ZAMAR CHURCH

Life Group Leader Field Manual

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What are Life Groups

Life Groups are smaller gatherings of people who meet through the week apart from our usual Sunday worship experiences. Life Groups are for all people no matter where you are on your faith journey. Each group is led by a Life Group Leader. New Life Groups are introduced every few months on an annual semester schedule; Spring, Summer, & Fall. Sign ups take place in a free market sign up period. Life Group content and meeting times vary per group.

Why Life Groups are Important

We are not designed to do life alone. Jesus himself had a group of people He did life with!
Life Groups are small settings where big change happens. Life Groups create platforms where we can learn more about God's plan as it unfolds in the Bible, and grow closer to one another in the process. As the church expands, Life Groups help continually create connection points, foster community, and allow us to care for one another.

The 3 C's of Life Groups

The DNA of all Life Groups can be summed up into the 3 C's. These elements maximize the impact and growth of each group.

Connection:

Life Group's create a place where people can connect to others, just like themselves. Jesus died so we could have the ultimate connection to God. Life Group connections allow us to share thoughts and experiences to grow together. Life Groups help forge lasting relationships between the leaders and members. People need to know they belong.

Community:

We are the church. As the church grows there is a need for people to continually develop together. Life Groups create small communities in our larger church family where this can, and will, happen. As a Life Group Leader you will create an atmosphere where at each meeting a room full of individuals can become one family.

Life Groups are also designed to create an engaged family that impacts the world around them. Life Groups grow together and change the world together. Each semester Life Groups will find opportunities to serve the greater community we call home through a community outreach project.

Care:

Life brings us all kinds of circumstances, but God puts individuals in our lives to help us through those moments. Life Groups are families that are there for you when times get tough. Leaders are the first to act when someone in a Life Group has a care need. Care needs can come in a variety of ways. A care need could be a loss in their life, trouble within their family unit, loss of a job, or just simply being a little blue. A vigilant response will help let the group member know that they have a support system to lean on. You can also share any need with the Life Groups & Care Team Coach by contacting the zgroups@zamarchurch.org , or by filling out a form on our Care Portal. From there, additional care support will be arranged.

The Life Group Meeting Model - ESPN

Each and every one of your life group meetings should be built around this ESPN model. All you have to do is make sure that each of these components are included during your designated meeting time.

E - ENCOURAGE

Be Encouragers. Hard topics or hard situations may present themselves in your life group. We never know what people are going through or what they may be carrying. In these instances, bring the hope of Jesus to your group and individual group members. Guide them to the hope that is Jesus.

S - SCRIPTURE

Bring the Word of God into your meetings, and discuss what God's word says together. As leaders, if a member is going through something difficult, try not to give a personal opinion; instead, bring the Word of God and what He has to say into the situation. We know His word to be good and true. Scripture is so very important to growing our faith and connecting with our Father.

P - PRAYER

Pray over your group, or ask someone to pray over your meeting and time together. Write down prayer requests and have your group members be in prayer for individual members during the week as well. We know there is power in prayer. Remember we have direct access to our Father, and we can talk to Him any time. It is so important to ask God to move in the lives and hearts of our group members.

N - NEXT STEPS

Point members in the direction of a Next Step. This can be a Next Step within our church - such as salvation, baptism, or joining a team, or it can be a personal next step. For example: picking up the word of God daily, memorizing scripture, finding an accountability partner within the group, praying out loud in front of others, etc. We always want to help members and each other grow our faith and relationship with Jesus.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECT

Choose one community outreach project per life group semester that your group can work on together to care for, and reach our community. As the LG leader you can come up with this idea on your own, or you can gather ideas from your group members. Serving our community is part of the DNA of Zamar Church, and therefore is also a part of the DNA of a Life Group.

Examples of Community Outreach Projects:

- Do a neighborhood, park, or road clean up
- Contact a shelter in your community and ask about their specific needs that your team can collect
- Volunteer at a local shelter
- Build a wheelchair ramp for someone in need
- Volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House
- Collect activities and toys for the Children's Hospital
- Cook meals for police/EMS/Fire Department

Life Group Coaching System

As a Life Group Leader, you are still susceptible to every challenge life can bring. With that, know that you have someone praying and caring for you by name, and need, all semester.

What is a Life Group Coach?

A Life Group Coach is a leader that has two primary missions:

1) Serve as a Coach in leadership, and is responsible for the growth, development, and success of the entire Life Groups ministry.

