

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 20 minutes of fellowship at the beginning and 1 hour of group time.)

Now you are ready for group time!

LifeGuide for Relationships 2.0 – Start Fighting

Ice Breakers

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

- A. *Who is your college football team and why?*
- B. *What pets have you had in your life?*
- C. *What is your favorite infomercial product?*

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.

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.

God is doing an amazing work at Real Life Fellowship! The fall is always an exciting time for a church as people get back to their normal family schedules and new people are checking out churches. We need to be ready as a church to help people connect during this season of change and growth.

Real Life Fellowship is changing and growing, and this fall may prove to be the most important fall we have faced as a church. We have several new campuses including OKC and the Spanish Campus as well as new campuses launching soon like Tulsa/BA, San Antonio, and DTown CC. Portland and Hartwell are moving into new buildings, and we are anticipating exponential growth over the next 2 years.

This weekend Micah started a new series called Relationships 2.0 which is based on Galatians 5:16-26. We live in a world of technology – texting, social networking, cell phones and internet – all designed to help us connect. Ironically, our relationships are struggling, our friendships are frustrating and today more than ever people feel lonely and isolated. Is there a way to strengthen your connection with the people in your life? Let’s find out what God’s Word has to say about relationships.

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: Early in the fall is one of the best times to get people connected and locked in to church. Make sure you are diligent to contact the people in your group each week and encourage them to stay committed to the group. Don’t feel like you are bothering people. They will appreciate it when you call as long as you are loving and encouraging. You will notice that this guide is basically Micah’s sermon notes with stuff added to help you create discussion.

Micah asked us to rate our relationships in different categories on a scale of 10 with 1 being not so good and 10 being great.

- How did you rate your Home relationships?
- How did you rate your Work/School relationships?
- How did you rate your friends/family relationships?

If we want our relationships to be stronger, we have to start fighting for them. We need the Scriptures to help us fight so really think about the truth found in Philippians 2:3b CEV.

“Consider others more important than yourselves.”

So, how do we make our relationships stronger?

1. Great relationships start with a great fight.

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit

what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.” (Galatians 5:16-17)

A simple way to understand the meaning of these verses is to remember that what happens on the inside effects what happens on the outside.

- How would you rate your relationship with Jesus?
- What are some of the desires of the sinful nature?
- How can we understand the differences between sinful desires and spiritual desires?
- Can you think of a specific example of how a sinful desire has negatively affected one of your significant relationships?

2. When you lose the fight, your relationships lose.

“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” (Romans 7:18)

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality ... hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy.” (Galatians 5:19-20)

- What are some creative ways that you can begin each day thinking about fighting for your relationships?
- How does our culture tend to define “good people”?
- Why is it important to understand that apart from the grace of God, we are not good people?
- How can you share this truth in a loving way with someone who is not a Christian?

3. When you win the fight, your relationships win.

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:13-14)

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23a)

- How can attending church on a regular basis actually improve your relationships?
- How does serving at Real Life help strengthen your relationships?
- How is Biblical freedom different from American freedom?
- How can you show your co-workers that you value them?
- How can you put your family first this next week?

Wrap Up

Sum up the lesson by re-capping the main points 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 or to save time just pray your 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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