



# *Starting Group Well*

**6**

***LAUNCH***

*Build Leaders. Build Groups. Build Disciples.*

## STARTING OFF

Starting your first group gathering can be an awkward, tough, nerve-racking, fun, exciting, or fulfilling experience. There are several things you will want to do and not do so you can have a great first group gathering that leads to connections and not disconnection. Kick off with an icebreaker to loosen things up:

Icebreaker: *“If you could vacation anywhere in the world with unlimited money, where would you go, what would you do, and why?”*

## PURPOSE

Following the icebreaker, it's time to transition into communicating the Purpose & Healthy Expectations in the first official meeting. Communicating this information will help set a healthy trajectory for the bonding and growth of your group. It will aid in your group gathering and building and living in biblical community. Anyone can attend a group, but that doesn't mean they are experiencing and living out the “One Anothers” of the New Testament together to know and be known by others.

Additionally, it is important to communicate Purpose & Expectations up front because every single group member will have different expectations for and from the group members and you as a leader. Some may want a group that shares their deepest darkest secret sin weekly. Others may want just a social hang out club time. Another group may desire a deep bible study. As you see, this can create some friction rather quickly if right expectations and purpose are not laid out immediately for the group to have healthy expectations for and from the group themselves. Therefore, this first meeting is important.

Here are some ways to lovingly, gently, yet firmly communicate the Purpose and Expectations of Groups at Midway to your new group members. If you find it easier, you can even read this off the piece of paper for everyone to hear the Group Essentials:

# GROUP ESSENTIALS

1) Why does our group exist?

- a. Groups exist to do two Practices = to “One Another” (Connect, Grow, Serve) & Share the Gospel (Multiply)

2) What do we follow and submit to as a Group?

- a. The primary authority we submit to is the **Bible**

3) Who can attend the Group?

- a. You will choose 1 of 2 options – Closed or Open and you will want to communicate this to your group so they know if they are able to invite friends to the group or not
- b. Once you reach 12 to 15 committed people, it is time to close the group for you all to work on building trust in your relationships to go deeper together in your walk with the Lord
- c. **If you are Open**, you will share that we are an Open group and once we reach 8 to 15 committed people, we will close
- d. **If you are Closed**, you will share that we are a closed group and are full. Therefore, if someone asks if they can come to your group, please tell them that their group is full and that they do not have any room. It is good to protect the community we will build together as a group. Every time we add a new group member, it's like hitting a reset button on the trust of relationships we've built and will need to start all over to see if we can or cannot trust the new group members that have joined

Next, you will transition to questions to facilitate for some brief discussion for the group members to communicate what they want out of the group and to state what they think makes a healthy group. Helping them to think about “what is a healthy group?” will in turn help them team up with you to make it a healthy group as well.

## QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you want out of a group?
  
- 2) What is one quality that makes a group healthy? (Go in a circle – each person list only one so they leave some for others)

**Common Answers:** Transparency, openness, vulnerability, trust, confidentiality, care, acceptance, love, serving, teachability

**Uncommon Answers:** Repentance, Grace, Exhortation, Admonishing, Transformation (Gospel of Transparency vs Gospel of Transformation) – “It’s ok to not be ok (Transparency), but it’s not ok to stay there (Transformation)”

- 4) What are some healthy boundaries we can have in place as a group?
  - a. Every healthy thing, groups included, has boundaries or ground rules – here are a few that make for an amazing life group (share a few, not all of them, share the rest in other groups):
  
  - b. **Vegas** – what happens here stays here. Confidentiality is paramount to have healthy relationships and group life so there is trust between one another. Not sharing someone else’s

business outside of the group is very healthy to build trust.

- c. **Accepting not Affirming** – there will be people in sin most likely every gathering because we're all human; however, we are to be accepting, loving, and to extend grace to them not condemning in any way. We accept people in love, but at the same time we do not need to affirm their sin that it is permissible.
- d. **No Fixing Others** – when someone is transparent to share a struggle, temptation, or issue that plagues them, we are not allowed to offer suggestions in such a way that it just fixes the problem. Clarify with the group member why they are sharing. For advice or to be heard. Only offer advice if the group member is asking for it.
- e. **It's Ok to Not be Ok, It's Not Ok to Stay that Way** – it's ok for someone to be struggling or in sin because Jesus came to save sinners not perfect people (which by the way there are none), but it is not ok to stay there. Christ died on the cross to pay the debt of our sins; however, he didn't stay buried in the grave. He rose from the dead and conquered death, sin, and Satan so that we ourselves could walk in newness of life and have progress in overcoming sin in our own lives.
- f. **No Gossiping** – gossip is malicious speech towards another person. We want to build up one another. It's not gossip to talk about another person with another person in a positive way with a heart of wanting to help.
- g. **No Ball Hogs** – it's good to speak up and share in conversation, but if you are constantly the only one who is talking – that's called being a ball hog. Allow for other group members to speak and share. In a Group of 12 people, 80%+ should get the chance to engage in conversation

- h. **Disagree not Disagreeable** – it’s ok if group members do not agree with one another, but it is important that they do so in a loving and respectful manner that doesn’t escalate into anger, frustration, or dissension. Disagreement is totally fine as long as they’re not disagreeable or distasteful in their responses.

## 5) My Hope for our Group

- a. Here is a chance for you to share what you hope the group will become or do. Here are some examples:

“I hope our group does life together by getting together outside of group gathering time, setting up play dates, eating out together, going on date nights, doing game nights together (and this doesn’t have to be with the whole group – there may be a few people you do life with more that you connect with more or have schedules that align better)”

