

HARRIS CREEK

Core Values Curriculum for Life Groups

This document describes how the Harris Creek Core Values are lived out in the context of Life Groups. This is designed to be used as a reference or as a curriculum for Life Groups to walk through together.



Authentic

We believe authenticity, integrity, transparency, and sincerity should mark those whose confidence is in Jesus.

“The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” – 1 Timothy 1:5

CONFESS CONSISTENTLY – JAMES 5:16

God calls us to walk in the light as He is in the light. We do this by confessing our sins to our Life Groups. Group members should ask lots of questions to get to the root of the issue, which is usually a problem with our beliefs, since **our behaviors follow our beliefs**. Confession can feel like a punishment, but it’s actually a gift from God. Confession brings mercy, forgiveness, fellowship, healing, purification, and restoration.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Every week have everyone answer the question, “How have you fed your flesh?”
- Ask “why” questions. It may take multiple “why’s” to get to the root of a sin issue.

ALLOW ACCOUNTABILITY – GALATIANS 6:1-2

None of us are strong enough or wise enough to go through this life alone. We need help. God’s design is for us to sharpen, support, and encourage each other; we make up for each other’s weaknesses and pick each other up when we fall. Your Life Group is intended to be your first place to go for accountability in areas that you are sinning and falling short of God’s desire for your life. Correct each other lovingly and gently from God’s Word and be open to correction from your group.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Check-in with group members throughout the week on how they are combating sin.
- Follow up every week to what was confessed in the past.

SHARE TRANSFORMATION – ACTS 1:8

Once we truly understand how God has transformed our lives, we should learn to share our stories and our ongoing transformation with others. With your group, this looks like constantly updating each other on how God is transforming and sanctifying you. Outside of group, this looks like being able to articulate your journey of faith and being ready to share this with the people you encounter.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Ask questions about known previous struggles and ask about progress or change.
- Practice sharing each other's 30 seconds, 3 minutes, and 30 minutes testimonies.
- Practice sharing the Gospel with each other.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses, fears and confidences in each other and grow them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Are you open to sharing all of your sin struggles with your group and receiving accountability? If not, what are your fears?
2. How can we as a group receive confessions in a loving, non-judgmental way while also faithfully correcting and admonishing each other towards godliness?
3. What proactive practices can we put in place to ensure that we track and share areas in our own life that need accountability?

Biblical

We believe God's Word is our **authority, conscience, and guide** in everything. We stand firm where it is firm and remain flexible where it is flexible.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" – 2 Timothy 3:16

STORE UP SCRIPTURE – PSALM 119:11

Understanding and internalizing Scripture in our hearts is the best way to combat the enemy and become more like Christ. As you are abiding with Jesus and reading Scripture regularly, make every effort to meditate and memorize the Word of God. Hold yourself to this standard and keep everyone in your Life Group accountable for knowing their Bible.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Choose passages of Scripture to memorize together as a group and check-in weekly on progress.
- Engage tools (e.g. memory cards, Scripture memory apps, post-it notes) to assist your memorization.

COUNSEL BIBLICALLY – 1 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

Every part of our lives comes under the authority of God's Word, and every situation could benefit from the biblical counsel. Your Life Group should strive to base all counsel directly or indirectly on God's Word, not on mere opinions or feelings.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Regularly test everything against Scripture.
- Make it your first reaction to always ask, "What does the Bible say?"
- Practice answering questions or problems with Scripture before our own advice or thoughts.

COUNSEL COLLECTIVELY – PROVERBS 15:22

Even the wisest among us are not wise enough to go through life without advice and counsel from the folks around us. In Proverbs, many verses essentially say, "wisdom comes from the counsel of many", and many more verses encourage you to seek counsel and gain wisdom from wise people around you. Advice or wisdom from one person is not going to be as effective as weighing multiple pieces of advice and wisdom from multiple perspectives. Your Life Group is intended to be the primary place you go to for regular counsel.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- When you need counsel, try to get it from more than one person.
- When advice is given in your Life Group, make room in the conversation for others to voice a different perspective.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways do you struggle to believe that the Scriptures are our “authority, conscience, and guide”?
2. How can we as a group keep each other responsible for memorizing and internalizing Scripture?
3. How capable do you feel to counsel others based on God’s Word? How can you increase your ability to provide such counsel?
4. In what areas would we be prone to offer worldly wisdom instead of turning to God’s Word? How can we combat this?
5. What are the commands of scripture you find most difficult to keep in your day to day? How can you better practice obedience and be held accountable to these?