2) Serve you as a Life Group Leader by checking in with you digitally, on the phone, and in-person during the semester. They will make sure you are cared for and healthy as you Shepherd others.

Life Group Coaching Hub System Explained

There are (3) unique hubs for every type of Life Group. Hubs are a segmented audience. All three Hubs are below:

Men
Women
Co-ed

Life Group Leader Expectations

As a Life Group Leader, you represent Zamar Church in its fullest capacity. Even more so, you are a representative of Jesus, and the church He died for. You are recognized as someone who models the highest of character, integrity, and you champion the values of Zamar Church. Below is a list of expectations that ensure as a Life Group Leader I am leading with the highest character, integrity, and championing the Zamar Church Values.

Preparation:
Be prayed up and remember that leading your group should come out of the overflow of your preparation and time with Jesus.

Life Group Environment Expectations:

- Set the Spiritual Environment Throughout the Week - You are responsible for helping your group grow spiritually. Lead them like a Pastor. Pray, challenge, and inspire your group as you develop together
- Greet and Treat Everyone. Life Groups are about connection, community, and care. Create an environment where people are excited and encouraged to grow their faith.
- Know the mission and vision of Zamar Church. If you need to grow in this area, our Next Steps class takes place every quarter. Sign up at zamarchurch.org/nextsteps
- Do not create an environment where someone is likely to sin, be misguided, or that contradicts the values of Zamar Church

Communication:

- Check all Life Group communication methods for any updates
- Respond to all questions or requests in 24 hours or less
- Communicate with the Staff, Coaches, and Leaders with any issues, questions, comments, and ideas

Social Media:

- Refrain from scandalous pictures or posts (i.e. sexually charged, demeaning of Zamar Church or other churches or people, argumentative, alcohol in the picture with you, etc.)

Finances:

- Be good stewards of what God has blessed you with, and give to the house you serve

Attendance:

- Attend most of the opportunities a month unless vacation, sickness, or tragedy strike
- If leading a group remotely, weekly engage with Zamar sermons, podcasts, and other media
- Attend any training that goes along with serving at Zamar Church

Group Development:

- Celebrate your Life Group every week! Find a way to celebrate someone or something in your Life Group each week on your preferred team communication method
- Pray for each group member each week. Some of your group members do not have another person who is actively praying for them
- Create one community outreach serving opportunity once each semester outside of Zamar Church & #WeLoveOurCity opportunities

Spiritual Growth & Development:

- Spend time in a relationship with God through prayer, and reading the Bible (use devotionals/podcasts to grow your relationship with God)
- Use Biblical standards as guard rails to your, life, not personal interpretation
- Are you becoming more or less like Jesus?
- Help develop 1 to 2 more others who have the potential to lead a Life Group in the future
- Proudly proclaim what Jesus is doing in your life, in this church, and in the world!

Life Group Platforms

As a Life Group Leader, you will need to be familiarized with a variety of platforms to ensure Life Group Success. These are:

Planning Center- Groups

This is your group management tool. This is also where your Life Group will be housed. This is where you will:

- Confirm the people that have signed up for your group
- Report Attendance
- Add any electronic notes
- Manage your group

Facebook Groups

Facebook groups is available in web and app form. This will be the main collaboration platform for you to connect with other active Life Group Leaders and Coaches.

Zamar Church Website

The website is the main driver for all Life Group sign-ups. There is a dedicated page located there.

How To - Choose and Use Curriculum

The best way to choose a curriculum is to pray and decide what topic area is speaking the loudest to you. Whatever you teach must come out of the overflow of what God is doing in you.

Some Life Groups can be designed to create spaces for shared interest (Golf Group, Exercise Group, Coffee Group) and these may not have a curriculum. That is ok! The main goal of a Life Group is to achieve the 3 C's. Be sure to let your Life Group Coach know which study you will be leading by filling out the Life Group Leader Form they will provide.

