Crossroads Church is Small Groups

Small groups are intentional efforts to create an atmosphere that causes believers and non-believers to grow in their understanding and application of God’s direction in our lives. Small Groups can form and meet in a variety of settings, centered around a number of interests, goals, or tasks. LIFE (Living In Fellowship Every day) Groups is our umbrella term for all of our different types of small groups.

**LIFE GROUPS MISSION:** To encourage people to participate in small gatherings of people where an atmosphere is created that causes believers and non-believers to develop great relationships with one another and growth in their understanding of God and application of His Word in their lives.

Crossroads has different types of Small Groups which meet under the umbrella of our L.I.F.E. Groups Ministry: men’s groups, women’s groups, support groups, discipleship groups, study groups, affinity groups, ministry groups, etc.

**Why LIFE Groups at Crossroads?**
They are the primary place for pastoral care in this growing congregation. It is in a LIFE Group that you can have the closeness with others that positions you to meet the needs of people and see your own needs met by others. They are the main means of biblical togetherness. They are the place where personal transformation is most likely to occur.

Throughout the Bible, community is a theme. God has always been calling out a people for Himself, beginning with His first creation and continuing with Israel and the New Testament church. Even when the Jews were dispersed among enemy nations during times of captivity, they organized themselves into groups and ultimately formed synagogues, where they could serve one another and carry out their beliefs.

In Acts 2, the first century church met in temple courts (Sunday morning worship) and in house to house (home group) settings. These new church communities began as small groups, just as Jesus had modeled with the 12 (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:12-19).

Over 50 Biblical “one anothers” admonish us to be closely involved with a few others (home groups) in order that we might learn and imitate attitudes and behaviors that characterize God’s household – the community of believers.

**LIFE GROUPS OVERVIEW**

We believe that life-transformation will most often occur in a small-group setting. It is in smaller, more intimate groups that we are most likely to ask questions, to reveal our struggles, to ask for prayer (and to pray for others). It is in a group of less than a dozen that we are more likely to give our thoughts about the Scripture or topic we’re discussing.

At Crossroads, we believe LIFE Groups are essential to your spiritual development and growth. Within a LIFE Group you can actually experience all 4 components of our Vision – you can experience the LOVE
of God as you get to know Him intimately, GROW as you experience true community with other believers and build good spiritual habits into your life, learn to SERVE others and God, and develop the confidence to take the message of grace and GO into the world to share Christ with others.

We have a variety of types of LIFE Groups:

✓ **Affinity Groups:** people gather around a common interest. Examples: bowling, basketball, hunters, quilters, exercise, music, techies. You gather to enjoy the common interest, but also make sure to share a scripture, talk about what is going on in your life, and pray together.

✓ **Ministry Groups:** Are you already involved in a ministry or do you want to be? Why not take some time when you are together to talk about some spiritual things and pray for one another and for your ministry. If you want to have even more time for your group, meet outside of your ministry schedule time-frame.

✓ **Discipleship Groups:**
  - These groups are focused on pursuing what it means to be a follower of Jesus, usually using a study-guide or video curriculum. Bible Study groups (short-term or on-going) are another example of Discipleship groups.
  - **We have a class called ROADMAPS, that serves as the required entry point for those involved in volunteering for ministries and for becoming a member of Crossroads. In addition, we have 4 Core-Discipleship Classes that serve as major growth-points for serious followers of Christ. These classes are called 101, 201, 301, and 401.**
  - Is intercessory prayer your passion? **Prayer Groups** are another example of our Discipleship Groups. These groups can meet anywhere from 1 day to several months at a time.
  - **A new initiative is being started by our Pastor and Elders, centered around a different kind of discipleship group** – these will be called “Discipleship Huddles”. Discipleship Huddles will be built around the leadership of a spiritual mentor or coach who is investing in the development of other disciples. Huddles are formed by personal invitation and meet for 6 months, with the expectation that “graduates” will form a Huddle of their own and lead it.