Community-Centered

We believe life change happens best in the context of relationships. Belonging to our larger community requires a commitment to being intentionally involved with others in accountable, encouraging Life Groups. Here, people can experience both the benefits of a larger church and enjoy the kind of relationships that only develop in smaller settings.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” – Hebrews 10:24-25

PRIORITIZE PURSUING – HEBREWS 10:24-25

God designed us to walk through life with other believers, and He desires us to love and serve each other in a deep, meaningful, consistent, and committed manner. Your Life Group is intended to be the smallest unit of people at the church that you are directly committed to living life with, and commitment to your group should affect your calendar.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Put Life Group on your calendar in “pen”, not “pencil”. Treat your meetings as a commitment and miss them for the same reasons you would miss work or a wedding of a close friend. Usually, this is reasons like sickness or travel, not things like simply not feeling like it.
- If/when you have to miss, make it a point to still contribute and follow up with the group.

FOSTER FRIENDSHIP – ROMANS 12:10

God’s desire is for us to deepen our relationships with those in the body, and relationships consist of more than just deep conversations, confession, and accountability. We believe it is both possible and necessary to build friendships with those we are committed to walking through life within Life Group. Engage in one another’s lives outside of group meetings. Be an initiator. Have fun together. Be devoted to one another. Have conversations, text messages, and emails outside of group times.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Stay connected throughout the week through texts, emails, phone calls, etc.
- Choose one or two people to coordinate rhythms of “fun” time together outside of group.

CULTIVATE CARE – ACTS 2:43-47

Your Life Group serves as the “home base” where you can know others fully and be fully known yourself. Part of sharing each other’s lives is caring for one another in hard times and enjoying one another in good

times. You have the privilege of inviting people into your lives collectively and individually to taste and see the gift that is biblical community.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Try to align your normal life patterns with each other (going to church together, sharing meals, going to sporting events, etc.).
- Practice hospitality regularly by bringing people in and caring for them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What changes to your personal calendar need to be made in order to prioritize gathering with your Life Group?
2. When, where, and how often will we meet as a full group? What about single-gender meetings, if applicable?
3. How can you develop and encourage friendships with the members of your group?
4. What can we do as a group to have fun, create shared experiences, and encourage friendship?
5. What are any current needs in our group that we can come around and meet?

Devoted

We believe success is measured by our ability to help everyone follow Jesus. Full devotion to Jesus is normal for every believer. As Christians, we are called to action in carrying out our faith. This action necessarily includes the deployment of our unique spiritual gifts in serving others. In our service, as with every area of our ministry and in our lives, we strive for excellence without compromise.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God- this is your true and proper worship...” – Romans 12:1-2

ABIDE IN CHRIST – JOHN 15:5

Everything we do as a follower of Jesus is dependent on knowing and abiding with Jesus. Abiding involves practicing spiritual disciplines (e.g., study, prayer, fasting, confession, worship, fellowship, rest, etc.) towards the end of knowing Jesus more deeply. **To know Him is to love Him**, and He Himself is the end goal of the Christian faith.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Research the spiritual disciplines and identify disciplines that you could grow in.
- Have a **plan, place, and time to** intentionally spend time with Jesus alone.
- Every week have everyone answer the question, “How have you fed your soul?”
- Keep track of what you are learning as you abide in Jesus, and share this with your group.

GROW YOUR GIFTS – EPHESIANS 4:11-12

Being devoted to Jesus includes using our spiritual gifts to serve others. Every member of the Body of Christ has been given unique talents, skills, and abilities that can be used to serve the local body you belong to as well as the broader global Kingdom. Your Life Group can see how God has gifted you and is using you in ways that you may not be able to see, and encourage you and push you to hone the gifts you’ve been given and leverage them for the Kingdom.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Take an online spiritual gifts test to help guide you on what your giftings *might be*.
- Ask your Life Group to affirm or help you identify your giftings.
- Read: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4

BE OBEDIENT – JAMES 1:22

We called not just to read, hear, and understand the Word of God but to live it out *daily*. We are called to discipline ourselves towards godliness, love others, expand the Kingdom of God, and grow more like Christ. Your Life Group has the privilege and responsibility to support each other as you seek to be obedient to this high calling.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Ask your Life Group regularly if they see anything in your life that does not align with Scriptures.
- Confess to your Life Group and to God any ways that you have not been obedient.
- Ask the Lord for help in being obedient.
- Ask to be held accountable to the commands in the Bible you may struggle to follow.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are you doing at practicing the spiritual disciplines and abiding in Jesus?
2. How can we as a group encourage one another to grow in exercising the spiritual disciplines and deepen in our relationship with God?
3. What do we need to do as a group to fight against apathy and ensure we are constantly maturing spiritually?
4. How can we identify and affirm each other's gifts?
5. How can we encourage each other to use our gifts?

