



LEADER ORIENTATION

2026-2027



LIFE GROUPS DEFINED

LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL

The last thing Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 28 was a commissioning to all Christians to be and make disciples. This call is central to our faith and a call for all Christians to think and act like Him and help others do the same. Discipleship is not just for church staff—it is the responsibility of all believers. As followers of Christ, we are called to grow in our own faith while also helping others grow in theirs. This is an ongoing process that happens in every aspect of life, not just within the church building.

- **Every believer is called to be a disciple.**
- **Every believer is called to make disciples.**

As Christians, discipleship is not something we do – it's who we are!

WHY LIFE GROUPS?

The early Church wasn't just about large gatherings; it was deeply personal and relational. Acts 2:42-47 shows how believers met in both large groups and in homes, devoting themselves to small, relational communities. This wasn't just a program; it was a way of living as the body of Christ.

The New Testament shows that Discipleship happens in relational community. Jesus modeled this by investing in His disciples through personal relationships. They did not just meet in a class; they lived life together. The early Church continued this model, growing through deep community with one another. Discipleship in relationships moves faith beyond knowledge into real life, enabling the Church to extend Christ's love into neighborhoods, workplaces, and daily interactions. It also empowers believers to use their gifts for God's mission.

Life Groups are all about **discipleship in community**. Through Life Groups, we experience a caring community that strengthens faith, deepens relationships, and extends the mission of Jesus into the world.

LIFE GROUPS DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

At Woodside, we define discipleship through four key aspects that shape a fully devoted follower of Christ:

1. **Identity** – Discipleship begins with knowing who you are in Christ. A secure identity in Him provides the foundation for all spiritual growth.
2. **Worship** – Growing in relationship with God through prayer, Scripture, devotion, and service. Worship is both a personal pursuit and a communal expression.
3. **Community** – Connecting with others in authentic relationships, marked by care, encouragement, and shared growth.
4. **Mission** – Extending the love of Christ by making new disciples in our neighborhoods and networks.

Having our Identity in Christ is central to who we are as Christians. We express that identity through Worship, Community and Mission

Our goal is for Life Groups to embody all these elements.

Life Groups are not just Bible studies or just care groups; they are spiritual families growing in relationship with God, building supportive communities that serve together, and reaching out to make more disciples. By fostering spiritual family on mission, we create spaces where relationships thrive, and growth and outreach happen naturally within your life and community.

LIFE GROUP LOGISTICS

HOW IS A LIFE GROUP ORGANIZED?

Just like the kingdom of God, Life Groups are diverse, but they all have the following things in common:

LED BY A LEADER (OR CO-LEADERS): Our Life Groups are facilitated and coordinated by one or more leaders. This keeps the group's gatherings organized, on-track, and on mission with balancing worship, community, & mission. See page 2.

IDENTITY OF A LIFE GROUP: A Life Group is a group of people committed to belonging as spiritual family, growing as disciples, and reaching their neighbors and networks with the gospel. A spiritual family is defined by living out of their identity in Christ and balancing expressions of worship, community, and mission.

TYPES OF LIFE GROUPS: All Life Groups are family based, meaning that they are organized by household type (Singles, Married, Young Families, Etc.). In the same way, the church is made up of different types of families. We highly encourage Life Groups to incorporate a variety of household types. We call these "Multi-Generational" Life Groups.

SIZE: Life Groups are a minimum of 3 households (recommended up to 20 adults).

LOCATION: Our preference is that Life Groups would meet in a home. The early church was oriented around the temple and the home. Our homes are the places where our faith in Christ is lived out in deeply personal ways and where community can most effectively be modeled for others. On occasion, some Life Groups will meet in coffee shops, on campus, or in a specified meeting area that works well for group members. Feel free to brainstorm with us to assess the best meeting place for your Life Group.

FREQUENCY: Life Groups commit to meeting a minimum of twice a month to build and maintain strong foundations and relationships.

STUDIES: We recommend that Life Groups utilize the Sermon Discussion Guides created by Woodside. These guides are created to help groups dive deeper into the passages from the Bible that are being talked about on Sunday mornings. Additional studies can be chosen with prior approval from the Life Group Director or Campus Pastor at each location. In addition, all Life Groups will be asked to participate in churchwide studies.