✓ **Community Groups:** Community Groups will seek to experience New Testament community, as they “do life” together. They typically meet in homes with 6-12 people who are committed to building close, intimate relationships. Fellowship, mutual accountability, encouragement to personal spiritual growth, and individual and group outreach and service will be encouraged. These groups probably have the best opportunity to experience and pursue all 4 components of our vision: Love, Grow, Serve, and Go.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CROSSROADS LIFE GROUPS:**

- Meet at least 2 times each month (with 1-day seminars being the exception)
- Group meetings need to include at least 1 of the following: Bible Study, prayer, worship, testimonies, outreach/service.
- With only a few exceptions, the groups should all be welcoming to newcomers. The exceptions would be for groups formed around those holding a particular leadership position (examples: A Worship Team group or The Elders group – or “invitation-only” groups like Discipleship Huddles. Other groups will be open in the beginning, but as they work through a set curriculum, may be closed to newcomers until a new cycle of the material is presented).
- We will work on 3-month Group Cycles. Cycles will be January – March, April – June and September - November. Some of the curriculum-based groups may have a shorter life: For example, there may be a 1-day seminar or 10-week study offered. July, August, and December are scheduled breaks, used for rest, preparation for new groups and socializing in more informal ways with your friends. Curriculum-driven study groups may choose to continue and meet during some or all of the break times.
- Each group leader should have an assistant (or be raising one up). Leaders, like groups and churches, multiply. Groups and individuals should grow.
Each group should plan and execute one outreach or service activity (or participate in one planned by others) during each Group Cycle.

All group leaders will be supported, prayed for, trained, and empowered by the LIFE Groups Director and the Elders of Crossroads Church.

Life Group Leadership Training should be completed before group meetings begin.

Groups will be a vital part of how we fulfill the mission of Crossroads Church.

**Crossroads Adult Ministry Overview**

In all that we provide for adults – small groups, Bible studies, men’s and women’s ministries, etc. -- we strive to see the following in their lives:

**LOVE:** Coming to know Jesus, personally. Worshiping God – honoring God both corporately in large and small gatherings and privately, in your own time alone with God. Learning to love and value others with the love that God puts within us.

**GROW:** Living by God’s Word – understanding the Bible as the ultimate authority for daily living and involved in corporate, small group, and private Bible study. Developing the spiritual disciplines necessary for spiritual growth.

**SERVE:** Contributing to God’s Work – using your spiritual gifts, time, abilities, and finances for God’s glory. Opportunities abound for serving one another in a Life Group and for going as a group into the community to serve God and others in the world.

**GO:** Pursuing Christ-honoring relationships at home, in the church, at work, and in the community. Impacting God’s World – reaching out to the lost and unchurched friends by praying, giving a verbal witness and inviting them to Crossroads Church events and groups. Support and participate in missions projects and efforts.

[On the next page you’ll see a graphical portrayal of these growth values and the process Crossroads uses to help people grow as disciples.]
Your Spiritual Journey

Come to Faith in Christ & Become a Worshipper

We believe everyone should know how much God loves them – becoming engaged in regular worship services where they can come to know Christ and His people.

Tell Others About Jesus

We believe that all Christians and churches are expected by God to take the message of Christ to the world. As we go, He empowers us to speak up for Him. Disciples & Churches should always be multiplying.

Volunteer in a Ministry

We believe that growing Christians will be serving Christians. We will challenge people to discover how God designed them to serve Him and others in His Kingdom.

Join a LIFE Group

We believe that once someone makes a commitment to Christ, they should then become involved in LIFE Groups (small groups) as an essential element of growing as a disciple. Life-transformation most often occurs in small-group settings.

Roadmap of Growth!
Distinctives of Crossroads “Life Groups”

- Small in size – 6 to 12 adults
- Committed to multiplication – groups plan from the beginning to grow and give life to new groups. Group leaders should identify and encourage those in their group to consider becoming a leader of a new LIFE Group.
- Spiritual and relational intimacy are pursued – teaching people to love God and love each other
- “Community” is a lifestyle and cannot be contained in a location, day, or time. We encourage people to “do life” together – pray, eat, worship, share, and serve together.
- Everyone will be valued and encouraged to participate – each person has something to contribute
- “Life Groups” are to be a safe place where deep places of the heart and soul can be revealed and touched.
- Groups will be open to people who are not Christians, seasoned disciples, and everyone in between.
- Crossroads Life Groups will be redemptive in nature – we will pursue forgiveness, healing, and restoration in each other’s lives
- Confidentiality is required. Conversations and information revealed in the group are not to be repeated without permission.
- Life is messy – group life will also be messy. We won’t avoid the messiness of people or their problems, but will trust God to give answers and healing.
- Change and disruption is necessary for maximum growth to occur.
- The group and group experience should never become a substitute for God and what only God can provide
- Our groups will be missional – we are engaged in purposes larger than the individual self and the group. We are a part of a larger Church and Kingdom.
- Groups will be open to new people, by invitation and advertisement.
- Each group should use the “Crossroads Life Group Covenant” to assure agreement on the basic ground-rules for group life, (for shorter term groups this may not be necessary)
- Groups will seek balance in purpose and mission – reflecting the mission of the church – Love, Grow, Serve, Go
- Remember: “Community is a by-product of mission.” (Chad Hall) - Relational connection and a Biblical sense of community flow out of working together on things that are important to God.

