



life groups

www.crossroadscommunity.ca

PURPOSE

At *Crossroads Community Church* – we believe that God made us and loves us and invites us into a work and play relationship with Him (Ps. 139:13-16; Jn. 3:16; Mt. 11:28; Jn. 15: 1-17).

And, we believe that He makes this appeal to us primarily through His Spirit, through His Word, and through His people (Jn. 14:15-21, 26; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; I Samuel 13:13–14, 15:23; II Samuel 12:7–15; Acts 9:10–18, 10:1–33.)

This is why we meet in ***life groups**: to explore and discern God’s voice together, to develop authentic and meaningful friendships, and to encourage and support each other in the *vision* and *mission* of the church.

VISION AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Crossroads Community Church believes that VISION is the ability to SEE. Therefore, the VISION of *Crossroads Community Church* is to try to SEE the world as Christ sees it.

Crossroads Community Church believes that MISSION is taking action on what we see. Therefore, the MISSION of *Crossroads Community Church* is to try to DO what Christ would do based on seeing the world as Christ would see it.

Everyday. Everywhere. Everyone.

This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

FOLLOW JESUS. LOVE PEOPLE. MAKE DISCIPLES.

Foundational texts: Mt. 22: 37-40; 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47.

***life groups** are a primary pathway of discipleship at *Crossroads Community Church*.

FOCUS

The primary question of Christian discipleship is: *What's next in my relationship with Christ?* Our **life groups** will help you answer that question by processing these kinds of questions with you...

1. What is God teaching you these days? How are you responding?
2. How are you serving in the church? How's it going?
3. How are you reaching out into our city? Who are you praying for (family, friend, coworker, neighbor) who doesn't know the love of God and who are you talking to about Him?
4. How can we pray for each other?

FORM

Our **life groups** are not...

- social clubs
- meditation groups
- counseling or support groups
- classrooms

Our **life groups** are predictable and confidential small group environments where participants can experience...

- spiritual growth
- authentic community
- missional life

Our **life groups** are small groups of 6-12 people – who meet together through the week (taking breaks at Christmas, Easter and through the summer) to teach and learn from the bible together, to “one another each other”*, and to cultivate a missional life together.

*A LIST OF NEW TESTAMENT ONE ANOTHERS

Love one another: Jn. 13: 34-35; Jn. 15:12-13; Jn. 15:17; Ro. 13:8; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1, 1 pt. 1:22; 1 Pt. 4:8; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:11-12; 2 Jn. 1:5.

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Pray for each other: Js. 5:16.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

We'd like as many folks as possible to connect meaningfully in a **life group**. So, we offer **life groups** at various times through the week and offer families reimbursement for childcare.

1. *Availability.* We recognize that people are busy – so we're trying to give people a chance to participate in a group on a day or night when they might not be busy otherwise (by having as many groups as possible). We aren't trying to compete with your schedules – we're just trying to accommodate them!

2. *Childcare.* We don't want childcare costs to be a barrier to your participation in a **life group**. So, our church is willing to reimburse families for a portion of their costs for childcare.

Here are the guidelines...

- a. Reimbursement forms are available through our **life group** leaders or the church office.
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**Reimbursement rates for childcare...*

1 child	=	\$5 per hour
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*These rates apply up to a maximum of two hours/week.

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- 7 p.m. REFRESHMENTS
- 7:30 STUDY AND DISCUSSION
from the study questions in the bulletin or online –
done in advance of the group meeting.
- 3 Qs
- Open-ended discussion starters.
 - Into the bible – exploring the message + parallel or complimentary biblical passages.
 - Application.
- 8:00 PRAYER + SHARING TIME + FOCUS Qs (see above).

Possible **life group extras**...

BAPTISM. We encourage every believer in Christ to be baptized. Please contact the church to let us know when folks are interested in being baptized so we can a. get baptism information into leaders' hands and b. plan for a baptism service!

COMMUNION. We believe that the context of a **life group** is a great place to celebrate communion regularly. Contact pastoral staff FMI.

MINISTRY. Maybe group members might explore their giftedness by ministering together on one of our Sunday a.m. teams: Set-Up, AV, Worship, Greeter, *Kidzone* Staff...

PASTORAL CARE. The primary and most effective means of pastoral care in any church is through its people (not just the pastoral staff). Help out where and how you can (and contact pastoral staff when needs exceed your resources).

