

RIDGEGROUPS

TIPS FOR LEADING YOUR GROUP WELL:

The Mission: Setting the Course

Q. What do we want people to become?

A. We want them to be growing in a relationship with Jesus.

- Our primary goal is not to equip people with life skills.
- Our primary goal is not to make people biblically literate.
- We believe that making disciples involves relationally connecting with people in such a way that it encourages them to follow Christ.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them everything I have commanded you.”

Matthew 28:19-20

Q. What do we want people to do?

A. We want them to pursue three relationships: connecting with God on their own, connecting in community, and connecting with people who don't know Jesus.

- Spiritual growth is not a point in time, but a continual pursuit.
- The evidence of our spiritual growth is the degree to which we are loving God and loving others.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:37-40

Q. Where do we want people to go?

A. We want them to be in community.

- We believe that the best place for sustained life-change is within intentional relationships.
- We believe the best place for encouraging intentional relationships is a small group.

Mission & Strategy:

Our mission is to help people find and follow God. In Ridge Groups, we accomplish this by encouraging and equipping everyone to pursue: connecting with God on their own, connecting in authentic community, and connecting with people who don't know Jesus.

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The Group- Being an Environment Creator

Q. What is the purpose of a Ridge Group?

A. The purpose of a Ridge Group is to provide a predictable small group environment where people connect relationally and grow spiritually.

Q. How do we define spiritual growth?

A. We consider someone to be growing spiritually when he or she is pursuing and growing in three vital relationships: connecting with God on your own, connecting in authentic community, and connecting with people who don't know Jesus.

Q. How do we define authentic community?

An authentic community includes:

- Recognizing that we are all works in progress.
- Seeking the good of the other (choosing trust over suspicion).
- Being consistent in encouragement and willingness to speak the truth in love.

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25

Q. What's a 'win' for a Ridge Group Leader?

A. A win for a leader is to grow as a follower of Jesus and to create a small group environment where people connect relationally and grow spiritually. We accomplish this by focusing on the three vital relationships and the 4 "R"s of leadership.

Three Steps to Leading Individuals

Leading a group of 10 to 12 individuals can be tough because each person has different needs. Although everyone in the group shares the same goal—to grow in their relationship with Jesus—each person's best next step in pursuing that goal is often different.

So, how do you lead individuals while also making sure the whole group is headed in the right direction? Here are three things to keep an eye on:

1. Lead toward the big goal.

Take comfort in the fact that even though people have different wiring, personalities, experiences, talents, and temperaments, the purpose of the group is the same for each of them: to create an environment where they can grow in their relationship

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with God. Within the context of that goal, the individuals in your group will be at different places in their journeys and will be ready to take different next steps. Your job is to keep an eye on the overarching goal while helping individuals take personal steps toward Jesus.

2. Determine where each person is. (See the “4-Stages” Sheet.)

Each person in your group comes into group at a different place in their journey with God and with community. It’s important to figure out where each person is so you can lead them effectively. Some group members may be exploring the idea of a relationship with God. Others may be beginning their relationship with him. Still others may be pursuing a deeper relationship with God through community. People in different places in their spiritual journeys face different challenges and struggles. Determining where your group members are spiritually will help you decide how to tee up helpful conversations.

3. Point to next steps.

Once you know where everyone is starting from, you can begin to see his or her best next steps. A next step might be opening up more to the rest of the group, serving on Sundays in a Ridge team, signing up for a mission trip, or just beginning to read the Bible and pray on a regular basis. You may be able to see what a person’s best next step is better than he or she can. And the entire group can offer encouragement and accountability. Just remember: your job is to *help* your group members as they take a next step. They’re responsible for actually taking the step. And God is responsible for growing them.

As you help each individual take steps toward Christ, you strengthen the group as a whole because each person learns and grows in doing his or her part in the body of Christ. As Paul says in Ephesians 4:16, *“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

Ridge Group Leader Role Description

Overall Win: Help Ridge group members connect relationally and grow spiritually.

