

KICKING OFF YOUR LIFE GROUP: THREE OPTIONS

OPTION ONE: a 1-week kick-off

This might be the best option if your life group is largely intact from last year, and everyone knows each other reasonably well. It's still important to review the group commitment and reinforce the vision for your group. The downside of Option One is that you have to keep the intros a lot shorter. But if everyone already knows each other, this shouldn't be as much of a problem. Here's the basic flow, which would take about 90 minutes.

A. INTROS: 30 minutes

- ▶ If there's anyone new to your group, you should take time for all participants to do intros.
- ▶ Ideally, limit to about 3 minutes each, and make sure everyone shares, not just a 'spokesman/spokeswoman for the couple.').
- ▶ If your group is the same as last year, insert an icebreaker question here instead.

B. SETUP: 5 minutes

- ▶ Feel free to share a few personal thoughts to set enthusiasm for the year ahead.
- ▶ You might want to read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 and/or Philippians 2:1-4, and start with a brief prayer.

C. VIDEO: 8 minutes

- ▶ Watch the video *Circle Up Part 4* (the last one)

D. DISCUSSION: 20 minutes

- ▶ Here's some questions to create discussion (you don't have to use all of them!):
 - What's the best group/team you've ever been a part of? What made it so great?
 - Aside from the community itself, did that group help you grow individually too? If so, how?
 - George Gallup says, "Americans are among the loneliest people in the world." Why might that be? How is it harder in today's culture to find meaningful community?
 - The speaker in the video (Samer Massad) said that the difference in his group experiences wasn't based as much on the leader or the people in the group, but on something *he chose to do*. What was that? How did that help?
 - What's the difference between a community-consumer and a community-contributor?
- ▶ Read Romans 15:1-3
 - With verse 1 in mind, how important is 'chemistry' for a good community?
(Leader Note: The point here is that we're called to love people who are different than we are, and not simply to expect the group to be comprised of people we would naturally get along with or gravitate to.)
 - What 'attitude of Christ' are we called to exhibit amongst one another? (see v. 3)



All three options utilize the 'Circle Up' series from North Point Ministries, which can be found at www.anthology.study/circleup. Better yet, you can download the Anthology app to your Apple TV or Roku, and search for 'Circle Up.' If you do not have a computer or Apple TV/ Roku connected to your TV, Kevin can provide you with a DVD.

- ▶ Read Romans 15:5-7
- What would this look like 'lived out' in the coming year with this group? What might be some specific 'agreements' our group could make to foster this Romans-15 sort of community?

E. **GROUP AGREEMENT: 10 minutes**

- ▶ Have five volunteers read the five parts of the Group Agreement. Allow thoughts or discussion, and be prepared to share some of your own thoughts or rationale for the agreement.
- ▶ Tailor-make the agreement with some specifics for your group. This might include:
 - Night of week, time, and frequency of meeting
 - Ideas regarding structure of meeting (dinner, social events, etc.)
 - Who will host, and who will lead the study (same every week, or a shared approach?)
 - Group roles (Who schedules the child care? Who circulates the prayer requests?)
 - Other ideas pertinent to your group (You can share some of your logistical ideas here, like setting up a group text, or explaining how you'd like to do the groups' prayer time, etc.)

F. **STUDY PLANS: 5 minutes**

- ▶ You may already have a plan for what the group will be studying. If not, now's the time to discuss. You may want to come prepared with two or three options rather than an open brainstorm, to help give some tangible ideas; if you choose to keep the discussion more open-ended, you may need more than 5 minutes here.

G. **PRAYER: 15 minutes**

- ▶ Close the meeting with requests and prayer.

OPTION TWO: a 2-week kick-off

This option is probably better for new groups or groups with several new members, because it gives more time for discussion and getting to know each other, and it bears down a bit harder on the idea of 'making community' where relationships haven't already been established. Here's a possible flow:

WEEK 1 (about 90 minutes)

A. SETUP: 5 minutes

- ▶ Feel free to share a few personal thoughts to set enthusiasm for the year ahead.
- ▶ You might want to read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 and/or Philippians 2:1-4, and start with a brief prayer.