Grace-Filled

We believe we have benefited from the kind intention of God's will in the form of grace; therefore, we eagerly extend it to others.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast." – Ephesians 2:8-9

INTERNALIZE GRACE – EPHESIANS 2:8-9

We receive undeserved grace from the Lord through Jesus's death on the cross and have complete forgiveness for our sins by trusting in Christ. By having faith in Jesus, we are completely accepted by Him, and we walk in the freedom of not being condemned for our sins and receiving mercy for all we have done and will do. The Christian Life is one of **acceptance-based performance, not performance-based acceptance**.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Always ask yourself "why" you do the things you do, and make sure the reasons are aligned with a correct understanding of Grace.
- Examine the things you do or thoughts you harbor that lean towards trying to earn your salvation or acceptance from God.

PRESERVE PEACE – EPHESIANS 4:3

Anytime you have more than one sinful, fallen human in a relationship, you will have conflict. God desires us to make every effort at maintaining peace and unity, especially amongst the community of believers, by "keeping short accounts" with one another. **Merely not fighting is not necessarily peace**; sometimes, that is peace-faking, not peace-making. We are command to resolve conflict proactively and with urgency.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Commit to having conversations *during* your group meetings that you have with others on the car ride home.
- Keep "short accounts" with each other.
- Practice looking for your own fault in a conflict.
- Read the *How to be a Peacemaker* guide.

GIVE GRACE – EPHESIANS 4:32

We have received undeserved grace from Jesus through the cross because He cares for us and desires us to know Him. When we fully comprehend this grace and forgiveness of sins from a Holy God, we can

more readily extend this same grace towards others. Whether it is in conflict or in situations of hurt, as believers we have the freedom and the obligation to forgive people as Christ did.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Be quick to extend forgiveness and showcase the love of Christ.
- Practice imagining how God looks upon people and cultivate that same mercy and grace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel like you fully understand grace? What makes you doubt or question the grace offered through Jesus?
2. Is there any unresolved conflict that currently exists amongst our Life Group? How can we resolve it?
3. How can encourage each other to grow in extending grace towards one another?
4. What unresolved conflicts exist with other people in your life? How can the group help you and support you in resolving these?

Innovative

The Bible makes it clear that we are to find ways to effectively bring the message “into all the world” in order to make disciples. We believe this will require careful scrutiny of everything we do – new practices and old – and a willingness to change when necessary within biblical parameters.

“To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all means possible I might save some.” – 1 Corinthians 9:22

INSPECT INWARDLY – PSALM 139:23-24

Look inward to identify where you may be holding onto things tightly that are keeping you from God’s best. Create rhythms to regularly evaluate your habits, priorities, and thoughts to examine where you might need to adjust your ways of life. Pay attention for the ways the Holy Spirit may be guiding you. Be willing to change and grow according to the Scriptures.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Ask God to reveal areas of your life where you are rigid or inflexible.
- Take the Life Group Assessment annually and discuss the results as a group.

CONNECT CREATIVELY – 1 CORINTHIANS 9:22

In order to reach people with the Gospel and demonstrate God’s love, we are called to be all things to all people. This means putting others before ourselves and prioritizing their needs, thoughts, feelings, and even preferences over our own. This is a tangible way to reach people and demonstrate the love of Jesus to them.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Seek to listen more than you speak and have an open mind.
- Learn about the people in your group and what makes them feel loved and strive to do that.
- Utilize personality tools such as the enneagram, love languages, Myers-Briggs, etc.

FIGHT APATHY – 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

It is easy to grow apathetic by simply going through the motions when it comes to our faith, especially with weekly activities like Life Groups meetings. Your Life Group should be proactive in raising concerns when you think your group may be drifting or becoming stagnant. When concerns are raised, collectively work to find creative solutions.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Find new ways to share what you're learning from Scripture.
- Have a rotation of people who take charge of the agenda for that week.
- Evaluate whether the "best practices" that have been suggested are still being effective for your group, and seek other, more effective methods if necessary.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What preferences, patterns, or habits are you holding on to that are either unbiblical or may be hindering your relationship with God or others?
2. How can we "shake things up" to not grow stagnant, lazy, or lackadaisical?
3. How can we go beyond our own comfort to reach all people for the sake of the Gospel?
4. Putting our selfish desires aside, how can we best serve and love the members of this group?