Qualifications:

- Must be a follower of Jesus (Striving or Surrendered) who is committed to growing in your relationship with Him.
- Embrace and embody the mission, vision, and values of The Ridge Community Church.
- Committed to the 4 R’s of leadership: Relational, Run-Well, Reproducing, Rewarding.
- Fully engaged: serving, in a group, percentage giver, invests & invites.
- Have Ridge Group experience (preferably).
- Have the time, emotional capacity, and moral discernment to lead a group.

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Time Commitment

Duration: Commitment of 1-2 years.

- Weekly facilitation of small group (8 hours/month during session months only).
- Weekly planning and preparation with apprentice leader (4 hours per month).
- The following three rotate so that it is 1 meeting per month:
 - Quarterly 1-1 with coach (1 hour per quarter).
 - Quarterly Leadership Community (2 hours per quarter).
 - Quarterly Area Training Meeting (2 hours per quarter).

Expectations

- PREPARE FOR AND LEAD GROUP MEETINGS
 - Listen to the sermon
 - Read the Leader Guide each week
 - Read the weekly Leader Notes (Email or newsletter format)
- TRACK PERSONAL PROBLEMS & NEEDS OF GROUP MEMBERS
- COMMUNICATE SPECIAL NEEDS TO PASTORS
- CARE FOR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
- VISIT MEMBERS IN THE HOSPITAL
- COMPLETE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE ROSTERS

LEADER ESSENTIAL: 4 SPIRITUAL STAGES

The following spiritual stages are not an exhaustive list but designed to help determine where someone may be in their spiritual journey, to better understand their spiritual needs in growing their relationship with God. These are intended to be descriptive not prescriptive.

1. SEARCHING for God and what it means to follow Him.

Typical beliefs, behaviors and attitudes:

- Disbelief or uncertainty in the existence of God.
- Belief in many forms of the supernatural.
- Belief in one God but many ways to get to Him.
- Expresses frustration or negativity with the church at large.
- Confusion about God, Jesus and the church.
- Lack of knowledge regarding the Bible (doesn't have a biblical worldview).
- Belief that the answers they are seeking lie in prestige, power, fame and so on.
- Belief that they are as good as anyone else so they don't really need Jesus.
- Belief that they have done too much wrong and fear/question if they can be saved.

Spiritual Needs:

- A solid relationship(s) with followers of Jesus who are further along on their journey.
- A picture of the real Jesus lived out in front of them.
- Answers, evidences for the existence of God.
- A clear explanation of the gospel message.
- An invitation to follow Jesus.
- Beginning serving experiences.

Common Phrases:

- "There are many ways to get to God."

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- “I have been a good person, so I will be ok.”
- “I’m not sure I really believe in the Bible.”
- “I haven’t been to church for years and I am just getting back into it.”
- “This is my first church experience. I am brand new to church.”
- “I don’t really know anything about the Bible, and I would like to learn more.”
- “Just coming to church has been a huge step for me.”
- “I don’t believe in organized religion.”
- “I’m really just exploring and have no idea where to begin.”

Key Movements:

- Developing spiritual relationships.
- Spiritual Practices:
 - Beginning to reflect on Scripture.
- Beginning a prayer life.
- Key Teachings/Understandings:
 - Realization of salvation by grace.
 - Understanding the Trinity.
- Serving experiences both at The Ridge and outside The Ridge.
- Decisions:
 - Making a decision to follow Jesus.
 - Baptism.

2. STARTING to follow God.

Typical beliefs, behaviors and attitudes:

- Uncertainty what the Bible says about the purpose of a follower of Jesus.
- Belief that followers of Jesus don’t make mistakes.
- Cultural perspective about life with some spiritual truth mixed in.
- Excitement over new found spiritual relationships.
- Belief that feelings are the most important, which leads to spiritual highs and lows.
- Belief that people are not caring for them enough.
- Tendency to serve others in a ministry as long as the benefit outweighs the cost
- Confusion about complex issues because of an incomplete understanding of the scriptures.
- More knowledge about what followers of Jesus say than what the Bible says.

Spiritual Needs:

- A solid relationship(s) with followers of Jesus who are further along on their journey.
 - Encouragement and support.
 - Modeling of the spiritual practices of a growing follower of Jesus.
- Continued guidance and teaching about:
 - Truths found in the scriptures.
 - Who they are in Christ/what a relationship with God looks like.
 - how to start feeding themselves.
- A place to serve consistently.