SERVICE. We encourage our **life groups** to serve together – whether through one of our community partnerships (*Chilliwack Community Services, Community of Schools Community Cupboard, Cyrus Centre, Fraser Health, One Life One Chance, Ruth and Naomi's Mission* or the *Salvation Army*) or out of their own intuitive callings to serve.

SOCIAL. We encourage our **life groups** to get out and have some FUN together! Maybe once-a-quarter – head out for a hike or a hockey game or white-water rafting or a movie!

MESSAGE BASED LIFE GROUPS

Our **life groups** are *message-based* – sort of like a lecture-lab combo.: a Sunday morning teaching with a small group real-life-lab application through the week. Leaders will be given a study guide to work through with their group when they meet.

Here's why we do message-based **life groups**...

- group prep. is simpler and easier for leaders and participants: the Sunday morning message jump-starts the mid-week discussion - study questions and additional Scriptures are provided so that groups can go deeper.
- increases Sunday a.m. attention and note-taking – in anticipation of mid-week discussion.
- provides church-wide focus – giving us a greater sense of common direction and reference – and NOMO FOMO.
- repetition is key to knowledge – to get us past the point of people with lots of things they *kinda* know to things they know because they are reinforced through repetition, discussion, and application.
- Messages/Series can be shaped by the feedback of the groups.

LIFE GROUP AGREEMENT

This agreement is reviewed and signed at the beginning of each session by all groups (continuing groups can review it).

Session dates: From _____ to _____

Leader: _____

Phone # _____

This agreement will help us discuss and clarify our goals, expectations, and commitments as a group. Since healthy groups thrive on trust and participation, a clear agreement is an important starting point toward a successful group experience.

Life Groups: Our Basic Purpose

Life Groups exist to teach and learn from the bible together, to “one another each other,” and to cultivate a missional life together.

Sharing

Each week, we will take the time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include some planned “sharing questions.” After the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as our group begins to feel safer and more comfortable.

Study

Each week, we’ll study a portion of God’s Word that relates to the previous weekend’s message. Our goal is to learn how to apply and live out our Christianity in our day-to-day experiences and relationships.

Support

Each week, we’ll learn how to take care of one another. This will take many forms – such as praying, listening, meeting needs, and encouraging and challenging one another as needed.

Guidelines

1. Dates: We’ll meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of the session will be on _____.

2. Time: We’ll arrive between _____ and _____, and begin our time together at _____. We’ll spend approximately _____ minutes checking in, _____ minutes in study and discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer.

3. Children: Group members are responsible to arrange childcare for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome, provided they are not a distraction to the group. Group members are welcome to reimbursement from the church for these costs.

4. Study: Each week, we’ll study the same topic(s) covered in the previous weekend’s message.

5. Prayer Our group will be praying each week for one another and specific missional requests.

6. Attendance Joining a group requires a commitment to participation. This commitment is the key to a healthy group. If we cannot come to group, we will..._____.

7. Refreshments:

8. Socials:

9. Service Projects:

We commit together to honor this agreement....

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 12. _____ |

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We train and develop leaders through these 3 main mechanisms...

1. *Leadership Round-Tables*

September: leadership training focused on team-building, philosophy and structure of **life groups**, and equipping the leaders with practical tools to lead effective small groups.

February: a mid-season leadership training focused on encouraging, guiding and caring for the leaders.

2. *Coaching Drop-Ins* throughout the year: focused on positive feedback, strengths development, and practical steps to take to lead even more effectively.

3. *Coaching Tips* through the month (via email): focused on fine-tuning leadership skills.

LEADERSHIP TRAITS

1. Devoted to GOD'S WORD.

- a. reads the word regularly.
- b. prays dependently.
- c. gives generously.
- d. handles the Word accurately.
- e. shares the gospel clearly.
- f. applies the Word meaningfully.
- g. repents of sin.
- h. believes God's promises
- i. has had a personal, growing/maturing relationship with Jesus Christ (for at least 2 years).
- j. recognizes the Word as authoritative.
- k. regularly participates in Sunday morning worship

LEADERSHIP TRAITS CONTINUED...

