



# Grace Group

## Leader Orientation



# Welcome to Grace Group Leader Orientation!

Grace Group Leader Orientation is designed to help prepare you to lead a group. We want to equip you to be a source of encouragement and hospitality for your group members. We hope this orientation provides some helpful tools as you begin leading your group and helps you move forward in your own faith journey.

Keep in mind that Grace Group Leader Orientation isn't exhaustive. We've tried to keep it simple by including the information that is most helpful as you begin leading. There will be other training opportunities for you to grow in your leadership.

Finally, we recommend you use the space provided to take notes and record ideas.

**Thank you for partnering with us to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.**







# SESSION ONE



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## THE STORY CARDS

We'll begin Session One by participating in an exercise using Story Cards. They're a visual way to encourage people to share about their lives and spiritual journeys. It is surprising how using photographs as a storytelling tool draws people into deeper reflection and more meaningful conversations.

## GROUP LEADER BASICS

### **Grace Group Win:**

The win for a Grace Group is to create an environment where people have the opportunity to experience a community that cares for one another, serves others, and pursues spiritual growth.

## LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

1. The leader is a follower of Jesus, who has been or is willing to discuss being baptized.
2. The leader has attended or plans on attending Explore.
3. The leader has passed a standard background check.

Notes:

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Notes:

*Acts 2:42-47:*

*"42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. 43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity — 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved."*

## LEADER ESSENTIALS

### STAY ROOTED

- This essential reminds us to stay spiritually nourished.
- In John 15, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to instruct His followers to "abide". When we stay rooted to Jesus in this way, we welcome God's work in us and through us.
- *Key question: How are you rooting yourself in Jesus, realizing that apart from Him you can do nothing?*

### CULTIVATE COMMUNITY

- A Grace Group should be a place where people experience an "extended spiritual family" that they can be a part of and invite others into.
- By encouraging people in the group to be open and honest with one another your group can move beyond just a group of people gathering to hang out or simply engage in a study.
- *One great test for true community: If your group members had good news or bad news, how soon would they share it with the group?*

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## PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

- This essential focuses on how to involve your group members.
- Shared participation (facilitating the study, hosting the meeting, preparing the food, leading prayer time, planning social gatherings and service projects, helping decide what your group talks about, ect.) creates broader ownership of the group.
- Key question: How are you involving your group members in supporting the group? Remember, this is a spiritual family, so everyone gets to contribute.

## SERVE TOGETHER

- This essential expands the focus of the group beyond itself.
- Serving those outside of the group is a great way to leverage the influence of the group while strengthening the relationships within the group.
- Key question: Is serving others a consistent part of your group experience?

## CARE WELL

- This essential focuses on the big and small ways we can provide care.
- Acts 2:44-46: "44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity..."

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## CARE WELL (continued)

- The Grace Group should be the go-to for prayer, hospital and home visits, encouragement, and generosity. However, for those without a Grace Group, or if a group member's needs go beyond the scope of the group, our Grace Care Ministry is here to help.
- *Key question: Do you make it a priority for your group to support and care for one another?*

## OUTWARD FOCUSED

- Statistics show that more and more someone's first step into a church if they are curious about God is just as likely to be in a believer's home as it is a church building.
- Grace Groups should be environments where friends, coworkers, and neighbors who are curious about God can come and experience Biblical Community (Acts 2:42-27) as a bridge to beginning a relationship with Jesus.
- *Key question: Is the environment of your group conducive to people engaging with you who are open to or curious about God?*



# SESSION ONE

## MAKE A PLAN

### FIRST 3 MONTHS

Stay rooted to God (John 15)

Focus on building relationships.

Make sure everyone has one another's contact information.

Plan 2 socials where you can just do something fun together (could be simply grilling out, a game night, or going somewhere together). We recommend these occur every 6-8 weeks moving forward in place of your normal gathering.

Share tasks with your group members: hosting gatherings, bringing snacks/food, sending emails, ect.

Decide what you'll study after your first 2 series: What kind of study will help your group take next steps?

Decide where you will serve together moving forward and serve there in place of your normal gathering at least once in the first 3 months.

Dialogue with your group about who they know who is not necessarily a believer that they could invite to engage with your group (friends, neighbors, co-workers, ect.).

### NEXT 9 - 15 MONTHS

Stay rooted to God (John 15)

Continue to focus on building deeper relationships.

Decide together who and how you'll serve on a regular basis (we recommend at least 3-4 times/year in place of your normal gathering).

Start sharing more roles with other members of the group like: facilitating group discussions, hosting, helping select studies. Invite them to share in further training/development with you

Try to simply "do life" with your group members as much as is natural (Family outings, double dates, play dates, vacations, etc.).