B. VIDEO: 6 minutes

- ▶ Watch the video *Circle Up Part 3*. STOP the video at the 6-minute mark.

C. DISCUSSION: 15 minutes

- ▶ Here's a couple questions to set up the intros:
 - The speaker (Chris Kim) said, 'The church can create a group, but you create community.' What do you think he means by that? What's the difference between a group and a community?
 - The video encouraged us to 'practice curiosity.' What does that mean?
- ▶ Read Romans 15:1-3
 - With verse 1 in mind, how important is 'chemistry' for a good community?
(Leader Note: The point here is that we're called to love people who are different than we are, and not simply to expect the group to be comprised of people we would naturally get along with or gravitate to.)
 - Verse 2 says that we're called to build each other up and pursue the good of our neighbor. In verse 3, how does Paul say that Jesus modeled that?

D. INTROS: 45 minutes

- ▶ Ideally, limit to about 5 minutes each, and make sure everyone shares, not just a 'spokesman/spokeswoman for the couple.'). If you don't get through everyone in the time allotted, you can continue the following week.

E. PRAYER: 15 minutes

- ▶ Close the meeting with requests and prayer.

WEEK 2 (about 70 minutes)

A. SETUP: 5 minutes

- ▶ Welcome and opening prayer.
- ▶ If some people didn't have a chance to share last week, add some time here for intros.

B. VIDEO: 8 minutes

- ▶ Watch the video *Circle Up Part 4*.

C. DISCUSSION: 20 minutes

- ▶ Here's a couple questions to follow the video:

- What's the best group/team you've ever been a part of? What made it so great?
- Aside from the community itself, did that group help you grow individually too? If so, how?
- George Gallup says, "Americans are among the loneliest people in the world." Why might that be? How is it harder in today's culture to find meaningful community?
- The speaker in the video (Samer Massad) said that the difference in his group experiences wasn't based as much on the leader or the people in the group, but on something *he chose* to do. What was that? How did that help?
- What's the difference between a community-consumer and a community-contributor?
- ▶ Read Romans 15:1-7
 - What does 'accept one another' mean, and how might it be different from how our culture might use those same words?
 - What 'attitude of Christ' (v. 5) are we called to exhibit amongst one another? (*notice v. 3*)
 - What would this passage look like 'lived out' in the coming year with this group? What might be some specific 'agreements' our group could make to foster this Romans-15 sort of community?

D. GROUP AGREEMENT: 15 minutes

- ▶ Have five volunteers read the five parts of the Group Agreement. Allow thoughts or discussion, and be prepared to share some of your own thoughts or rationale for the agreement.
- ▶ Tailor-make the agreement with some specifics for your group. This might include:
 - Night of week, time, and frequency of meeting
 - Ideas regarding structure of meeting (dinner, social events, etc.)
 - Who will host, and who will lead the study (same every week, or a shared approach?)
 - Group roles (Who schedules the child care? Who circulates the prayer requests?)
 - Other ideas pertinent to your group (You can share some of your logistical ideas here, like setting up a group text, or explaining how you'd like to do the groups' prayer time, etc.)

E. STUDY PLANS: 5 minutes

- ▶ You may already have a plan for what the group will be studying. If not, now's the time to discuss. You may want to come prepared with two or three options rather than an open brainstorm, to help give some tangible ideas; if you choose to keep the discussion more open-ended, you may need more than 5 minutes here.

F. PRAYER: 15 minutes

- ▶ Close the meeting with requests and prayer.

OPTION THREE: *a 4-week study*

This is the option intended by the Circle Up curriculum. If you'd like to spend more time discussing the purposes and vision for your group, this is a good route to take. You'd simply walk through the material as it's intended in the study. There is a study guide available (we have 2 copies to lend out). If you do the four-week option, it would be beneficial for each participant to have a study guide. They're \$9.99 each (a bit overpriced for what you get, but hey, the videos are free!). You'd need to ask people to pay for them themselves. We can get discounted rates for volume purchases, so let me know if you're interested and I can place one order for all the life groups that want them (as long as your group reimburses us!). One per couple would probably work fine.

<https://store.northpoint.org/collections/study-guides/products/circle-up-study-guide>