2. Devoted to FELLOWSHIP.

- a. identifies needs in others
- b. asks good, relevant questions.
- c. listens to others' stories.
- d. follows up.
- e. models transparency with own life (sin, struggles, victories, joys).
- f. encourages others in their spiritual journey.
- g. lovingly confronts sin in others.
- h. uses gifts in service of the church.
- i. has successful experience leading small groups.
- j. inclusive of peripheral people.
- k. not quarrelsome.

3. Devoted to MISSION.

- a. shares the gospel with others.
- b. builds relationships with Christians and non-Christians (loves their neighbors).
- c. serves local partners outside the church.
- d. looks for ways to follow and partner with Jesus.
- e. supports global missions through awareness, prayer, giving or going.

THE ROLE OF A LIFE GROUP LEADER

Our **life group** leaders will be responsible to...

- a. launch the group.
- b. organize the group re. time and place of meeting.
- c. monitor and contribute to group health.
- d. lead discussion and prayer.
- e. start and end group on time.
- f. do group follow-up when needed.
- g. sign the leader agreement.

3 KEYS TO LAUNCHING A LIFE GROUP

1. Pray, pray, pray. Ask God to show you whom to invite and that He would open their hearts and draw them to your group.
2. Invite people to your group: God doesn't send a **life group** stork to drop a couple of new small group members for you. You need to look for them! So as you pray, invite people from church, friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers.
3. Set a *launch date* and stick with it: Once you have prayed and invited people to your Small Group, set a launch date and stay faithful to it. If a start date is not solidified, the group launch can drag on and might never get off the ground. Just start it, keep praying, keep inviting, and let God add to the group who He will.

10 WAYS TO KILL A GROUP

1. Don't meet regularly.
2. Have too few members.
3. Have too many members.
4. Don't use a group agreement.
5. Don't deal with a problem member.
6. Allow prayer request time to become storytelling time.
7. Don't follow the guide.
8. Once the group is full - allow members to bring guests without clearing it with other members.
9. Ignore the personal needs of group members.
10. Never multiply to form a new group.

10 WAYS TO KEEP A GROUP ALIVE

1. Pray *for* group members daily (and pray *with* them regularly).
2. Invite new people to visit the group weekly (until it is full).
3. Contact group members regularly: thank them for coming to group (esp. first-time participants), follow up on something they've said, tell them that you're praying for them, text them to remind them when group is meeting, let them know you missed them.
4. Prepare for the group meeting. Listen to the Sunday message. Review the notes: the opening question, the additional readings, the study questions, and the personal application question.
5. Share the leadership. Use your gifts in service of the group – some lead, some are apprenticed, some host, some organize refreshments, socials, service initiatives, some lead the prayer time...
6. Plan group fellowship activities. Eat, work, and play together - outside of the regular group meeting.
7. Be committed to personal growth. Be devoted to GOD'S WORD, FELLOWSHIP, and MISSION.
8. Promote participation in the life of the church. Encourage group members to participate in Sunday a.m. worship, life group, ministry, and missional activity.
9. Celebrate change. Look for, identify, and encourage personal growth in members by celebrating positive changes in their lives.
10. End well. Start your **life group** gatherings light and end light. And, cooperatively craft a vision of a strong finish to the group/a positive closing to the end of a natural small group life cycle (12-24 months). Transitions the groups as best as you can for the next season of **life groups**.

10 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEADING DISCUSSION

1. *Come to the study prepared.* Read the study guide. Ask God to help you understand and apply the message to your own life – so that you will be ready to talk about it with others.

2. *Pray for the members of your group before the study.* Invite the Holy Spirit to be at work in the group before, during, and after the group gathering.

3. *Begin on time.* Be respectful of everyone's time.

4. *Explain that the gatherings are meant to be discussions, not lectures.* Give everyone a chance to share their thoughts.

5. *Encourage more than one answer to each question.* A good question can have more than one possible answer – and each person has his or her unique perspective. Ask, "What do the rest of you think?" or "Anyone else?" until several people have responded.

6. *Affirm people's answers.* Use simple phrases such as, "That's insightful," "Good stuff!" "Excellent idea," or "I hadn't thought about it that way before" are enough to show people you value their input.

7. *Don't be afraid of silence.* Give people time to think.

8. *Resist the temptation to answer your own question.* Rephrase the question until the group understands what you are trying to ask. A group can become passive and silent if they think you will do most of the talking.