Common Phrases:

- Statements on perceived needs:
 - “I go to church regularly, that’s good enough for me.”
 - “My Ridge Group is not meeting my needs.”
 - “I didn’t like the music today. If only they did it like...”

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- “I’m not being fed at my church, so I am going to a church that meets my needs better.”
- “I’m not getting anything out of serving, I think I need a break.”
- Statements on views:
 - “I love my Ridge Group; don’t add any more people to it.”
 - “Our church is getting too big!”
 - “I occasionally pray and read my Bible, that’s good enough for me.”
 - “People have hurt me, so it’s just me and God.”
 - “I didn’t know the Bible said that.”
- Phrases on moving forward:
 - “I made a decision to follow Jesus and I go to church, but I don’t know what is next.
 - “I want to know more about what it means to follow God.”

Key Movements:

- Consistent spiritual relationships.
- Consistency in spiritual practices.
 - Frequent reflection on scripture, growing prayer life. giving regularly. journaling.
- Key teachings:
 - Understanding you exist to know, love and serve God.
 - Understanding key truths from the scriptures.
- Serving experiences both at The Ridge and outside The Ridge.
- Beginning to invest in people who are far from God.

3. STRIVING to take ownership in your journey to follow God.

Typical beliefs, behaviors and attitudes:

- Desire to serve others for other’s good and for God’s glory.
- Tendency to feel responsible for how others respond to the Gospel.
 - Possible pride if person accepts and possible discouragement if not.
- Tendency to be black-and-white about what should happen in a church.
- Moving towards if not already practicing the spiritual practices daily.
- Desire to serve but not sure where their serving sweet spot is.

Spiritual Needs:

- Continued relationship(s) in a spiritual community.
 - Encouragement and support.
- A surrendered follower of Jesus who will challenge them and debrief with them about spiritual disciplines and ministry experiences.
 - Provides accountability.
- Consistent opportunities to serve both in the church and outside of the church.
- Help identifying their spiritual gifts.

Common Phrases:

- “On Mission” Statements:
 - “I love my group, but there are other people that need a group like this.”
 - “Look at how many people are at church today – it’s awesome!”
 - “I was noticing that someone from my group is not serving, I am going to invite them to serve along with me.”
- Spiritual growth statements:
 - In my quiet time with God, I came across something I have a question about, I think I will ask the person who has been investing in me.”

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- “I just can’t seem to put down this book on spiritual growth.”
- “I think I could lead a group/team with a little help.”
- “This is a big deal, I need to pray about it.”

Key Movements:

- Daily growth through spiritual practices.
 - Daily reflection on scripture.
 - Daily prayer life.
 - Moving from regular giving to tithing.
 - Frequent journaling.
 - Intentional times of solitude.
- Investing:
 - Investing in people who are far from God.
 - Investing in people who are in the Searching and Starting stages.
- Serving:
 - Serving inside and outside church.
 - Inviting others to serve with you.
 - Taking a step towards leadership within a ministry.
- Decision to make Jesus the center of every decision you make.

4. SURRENDERED your life to following God.

Typical beliefs, behaviors and attitudes:

- Ability to think in terms of what a team can do.
- A coaching mindset.
- Desire to see other people take next steps with God.
- My Relationship with God is the most important relationship in my life. It guides every decision that I make.

Spiritual Needs:

- Continued relationship(s) in a spiritual community.
 - Encouragement and support.
- An ongoing relationship with other surrendered followers of Jesus.
 - Providing encouragement and support.
- A relationship where they are pouring into people not in the surrendered stage.
- Investing in people who are far from God.
- Resources to use to feed themselves.
- Leading other people take next steps with God.

Common Phrases:

- “On mission” statements:
 - “We are having our neighbors over for dinner, please pray for me.”
 - “We get to baptize someone from our Ridge Group. When is the next “INSIDE TRACK” gathering? I want to go with them and help them start serving somewhere.”
 - “God is really moving in the group of people that I am investing in.”
- “I am looking for chances to sacrificially give beyond what I am giving right now. I really want to depend on God in this way.”