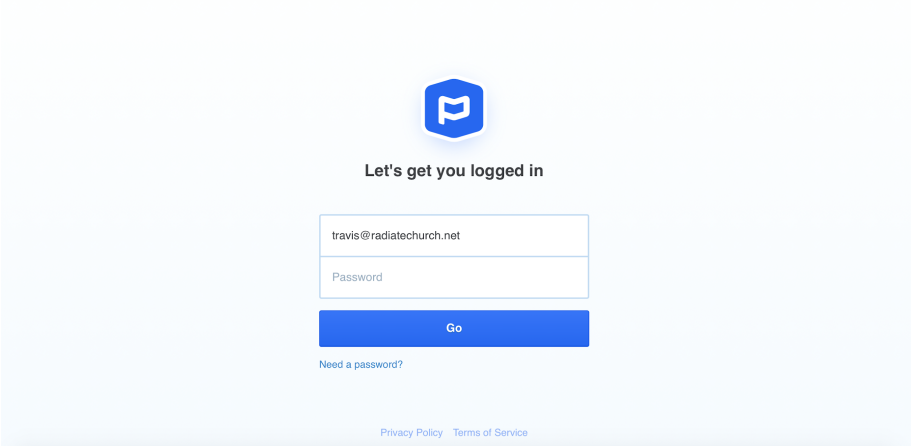
Do you need assistance with finding a curriculum/book to go with your study?
Make sure to note that in the Life Group Leader Form and one of our team members will work with you.

How To - Manage Your Group in Planning Center

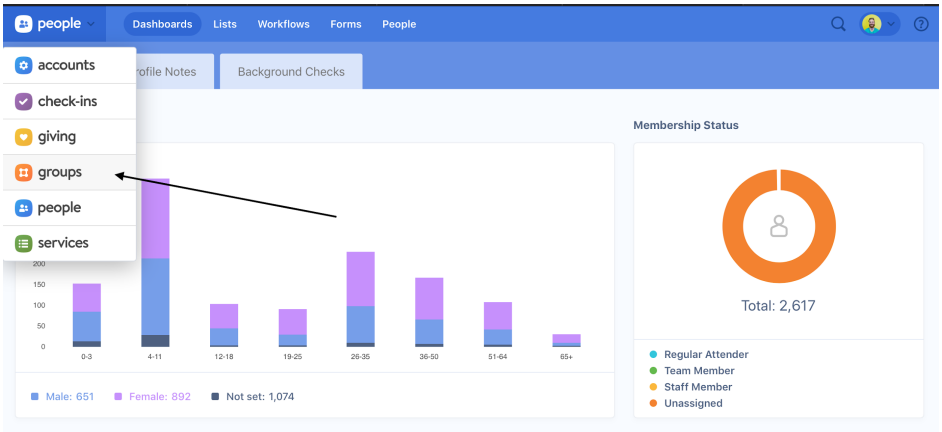
Before the semester begins a Life Group Coach or staff member will build your group in Planning Center Groups for you. From there you will have access to your group to make any changes, confirm signups, add members, and upload any additional resources.

Below is how you access your Life Group in Planning Center Groups:

1) Login to Planning Center: planning.center/groups/



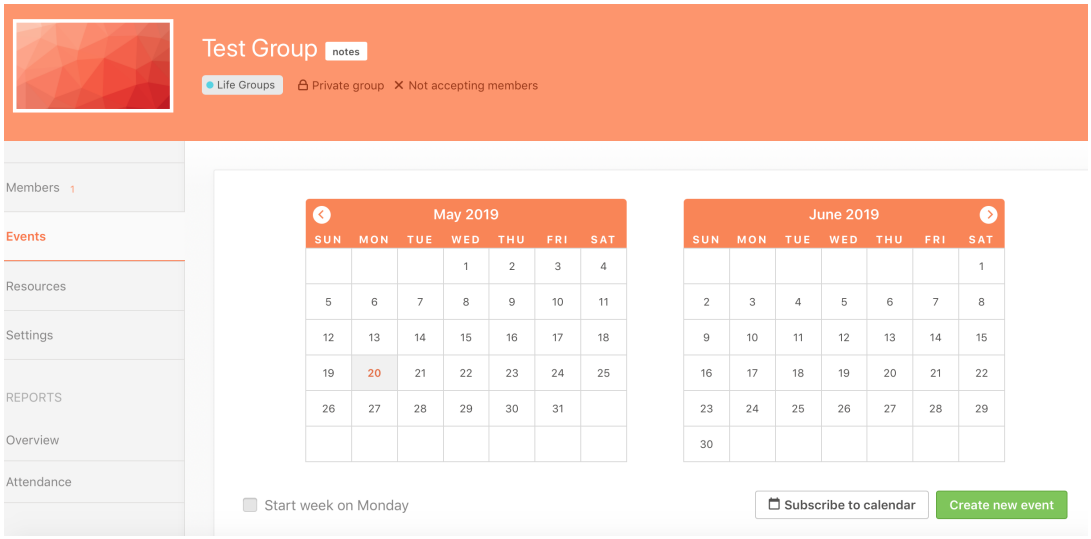
2) Select the “Groups” Dropdown

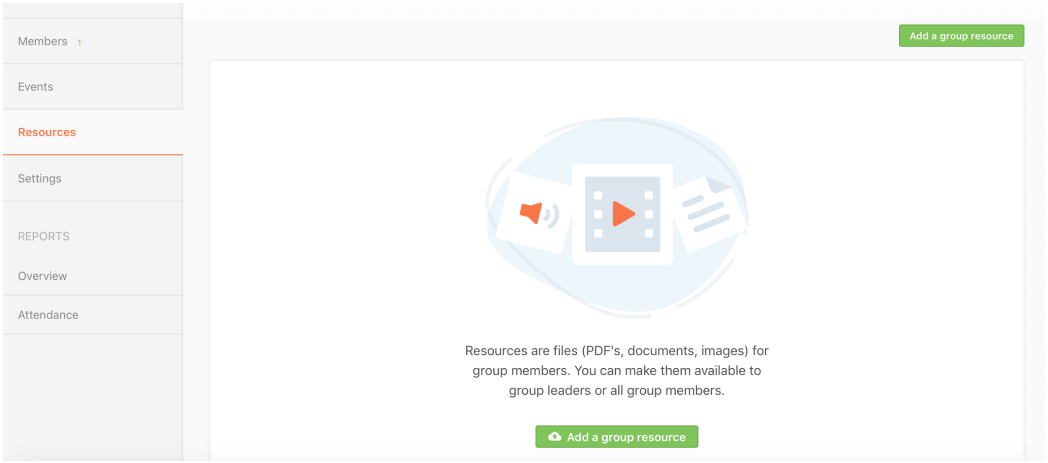


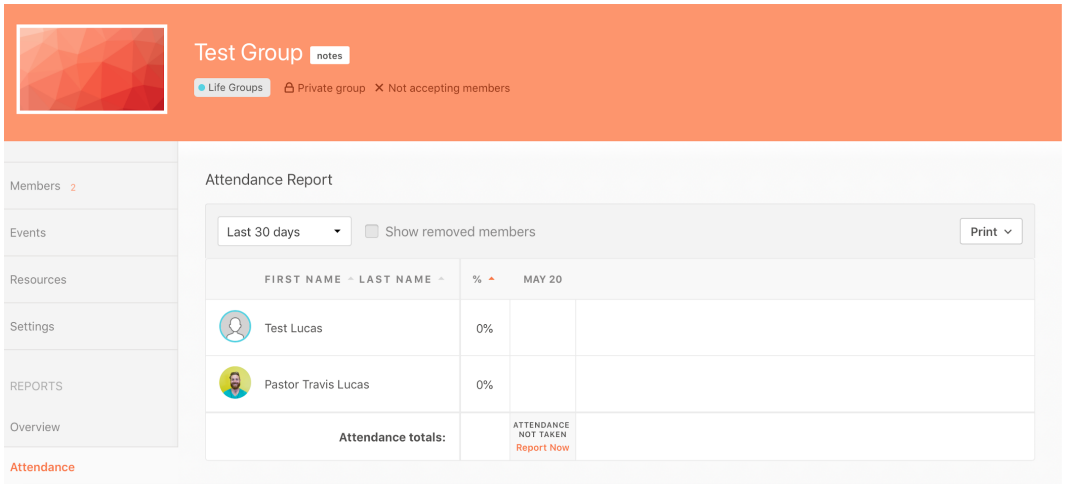
3) You will See your Group and be able to add:

- Meeting Dates
- Add Resources

- Take Attendance







How To - Collaborate with Other Life Group Leaders and Coaches

As you lead your Life Group you are also a part of one! It's a group consisting of every other Life Group leader! We are a team, and it's our mission to achieve the 3 C's together. With that, we need a space where we can celebrate, share ideas, talk about events, and work together in real-time. Facebook Groups provides this space for free. You will be invited to join. You can post messages, links, and even host virtual meetings with other leaders.

Here is how to access Facebook Groups per Semester:

1) Accept Invite to join from a Life Group Coach
2) Download from Itunes or Google App Store - facebook

How To - Navigate Challenges and Care Needs

As a Life Group Leader, you have the potential to be very involved with the faith journey of your group members. Sometimes that presents challenges and care needs. Below is a list of responses you can use when these opportunities happen.

Remember, you have Life Group + Care Coaches, Staff Members, and Pastors to help guide your decision making. Do not hesitate to call for backup.

Life Group member needs monetary assistance - If you feel a Life Group Member needs assistance please forward that request to the Radiate Care Coach. Approved needs are emergency food or shelter.

Life Group member is battling severe depression, anxiety, stress, substance abuse, or disorder - Let your Life Group Coach know, and recommend and assist the member in seeking *professional help*. There are a variety of organizations with a sliding scale that is affordable.

If you feel this could lead to the member harming themselves ask them to admit themselves or contact the police

Life Group member discloses previous moral, ethical, or legal failure that has current or future implications - Let your Life Group Leader Coach know. Ask the member to make a commitment to honor their current character and integrity by disclosing these things with the parties that are involved to begin restoration.

Examples:

Infidelity - Disclose with spouse and seek restoration with professional help

Committed Crime - Disclose with authorities and seek restoration

How To - Prepare for Meetings & Answer Group Questions

God works through your preparation. Be ready to seize the time you have with your Group to help them develop their faith in Jesus.

Below is a checklist to help you prepare for Life Group Meetings:

- ❏ Pray for your Group Meetings in advance
- ❏ Preview the video/written material days in advance to guide the Group Meeting
- ❏ Study corresponding Biblical passages, and outside sources (other books, videos, podcasts) that help strengthen your knowledge on the subject

Below is a checklist to create a safe clean space if meeting in person:

- ❏ Clean all high touch surfaces with a high strength disinfectant
- ❏ Create a little space so your group members have some a few feet on each side
- ❏ Create open and understanding communication about if your groups desires to use masks or not (have a few extra if a group member forgets one)
- ❏ Ask a group member that may not be feeling well to join in digitally (Zoom, Facetime, etc.)

As a Life Group Leader, you will also encounter a variety of questions. These questions help others understand more about what God and the Bible have to say about certain subjects. Questions lead us to development.

If you ever have a difficult question asked and are unsure of the answer, that is ok! You can always use the following:

- Let me check on that and get back to you
- Let’s ask a Life Group Coach or a Pastor
- Let's see what the Bible has to say about that
- Let’s see what the church's position is on that (If Zamar Church-related)

How To - Design a meeting using the ESPN model

As a Life Group Leader, one of your expectations is to design engaging meetings that incorporate the EPSN model. Each group is unique in every way. This model is simple and can be achieved no matter what type of Life Group you lead!

Below are ways to incorporate ESPN by design.

Encourage

- Make everyone feel included and valued
- Ask and celebrate what your members are celebrating
- Help offer encouragement when someone is struggling

Scripture

- Include at least one passage of Biblical scripture for your group to engage with
- If your group is lifestyle based (i.e golf, xbox, coffee) create one talking opportunity about a Biblical text from a previous week's sermon or text you are studying
- If your group is lifestyle based suggest a Bible App Devotion as a source of scripture

Prayer

- Create at least 1 opportunity to pray for your group aloud in your meeting
- Frequently ask how you, and your group, can continually pray for each other outside of your meetings

Next Steps

- Create an opportunity to share a way your Group Members can take a Next Step
- Share what is taking place in the life of the church and how others can be involved (ex. Outreach opportunity)
- Share resources that can help others grow their faith (books, other studies)

How To - Identify and Recruit New Potential Leaders

As a Life Group Leader, one of your expectations is to identify and recruit other potential Life Group Leaders. As you lead you will encounter others who show a high aptitude and capacity to become group leaders. This is how to identify and recruit new potential leaders.

How to identify potential leaders

Potential leaders will exhibit the following qualities:

- Highly engaged in Life Group Meetings
- Engaged in other ministries at Zamar Church (ex. Serve as a Team Member/Active in Outreach)
- Have Missional qualities (love, care for, and invite others)
- Engaged in studying outside the group & regularly attend Sunday Experiences
- Champion the Values of Zamar Church

How to Recruit them to Lead a Group

These are ways to bridge the gap from identifying them to on-boarding them:

- Invite them to join you for every Life Group Leader training, party, meet up during the semester
- Ask them to serve as your backup for your group, or even lead one meeting
- Hang out with them one-on-one and ask them if they would consider leading in the future. Learn how you can help prepare them for their new opportunity
- Pray with them about the decision & get them in touch with a Life Group Coach