9. *Reframe tricky responses.* Ask, "What verses or experiences might lead you to think that?" or turn it to the group for their input by saying, "What do others think?"

10. *End on time.* Leave enough time for food, sharing, and prayer. Try not to "tack" good things on at the end.

LIFE GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

Every **life group** leader is asked to sign and commit to our **Life Group Leader Agreement** (see below).

LIFE GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

I commit...

- To grow in my faith as I seek to love Christ, love others, and help lead others to Christ.
- To adhere to our Mennonite Confession of Faith.
- To actively invite people to church and **life group**.
- To make choices and live a lifestyle that are both godly and "above reproach," knowing that my life represents my Lord, my family, and my church.
- To develop an Apprentice in my **life group** to be a future leader.
- To uphold unity within the church and within the group.
- To encourage people in my **life group** to serve in a ministry.
- To participate in ongoing leadership training.
- To continue to develop my leadership traits (see listing of Leadership Traits).
- To know and to understand and to promote the four connecting points of CCC: Connect to God (Sunday a.m. worship), Connect with Others (**life groups**), Connect to Ministry and Connect to the World (Child Sponsorships and Mexico Mission).
- To pray for my church leaders, my church, and my **life group** members.

Print Name: _____

Sign Name: _____

FAQ's ABOUT LIFE GROUPS

1. *What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?*

It will happen! Here is your response. "I appreciate that question(s) and I don't know the answer to that, but I will do my best (and ask you to do the same) to find out this week and get back to each other at our next group meeting if not beforehand."

2. *What if one individual wants to dominate our Small Group discussion time?* Establish *Rules Of Engagement*: clear discussion guidelines.

For example...

a. *What is said in our life group stays in our life group (confidentiality)* - whether it is a prayer request or a discussion statement.

b. *Please express your thoughts within 2- 3 minutes so everyone can participate.* If you feel a person dominates the discussion time then you, as the leader, must react to the situation positively. Find a place in the conversation asap. and say something like, "Thanks for that. I'd like to hear what some other folks might be thinking... or we can move onto a new subject." Try to graciously engage introverts by giving them a heads-up and by letting them weigh-into the conversation when they're ready to do so (usually later than sooner).

3. *How do I ask others to pray out loud in our group?*

Start with yourself. Ease into the public prayer carefully. Remember there are two things most people fear most in a **life group**: reading in front of others and praying in front of others. If you do ask someone to pray or read in front of others, please talk to them before your group time (if you can) to be sure it's all right.

4. *How much time do I need to devote as a **life group** leader?*

The average **life group** meeting takes about an hour and a half with an additional hour for preparation, phone calls, emails, texts etc. Keep in mind that you may need to meet one-on-one with some of your group members who might be struggling or are in need.

5. *What is an Apprentice?*

An Apprentice is someone in your life group who has leadership potential. Identify that person or persons and invest in them: meet with them, give them things to do within the group that they are gifted to do, encourage them with positive feedback. Sheep-dog them – and let pastoral staff know that you are training a leader – and when that leader might be ready to lead his or her own group.

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Life Groups exist to teach and learn from the bible together, to “one another each other,” and to cultivate a missional life together.

Sharing

Each week, we will take the time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include some planned “sharing questions.” After the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as our group begins to feel safer and more comfortable.

Study

Each week, we’ll study a portion of God’s Word that relates to the previous weekend’s message. Our goal is to learn how to apply and live out our Christianity in our day-to-day experiences and relationships.

Support

Each week, we’ll learn how to take care of one another. This will take many forms – such as praying, listening, meeting needs, and encouraging and challenging one another as needed.

Guidelines

1. Dates: We’ll meet on _____ nights for ____ weeks. Our final meeting of the session will be on _____.

2. Time: We’ll arrive between ____ and ____, and begin our time together at _____. We’ll spend approximately ____ minutes checking in, ____ minutes in study and discussion, and ____ minutes in prayer.

3. Children: Group members are responsible to arrange childcare for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome, provided they are not a distraction to the group. Group members are welcome to reimbursement from the church for these costs.

4. Study: Each week, we’ll study the same topic(s) covered in the previous weekend’s message.

5. Prayer Our group will be praying each week for one another and specific missional requests.

6. Attendance Joining a group requires a commitment to participation. This commitment is the key to a healthy group. If we cannot come to group, we will..._____.