Notes:



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## “NEXT STEPS” WINDOW - MONTHS 12 - 18

At this point the group leader in conjunction with the group members will have several choices:

- **Re-Up:** The group leader and members may decide to “re-up” and continue for another full cycle (12-18 months) with renewed covenants.
- **Rotate Leaders:** The group may continue on the current group leaders will rotate off and new ones within the group will rotate on. The former group leaders can choose to stay as members of the group, join/lead a new group, or take a season of rest before reengaging.
- **Send out leaders:** The group may stay intact and continue on, but send out a person/couple to start a new group who has shown they are ready so more people can find community.
- **Land the Plane:** Groups can be perfectly healthy and effective but decide that their next step should be to “land the plane” and allow the group members to make their own decisions about what they would like to do moving forward. Group members may start or join new groups, join a Huddle, or take a season of rest before reengaging.

Notes:



# SESSION TWO



# SESSION TWO

Notes:

## THE PRIMARY ROLE OF A GG LEADER:

*What's the primary role of a group leader?*

- Group leaders *aren't* primarily Bible scholars
- Group leaders *aren't* primarily social chairs
- Group leaders *aren't* primarily teachers
- Group leaders are environment creators

Since the Holy Spirit is the main helper, discipler, encourager, teacher, and challenger of every believer; the role of a group leader is to simply make a space for that to happen.

- **Make space** by cultivating relationships to help people hear from God.
- **Make space** by helping your environment be a safe, transparent, and trustworthy space.
- **Make space** by providing a comfortable and inviting atmosphere for people to connect relationally and grow spiritually.
- **Make space** by focusing on God's Word, praying for one another, caring for one another, and serving others.
- **Make space** for God to do what only He can do, and enjoy the ride!

## THE POSTURE OF A GG LEADER: HUMBLE & CURIOUS

### HOW DO HUMBLE LEADERS LEAD? LIKE JESUS.

*Philippians 2:1-5: "Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had."*

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Notes:

## WHAT DO CURIOUS LEADERS DO? ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS.

In the New Testament Jesus was asked 183 questions. He answered 3 of them. He asked 307 clarifying or redirecting questions. *If it helps, a healthy ratio would include a leader talking 20% of the time, and the rest of the group contributing 80% of the time.*

### BENEFITS OF ASKING QUESTIONS:

- They show genuine interest in someone else.
- They help people think for themselves, and that creates ownership. They help people problem-solve.
- The person asking the questions stays in control of the conversation.

### WHAT MAKES A “GOOD” QUESTION?

Good questions are discovery-based, motivated by a genuine desire to understand and connect with the other person. Think of the most interesting person in your life (friend, relative, significant other). You are naturally curious about them and show interest in who they are because you care about them. Your curiosity validates that person. So it should be with a group leader and the members of their group.

ACTIVE LISTENING: One of the best practices for being a curious leader is active listening; which is the ability to restate what the person is saying to affirm them and let them know that you hear and understand them.

## THE AIM OF A LEADER: PROVIDE BALANCE

One of the best ways a leader can shepherd their group is to remember the balance required to have overall health in a group. A group should be focused on God, community, and reaching/serving others. To illustrate this, we use the terms **CONNECT**, **GROW**, and **GO**.



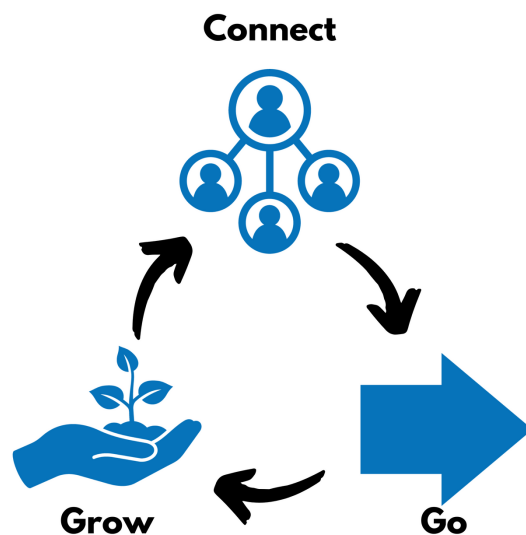
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Notes:

**CONNECT relationally:** Community: Focus on building relationships within the group and caring for one another.  
*Leader Essential: Cultivate Community, Promote Participation, Care Well*

**GROW in Jesus:** God: Focus on God (Study, Prayer, ect.)  
*Leader Essential: Stay Rooted*

**GO reach others:** Others: Focus on those who are not a part of your Grace Group (serving together, remembering friends, neighbors, coworkers who could be a part of your group).  
*Leader Essential: Serve Together, Outward-Focused*



Most groups are naturally great at 2 out of the 3 but need help shifting their focus to complete the triangle. This is where you as the group leader can determine where to push and lead out in the area that doesn't necessarily come naturally to your group (or even to you). Your Groups Director is here to help you as well.

# SESSION TWO

## COMMUNITY IS MESSY

### THE 3 KINDS OF MESSES

#### 1. SIN MESS

When people do something outside the perfect will of God.

#### 2. RELATIONAL MESS

When there are differences of personalities or perspectives in the group.

#### 3. LIFE MESS

When people's lives blow up because we live in a fallen world.

If you find that any of these kinds of messes are beyond the scope of your group, please reach out to your campus Groups Director.

Notes: