



# LIFE GROUPS

AT CREEKWOOD

**LEADER MANUAL**



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# INTRODUCTION

**We believe life change happens best through authentic relationships because God created us to live in community with others. It is only then that we can experience the full life He intends for us.**

**VALUE: WE DO LIFE TOGETHER. LIFE CHANGE  
HAPPENS BEST THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS.**

# LIFE GROUPS PROVIDE THREE THINGS:

## 1. A place to \_\_\_\_\_ with others.

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Life Groups provide a place to connect with others, develop friendships, and grow in relationship with Jesus.

## 2. A place to \_\_\_\_\_ each other.

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words, or speech but with actions and truth."*

1 JOHN 3:16-17

When we do life together, God uses relationships to bring support and encouragement into our lives. Life Groups become the place we are fully known, receiving support for our everyday life and spiritual growth.

## 3. A place to \_\_\_\_\_ together.

*"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."*

PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person was created by God to make a difference in this world. Life Groups create space to grow with others, become more like Jesus, and reach our God-given potential.

# HOW LIFE GROUPS WORK

## FIND YOUR PEOPLE.

Rather than centrally managing groups, the church creates an environment in which anyone can start a group based on their passions (e.g., hobbies, needs, interests).



LIFE GROUPS ARE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WE DO AT CREEKWOOD.  
AS A CHURCH, WE DO FOUR MAIN THINGS:

1. **Weekend Services**
2. **Discover Creekwood**
3. **Volunteering**
4. **Life Groups**

**YOUR LIFE GROUP IS ESSENTIAL IN FULFILLING  
WHAT WE DO AT CREEKWOOD CHURCH.**

LIFE GROUPS RUN WITHIN THREE SEMESTERS.

Existing and new groups start and end three times a year to accommodate the changing seasons for individuals and families. We want to make it easy for everyone to find the right group for the right season in their life.

**Spring Semester**

February - May

**Summer Semester**

Mid June - July

**Fall Semester**

September - December

Being a Life Group leader provides an avenue to make disciples. As a church, we want to grow larger and smaller at the same time. The smaller the group setting, the greater the opportunity for spiritual growth (discipleship).

*...go and make disciples of all nations...*

**MATTHEW 28:19**

# CREATE A PLACE TO CONNECT

**Your Goal: To create an environment where people can find connection through authentic relationships.**

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the day approaching.*

HEBREWS 10:24-25

## BIGGER AND SMALLER

At the heart of meaningful relationships is simply spending time together, by sharing meals, slowing down, and creating space for real conversation. These moments allow people to feel comfortable, known, and genuinely cared for. Over time, those simple, intentional practices help turn a large church into a place where people truly feel at home. As we continue to grow, it becomes even more important to stay connected by growing smaller through Life Groups. These smaller gatherings create space for people to open up and support one another, as well as walk through life together in a more personal way. With God at the center, these relationships deepen naturally, strengthening both individuals and the church as a whole.

## KEYS TO PROVIDING CONNECTION

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### **Our relationship with one another must be built on trust.**

1. The ingredients for that trust are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Make \_\_\_\_\_ with people you do not know and invite them to your Life Group.
3. Have open \_\_\_\_\_ in your Life Group.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ with and for each other.
5. Have \_\_\_\_\_ together.
6. Text or call each other throughout the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ together in a ministry or a Creekwood Outreach Group.

### **Questions to ask yourself about creating connection:**

- Are people getting to know at least one more person?
- Are group members connecting outside of group time?
- Are people opening up with others more?



# CREATE A PLACE TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER

**Your Goal:** To provide love and support for each member of your group when they experience significant change in their life.

As a Life Group leader, you help pastor the people of Creekwood. Providing support for those facing crisis, or a new life event such as the birth of a baby, adoption, etc., is one of the most important ways to care for each other.

*"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"*

MATTHEW 25:37-40

## Steps For Providing Care:

### 1. Call

- Make a personal phone call to let the individual know you are thinking about them, gather information, and pray with them. Ask questions to gather information with the goal of completing the Pastoral Care form below.

### 2. Complete Pastoral Care Form

- Please keep our Pastors informed by completing a Pastoral Care form for all hospital visits, meal trains, births, funerals, severe illnesses, etc., which can be found on [creekwoodchurch.com/leaders](http://creekwoodchurch.com/leaders).

### 3. Meal Train (if needed)

- In some situations, providing short-term meals can be a great way of showing love. Specifically with births, medical procedures, and the death of an immediate family member.

*Tip: Provide meals every other day for a short time period (1-2 weeks) to start. Time period can be extended at a later date if needed.*

- Involve other group members to fill up the meal train.

# CREATE A PLACE TO GROW

**Your Goal: To help each other grow to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus.**

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

PROVERBS 27:17

## **Essential habits for promoting personal and group member growth:**

### **1. Bible Reading and Prayer**

- Encourage people in your group to establish a regular time of connecting with God through Bible reading and prayer.

### **2. Godly Relationships**

- A large part of us growing closer to God has to do with the encouragement and experiences we get from the Godly relationships in our lives.

### **3. Sharing Your Faith**

- Inviting a friend to church or sharing your faith with them is what God uses to bring people to Jesus.

### **4. Living a Spirit-Led Life**

- Taking time each day to seek the Holy Spirit, through prayer, time in Scripture, and quiet moments of listening, while asking God for wisdom in everyday decisions and allowing His truth to gently guide our thoughts, choices, and actions.



**Questions to ask yourself about growing together:**

- Are people reading their Bible more and processing life through God's Word?
- Are people learning to pray and seek God more on a daily basis?
- Are people changing habits and lifestyles to be more like Jesus?



## LIFE GROUP LEADER EXPECTATIONS

As a Life Group leader, you help pastor the people of Creekwood Church.

Set \_\_\_\_\_ .

- Maintain appropriate boundaries with the opposite sex. One-on-one conversations that deal with emotional issues need to be facilitated by a leader or member of the same gender. This is very important for leaders who will lead a co-ed group.
- **Business conversations should take place outside the group. Fundraisers and business promotion should not be present in a Life Group setting.**

**PROTECT YOURSELF AND THE  
PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE GROUP.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **your Life Group.**

- We will promote Life Groups as a whole through the church and have your group on our website.
- Prayerfully consider who might be interested in joining your group. Extend an invite and make it easy for them to attend by providing times, location, and a warm welcome.
- It is not a requirement to attend Creekwood Church to join a Life Group. Include neighbors, friends, and acquaintances from your own personal circles.
- Encourage attendees to also extend invites to others who would be interested in joining such as friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.



**Determine if \_\_\_\_\_ will be provided.**

**Childcare solutions:**

- We encourage groups to work together to find creative and supportive childcare solutions, such as sharing the cost of a babysitter or rotating childcare among group members when possible.
- If childcare still prevents someone from attending, our reimbursement policy is available as an additional support. Reimbursement is provided directly to parents or guardians (not childcare providers) after payment, and applies to one Life Group per semester.
- For more details, please visit **creekwoodchurch.com/leaders** and click on "Childcare Reimbursement Form."

**Take \_\_\_\_\_ for your Life Group.**

- Appendix 2 in the back of this manual will show you how to take attendance.
- Taking attendance helps us measure where we are as a church and helps us to know where we need to make adjustments.

**\_\_\_\_\_ with us and Life Group members.**

- It's important to stay in regular communication with your group members to help keep everyone connected and engaged. You can use tools like the Church Center app, GroupMe, email, and other group messaging options that work best for your group.
- If you set up a group chat or communication thread, be mindful to add any new members each time someone joins so everyone stays included and informed.
- As leaders, we would love to stay connected and support you and your group members well, so please keep us in the loop if something comes up. We are not always aware of what's happening, and your communication helps us care more effectively. You can reach out by email or by submitting the Care and Support Form at **creekwoodchurch.com/leaders**. This is the best way to connect with us, and we'll make sure the information is shared with the right people.

# TIPS FOR LEADING AN EFFECTIVE LIFE GROUP

## 1. Pray Together

- › Start or end each group meeting with prayer time. Ask for prayer requests and then pray over them as a group.
- › Involve group members by asking them to lead prayer time.

## 2. Eat Together

- › Encourage group members to bring snacks or drinks to the Life Group meeting by using a sign up sheet for the semester.
- › Involving others helps them take ownership in the group.

## 3. Have Fun Together

- › Christmas parties, attending community events, game nights, cookouts, pool parties, etc. are all great ways to help your group connect and have fun together.

## 4. Talk Together

- › Groups promote intimate environments where feelings and experiences are shared. Embrace the hard conversations and celebrate life victories with your group members.

