make this a natural transition into your Bible study time.

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## Setting the Stage

**Leaders:** The purpose of “setting the stage” is to effectively transition from the icebreakers to a discussion of the current weekend message. This section reminds everyone in your group of the overall theme and purpose of the sermon series, and gets their minds prepared for the subject matter.

The year 2010 has been awesome so far, and God is moving at RLF. We had a church in OKC merge with us, and we are expecting God to use Real Life Fellowship to start at least 2 new campuses this year. We hope to see more people attending our services, more people volunteering, more people connecting to LifeGroups, and more people giving than we have ever experienced at Real Life Fellowship. **We had a record attendance of 3200 people on all of our campuses on Easter.** We want God to do something in our church that only He can get the credit for. Are you ready for the rest of 2010?

Micah has finished a new sermon series called *Who’s Your Daddy*. What if praying to God was as simple as praying to a Father who loves you? The apostles asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, and he gave them some simple but profound principles on praying to the Heavenly Father. I hope you are encouraged this summer to start developing an effective prayer life or renew the discipline of prayer in your life. **This weekend Micah prepared a special message for July 4<sup>th</sup>. Come find out how Micah will answer the question; “Is America a Christian nation?”**

# Discussion Time

**Leaders:** Let me take a moment to make you aware of the content found in each LifeGuide, and how you can use it. Remember this is a “guide” so you should not feel compelled to read every word and follow it in perfect order. Basically, I want this guide to provide you Scripture that you can read and study together, explanation and commentary, and discussion questions to get the group talking. The questions are bulleted so that you can locate them easily. The guide does provide you with a general flow for the evening, but you are free to adapt the guide to the needs of your group. You are always welcome to call or email me if you have any questions. Please don’t feel like you are bothering me. It’s my pleasure and my job to help you.

**Leaders,** remind your group of the one goal we are to have this new year, and really for the rest of our lives. Challenge your groups to memorize the verses below.

*So we make it our goal to please Him. (2 Corinthians 5:9a)*

*We obey his commands and do what pleases Him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (1 John 3:22b-23)*

*I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)*

**Leaders:** During this past sermon series, Micah has used the acrostic **P.R.A.Y.** to help summarize the principles found in Christ’s teaching on prayer. Take some time to share about how your group has been applying the principles they learned during the prayer series.

## Praise

- Have you been praising God everyday this last week? How has it affected your prayer life?
- How did praising the Father help your attitude this last week?

## Request

- Have you been learning the difference between demanding and depending?
- Has starting with praising God helped you better understand what you should be requesting from Him?

## Admit you need forgiveness.

- What have you learned about forgiveness this last week of praying?
- Who do you still need God’s help to forgive?
- How many of you guessed correctly what the Y stood for in PRAY?

## **Yield to God before temptation comes.**

- Have you been able to identify some areas of temptation in your life that you need to yield to God?
- How do prepare yourself in the morning to face the temptations of each day?

**Leaders:** There is potential for some great discussion on this July 4<sup>th</sup> message, but be sensitive to the political nature of this message. Your group will likely have to people with very different political views. Stay in control of your group discussion time and don't let it turn into a political debate.

“This is a religious people. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, we find everywhere a clear recognition of this truth, that this is a Christian nation.”

U.S. Supreme Court in 1892

### **Historical Facts**

Fact #1: Mayflower Compact

Fact #2: George Whitfield

Fact #3: First Great Awakening

Fact #4: History of Education

Fact #5: James Madison

**Leaders:** Micah shared some encouraging but surprising statistics about the beliefs of the majority of Americans. It seems as though many Americans believe in God and would call themselves Christians.

- Were you surprised by the Gallup Poll statistics?
- How would you answer the question, “Is America a Christian Nation?”
- How did Micah answer the question? (No, because a nation can't be Christian, only people can be Christians. Tricky, Tricky Micah)

### **America Today**

“There is a gap between Americans religious belief and the kind of society they shape. Religion is popular in America but it is to a large extent superficial”  
Gallop

- What is your theory as to why this gap exists between what people believe and what they really practice?
- Have you seen this gap in your own life in the past or even the present?
- Do you think that non-Christians notice this gap? How does that affect the way they view the Church in America?
- How can we begin to close that gap in our country?
- What can Real Life Fellowship do as a church?
- What can you do as an individual?

Micah believes that we can turn this nation back to God if we focus on some key truths that come from God's Word.

### **1. We believe human life is valuable.**

*"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." (Gen. 1:26)*

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

(Declaration of Independence)

- Why do you think the abortion issue has been such a difficult one for American to deal with?
- What are some other ways that we devalue life in America?
- What are some things that RLF can do to show that we truly value human life?
- What can our group do?

### **2. We believe the family is the priority.**

*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)*

"The traditional family has always been the cornerstone of American society, today more than ever it is essential to remember that the strength of our families is vital to the strength of our nation.

- In your opinion, what has happen to the family in America?
- How do we uphold the priority of the Biblical family (1 man & 1 woman for life) and at the same time be sensitive to the growing number of blended family situations? (I'm not referring to same sex marriages)
- How do lifegroups help strengthen the families?
- How should a Christian family work through education options in your community?

### **3. We believe our hope is in the power of God.**

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (1 Chronicles 7:14)*

- Do you think American must have a Christian president in order for the church to thrive?
- Why is it important to be a good citizen even when you don't agree with the decisions of your political leaders?
- What did you think about the story of the tornado taking out a bunch of British soldiers in DC?
- How has God demonstrated His power in your life?

# Wrap Up

Sum up the lesson by re-capping the main point and challenge the group to apply the truth to their life this week.

1. Ask for praise reports from previous prayer requests
2. Ask for prayer requests
3. Ask each person (or couple) to volunteer for part of next week's meal/snack.
4. Make any announcements
5. Close with prayer and praise

☺ Let me know if you have any questions.

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