Organization/Accountability

- Small Group leaders will report to the Life Groups Director, who will be responsible for encouragement and training of Group Leaders. He will communicate back with the Elders about Life Groups ministry, progress, and needs.
- Group Leaders will be committed to Christ and to the ministry, mission, and values of Crossroads Church. This will be expressed through membership or signing the Church Covenant.
- Leaders serve at the will of the church leadership (Elders and Life Groups Director). Changes in leadership may be made as needed.
- We will continually go through a process of evaluation, planning, recruiting, training, and enlisting people into Life Groups.

An effective evangelist who reaches 1000 people a day for Christ will win the world to Christ in 13,515 years. However, a very effective discipler who teaches or trains two people a year to reach 2 others for Christ each year will win the world to Christ in 33 years. As we continue to multiply ourselves, we multiply our ministry as well.

- All study materials will be approved by the church leadership.
Childcare Options for Life Groups

- Have childcare in another room of the home.
  - Hire High School or College students to baby sit the kids.
  - Hire older children from the families attending the group.
  - Have each family donate money to help with the costs.
- Have childcare at another home not being used for the group.
  - Use same options as above.
- Let the kids run free without supervision.
  - This is not a good option. It will end up ruining the group.
- Ropes, handcuffs, jail cells etc. Just kidding!
- Trade out with another group – provide care for them and they provide care for you
- The only bad option is doing nothing and hoping it will be fine. It won’t!

Small Group Leader/Host Job Description

**Purpose:**
To connect people in authentic community and experience life-change through leading a weekly small group.

**Qualifications – 4 C’s:**
- **CONNECTED**—Personal relationship with Jesus Christ & partnered with Crossroads Church through membership or signing the church covenant.
- **CULTURE**—Embrace Crossroads’ mission, strategy, and values.
- **CHARACTER**—Known for integrity and displays genuine fruits of the Spirit — Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and self-control.
- **COMMITMENT**—Willing to receive guidance from the Small Group Leadership Team / Attend training events / Communicate updated group information to the Small Groups Director.

**Time Commitment:** Approximately 3 hours per week (this includes actual group time)

**Priorities:**
- **Think Life-Change:** The priority is an environment where God is active in the lives of each member. Keep Life-Change the goal and purpose of your group. Pray consistently for the spiritual transformation of each other.
- **Cultivate Relationships:** Relationships are like bank accounts, they don’t just happen! Leaders need to be responsible to build a sense of community in their groups. Personal contacts and follow-up are the keys to getting it started.
- **Promote Participation:** Shared participation creates broader ownership of the group. All Group members should be encouraged to participate in the ownership of the group (discussion leader, activity planner, follow-up calls, food, host home, etc.).
- **Replace Yourself:** Leaders should intentionally apprentice someone in their group for future leadership. This assures that someone could “replace” the leader if needed or be prepared to lead another group at the end of a covenant period.
- **Provide Care:** The primary way we provide care to members at Crossroads Church is through our L.I.F.E. Groups. You are the first-level pastor in their lives. The group as a whole will “shepherd” it’s members.
LEADER STRATEGIES

Step One
How Do I Form My Group?
1. Invite people you already know: The Five F’s principle!
   - Family
   - Friends
   - Firm/Factory (co-workers)
   - Fellowship (people you meet at church)
   - Fun (people from where you play, the gym, a sports team, civic club, etc.)

   Ideas: How do I invite people?
   - Casual conversations – work it in
   - Phone Calls
   - Prayer – prayer “softens the heart” of someone you’re going to invite
   - Neighborhood party - Get Together

2. Participate In Small Group Connect Events!
   Meet face to face with weekend attenders and encourage them to come check out your group.