## 5. Don't be afraid of silence

- › Twenty seconds might seem like an eternity when no one is answering a question, so be willing to wait for the quieter person to speak up.
- › You may need to directly call on someone to involve everyone.

## **6. Serve Together**

- › Serving together is one of the greatest ways to bond as a group.
- › As a group, join a weekend volunteer team, serve at a local non-profit or get involved in one of the Creekwood Outreach teams.

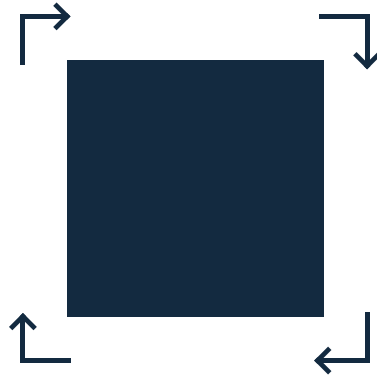
## **7. Meet Regularly**

- › Set a day, time, and location. Please meet on that day, time, and location specified.
- › Nothing kills a Life Group quicker than meeting inconsistently.
- › Creating a consistent meeting time and location will help people build the group into their routine. You will see better attendance when you are consistent.
- › Have a co-leader that can step in to lead when you are unavailable. This is a great way for your group to still meet and build consistency when you are gone.
- › We understand that adjustments may need to be made every now and then. Let those instances be the exception, not the norm.
- › This is the main reason to have a co-leader. It allows the group to continue meeting if you cannot be there.

## **8. Start and end on time.**

- › Be consistent on start and end times. This greatly helps those who have other commitments or have hired childcare.
- › It is normal for some people to stay and hang out after the group ends. However, some may need to leave at the exact end time.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



## Tips For Developing Leaders:

### 1. Teach & Delegate

- Teach potential leaders within your group to be responsible for different tasks and responsibilities. Have them lead the discussion for a week, oversee taking attendance, manage snack schedule, etc.

### 2. Let Them Lead

- After delegating responsibility, trust the process and resist the urge to take it back. Different approaches can still lead to great results, and a task doesn't have to be done your way to be done well.

### 3. Release Them

- Once someone has proven they can lead, encourage them to take a step of faith into what God is calling them to do next. This may be hosting or leading their own Life Group, leading a volunteer team, or stepping into a leadership position outside of the church.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT DEVELOPING LEADERS

- Are people understanding that their mission is to make disciples?
- Are people engaged in serving others in our church and community?
- Are people more excited about using their time, talents, and gifts for God?



# ANSWER KEY

## PAGE 6

1. Connect
2. Protect
3. Grow

## PAGE 10

1. Time and Transparency
2. Conversation
3. Discussions
4. Pray
5. Fun
6. Week
7. Volunteer

## PAGE 14

- Boundaries

## PAGE 15

- Promote

## PAGE 16

- Childcare
- Attendance
- Communicate



# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX I: VALUES & POLICIES

## CREEKWOOD CHURCH VALUES

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### **We Keep Jesus at the Center**

We will keep the main thing the main thing.

### **We Saved a Seat For You**

If people matter to God, they better matter to us.

### **We Do Life Together**

Life change happens best through relationships.

### **We are Generous**

We believe it is more blessed to give than to receive.

### **We Serve Always**

We're never more like Christ than when we're serving the needs of others. We are contributors, not consumers.



## CREEKWOOD LEADERSHIP VALUES

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### **We Would Rather Be In Right Relationship Over Being Right**

We will commit to put THE dream before MY dream. We will unapologetically weed out hidden agendas.

### **We Always Bring Our Best**

How we do things says as much about God as what is said. Excellence honors God and inspires people.

### **We Develop and Empower Others**

We are always working ourselves out of a job and looking for potential leaders to empower and equip.

### **We Feed Our Friendships**

Community is just as important and valuable to our staff/volunteer culture as it is in our church culture.

### **We Close the Loop**

Our team will only function as well as our communication is clear. We are intentional about bringing clarity, so we are all on the same page.

### **We Choose a Positive Attitude**

Have the right attitude and stay positive at all times.

### **We Believe Healthy You = Healthy Us**

We will commit ourselves to be physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy. We can only bring our best to God and others when we are best leading ourselves.

