



ST. ANDREWS AG

Life Groups

LEADER GUIDE

Table of Contents

3	Life Group Leader Guide
3	Why Life Groups
5	What a Life Group looks like
7	Your Role as a Life Group Leader
12	Important Documents
12	Leadership Commitment
13	Abuse Policy Acknowledgement



Why Life Groups

The purpose of Life Groups is to bring people together for the purposes of growing in faith and building community.

Here at St. Andrews AG, we want to connect every person to the **freedom** found through Jesus Christ. We believe this happens when we Encounter Grace, Discover Purpose, and Love on Mission. Life Groups is the Discover Purpose part of our mission. We believe that the purpose of all of humanity, especially Christians, is to be a disciple of Jesus and help others become disciples. The church in Acts gives us a format for discipleship with two elements: **Learning** and **Relationships**.

Acts 2:42 - *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*

Life change happens in the context of relationships.

James 5:16 - *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."*

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Life Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 - *"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."*

St. Andrews Life Group Model

We believe that our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We come together in Life Groups to be disciplined, build community, and care for others.

St. Andrews AG is a church **of** Life Groups, not a church **with** Life Groups.

Every Life Group will hold these values: **Connect, Protect, Grow.**

A Place to Connect

1 Cor. 9:22 - *"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."*

Life should not be lived alone. God created every human to be in community. Life Groups provides a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

A Place to Protect

1 John 3:16 - *"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."*

As we come together, God uses others to support and encourage each other. Life Groups should be a place where others don't just know your name, but care about the details of your life and support you in your walk with Christ.

A Place to Grow

Proverbs 27:17 - *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."*

We believe every person is created with God-given gifts to make a difference in the world. Life Groups is where spiritual growth happens, deepening our sense of discipleship, and looking more like Jesus.

What Life Groups Look Like

At St. Andrews, we use a free market approach to Life Groups. This means that we want people to gather around shared interests and where they are in their faith journey.

The leaders of Life Groups create groups based on their gifts or interests.

Group Structure

Life Groups follow a semester format: Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Groups can meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.

Groups can meet at the church (Sundays & Wednesdays), homes, parks, coffee shops, or any place that works for the group.

Types of Life Groups

Life Groups have two categories: **Learn and Connect**.

Learning based groups are centred around curriculums, books, or Bible studies.

Connect based groups are centred around an activity for the purposes of building relationships.

All groups, whether they are focused on learning or connecting, should have four elements:

1. Fellowship

A time for group members to talk and get to know each other.

2. Activity or Discussion

This varies based on the kind of group you are leading. It could be an activity like Frisbee or outreach or a discussion about a book or Sunday message.

3. Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

4. Spiritual Component

Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

Life Groups are NOT a place for:

- Business
- Personal Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics

Your Role As a Life Group Leader

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Life Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of St. Andrews to help care for people.

Eph. 4:11-13 - *"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."*

The primary role of a Life Group Leader is to help group members take steps in their walk with God. Remember: **Connect, Protect, Grow!**

Proverbs 27:23 - *"Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds."*

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some next steps you can help people take:

- Start attending Sunday services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Be baptized
- Complete Next Steps
- Join a Serve Team
- Start tithing
- Invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to church or a Life Group
- Become a Life Group Leader

How to be a successful Life Group Leader:

- Pray daily for the members of your group.
- Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
- Connect with group members between meetings. Encourage the members to connect with each other, as well.
- Have fun together by creating an enjoyable environment.
- Respect people's time by beginning and ending your group on time.
- Invite group members to attend church services and events.
- Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a foundation for our church and your Life Group.

2 Chronicles 7:14 - *"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

How to pray for your group

- Pray for any requests group members have.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

How to create good group dynamics

1. Set Expectations

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

2. Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About **70%** of talking should come from members and **30%** from the leader.

3. Keep discussions positive.

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or speak to a pastor to help you respond well.

4. Keep the conversation relevant to everyone.

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

5. Respect boundaries.

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Small Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.



Honor Code

As a St. Andrews AG Life Group leader, you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior. This should be the heart of your desire to serve in a leadership position here at St. Andrews AG.

While serving the Body of Christ as a Life Group Leader, you pledge to present a good appearance at all times. In both attire and behavior, you should strive to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations.

As Christians, the way we present ourselves can influence the way others perceive Christ. Our conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ, but should exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer and servant-leader.

Exemplifying the highest moral commitment, St. Andrews AG leaders are to maintain a disciplined life of Bible reading, prayer, and fasting. You must also refrain from such things as:

- Profanity
- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Gambling
- Indulging in alcoholic beverages
- Dishonest gain
- Illicit drugs
- Pornography
- Sexual immorality, and all behaviors which might cause Christ to grieve and others to stumble

By providing an example in speech and action, we encourage others to grow in Christ and become servant-leaders themselves. This is a way of life measured by the heart and commitment of each leader in the St. Andrews AG family. We should regard it as an essential part of our development, not as an imposition or restriction.

Abuse Policy Acknowledgement

I understand that St. Andrews Assembly of God is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults and that St. Andrews 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 a pastor. I also understand the 4 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 care giver if abuse is suspected. As a Small Group Leader, I agree to comply with this policy and report any suspected abuse to the staff person who oversees the area in which I serve.



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