



LEADER DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

OVERVIEW

BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADING

LOVE EACH PERSON IN GROUP

- You'll have to choose to love some of the men in your group.
- Some will be very different from you and some will have horrible sins in their past (or in their present).
- Pray for each person by name, asking God to open your heart and help you love them proactively.
- “Do they know how much you love God and love them?” is a good question to ask yourself throughout the process to gauge how well you are leading.

MAXIMIZE YOUR 1-ON-1s

- At the retreat, have everyone take notes during the sharing of stories.
- As soon as everyone has told their stories on the overnight retreat, start scheduling to meet with group members individually.
- At the retreat, most people will share events and beliefs that carry shame and give you clues to their views of their identity. The one-on-ones provide a powerful opportunity to help replace the shame-based beliefs that he is telling himself.
- The one-on-ones also help connect you on a deeper level relationally and provide opportunities to encourage potential areas of personal growth.
- Have a one-on-one with each group member within 45 days after the overnight retreat to process stories, affirm them, etc.

MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

- God will be at work in each person throughout the group
- It may not be at the pace or in the way you desire.
- Know that sometimes life change happens years after the group. A seed that is planted takes time to grow.

ENFORCE COMMITMENT LEVEL

- Your group members will rise or fall to the level of expectation set for them when expressed clearly with love. It is easier to start strong at the beginning.
- It can be difficult to enforce people being at every meeting, being on time, reading and ‘netting out’ every book, and completing assignments, but push yourself to confront and set a bar expecting full engagement.
- Our experience has shown that the primary “lesson learned” is that Mentor’s did not hold their guys accountable to the commitment they made affecting the efficacy of the experience.
- Always start on time. Ask the group to treat these meetings with the same promptness they would if meeting with their boss or a client.
- Demonstrate a fair balance of grace and expectation.



BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADING CONT.

PRIORITIZE LISTENING OVER TALKING

- Offer thoughts at the end of a discussion, amplify points as they come up, and ask good questions.
- Avoid lecturing, and don't tell long and/or irrelevant stories.
- Ask good questions, follow emotions, be okay with silence, and talk less.

MODEL VULNERABILITY

- Your faith story sets the tone for everyone in the group.
- When we attempt to make ourselves look better, we miss the chance to give God the glory he deserves for changing us and making us new.
- Model vulnerability through sharing, not just the 90 percent that you would share with anyone, but even your last 10 percent, setting the precedent for the men in your group.
- If some things that are shared are not uncomfortable for you or your apprentices, you are playing it too safe.

SHOW CAUTION WHEN GIVING ADVICE

- When you give advice, you unknowingly take on responsibility for a decision's outcome.
- Dig out or point them to relevant Scriptures, and share a similar experience you may have had.
- Share what you did and why it worked (or didn't), but let them figure out what to do on their own.
- Allow space for apprentices to practice encouraging and speaking into each other's lives.

BE AVAILABLE

- Similar to how Jesus spent much of his time with his disciples just "doing life" with them, open your life to these men over the nine months.
- If group members feel like you are too busy for them, they will distance themselves, significantly limiting the fruitfulness of your time together.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to intentionally pour into these men for a season by prioritizing the time you spend with them.

CREATE A SAFE, CONSISTENT ENVIRONMENT

- Groups will typically meet in your home. Some groups will meet at the church, but history has shown that more effective community is built by allowing men to see you where you live.
- For the most part, do not feel obligated to prepare food.
- Sundays (1pm–4pm) or any evening Sunday through Thursday (7pm–10pm) are common meeting times.



LEADER DEVELOPMENT GROUPS OVERVIEW

Our desire is for the men of our church to have exceptional models of leadership and to experience authentic community with other men. We want to see men grow in their faith and become future influencers within the local church.

DESCRIPTION

- Comprised of two mentors and six to eight apprentices.
- Meet once a month (3-hour sessions) for nine months.
- Have one overnight retreat.
- Have one-on-one meetings between group members.
- Have one-on-one meetings between the mentor and each group member.

PRIMARY WINS

- Have a clear understanding of his identity as a son of God with a greater understanding of grace.
- Be intentionally tracking with another man in his life who he is fully known by.
- Step into a spiritual leadership role at our church within nine months of completing the group.

VISION

Our vision is to be a community of men who are fully alive. We want to develop leaders and create environments that result in men who are rooted in Jesus, fully known by a few, and engaged in their unique callings.

