

What is a LIFE Group?

A LIFE Group is a community of people doing life with one another. “L” stands for life applicable biblical teaching. “I” stands for investing in one another. “F” stands for fellowship, building friendships. “E” stands for engaging others, reaching out to the unconnected. LIFE Groups are where we strive to build true biblical community.

Vision of LIFE Groups

To multiply disciples of Jesus in the context of Gospel-centered *community* and *mission*. (Matthew 28:18-20).

- Community - As LIFE Group members gather together to eat, pray, worship, read Scripture, encourage one another, and serve others, they will grow as disciples of Jesus and discover the joy of taking part in a shared mission (Acts 2:42-47).
- Mission - As LIFE Groups we want to be intentional about serving neighborhoods and/or networks, the people in our communities will witness lives living out the Gospel in tangible ways (Matthew 5:14-16)

Who can belong to a LIFE Group?

LIFE Groups are the DNA of MOBC. LIFE Groups are communities that people can belong to before they believe. This means that LIFE Groups are a reflection of our entire church and are comprised of mature Christians, new Christians and non-Christians. Simply put, we want everyone to be in a LIFE Group because that is where both community and mission take place.

Core Values of a LIFE Group

The values that drive LIFE Groups are UP - IN - OUT. Because of God’s act of reaching DOWN to us in the Gospel, a LIFE Group responds with an upward movement toward God, an inward movement toward each other, and an outward movement toward others to represent Christ to their unique missional context.

These Core Values drive various Rhythms that allow the Spirit of God to transform members’ lives and create a mission-centered community.

UP - Movement Toward God

In a LIFE Group, people will pursue God and grow in their love for Jesus. This may sound simple, but in our fallen world people seek to become their own gods. We often seek to live apart from God, preferring our independence over a relationship with our Creator. But through the Gospel, Jesus transforms our hearts and moves us to a place where we recognize God as King, Father, and Savior! It becomes our joy to know, serve, and worship Him. (Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Cor 5:17)

Rhythms that include UP

- SOAP - Reading and applying the Bible (see page 6) (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Joshua 1:8).
- Making regular time to reflect, pray, and praise God for His work. (Psalm 95:1-2)
- Engaging in discipleship Huddles (see page 8) (2 Timothy 2:2, Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Worshipping God in creative ways (songs, communion, etc.) (Psalm 105:1-2)
- Confessing and repenting of sin, and reminding each other of the good news of Jesus Christ! (James 5:16)

IN - Movement Toward God's People

In a LIFE Group, people learn to love one another. This means sharing each other's burdens, praying for each other, and forgiving each other as Christ forgave us. New people are not left out, but drawn in as they experience the family of God living in light of the Gospel. (Acts 2:42- 47, 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Rhythms that include IN

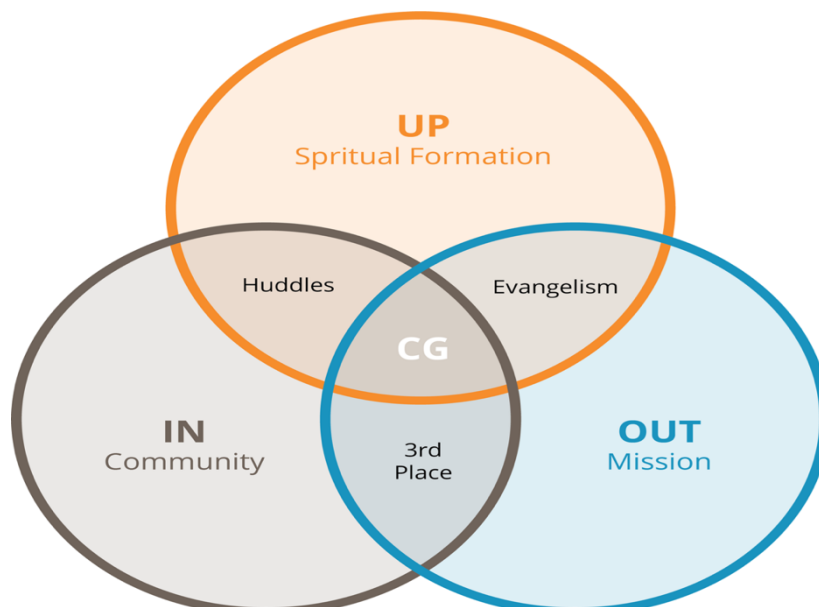
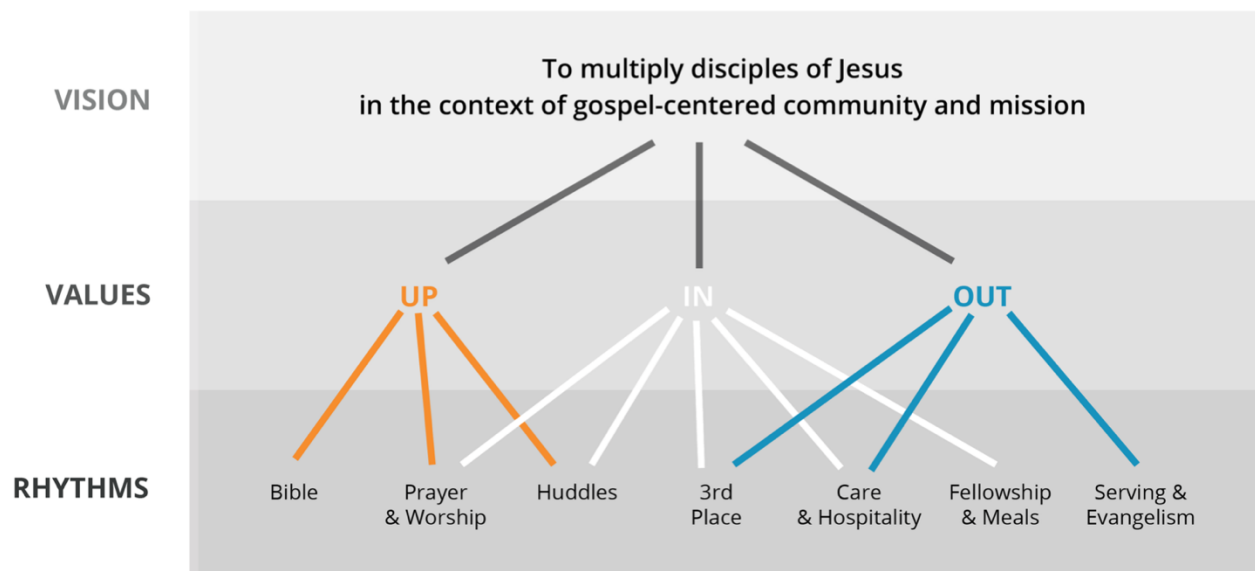
- Practice hospitality and care for one another in practical ways (prayer, meals, service) (Mark 12:30-31, 1 Thessalonians 2:8)
- Encourage each other and build fellowship by sharing testimonies (see page 10) (Psalm 22:22, 1 John 1:1-3).
- Engaging in discipleship Huddles (see page 7) (2 Timothy 2:2, Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Praying, praising, and worshipping God together (Psalm 95:1-2, 105:1-2)
- Practice 3rd Place (see page 9) (Mark 2:13-17).

OUT - Movement Toward God's Mission

A LIFE Group has a defined and shared mission. In other words, we are a family on God's mission together. Our shared mission is made up of a neighborhood or a network of people. For example: neighbors who live on your block or in your school district, young families with kids, single parents, coaches, college students, or recovering addicts. This mission is a blessing to be a part of, as we get to take part in God's redemptive work in people's lives. (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:20)

Rhythms that include OUT

- Practice 3rd Place (see page 9) (Mark 2:13-17)
- Invite people to your LIFE Group. Allowing the Gospel to be seen and heard in community is powerful and can help people see the joy of worshiping Jesus (John 13:35)
- Care for your neighbors in practical ways. Plan and organize service projects or events that meet a need in your community. (i.e. Organize a truck-or-treat, meal train for a family, or playground pick up) (Mark 12:30-31, 1 Thessalonians 2:8)
- Meet new people by participating in existing community events that have been organized by neighborhood groups, non-profits, or businesses (i.e. Jazz on the Green). Jesus regularly attended community events (i.e. John 10:22-30)



LEADERSHIP TEAMS

LIFE Groups are the primary context in which we hope to make disciples, build those individuals into maturing leaders, and experience Gospel-centered community. Because of the different giftings needed to maximize the impact of a LIFE Group, we believe in shared leadership.