Step Two
Preparing for My First Night
- Make telephone calls and email all interested people at least 48 hours prior to your group meeting and encourage them to come
- Preview your outline for the meeting
- Read & think about the discussion questions
  - Consider potential answers
  - Review Leaders Guide Suggested Answers

Know Your Audience
- Determine where your attendees are in their walk with Christ: seeker, new believer, seasoned Christian, etc.
  - If you have a group of mostly new people, have a trusted friend be the last to leave

Pray, pray, pray!
- Ask God for His leading and presence in your group

Step Three
What Does My First Night Look Like?
1. Plan group time to be between 60-90 minutes. You will lose people from your group if you routinely go beyond 90 minutes for your meetings. The exception to this is if you are doing a social function like watching a movie, going out, Super Bowl parties, etc.
2. Create a proper atmosphere
3. Greet with enthusiasm
4. Have each person wear a name tag (if everyone doesn’t already know each other)
5. Pray aloud and invite God’s presence
6. Use the Ice Breaker to begin
7. Review Group Covenant
8. Read suggested scripture
9. Turn to Discussion Questions -- Model/Direct answers when appropriate
10. Close in Prayer – Keep prayer time focused – don’t let it become a “praying around the world” session where it’s dominated by requests that are too far removed from the members for them to feel personally connected to the situations
Step Four
What To Do After the First Night
1. Identify someone you can debrief with
   1. What did you like/dislike?
   2. What can I do better?
2. Identify the one or two people after week three with whom you can share leading and group responsibilities
   1. Shared leadership is healthy
   2. Everyone feels like part of the group
3. Connect with Small Group Director
   1. Utilize e-mail and phone to stay in touch with the SG Director
   2. Let the SG Director know what you need – more contact and help or less. He won’t know unless you let him know.
Icebreakers (samples)

What is your favorite movie? Why?
Describe how you're doing today in "weather" terms (i.e., bright and sunny, foggy, etc.).
If you could travel to anyplace in the world, where would you go? Why?
Which animal best describes your personality?
Share your whole name and what you like/dislike about it.
How does your life now compare to what you thought it would be like ten years ago? What is the same? Different?
Tell us about your "finest moment".
If you didn't need to work for a living, what would you spend your time doing?
What do you like best about your present life? What is one thing you would change if you could?
How do you relieve stress?
If you had a million dollars that you could not spend but had to give away, what would you do with it?
When was the last time you really felt uncomfortable in a situation? What made you feel that way?
Tell about your most memorable birthday (could also do Christmas).
Who is the closest friend you've had? What made the relationship work?
What is the last book you read? Would you recommend it?
Describe the best/worst vacation you ever had.
When have you been with a group of people that really made you feel included?
What did they do to make you feel that way?
Finish this sentence: "Most people would never guess that I ______________________
L.I.F.E. GROUP LEADER COVENANT

As a Life Group Leader/Host, I will commit to the following:

1. I will commit to completing Class 101, signing the church covenant.

2. I will commit to completing Classes 201, 301, and 401, as I am able.

3. I will support and defend the vision and direction of Crossroads and its leadership.

4. I will recognize that as a Life Group Leader I represent Christ and Crossroads Church at all times.

5. I will commit to actively multiplying my group by seeking and training potential new leaders from within my group.

6. I will commit to regular weekend service attendance.

7. I will commit to faithfully attend ongoing training or appreciation events.

8. I will maintain regular communication with my Life Groups Director and Ministry Leadership.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Spouse’s Signature: ____________________ Date: ____________
L.I.F.E. GROUP MEMBER COVENANT

1. The purpose of our group is to help each of us experience New Testament community. Our name communicates our goal – L.I.F.E. (Living in Fellowship Everyday).

2. We will meet each week at (location) _______________________________, from (time) ____________ to ____________, and will strive to start and stop on time.

3. We will seek balance in our group life – Love, Grow, Serve, Go.

4. Within the Life Groups Cycle, we will plan and participate in at least 1 serving or going project.

5. Our Values:
   a. Life Transformation – we are seeking to become like Christ.
   b. Accountability – we will give and receive loving guidance and challenges from one another.
   c. Our group will be a “safe place” – we can be completely honest with one another, knowing our group confidentiality is absolute and will not be betrayed. Group conversations will not be repeated outside the group.
   d. Priority of our group – If I am going to miss a meeting, or be late, I will call ahead to let my friends know where I am.
   e. Open Chair – we will always keep an empty chair in our circle and pray for the person God is preparing to join our group.
   f. Multiplication – we will pray about who will serve as the group leader’s apprentice, knowing that life always multiplies. We will seek to multiply leaders and to multiply our group at least once each year.
   g. Serving – each of us will serve the others in the group in some regular, tangible way. No one gets to be a passive participant – all are contributors to Group Life.

Life Group Member __________________________________________________  Date ___________________

Life Group Leader ____________________________________________________________________________