We want to give future leaders a model of exceptional leadership and authentic community in order to increase the quantity and quality of male leaders at our churches. We will do that by modeling humility, teachability, curiosity, and intentionality for the next generation of leaders. And they will experience the power and freedom of authentic community so they can one day create that for others.

These new leaders, in turn, will step into leadership roles within our church, and the ripples of their influence will shape a culture of men through their leadership.



PRIOR TO LAUNCH

BEFORE KICKOFF MEETING CHECKLIST

1. Attend Mentor Meeting #1

(4-6 weeks prior to launch)

- Meet the other mentors.
- Discuss the “why” and “history” of LDG.
- Discuss the primary goals and wins.
- Discuss how it fits within the church vision/mission/model.

3. Send Initial Email to the Group

- A template for Email #1 can be found.
- The email will include an invitation to join the group, logistics about the group, mentor bios, and a link to the Group Commitment.

5. Prepare for Initial Launch Meeting

- Coordinate your calendar with your co-mentor. One of the primary goals for the initial meeting is to set the calendar for the year, so you will both need to have a strong understanding of your availability over the next nine months.
- Plan the agenda and create a timeline for the session.
- Pray for each group member.

2. Attend Mentor Meeting #2

(3 weeks prior to launch)

- Receive spreadsheet overview and binder.
- Discuss best practices.
- Discuss meeting details.
- Learn the “nuts and bolts.”
- Receive roster of group members.

4. Send Second Email to the Group

- A template for Email #2 can be found.
- For those who respond that they are in the group, send a follow-up email to provide them further vision for the group.



SAMPLE EMAIL #1

Subject: Congratulations! You have been selected for a Leader Development Group.

To: All potential group members

Hi Men,

Congratulations!

You have been chosen to participate in our Leader Development Group, launching on _____. I can't wait to begin meeting together. Please take a few minutes to read this email. It's pretty long, but all the information is important.

Logistics:

Our initial meeting will be held on _____ at _____ and will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m., so please arrive a few minutes early. We'll meet in Room _____ located at _____. We will wrap up at 9:30 p.m.

This group will involve reading one book per month, an overnight retreat, three-hour monthly meetings, homework assignments, Scripture memory, and relational investments. The materials we'll use and the books you'll receive each month will cost about \$200 in total (about \$20 per session). Let me know if that's an issue and we can work something out. Dress will always be casual for our sessions. Also, one of the sessions will include a group dinner with spouses.

Signed Agreement:

At the first meeting, come prepared to sign a copy of the Group Commitment, which you can review at groupleaders.org/ldg-groupcommitment. If you're married, review this commitment with your wife prior to coming to group. We want her to know what you're being asked to do and be totally supportive of the time you're going to invest in the group—with your reading, homework, and time away from home.

Calendar:

One of the most important things we'll do at our first meeting is set our schedule for the entire season. Once these dates are negotiated and set, they are unlikely to change. So you'll need to know the dates of your upcoming vacations, family reunions, anniversaries, small group meetings, work commitments, etc. Scheduling can be difficult for groups, so come with hard data but a soft hand . . . we'll have to make some compromises to get everyone on the same page.

Discretion:

It's important to know that you've been intentionally selected. While we want you to be glad to be a part of the group, know there will be disappointment from the men who were not selected. Please be sensitive to that.



SAMPLE EMAIL #1 CONT.

Let us know . . .

Please “Reply All” to this email if you are in. Include a brief bio in your reply, similar to our bios below, so that we can get to know one another a little bit.

If this is not the right season for you, let us know you won’t be participating so we can open the spot to someone on the waiting list.

Finally, I’d ask that you start praying for us as we lead, praying for each of the men in the group, and praying for yourself—that God would do something spectacular in our midst. He loves us so much, and I believe he wants to change each of us for the better. And who knows—God might use this group as a huge turning point for you.

Let’s get it started!

John Doe and Jim Smith

Bios:

John Doe

- Age: 47
- Home Life: I’ve been married for 24 years to Jane. We have three children: Ray (19), Paul (17), and Isaiah (14).
- Where I’ve lived: I grew up in Arkansas and later lived in Dallas and Detroit. I moved to Atlanta after college.
- School: I attended the University of Arkansas (business major).
- Work: I’ve worked in marketing for most of my career, and I currently work as a marketing professor at Georgia State.
- Church Involvement: My family attends Browns Bridge Church. Jane and I have been in many Community Groups. We are currently in one and we also lead a Starting Point group. Ray and Paul serve on the UpStreet production team.