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.
(1 Corinthians 12:18-20)

UP LEADERS – SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- Help to create environments of worship, prayer & praise.
- Helps group members grow in their knowledge of God and application of the Gospel.
- Allows space for repentance and confession to take place regularly.
- Provides sound biblical teaching and content for group discussions.
- Overall purpose is to help people worship, know and experience Jesus.

IN LEADERS – COMMUNITY

- Ensure new members or visitors feel welcomed and included.
- Help existing members get connected to Huddles.
- Model and encourage hospitality both inside and outside of regular CG meetings.
- Facilitate and organize meeting spaces, hosts and meals.
- Create environments that allow members to connect and care about one another.
- Confront unresolved conflict, gossip, or relational tension.

OUT LEADERS - MISSION

- Define and cast vision for the overall shared mission (Network or Neighborhood).
- Help organize and oversee service projects, community outreaches and partnerships.
- Work to inform/educate the CG of the existing physical and spiritual needs within your missional context.
- Provide resources and to train and equip CG members for living on mission.
- Overall purpose is to help members experience the joy of living on mission while growing the group through missional efforts.
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LEADER OF COMMUNICATION

- Communicate weekly with the entire LIFE Group.
- Send emails to communicate meeting times, locations, and goals.

- Keep a list of group contact info (email, facebook, etc.)
- Make announcements relevant to the whole group (School opportunities, etc.)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL LIFE GROUP LEADERS

- Develop future LG leaders by regularly delegating responsibility, evaluating results and investing in their character.
- Oversee and facilitate childcare for the group.
- Regular communication (phone, email, meeting) with a Pastor.
- Coordinate and communicate CG gatherings and events
- Participate in church-wide CG leader or membership meetings.
- Participate in regular coaching meetings.
- Cast vision for church-wide events and/or needs (retreats, service projects, etc.)

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

Each of us have a story to tell how Jesus came into our lives, saved us from our sin, and called us to Himself. Sharing our story is important because it helps us move from strangers to family. All of our stories are different, but there is one enemy; Satan and the effects of sin, and one hero; JESUS. When we hear other testimonies, we see just how much we have in common in the saving work of Jesus Christ!

Use the 3 sections and questions below to help you write out your story.

1. Before I Accepted Christ (or gave Him complete control)

- What was my life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?
- What did my life revolve around the most? Where did I find my security and happiness? (The non-Christian is relying on something external to give him happiness)
- How did those areas begin to let me down?

2. How I Received Christ (or gave Him complete control)

- When was the first time I heard the gospel?
- What were my initial reactions?
- When did my attitude begin to turn around? Why?
- What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
- Why did I go ahead and accept Christ?

3. After I Accepted Christ (or gave Him complete control)

- Specific changes and examples of the changes Christ has made.
- Why am I motivated differently?

Helpful Hints

- Write the way you speak; make the testimony yours.
- Practice this over and over until it becomes natural.
- Keep it short – 2-3 minutes. At that length, it's easily something you can put into a conversation without it becoming a monologue.

HOW TO SOAP

When you have your daily time with God use, SOAP to help you think through what you're reading.

Scripture

Copy down the verse or verses that stuck out the most. When reading, ask: Who is the author? Who is in the passage? What happened before and after this passage? What things are repeated or emphasized? Then summarize the passage in your own words.

Observation

Write down what you noticed. How do you think the author wants his audience to respond? What does it reveal about mankind? What does it reveal about God? How does this point to Jesus and Gospel? Write down thoughts, feelings, questions, or ideas that come to mind.

Application

How can you apply what you learned? What thoughts or attitudes do you need to turn from? What truths about the Gospel do you need to believe? Getting practical with the Bible helps it come alive in your life.

Prayer

Write a prayer to God based on what you just learned and ask Him to help you apply this truth in your life.

EXAMPLE OF SOAP

Scripture: John 15:1-11

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Jesus and His disciples are celebrating a final Passover Feast before Jesus is arrested and crucified. Jesus is teaching about abiding in Him and bearing fruit.

