

# STARTER GROUP LEADER GUIDE

## next steps

- 1) Contact your director and inform him/her of the group's next step and any group members that may not be continuing.
- 2) If the group chooses to continue, plan on taking a break between studies and do something fun together.
- 3) Fill out a new covenant so group members can reaffirm or change the guidelines for the group. The group should plan on meeting for an additional 10-22 months.
- 4) Discuss curriculum options with your director. We strongly suggest you choose a curriculum that is 6-8 weeks in length and easy to facilitate. Go to the Group Curriculum Guide website at [www.groupcurriculum.org](http://www.groupcurriculum.org) to find recommended curriculum and read reviews from other leaders.
- 5) Plan on attending the next Community Group Leader Orientation when it is offered. The next session will be announced in the bulletin or can be confirmed by calling the Community Group's office.
- 6) Congratulations! You are now a fully-functioning community group!

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If you have questions and you connected at a Buckhead Church GroupLink, please contact [communitygroups@buckheadchurch.org](mailto:communitygroups@buckheadchurch.org) or call (404) 814-7073..



## DEAR STARTER GROUP LEADER,

Thank you for your willingness to facilitate your group. Listed below are a few important principles we believe will help you successfully lead your group over the next 8 weeks. We've also provided you a week-by-week guide for leading the group using the starter study. Your director will be checking in on your progress, so please let him/her know of any challenges, successes or questions. And again, thanks for leading!

## FACILITATING THE GROUP

**1) PRIORITIZE RELATIONALLY:** The goal of the group over the next 8 weeks is for you to become well acquainted with each other, not simply to complete a curriculum. At the end of the 8 weeks, your group will determine if the relational chemistry exists to the point that you want to continue on as a group. While studying a curriculum is an important part of the group experience, be sure you prioritize connecting relationally over curriculum during the next 8 weeks.

**2) STAY PREDICTABLE:** During the starter period, we strongly encourage your group to meet every week on an agreed upon day and at an agreed upon time. Frequently changing the meeting day and time is a prescription for failure.

**3) FILL OUT A COVENANT:** Be sure your group reviews and completes the covenant for the starter period. This will help clarify the goals and expectations of the group and allow everyone to start with the same understanding.

**4) START LIGHT/END LIGHT:** Start each week with 15-20 minutes of fellowship and refreshments before you move into the more intense elements of Bible study and prayer. This will allow the group to reconnect relationally each week before you dive into the curriculum. After discussing the study and praying together, end the meeting with additional fellowship and refreshments. This will allow you to end each week on a relational note.

**5) HAVE FUN:** We want the group to be an enjoyable and an encouraging experience. Make sure laughter is a part of the meeting every week.

## USING THE CURRICULUM:

1) The Starter Group study is a something everyone will benefit from regardless of spiritual maturity. Remember that as a starter group, your main goal is to get to know one another and hopefully lay the foundation for a successful community group. This curriculum is an effective tool to help you build this foundation if you use it correctly.

2) Don't teach...facilitate. Your primary job is to create an environment where people feel comfortable and keep the meeting generally on track. Leading a small group is not about you answering all the questions for the group. In fact, you will find your group is most successful when the members do most of the talking.

3) Cultivate discussion. The ideas of the group members are what will make the small group meeting successful. The most valuable thing you can do as a leader is to get people to share their thoughts. Since you are using a video curriculum, be aware that the video portion of the study may cause some people to shift into listening mode. Your job as a leader is to help get all the members engaged to create a richer discussion.

4) Take time at the beginning of each meeting to reflect on the previous week's lesson. Make notes and follow up on individual members' comments from one week to the next. Follow up on the 'What Will You Do?', 'Think About It', and 'Changing Your Mind' sections. Give group members time to share what they learned from doing the weekly homework. This will help foster a sense of belonging and care within the group and provide a level of accountability for completing the homework each week.

5) Each lesson contains key Scripture verses in the 'Changing Your Mind' section. Make reading the verses as a group a part of each meeting, and take advantage of opportunities to challenge members to memorize these key passages of Scripture.

6) Encourage members to pray and encourage each other from week-to-week on issues that arise in the group. This is how you will begin to build authentic community within your group and help encourage spiritual growth for yourself and the other members.

## WEEKLY OBJECTIVES

**WEEK 1 OBJECTIVE:** Start relationally and get to know one another. Start the group off by doing an activity together that will help break the ice. Having dinner together is always an easy way to start your first meeting.

**ICEBREAKER:** Ask each member their name, how long they've been at the church and why they want to be in a group.

**CURRICULUM:** None

- Start telling your stories by asking the group to identify 3 people that have played a significant role in their life, and then continue with 3 events and 3 places that help tell their story. People should be free to share as little or as much as they want since some members may not be Christians. Aim for getting through half the group members' stories in the first week.
- As the leader, you set the tone so plan on sharing first.

**WEEK 2 OBJECTIVE:** Finish telling each other your stories and discuss expectations for the group.

**ICEBREAKER:** What would be a great vacation for you and why?

**CURRICULUM:** None

- Pick up where you left off last week and allow the group members to finish telling their stories.
- Ask each member what their expectations are for being in the group.
- Review the community group covenant values and goals and discuss any expectations that are different from those of the group members.
- Determine the guidelines for the group, then complete the guidelines section of the covenant and ask members to sign it.

**WEEK 3 OBJECTIVE:** Continue getting to know each other. Discuss Session 1. Review the Leader's Guide Session notes for Session 1 in the back of the workbook.

**ICEBREAKER:** People might be surprised to find out that I \_\_\_\_\_.

**CURRICULUM:** Session 1

**WEEK 4 OBJECTIVE:** Continue getting to know each other and continue your study and discussion of session 2. Review the Leader's Guide Session notes for Session 2 in the back of the workbook.

**ICEBREAKER:** What day of your life would you most like to relive and why?

**CURRICULUM:** Session 2

**WEEK 5 OBJECTIVE:** Continue getting to know each other and continue your study and discussion of session 3. Review the Leader's Guide Session notes for Session 3 in the back of the workbook.

**ICEBREAKER:** What is one thing a lot of people assume about you that you wish they wouldn't?

**CURRICULUM:** Session 3

**WEEK 6 OBJECTIVE:** Continue getting to know each other and continue your study and discussion of session 4. Review the Leader's Guide Session notes for Session 4 in the back of the workbook.

**ICEBREAKER:** I am most like my Mom and Dad when I \_\_\_\_\_?

**CURRICULUM:** Session 4

**WEEK 7 OBJECTIVE:** Discuss your next step as a group. While we hope every group wants to continue, we know some will not. Remember your group members have an option to leave. Review the Leader's Guide Session notes for Session 5 in the back of the workbook.

**ICEBREAKER:** In what area of your life would you like greater peace and why?

**CURRICULUM:** Session 5

**WEEK 8 OBJECTIVE:** Congratulations on making it 8 weeks! Review with the group the next step and discuss continuing on as a community group. Review the Leader's Guide Session notes for Session 6 in the back of the workbook.

**ICEBREAKER:** An emotion I often feel, but don't usually express is \_\_\_\_\_.

**CURRICULUM:** Session 6