7. Refreshments:

8. Socials:

9. Service Projects:

We commit together to honor this agreement....

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 12. _____ |

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We train and develop leaders through these 3 main mechanisms...

1. *Leadership Round-Tables*

September: leadership training focused on team-building, philosophy and structure of **life groups**, and equipping the leaders with practical tools to lead effective small groups.

February: a mid-season leadership training focused on encouraging, guiding and caring for the leaders.

2. *Coaching Drop-Ins* throughout the year: focused on positive feedback, strengths development, and practical steps to take to lead even more effectively.

3. *Coaching Tips* through the month (via email): focused on fine-tuning leadership skills.

LEADERSHIP TRAITS

1. Devoted to GOD'S WORD.
 - a. reads the word regularly.
 - b. prays dependently.
 - c. gives generously.
 - d. handles the Word accurately.
 - e. shares the gospel clearly.
 - f. applies the Word meaningfully.

- g. repents of sin.
- h. believes God's promises
- i. has had a personal, growing/maturing relationship with Jesus Christ (for at least 2 years).
- j. recognizes the Word as authoritative.
- k. regularly participates in Sunday morning worship

LEADERSHIP TRAITS CONTINUED...

2. Devoted to FELLOWSHIP.
 - a. identifies needs in others
 - b. asks good, relevant questions.
 - c. listens to others' stories.
 - d. follows up.
 - e. models transparency with own life (sin, struggles, victories, joys).
 - f. encourages others in their spiritual journey.
 - g. lovingly confronts sin in others.
 - h. uses gifts in service of the church.
 - i. has successful experience leading small groups.
 - j. inclusive of peripheral people.
 - k. not quarrelsome.
3. Devoted to MISSION.
 - a. shares the gospel with others.
 - b. builds relationships with Christians and non-Christians (loves their neighbors).
 - c. serves local partners outside the church.
 - d. looks for ways to follow and partner with Jesus.
 - e. supports global missions through awareness, prayer, giving or going.

THE ROLE OF A LIFE GROUP LEADER

Our **life group** leaders will be responsible to...

- a. launch the group.
- b. organize the group re. time and place of meeting.
- c. monitor and contribute to group health.
- d. lead discussion and prayer.
- e. start and end group on time.
- f. do group follow-up when needed.
- g. sign the leader agreement.

3 KEYS TO LAUNCHING A LIFE GROUP

1. Pray, pray, pray. Ask God to show you whom to invite and that He would open their hearts and draw them to your group.
2. Invite people to your group: God doesn't send a **life group** stork to drop a couple of new small group members for you. You need to look for them! So as you pray, invite people from church, friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers.
3. Set a *launch date* and stick with it: Once you have prayed and invited people to your Small Group, set a launch date and stay faithful to it. If a start date is not solidified, the group launch can drag on and might never get off the ground. Just start it, keep praying, keep inviting, and let God add to the group who He will.

10 WAYS TO KILL A GROUP

1. Don't meet regularly.
2. Have too few members.
3. Have too many members.
4. Don't use a group agreement.
5. Don't deal with a problem member.

6. Allow prayer request time to become storytelling time.
7. Don't follow the guide.
8. Once the group is full - allow members to bring guests without clearing it with other members.
9. Ignore the personal needs of group members.
10. Never multiply to form a new group.

10 WAYS TO KEEP A GROUP ALIVE

1. Pray *for* group members daily (and pray *with* them regularly).
2. Invite new people to visit the group weekly (until it is full).
3. Contact group members regularly: thank them for coming to group (esp. first-time participants), follow up on something they've said, tell them that you're praying for them, text them to remind them when group is meeting, let them know you missed them.
4. Prepare for the group meeting. Listen to the Sunday message. Review the notes: the opening question, the additional readings, the study questions, and the personal application question.
5. Share the leadership. Use your gifts in service of the group – some lead, some are apprenticed, some host, some organize refreshments, socials, service initiatives, some lead the prayer time...
6. Plan group fellowship activities. Eat, work, and play together - outside of the regular group meeting.
7. Be committed to personal growth. Be devoted to GOD'S WORD, FELLOWSHIP, and MISSION.

8. Promote participation in the life of the church. Encourage group members to participate in Sunday a.m. worship, life group, ministry, and missional activity.

9. Celebrate change. Look for, identify, and encourage personal growth in members by celebrating positive changes in their lives.