LIFE GROUP EXPECTATIONS

LEADER EXPECTATIONS

Leaders set the tone, direction, and familial culture of a Life Group. Leaders are disciple makers, shepherds and multipliers. As a Life Group Leader, we want to live lives worthy of the gospel and live lives worthy of imitation. Paul said imitate me as I imitate Christ ([1 Cor 11:1](#)). We are not perfect examples to people, but we are living ones. People don't just listen to our words; they watch our lives. We don't expect leaders to be perfect or have it all together. However, we do expect that they love and pursue Jesus, his Church, and meet certain qualifications.

- Mature and growing disciple of Jesus, and well-grounded in Scripture
- Member of Woodside Bible Church
- Committed to the purpose and values of Woodside Bible Church
- Genuine love for people along with demonstrated relationship skills
- Ability to both challenge and encourage others in their walks with the Lord
- Humble demeanor and teachable spirit; consistent and reliable
- Good verbal skills and possess the ability to communicate with warmth and graciousness in such a way that is clear and understandable
- Willing to be judged with greater strictness as a leader who is communicating the Word in the church (James 3:1)
- Ability to lead in a small group setting

In order to lead a Life Group, we ask that a leader commit to the following:

- Communicate with your Life Group - email, text, or call your members, send calendar updates and prayer requests, follow-up with Life Group interest cards.
- Prepare for your Life Group time - review materials, pray for your members, prepare your home
- Attend Life Group Leader trainings
- Communicate with the Woodside Life Groups Team
- Take weekly attendance and maintain the group's online roster
- Multiply leaders within your Life Group
- Cultivate a culture of spiritual family balanced around worship, community, & mission
- Lead a community based on the values of Woodside Bible Church – Truth, Goodness, & Beauty
- Commit to meeting as a Life Group a minimum of twice a month
- Participate in opportunities to serve as a group at your campus
- Be intentional about leading your Life Group members to reach their neighbors and networks with the Gospel through service and relationship

MY LIFE GROUP PLAN

LIFE GROUP ESSENTIALS

The format for your Life Group is up to you, just be sure to balance worship, community, and mission as a part of your gatherings.

Use the below information to help you write a brief description of what you'll do when you get together.

ALL OF OUR GROUPS:

- **STUDY THE WORD (Worship):** Life Groups provide an opportunity to grow in God's Word. This means creating a good balance between Bible study and practical life application.
- **PRAY (Worship/Community):** Be intentional about encouraging and supporting one another through prayer. Take time to pray collectively and commit to praying for one another throughout the week.
- **CONNECT & SHARE (Community):** Allow your Group to mingle and catch up on highs/lows from their previous week. Create opportunities for your members to get to know one another and share what's going on in their lives.
- **SERVE (Community/Mission):** There are many ways to serve or support a member within your Life Group, find and fill a need within the community, or volunteer to serve at an outreach put on by the church. Relational evangelism is the most effective form of living on mission as those in your Life Group look to serve people whom the Lord has already put within their spheres and influence (neighbors and networks).

SOME OF OUR GROUPS:

- **EAT TOGETHER (Community):** Some groups enjoy coffee, a light snack, or even a meal when they get together.
- **MULTIPLY (Mission):** Some Life Groups grow so large that they find the need to multiply and create a new group.

OUR STRONGEST GROUPS:

- **DO LIFE TOGETHER (Worship/Community/Mission):** Whether it's sharing an activity together, organizing a trip, or simply being there for one another through life's biggest events. Our goal is for all of our Life Groups to live on mission together and have FUN.

When we get together, my Life Group will:

MY LIFE GROUP PLAN

LEADING A LIFE GROUP WITH KIDS

Life Groups are meant to reflect our families, and let's face it, sometimes our families are a little chaotic! So how do we grow closer to God and closer together with a slew of children running amuck?

Below are some practical and effective ideas to help your Life Group stay organized and on mission, plus it will help you fill out the blank above.

MAKE IT HAPPEN: The one and only rule: It doesn't have to be perfect. Anyone with children has experienced the hard seasons along with the good! As the old saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child." So, do yourself a favor, let go of control and invite your village to help make it happen.

MAKE A TRADE: Simply take turns watching the kids. If you have 6 couples in your group, you're only up to bat every sixth meeting. That's more than fair! Some Life Groups trade childcare with other groups. We have friends in another group who alternate having guys' nights and girls' nights. Even date nights! You make the rules. Feel empowered to get creative.

MAKE AN INVESTMENT: Bite the bullet and pay two or three young adults you trust to love on your little ones. This has been a favorite for most Life Groups with kids. It's nice to have a couple of hours where the kid-chaos is contained, and the adults can connect without interruption. Some Life Groups even keep the kids at one family's home and host the adults at another!

