

LIFE GROUP LEADER RESOURCES

Creating a Culture of Care



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: The Basics

<u>Our Why</u>	4
<u>Mindset</u>	5
<u>Basic Skills</u>	6
<u>Group Skills</u>	7

Section 2: Resources

<u>Ice Breakers</u>	10
<u>Prayer Resources</u>	11
<u>Care Pathway</u>	14
<u>Staff On-Call</u>	15
<u>Emergencies/Crisis</u>	16
<u>Hospital Visits</u>	17
<u>Grief Help</u>	18

SECTION 1: THE BASICS

OUR WHY

WE EXIST TO CONNECT ADULTS IN COMMUNITY TOGETHER.

At Grace Church, we believe every person was born with a God-given destiny to be used by God to heal this broken world. Finding your purpose, however, is a process that begins with following Jesus. This happens when you're invited from culture to begin having transcendent experiences with God, to finding deep spiritual family, to serving in tangible ways and, ultimately, to multiplying yourself by inviting others along the journey. The Loop is our strategy for helping you do that. With concreted next steps and church-wide integration, The Loop is Grace's approach to help you discover, you were made for more.

Rooted, Life Groups, and Real Moms are located within the Your Community part of The Loop. As people experience transcendent moments, they grown hungry for more connection. Groups are the first step towards community. Our prayer and desire is that your group will grow together and deepen your roots as a spiritual family.



MINDSET

WE EXIST TO CONNECT ADULTS IN COMMUNITY TOGETHER.

It is extremely important that everyone including (Staff, volunteer leaders and attenders) view themselves as part of the priesthood of believers that has been called to love one another. Caring for others is not optional. Followers of Christ have been given the power and responsibility to demonstrate God's love and care. Each day should bring anticipation, as we ask God to bring people into our lives in need of His love. Demonstrating God's love can be as simple as offering a smile, encouraging word, making time for a cup of coffee or connecting someone with a resource that provides expertise in an area in which they need help.

There are three essential elements in shaping this mindset: clarity of condition, confidence and capability.

- **Clarity of Condition.** Acknowledge that you are broken, and the world is broken. It is everyone's responsibility and privilege to share their individual story and participate in helping one another heal, grow and transform into the image of Christ.
- **Confidence.** As a follower of Christ you embrace the most powerful care tool living inside you- the Holy Spirit! You choose to tap into this supernatural power that is far greater than your own human strength.
- **Capability.** Acknowledge that you need skills and tools to care for others well and intentionally pursue an equipping lifestyle.



BASIC SKILLS

What are the basic skills needed to care for someone well?

- The initial goal when connecting with someone who is hurting is to provide the ministry of “presence.” This means making time for someone, lending a listening ear, a word of encouragement and a heartfelt prayer.
- It is equally important to understand your limits regarding your ability to help the person. Remember, when you venture outside your capability and responsibility, helping can unfortunately turn into hurting. Be cautious to not rob someone of a transformational experience out of a desire to soothe your own discomfort as you witness people in pain. Rather, support them and guide them to resources that will encourage them towards healing and growth.
- When listening to someone in need, focus on the holistic elements of the concerns that they share. Typically, these can be divided into 3 areas:
 1. Physical/practical needs
 2. Mental/emotional/relational needs
 3. Spiritual needs
- Ultimately, discern how to best support a hurting person and walk alongside and support them in a loving manner while encouraging them to engage their challenging journey wholeheartedly to promote life change. The hope is that their difficult journey draws them nearer to God, builds their compassion and empathy towards others and solidifies a posture of humility with the understanding that we all need a Savior because of the reality of our brokenness.

Words of Encouragement Booklets

Consider giving a struggling group member a Words of Encouragement Booklet. This is a collection of some of our favorite scriptures that reference hope, peace and comfort straight from the Word of God. You may request copies from your Rooted/ Life Group Director.

GROUP SKILLS

Issues will arise in groups that cannot be anticipated. This is normal and ok! As a leader, by increasing your self-awareness and expanding your toolbox regarding how to handle challenging group experiences, you will be equipped to contribute positively to any situation.

Clarify your role as a leader- Understanding helps determine appropriate boundaries and next steps.

- Facilitate the group discussion
- Care for group members within appropriate limits
- Seek coaching if group needs go beyond your limits

Increase your self-awareness regarding how you handle difficult situations.

- Know how you respond mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally to conflict.
- Develop a plan to regulate yourself e.g.- breathing, glass of water, silent prayer.

Establish expectations of group members.

- Group members are actively engaged as evidenced by eye contact, listening, helpful feedback, avoiding distracting behavior and staying on the subject matter.
- Group members care for one another. This is not considered just the leader's responsibility but rather the whole group's responsibility to encourage and support each other.
- Group members equip not enable. Doing for others what they are responsible for themselves, robs them of the opportunity for growth.
- Group members walk alongside, listen, encourage and share resource information.

Develop a plan to navigate difficult situations.

- Set the tone for the group through a calm demeanor- both verbal and body language.
- When a difficult situation arises during group discussion, as a Leader,
 - o Thank the person for sharing.
 - o Restate the purpose of the group.
 - o Acknowledge that although important, the difficult topic can be better addressed after the group.
 - o Redirect the conversation back to the topic.
 - o Follow-up with the person who shared either one on one or within the context of the Grace Care Pathway.
 - o Follow-up with the group as a whole to assure them that care was extended, or issue addressed.

GROUP SKILLS CONT.

Seek coaching when the following situations arise.

- You feel overwhelmed by a group member or group dynamic.
- You need resource recommendations beyond [Care Pathways](#) and the [Online Resource Center](#).
- Boundaries have been crossed repeatedly.
- Situations arise that would involve harm to a group member or others.

On-Campus vs. Off-campus Support for Groups

- On Campus - Connect with Rooted and Life Group Directors and/or utilize referrals to [Care Pathways](#) and the [Online Resource Center](#).
- Off Campus groups- Utilize referrals to [Care Pathways](#) and the [Online Resource Center](#) or 911 if harm to self or others is a concern.

SECTION 2: THE RESOURCES



ICE BREAKERS

QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been attending Grace?
2. Share about your work and family?
3. What are you hoping for from this group (community, friendship, bible study, etc.)?
4. Where have you served at Grace?
5. What's your personal calling/passions?
6. Favorite place traveled to and why?
7. What is the last movie you saw/book you read?
8. What is your favorite movie/book & why?
9. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
10. If you could have dinner with anyone dead or alive - who and why?

ACTIVITIES & GAMES

- [60 Ice Breakers for Groups](#)
- [10 Fun Games](#)



PRAYER

PRAYER EXPERIENCE IDEAS

1. Read each Scripture passage slowly three times. Is there a word or phrase that stands out to you? What is the Lord saying to you in this passage?
2. Make a list of everything in your life for which you are thankful.
3. Which of the six broken places most resonates with you? Separation from God? Isolation? Hatred? Injustice? Brokenness? Decay? What does God want you to do about it?
4. What obstacle in your life today is preventing you from connecting with God? What do you need to do to remove that obstacle? Ask God to help you take it away.
5. Write down prayer requests for each of these areas in your life:
 - a. Personal character/faith
 - b. Family
 - c. Friends
 - d. World issues/leaders
6. If God wrote you a letter about what he loves about you specifically, what would he write? Now write that letter.
7. Assume a posture that will help you present yourself to God. Kneel, bow, or lie face down

PRAYER EXPERIENCE IDEAS CONT.

8. Is there a sin area in your life that you need to confess to God? Confess that sin and repent.

Now celebrate your forgiveness through Jesus.

9. What is one time when you experienced God working in your life?

How did God reveal himself to you during that time?

10. Think about someone in your life who has profoundly influenced your faith. What character

qualities did you see in their life that you would want to emulate? Ask God to help you grow in those areas.

GROUP PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Psalms 145: 14-21 (NLT)

14 The LORD helps the fallen
and lifts those bent beneath their loads.
15 The eyes of all look to you in hope;
you give them their food as they need it.
16 When you open your hand,
you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.
17 The LORD is righteous in everything he does;
he is filled with kindness.
18 The LORD is close to all who call on him,
yes, to all who call on him in truth.
19 He grants the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cries for help and rescues them.
20 The LORD protects all those who love him,
but he destroys the wicked.
21 I will praise the LORD,
and may everyone on earth bless his holy name
forever and ever.

Now, spend some time reading the following passages 2 or 3 times. After each passage, record what God seems to be saying to you.

- Psalms 23
- Ephesians 1: 3-11
- Luke 15: 1-17

SPIRITUAL LOCATION EXERCISE

- What are the realities of my life right now? List all the facts in your life right now. (Ex: "I've started a new job, struggling with family issues, new to the area etc.)
- What has been on your mind lately? List any and everything that you've been thinking about the past few weeks.
- What emotions have I been feeling lately? List all of them and what has contributed to you feeling that way (Ex: "I've felt anxious about work", "I'm angry with my spouse", "I'm sad", "I'm scared about...", "I'm happy about...")
- How is your body feeling? Spend some time noticing how you're feeling physically. (Ex: "I'm tired", "I have a headache", "My muscles are sore", "My asthma has been really bad this week", etc)
- What question would you like to ask God right now (and have answered!) Picture Jesus sitting with you, and you can ask him anything!
- What are you longing for or desiring? ("I wish I had..."). Name to Jesus what you are wanting or needing today.
- Spend some time slowly reading over your answers. What do you observe? Are there any themes you notice? Take a few minutes to engage honestly with God and listen for what he may be saying to you through this exercise. End your time by thanking God for His presence with you in this space.



CARE PATHWAY



CARE CENTER

Our Care Center can assist with physical/practical needs:

- Choice Food Pantry
- ESL Services
- Job Board
- Referral Services
- Vehicle Services

[LEARN MORE](#)



PRAYER MINISTRY

The Prayer Ministry provides additional support through:

- After-Service Prayer
- Hope Rooms
- Submitting a Prayer Request
- Prayer Gatherings

[SUBMIT PRAYER REQUEST](#)



CARE APPOINTMENTS

Receive support regarding mental/emotional/relational needs:

- Counseling
- Referrals
- Coaching
- Support Groups

[SIGNUP FOR APPOINTMENT](#)



STAFF ON CALL

WEEKDAYS

You may visit any of our campuses Monday -Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and request to meet with the staff member on-call for spiritual and emotional support.

EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS

We have a staff member on- call in the evening and on the weekend to provide spiritual and emotional support. To connect with this resource, call the church number at 317-818-4833 and follow the prompts.



EMERGENCIES & CRISIS SITUATIONS

EMERGENCIES

If you find yourself in a more serious situation in which a referral to any of the above resources is not enough, (e.g.- someone shares suicidal thoughts), please assist them with getting to a safe environment. This would include connecting them with family members or friends who can help them with next steps or to the local emergency room. If you cannot find someone to transport the person to a safe environment, call the police for transportation. If you suspect the situation may be urgent, do not hesitate to call 911. We don't want to "guess" whether someone is serious about harming themselves or others.

CRISIS SITUATIONS

Crisis Line: (800) 560-4038 or (317) 574-1252

Aspire Crisis is here to help individuals, families and the community who are experiencing mental and/or substance abuse related emergencies by providing 24-hour crisis intervention, assessment, and referrals.

Services:

- Phone triage, risk assessments, and safety planning
- Suicide awareness, intervention, and prevention
- Education and information about mental illness and substance abuse, and treatment options
- Assistance in navigating the mental health system
- Referrals to treatment, including inpatient treatment when needed
- Urgent outpatient intakes and appointments
- Referrals to community resources



HOSPITAL VISITS

- Confirm that the person wants visitors. Because not everyone feels “cared for” the same way, avoid showing up without permission.
- Use hand sanitizer before entering someone’s room. We want to avoid bringing in any outside germs.
- Pay attention to the length of your visit. If someone needs a hospital stay, then their full-time job is rest and healing. We do not want to hinder that goal.
- If possible, pull up a chair next to someone’s bed rather than standing over them during the visit.
- Notice body language. If a person is yawning or their eyes are drooping, take that as a cue to leave no matter what they “say”. Some folks feel like they need to be a good “host” to visitors even when in the hospital and will put their own needs aside.
- Clarify what information they are comfortable with you sharing with others.
- Do not post updates about people’s health on social media without their express permission.
- Ask the person if you can pray for them before you leave.
- Ask them if there is anything your group can do for them beyond praying. Examples include:
 - o Phone calls - check in on their healing journey.
 - o Cards - send cards to provide encouragement.
 - o Meals - arrange for meals for person/family post release from hospital (meal train, online scheduler or gift cards).



GRIEF HELP

- Assist with any needs regarding the funeral service (meal, childcare etc.)
- Spend more time listening and observing for potential needs than talking.
- Follow-up regularly after the funeral. Most people are running on adrenaline and have plenty of support during the memorial events however the hardest days will be in the future when everyone else has gone back to normal life.
- Encourage the person to engage in a support experience such as www.griefshare.org or read books to help them understand the grieving process like Good Grief by Granger Westberg.
- Add person to the Grief Card Ministry mailing list to receive cards.
- Invite person to the Surviving the Holidays Event. For details grace-church.us/counseling.