Missional

We believe that lost people matter to God; therefore, they matter to us. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and He has left us here, in part, to do the same. Our individual lives and corporate efforts will reflect this conviction.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” – Luke 19:10

LIVE GENEROUSLY – ACTS 20:35

Jesus said, ‘It is more blessed to give than receive’. We have a great call on our lives to give generously of our **time, talents, and treasures**. This means leveraging ourselves and everything we have been given for the sake of the Kingdom. We can do this through sacrificially serving our Body and the people in our lives to put the sacrificial love of Jesus on display.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Give financially what you are able to give cheerfully in support of your local church body.
- Commit to serve at the church.
- Ask your Life Group where they think your gifts and abilities could be most fully deployed in serving or discipling others.

CREATE FELLOWSHIP – 1 PETER 4:8-11

An easy avenue to invite others in and to show people the character of Jesus is to gather with them and welcome them into your home and life. Gather with others often and intentionally engage in meaningful Gospel-centered conversations in ways that anyone can easily participate. Actively invite your neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family into the work God is doing in your life. Partnering with your Life Group in your missional efforts is one of the best ways to grow closer as a group.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Partner with folks in your Life Group to reach out to people in your life that don’t know God or seem to be far from Him.
- Invite people into your homes and day-to-day lives.
- Ask interactive questions about what you all are learning from God’s Word and how God has and is actively transforming your life.

MAKE DISCIPLES – MATTHEW 28:18-20

We are called to participate in the “Great Commission” of God to make disciples and share the Gospel with all that we encounter. Daily, we have the opportunity to engage people with the Good News, share

the hope we have in Christ, and help people around us grow in their faith. Your Life Group should keep you accountable being on mission by regularly sharing the Gospel and pouring into others.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Memorize the “Romans Road” (Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-10).
- Use the Kennedy Questions to engage people in conversation:
 - If you died today, on a scale of 1-10 how sure are you that you are going to heaven?
 - If you died and stood before God and He asked you, ‘Why should I let you into Heaven?’, what would you say?
- Find other simple ways to start spiritual conversations, such as asking, “Do you have a faith?”.
- Commit to serving in a discipleship capacity, whether through a church program like being a Life Group Shepherd or by grabbing a group of younger folks formally discipling them on a regular basis.
- Ask the question in Life Group every week, “How have you ‘fed’ others?”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are we currently making disciples?
2. How can be proactively training for future opportunities to make disciples?
3. What current opportunities exist that we could take advantage of to make disciples?
4. What keeps you from engaging people with the Gospel?

Prayerful

We believe prayer is essential to everything we do.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful, and thankful.” – Colossians 4:2

PRAY CONTINUALLY – 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

God desires us to go to Him in prayer and be in constant communication with Him. Because of the work of Jesus on the cross, we have direct access to commune with our Heavenly Father and ask Him to move in our lives. He is all-knowing, so He already knows what’s on your heart and mind. Everything is laid bare before Him, and He loves you anyways. You can be honest with Him. He is all-powerful, so He is able to bring about what is best for you and others. You can pray bold prayers. He is good, so He is always working out what is best for us. You can rest assured that whatever the outcome, it is for our good, even though we may not be able to see how.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Trust that our Father *listens* to our prayers and desires to hear from us.
- Choose to ask from God first what you might ask of people.
- Practice the discipline of being brutally honest with yourself and with God.

SEEK HEALING – JAMES 5:16

It is crucial to precede and follow everything with prayer for God to work. The power of prayer allows us to ask our Father for restoration boldly. Most often the reason for sin and pain is rooted in a wrong belief or condition of the heart, so in Life Group, the act of confession should always be followed up by prayer and asking God to heal their heart.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- In Life Group meetings, immediately follow confession with prayer for the person confessing
- Regularly pray boldly for healing and redemption in your life and others.

PETITION PROACTIVELY – JOHN 14:14

God tells us that we can ask anything of Him and that He desires to answer our prayers. We have the confidence to ask God to change our lives and the lives of those around us. Be looking for opportunities the Lord will grant you to intercede for and encourage others around you. As a Life Group, regularly ask and share with one another the people and circumstances you are praying for and keep each other accountable to approach them with confidence in the Lord.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Incorporate tangible rhythms of prayer in your life (e.g., prayer cards, journaling, prayer) and keep each other accountable to these methods (or do them together!).
- Regularly ask one another who and what each of you is praying for.
- Stop to pray immediately when someone asks for prayer.
- Follow through when you feel prompted to pray for someone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe God listens? Do you believe God can or will answer your prayers?
2. Who/what are you currently believing that God cannot change?
3. What do you do with un-answered prayers?
4. What practices do we as a group need to put in place to regularly pray for healing from sin struggles for the members of our group?

If you have more questions, please email hello@harris creek.org.