Jim Smith

- Age: 49
- Home Life: I’ve been married for 20 years to Joan. We have three children: Roy (19), Raul (17), and Hosea (14).
- Where I’ve lived: I grew up in Alabama and moved to Atlanta after college.
- School: I went to the University of Alabama (engineering major).
- Work: I am a mechanical engineering professor at Georgia Tech.
- Church Involvement: My family attends Browns Bridge Church. Joan and I have been in many Community Groups. We currently lead a Starting Point group. Roy and Raul serve on the Guest Services team on Sundays.



SAMPLE EMAIL #2

Subject: What we're hoping for you!
To: All confirmed group members

Hey guys,

Just wanted to say again how excited I am to begin meeting together. Here's one more email before we have our first meeting. I want lay out some of the many things I'm hoping for you. Here are ways I'm asking God to work in your life through this group. I want you to:

Get To Know God Better

- by having a grace-oriented and aligned theology of who God is.
- by establishing spiritual disciplines like prayer and engaging with Scripture.

Become a Better Version of Yourself

- by claiming your identity as a fully forgiven, loved, and adopted son of a perfect heavenly Father.
- by growing in character and integrity.

Have Authentic Community

- by intentionally interacting with other men.
- by feeling the freedom to be fully known.

Be Further Equipped for Leadership

- by clarifying your future leadership and ministry roles.
- by looking for ways to intentionally apprentice other men.

Strengthen Your Relationships

- by understanding God's perspective on marriage and learning how to be a better husband.
- by finding more fulfillment and enjoyment as a father.

See you on _____.



CORE ELEMENTS OF LDG SESSIONS

MONTHLY FOCUS

This is a 5–10 minute personalized discussion about the monthly focus on the verse, selection of Scripture, and prayer. Mentor leads the first three and the apprentices are given responsibility to do the last five.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN FACILITATING THE MONTHLY FOCUS:

This is not a teaching devotional. The facilitator shares from a personal perspective:

- what stood out
 - what was learned
 - what happened in his heart in relation to the monthly focus
-

The facilitator will ask 2–3 men to recite the memory verse.

- Process difficulties or reasons why they were not able to memorize the verse during the month.
 - This serves as accountability and maintains an expectation of challenging each other to learn how to incorporate personal disciplines into our lives.
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Wrap up the time with a prayer.

MONTHLY QUESTION

- This revolves around the primary question built into the monthly meeting.
- Leverage the monthly question to align the relational conversation with the focus of the month, as this will help facilitate more intentional community.
- Lead with transparency.
- Model and help the men process more of what is going on in their hearts, not just in their calendars. This is a safe space and the best place for men to experience authentic community, but they can only experience that if what is shared is more significant and at a heart level.



CORE ELEMENTS OF LDG SESSIONS

MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

- Ask how their assignment went. If someone seems eager to share, let him go first.
- Go around the table and let each man share his experience.
- If someone didn't do the assignment, let him know that you'll be calling on him next month. Make a note and don't forget to follow through next time.
- Affirm the men who are engaging well and growing from the process.
- Summarize the reason for or goal of the assignment.
- Get the group members to think about the importance of implementing the habits and truths behind the assignments into their lives, and ask how members can help each other grow.

MONTHLY BOOK NET-OUT

- The purpose of this time is to leverage the content in the book for personal growth and life application.
- Start each month by asking if it was anybody's favorite book or how it had a significant impact on him. If it was someone's favorite, let him to be the first to talk about the content.
- If someone voices that he didn't like the book or author, refocus by asking if there was something about the book that was a good takeaway.
- Don't be afraid to ask specific men what they think. Certain guys will always want to share, and others will usually not speak up.
- Engage the quiet group members, as they usually are sitting on the nuggets of wisdom. Keep in mind, however, that many times the quiet members can better verbalize their thoughts after hearing from others first.
- Close out this time by sharing your thoughts—both from their takeaways and yours. Share any other points you want to make at the end—principles, quotes, or real life examples.
- Focus on life change and personal application by asking the group what they want to apply after they share what they learned.

MONTHLY HOMEWORK

- Discuss the next month's assignment, book, verse, and confirm the meeting schedule.
- Pass out copies of assignments and answer any questions about what is coming up or is expected.
- Delegate any upcoming responsibilities.