Observation: We don't naturally abide in Jesus so He commands us to abide. Following this command is not burdensome, but actually for our benefit. Jesus is the true vine and if we abide in Him we will bear fruit. The fruit we bear is glorifying to God. Jesus says that He taught all of this so that His joy would be in us. The joy Jesus gives is full, complete, and better than any other joy.

Application: How am I abiding in Jesus? In this passage "abide" is such an intimate word; to always remain in Jesus. What are ways I can remain in Jesus? Jesus says I will abide in Him if I keep His commandments, but am I actually doing that? Abiding in Jesus allows me to experience the fullness of joy that Jesus has for me. I can continue to abide in Him through developing a deeper prayer life, and reading the Bible to actually connect with Jesus instead of doing it just to look smart in front of my friends.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for saving me! Please always remind me of how amazing Your Gospel is. I confess that most of the time I would rather do my own thing than abide in You. I try to look good for others and that only steals more of my joy in You. Teach me more about what it means to abide in You and I pray that abiding in You would result in great fruit for Your glory!

HOW TO USE SOAP IN HUDDLES

Each member of your Huddle will SOAP throughout the week. Then have members share one or two things they heard from God. Ask and share with each other how you are going to obey what God spoke to you. Have members confess sin that may have surfaced and talk about what repentance would look like then pray as a group.

HUDDLES

WHAT ARE THEY?

Huddles are an extension of Sunday morning gatherings and LIFE Groups. They are a place where 2-3 people of the same gender gather on their own time to pursue Jesus together!

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

A Huddle is a place to be known by others in such a way that you can be completely honest with your joys and struggles, confess sin, speak the truth of the Gospel to one another, and point each other to Christ!

You will do four things every week:

HEAR & OBEY

Each person shares what they have been reading (SOAPing) in the Bible and what they have been hearing from God. Then share how you can obey God from what you learned from the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

ENCOURAGE & CELEBRATE

Take turns calling out greatest in each other. This is a great way to celebrate how you've seen God work in each other's lives and encourage each other how everyone is growing in Christ. (Hebrews 3:13)

REPENT & BELIEVE

We all sin and we all need to repent of that sin. Each person shares how you have sinned against God this past week (the accountability questions below can help with this) and then repent (turn) from your sin. But then spend time speaking out loud the good news of Jesus' work for us! Hearing the Gospel spoken aloud to each other enables us to believe. (James 5:16)

PRAY

Share with each other your joys and struggles. Also talk about how your conversations are going with your non-believing friends. Plan how you can share Jesus with them and weave them into your community or LIFE Group. Then pray for them by name for God to save them. (1 Timothy 2:4)

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS FOR HUDDLES

Not every question has to be asked, but be as thorough as necessary. A Huddle is a safe, honest, vulnerable, and confidential space.

- How has your anger or fear or anxiety or addiction shown up this week? How does that reveal what you're trusting in besides God? What truth or promise of the Gospel do you need to hear and believe to trust in God again?
- In light of God's love toward you, do you need to reconcile with somebody? Are you subconsciously holding a grudge?
- How has the Holy Spirit been growing you this week? Did you respond in faith or grumbling?
- How have you felt yourself resisting to obey God this week: in your mission OUT to the lost? In your sacrificial love for community?

- How have you battled sexual or intimacy temptation and how are you preparing to deal with it next week?
- Is there anything (school, work, technology, etc.) isolating you from important relationship?
- (your own personalized question)

THIRD PLACE

A Third Place is **neutral** ground that is informal and non-committal. It **naturally** fits into the rhythms of your lost friends lives, and we strive to do it **regularly**.

So where do we gather for a Third Place? It depends on the people you're trying to reach. Ask the question, "where do people already spend time and naturally go? How can we gather there?"

For families with younger kids, this might be a park where other families and kids play throughout the day.

A third place creates space where someone can **belong to before they believe**. We want to do it regularly, and invite those who don't know Jesus to participate often.

INVITE IN – Activity Ideas

- Neighborhood picnic and grill out
- Hiking
- Disc Golf or Frisbee
- Sand Volleyball
- Lake day with Kayaks and Canoes
- Restaurants
- Go get ice cream
- Book club
- Game nights
- Shooting range
- Go Karts!
- Pool Party
- Escape Rooms
- The Gym
- Kids play dates
- Go to the movies
- Sports League (softball, basketball, etc.)