MAKE DISCIPLES: Before banishing the kids to the basement or sending them outside to run around, gather them together and include them in the beginning of your study. Review the main ideas of the lesson with them in a way that is easy to understand and ask 2 to 3 questions that the little ones can answer. For elementary age kids and above connect with your Life Group Director for easy resources that you can utilize at your meetings.

MAKE IT VIRTUAL: A few Life Groups choose to meet on Zoom every-other-week after their kids go to bed. They have a focused hour of discussion and prayer as just adults. Then once or twice a month they meet in person to have a fun family gathering. They focus on building community and building into the kid's by doing family devotionals.

MAKE IT FUN: Plan family nights. Grill burgers. swing babies. and play corn hole. Serve meals together at your local shelter. Go swimming. Go out to ice cream Have fun!

If there are kids in my Life Group, we will:

MY LIFE GROUP PLAN

YOUR MISSION & VISION

Life Groups are more than simply a bible study or social gathering. We were tasked by Jesus on a mission to seek and save the lost, to make disciples of all nations, and confront injustice with the good news of Christ. Before people can follow you on this mission, you've got to know where you're going. Your Life Group Plan will become your roadmap to a successful Life Group.

We want your Life Group to fully balance **Worship, Community, & Mission**. Take some time to pray and ask God what He might do through your Life Group this next season.

Use the questions below to uncover your Life Group mission vision.

How will you specifically serve as a spiritual leader in your Life Group?

What will be your Life Group's patterns: when will you meet / how frequently will you meet / what is the plan for these meetings. See pages 4-5 for some practical ideas.

What will be your Life Group's mission-vision?

Examples: We will make an impact on the non-churched families on our kids' sports teams. We will make significant spiritual impact on the medical professionals we work with. We will intentionally pray for our neighbors and people in our networks who don't yet know Jesus

MY LIFE GROUP PLAN

FILLING YOUR LIFE GROUP

While we offer opportunities for people to sign up to join a Life Group at church and through our website, the best Life Group relationships start with an invitation.

Here are some questions that will give you ideas for filling your Life Group.

Who do you already know that you can invite to be a part of your Life Group?

Who do you serve with at church that might be interested in joining a Life Group?

Are there people you have shared interests with that might want to join your group (friends from the gym, a class, or hobby group)?

What familiar faces do you see at church each Sunday? Consider introducing yourself to someone who regularly attends church with you and invite them to join your group.

LIFE GROUP LEADER COMMITMENT

Objective:

To serve and lead a Life Group that exists to glorify God by making disciples (WBC Mission).

Qualifications:

- Mature and growing disciple of Jesus, and well-grounded in Scripture.
- Member of Woodside Bible Church.
- Committed to the purpose and values of Woodside Bible Church.
- Genuine love for people along with demonstrated relationship skills.
- Ability to both challenge and encourage others in their walks with the Lord.
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- Willing to be judged with greater strictness as a leader who is communicating the Word in the church (**James 3:1**).
- Ability to lead in a small group setting.

Expectations:

- I will submit to the leadership of my Life Group Director and/or Campus Pastor in matters pertaining to the direction and details involved with leading a Life Group at my campus. It is understood that any significant changes or suggestions would be discussed with the church staff and leadership so unity is maintained, and the mission of WBC would be furthered.
- All curriculum decisions need prior approval by my Life Group Director and/or Campus Pastor.
- I intend to do my best to create a culture of spiritual family balanced around Worship, Community, & Mission.
- I will uphold the five asks of a WBC Member: (1) Word, (2) Worship, (3) Groups, (4) Generosity, (5) Serve.
- I intend to help build a community that upholds the values of Woodside Bible Church:

Truth, Goodness, Beauty

- I commit to taking attendance for our Life Group meetings and maintaining our online roster.
- I commit to making sure my Life Group meets a minimum of twice a month.
- I commit to participating in opportunities to serve as a group at my campus.
- I intend to help my Life Group Members reach their neighbors and networks with the Gospel through service and relationship.
- I am open to developing more personal discipleship meetings with those interested.

As someone who aspires to lead a Woodside Life Group, I covenant to carry the responsibilities listed above for the term of one (1) year as a Group Leader.

LIFE GROUP LEADER COPY – KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

LIFE GROUP LEADER COMMITMENT

Objective:

To serve and lead a Life Group that exists to glorify God by making disciples (WBC Vision) as we help others belong to Christ, grow in Christ and reach the world for Christ (WBC Mission).

Qualifications:

- Mature and growing disciple of Jesus, and well-grounded in Scripture.
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Signature

Date