## ABUSE POLICY

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I understand that Creekwood Church is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults. Creekwood complies with all Federal and State laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse. As a Life Group leader, I understand that suspected abuse is to be reported to the staff member who oversees the area in which I serve within 24-48 hours. I also understand the four types of abuse defined below:

- Physical: a physical act directed at a child or vulnerable adult that causes injury.
- Sexual: contact or interactions between a child and an adult, or another child, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. This includes exploitation through photographs, videos, or other communication methods.
- Emotional: acts or omissions by the parent or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders.
- Neglect: failure to provide for the child or vulnerable adult's basic needs. This includes adequate adult supervision, medical attention, housing, food, and clothing. Most cases of physical neglect involve inadequate adult supervision that has caused harm to the child or vulnerable adult or places them in danger of such harm.

I understand it is not my responsibility to investigate and in no instance will I confront a parent or caregiver if abuse is suspected. As a Life Group leader, I agree to comply with this policy and will report any suspected abuse to the staff ministry leader/Pastor who oversees the area in which I serve.

## HONOR CODE

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### **Mission: To lead people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus.**

As a Life Group leader and an essential part of our team, you become a representative of God and our church family.

### **All Life Group leaders are required to:**

- Agree with the mission and values of Creekwood.
- Complete and be consistently involved in the Next Steps of Creekwood (Weekend Services, Discover Creekwood, Life Groups and Volunteering).

As Christ-followers, the way we present ourselves to others is of vital importance to the way others perceive Jesus. Our conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ. We should exemplify the qualities of a mature believer.



- Please scan to digitally sign that you have read and agree to abide by the Abuse Policy and Honor Code.

### **As a mature believer you should:**

- Have a consistent discipline of Bible reading, prayer, worship, and fasting.
- Lead by example and demonstrate biblical standards in all situations.
- Be humble, have a teachable heart and a positive attitude.
- Be a team player by effectively communicating with your team and leaders at all times.
- Approach relational conflict in a biblical manner with the goal of always maintaining unity.
- Show optimism in difficult and challenging situations by focusing on solutions rather than problems.
- Abstain from anything immoral, illegal, or prohibited by scripture.
- Not post comments or images that are contrary to the cause of Christ.
- Not solicit other members for the purpose of personal financial gain or investment opportunities.
- Be dependable and punctual by arriving before your scheduled meeting time.
- Regularly attend weekend services.
- Not have or consume alcoholic beverages, drugs or tobacco products at any Life Group gatherings.

## SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

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We ask all volunteers at Creekwood Church to adhere to this policy.

Alcoholic beverages, drugs or e-cig/tobacco products should not be used or consumed at gatherings and/or events sponsored or occurring on behalf of Creekwood Church (this also includes Life Groups promoted by Creekwood).

We recognize that alcohol, drug, tobacco and e-cig consumption/use is both a cultural and biblical issue and we want all people, no matter their background, to feel welcomed and able to grow in their relationship with Jesus while involved in a Life Group. While the use may not be a stumbling block for all, it definitely is for some and we want to be sensitive to what we see outlined in scripture (1 Corinthians 8:9-13, Romans 14:21). With this in mind we have always had the policy that these items not be a part of Creekwood Life Groups.



- Please scan to digitally sign that you have read and agree to abide by the Substance Use Policy.

## APPENDIX 2: INTRO TO CHURCH CENTER

Church Center will help you manage your group members, plan events, take attendance, message your group, and share resources. You can access Church Center through the app on your phone or through the website.

### LOGGING IN TO THE CHURCH CENTER APP

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#### DOWNLOAD THE APP



- You can download the app by searching for it in your app store or by scanning this QR Code

#### SELECT YOUR CHURCH

- Click Get Started
- Select Search Manually
- Enter Creekwood Church and 76063 for the zip code
- Select Creekwood Church
- Click This Is My Church

#### LOG IN

- Enter your phone number
- Enter your verification code (The verification code will expire after two hours and can only be used to log in once.)
- Select your Profile

#### ACCESS YOUR GROUP

- Click "Groups" tab on the bottom right corner of the Church Center App home screen
- Select your group (If you lead or are a member of multiple groups, they will all be listed here. Make sure you choose the appropriate group.)

## LOGGING IN TO THE CHURCH CENTER WEBSITE

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### VISIT WEBSITE



- You can access our Church Center website by visiting [creekwoodchurch.churchcenter.com](http://creekwoodchurch.churchcenter.com) or by scanning this QR Code

### LOGIN

- Enter your email or phone number
- Enter your password
- Select the login button



## MANAGE GROUP MEMBERS

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Group members are managed in Church Center. Anyone can request to join a group by viewing the directory at [creekwoodchurch.com/life-groups](http://creekwoodchurch.com/life-groups), or you can invite them directly to your group through Church Center.

### INVITING A GROUP MEMBER

- Log in to the Church Center app or the Church Center website
- Select the Members tab in the sidebar
- Select the Add a member button
- Scan to Join or Add by email or text
  - › Scan to Join - have the person you're inviting scan the QR code
  - › You will be able to send the person you're inviting a direct link to join your group

### RECEIVING A REQUEST TO JOIN

- You will receive a notification when someone requests to join your group
- Click the notification to go directly to review the request

### APPROVING A GROUP MEMBER

- In the Members tab, click Review Request
- The profile of the person requesting to join your group will appear
- Click Manage
- Click Add to group

(You may have to refresh the Members tab when receiving requests to join.)

## MESSAGE GROUP MEMBERS

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These messages can be used as group messages, to start discussions, or to post announcements.

*\*Group members will not receive or see messages unless they have the Church Center app downloaded and actively open it to check. Because of this, the app should not be used as the primary or only form of communication, but rather as a supplement to other methods.\**

### SENDING A GROUP-WIDE MESSAGE

- Click Messages
- Click + New
- Enter a Title (Subject) and a Message (Body of Email)
- Select Allow Replies as applicable
- You can disallow replies to post announcements
- Click Send



# EVENTS

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## CREATING EVENTS

- Click Events
- Click + New or Actions
- Enter Event details
- To set up recurring events, click the drop down under Repeating and select the appropriate frequency
- To add a physical location, click the drop down under Address and choose from the list provided
- If your event is being held at a location not listed, please list the location in the Event description
- To add a virtual location, select Virtual and enter the website in the Link field
- Set a reminder when appropriate by clicking the drop down
- Click Save

## EDITING AN EXISTING EVENT

- Click Events
- Select Event to be Edited
- Click the Ellipsis Menu
- Select Edit Event
- Make Change(s)
- Click Save



## CANCELING AN EVENT

- Click Events
- Select Event to be Canceled
- Click the Ellipsis Menu
- Select Cancel Event
- Select Notify Members (if applicable)
- You can include a message with the cancellation notification
- Click Cancel Event or Cancel & Send

## ADDING EVENTS TO YOUR CALENDAR

- You can link your group's event calendar to your personal calendar
- Click Events
- Click Actions
- Subscribe to Group Calendar
- Follow Instructions for Subscribing to Calendar
- This will vary based on your device, calendar app, and software

# ATTENDANCE

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## TAKING ATTENDANCE

You can take attendance up to two minutes before an event starts.

- Click Events
- Click Take Attendance for the Event
- Select the person/people in attendance
- Click Submit



## ADDING A VISITOR TO YOUR ATTENDANCE

To add a new guest to your group, you must have them join your group.

- Invite them to join your group
  - › Click Members
  - › Click Add
  - › Scan to Join or Add by email or text
    - Scan to Join - have the person you're inviting scan the QR code
    - You will be able to send the person you're inviting a direct link to join your group
- Approve their request to join
  - › You will receive a notification when someone requests to join your group
  - › Click the notification to go directly to review the request
  - › OR In the Members tab, click Review Request
    - You can also review directly from a notification
  - › The profile of the person requesting to join your group will appear
  - › Click Manage
  - › Click Add to group

*\* You may have to refresh or move out of the Members tab and back in for the Member list to update when receiving requests to join. \**
- Mark them in attendance
  - › Select the person/people in attendance
  - › Click Submit

## SHARING RESOURCES

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You can add files including pdfs, Word documents, text files, small image files, small video files, or websites to share with your group. Resources must be added from the Church Center Website.

### SHARING A DOCUMENT OR FILE

- Log in to Church Center
- Make sure Groups is selected in the top left corner
- Select your Group
- Click Resources on the left side of the screen
- Click Add a Group Resource
- Click Choose File
- Navigate to the file you want to upload and click Open
- Enter Resource Name, Description, and Visibility
- Resources can be shared with Leaders only or with all Members
- Click Save

### SHARING A WEBSITE

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- Log in to Church Center
- Make sure Groups is selected in the top left corner
- Select your Group
- Click Resources on the left side of the screen
- Click Add a Group Resource
- Click URL Link
- Add the website in the link field
- Enter Resource Name, Description, and Visibility
  - › Resources can be shared with Leaders only or with all Members
- Click Save