10. End well. Start your **life group** gatherings light and end light. And, cooperatively craft a vision of a strong finish to the group/a positive closing to the end of a natural small group life cycle (12-24 months). Transition the groups as best as you can for the next season of **life groups**.

10 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEADING DISCUSSION

1. *Come to the study prepared.* Read the study guide. Ask God to help you understand and apply the message to your own life – so that you will be ready to talk about it with others.

2. *Pray for the members of your group before the study.* Invite the Holy Spirit to be at work in the group before, during, and after the group gathering.

3. *Begin on time.* Be respectful of everyone's time.

4. *Explain that the gatherings are meant to be discussions, not lectures.* Give everyone a chance to share their thoughts.

5. *Encourage more than one answer to each question.* A good question can have more than one possible answer – and each person has his or her unique perspective. Ask, "What do the rest of you think?" or "Anyone else?" until several people have responded.

6. *Affirm people's answers.* Use simple phrases such as, "That's insightful," "Good stuff!" "Excellent idea," or "I hadn't thought about it that way before" are enough to show people you value their input.

7. *Don't be afraid of silence.* Give people time to think.

8. *Resist the temptation to answer your own question.* Rephrase the question until the group understands what you are trying to ask. A group can become passive and silent if they think you will do most of the talking.

9. *Reframe tricky responses.* Ask, "What verses or experiences might lead you to think that?" or turn it to the group for their input by saying, "What do others think?"

10. *End on time.* Leave enough time for food, sharing, and prayer. Try not to "tack" good things on at the end.

LIFE GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

Every **life group** leader is asked to sign and commit to our **Life Group Leader Agreement** (see below).

LIFE GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

I commit...

- To grow in my faith as I seek to love Christ, love others, and help lead others to Christ.
- To adhere to our Mennonite Confession of Faith.
- To actively invite people to church and **life group**.
- To make choices and live a lifestyle that are both godly and "above reproach," knowing that my life represents my Lord, my family, and my church.
- To develop an Apprentice in my **life group** to be a future leader.
- To uphold unity within the church and within the group.
- To encourage people in my **life group** to serve in a ministry.
- To participate in ongoing leadership training.
- To continue to develop my leadership traits (see listing of Leadership Traits).
- To know and to understand and to promote the four connecting points of CCC: Connect to God (Sunday a.m. worship), Connect with Others (**life groups**), Connect to Ministry and Connect to the World (Child Sponsorships and Mexico Mission).

- To pray for my church leaders, my church, and my **life group** members.

Print Name: _____

Sign Name: _____

FAQ's ABOUT LIFE GROUPS

1. *What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?*

It will happen! Here is your response. "I appreciate that question(s) and I don't know the answer to that, but I will do my best (and ask you to do the same) to find out this week and get back to each other at our next group meeting if not beforehand."

2. *What if one individual wants to dominate our Small Group discussion time? Establish Rules Of Engagement: clear discussion guidelines.*

For example...

a. *What is said in our life group stays in our life group (confidentiality) - whether it is a prayer request or a discussion statement.*

b. *Please express your thoughts within 2- 3 minutes so everyone can participate.* If you feel a person dominates the discussion time then you, as the leader, must react to the situation positively. Find a place in the conversation asap. and say something like, "Thanks for that. I'd like to hear what some other folks might be thinking... or we can move onto a new subject." Try to graciously engage introverts by giving them a heads-up and by letting them weigh-into the conversation when they're ready to do so (usually later than sooner).

3. *How do I ask others to pray out loud in our group?*

Start with yourself. Ease into the public prayer carefully. Remember there are two things most people fear most in a **life group**: reading in front of others and praying in front of others. If you do ask someone to pray or read in front of others, please talk to them before your group time (if you can) to be sure it's all right.

4. *How much time do I need to devote as a life group leader?*

The average **life group** meeting takes about an hour and a half with an additional hour for preparation, phone calls, emails, texts etc. Keep in mind that you may need to meet one-on-one with some of your group members who might be struggling or are in need.

5. *What is an Apprentice?*

An Apprentice is someone in your life group who has leadership potential. Identify that person or persons and invest in them: meet with them, give them things to do within the group that they are gifted to do, encourage them with positive feedback. Sheep-dog them – and let pastoral staff know that you are training a leader – and when that leader might be ready to lead his or her own group.