



# **Adult Discipleship Playbook**

## **2024**

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in leading a group at LifePark! The goal of this playbook is to help you understand the vision, purpose, model and strategy of the Adult Discipleship ministry at LifePark.

## Vision

We see a place for every person within a group at LifePark. We see these groups as helping people to know and love God through a relationship with Jesus Christ, to build healthy relationships, to make wise decisions, and to build God's Kingdom.

## Purpose

Adult Discipleship groups exist to help people become fully mature followers of Jesus Christ.

## Model





This purpose is accomplished by creating spiritual growth *environments* where people can come to Know Christ, Grow in Relationships, and learn to Share the Gospel.

In designing the Adult Discipleship Ministry at LifePark, we gained insight from the ministry of Jesus Christ. We see that there were four main ministry *environments* in which Jesus operated that are relevant to LifePark's discipleship ministry.

In the Gospels, Jesus demonstrated a close and personal relationship with His Heavenly Father. His deep **communion** with the Father provided the strength He needed to walk in obedience and carry out His earthly ministry (Mk 1:35; Jn 17; Jn 12:27-29). Among His followers, Jesus had an inner circle, known as the **core**, consisting of Peter, James, and John. These were individuals He mentored (Lk 9:54; Jn 21:15-17) and trusted closely (Matt. 27:36-38). Jesus also gathered 12 disciples, often referred to as His **crew**, who played a central role in His ministry on earth. Additionally, Jesus was surrounded by a larger **community**, drawn to Him as He taught on topics such as the kingdom of God. This broader community became a natural space for people to connect with each other while reflecting on the truths He shared.

These four environments make up the structure of the Adult Discipleship ministry at LifePark.

It is possible to think of these four environments sequentially, but they do not have to be. More importantly, believers should seek to engage in each environment for holistic formation.

	MODELED IN THE LIFE OF JESUS	DISCIPLESHIP ENVIRONMENTS	GROUP SIZE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	MY COMMITMENTS
	<b>COMMUNION</b> Jesus and the Father	<b>Personal Spiritual Habits</b>	1	Daily personal time with God, reading scripture and praying.	
	<b>CORE</b> Jesus and the Three	<b>Life Accountability Groups</b>	2-4	High levels of transparency and clear goals for personal growth and character development.	
	<b>CREW</b> Jesus and the Twelve	<b>LifeGroups, Mentoring Groups</b>	5-20	Groups (Co-Ed, Men, Women) for building relationships, gaining biblical knowledge, giving and receiving care and service, growing in spiritual maturity.	
	<b>COMMUNITY</b> Jesus and the 70/120	<b>Classes, Connecting Events</b>	20- 100	Larger crowd events for fellowship, equipping, connection, inspiration, and instruction.	

Here is a further explanation of each environment:

### Communion - Begin Personal Devotions

**Ministry under this environment reflects Jesus' relationship with His Father. It involves personal spiritual habits that lead to intimacy with God and spiritual growth.**

Personal Devotions are spiritual habits that help people grow closer to God. We encourage people to meet with God daily through reading and reflecting on Scripture, and through prayer. Research has shown that if an individual can read Scripture at least 4 times per week, they are significantly more likely to mature in their faith.<sup>1</sup> At LifePark, we want personal devotions to be an essential part of every person's spirituality.

People can visit <https://churchatlifepark.org/biblereadingplans/> to help find a plan that is right for them.

<sup>1</sup> <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/01/20/9-tangible-benefits-of-bible-reading-for-your-church/>

## Core - Gain Life Accountability

**Ministry under this environment reflects Jesus' ministry to Peter, James, and John. It involves transparency and accountability for personal growth.**

### Life Accountability Groups

Life Accountability Groups are groups of 3-4 believers (max!) that meet regularly to help people grow in godly character, spiritual intimacy with God, and develop close relationships. We believe that all believers should have a few Christians in their lives who can support them by knowing their deep struggles, praying for them consistently, and holding them accountable to achieve realistic goals for personal and spiritual growth.

## Crew - Join a Group

**Ministries under this environment reflect Jesus' ministry to the 12 disciples. They center around building relationships, understanding and believing biblical truths, and living out faith.**

### LifeGroups

LifeGroups are about Christ-centered relationships that help us grow spiritually. Each week, groups gather throughout neighborhoods in our city and at our church for Bible study, fellowship, prayer, and service. LifeGroups range from 8-20 people per group and are LifePark's main discipleship environment.

### Mentoring groups

Mentoring at LifePark provides specific spiritual and practical insight and wisdom into a person's life from an experienced leader. Mentoring at LifePark takes place in 2 ways: Mentoring Groups (Radical Mentoring for women and Radical Mentoring for men) and One on One mentoring.

## Community - Attend a Connecting Events / Classes

**Ministries under this environment reflect Jesus' ministry to His larger community. They seek to help people meet others, establish friendships, and be equipped for a specific topic.**

### Conferences/Workshops

LifePark Workshops are 2-day events designed to help strengthen specific areas of a person's life by presenting biblical truths and helping each person to apply them. Typically, workshops occur on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. They normally consist of biblical teaching via video and round table discussions. Conferences at LifePark are similar except that they occur on a larger scale and have a live speaker.

### **First Wednesdays**

First Wednesdays is a fellowship class that meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00pm. Designed for those seeking an easy way to connect with others, each meeting features a different discussion topic, fostering meaningful conversations.

### **Hike Ministry**

The LifePark Hike ministry is a three-day spiritual retreat designed to help hikers encounter God and build friendships. Participants hike through the great outdoors and encounter God's wonderful creation. This retreat is available for men or women.

### **MOMCo. (MOPS)**

MOMCo. exists to support moms, introduce them to Jesus Christ, and grow in a relationship with Him. MOMCo. meets twice a month on Wednesday mornings from September to May.

### **Classes**

Classes exist to raise the value of Biblical and Theological literacy to deepen faith and strengthen ministry environments. Classes are lecture-based with some discussion, consist of 20-50 people, and are focused on building knowledge.

### **Christian Leadership Class**

This class seeks to develop leaders for leadership in the home, the church, and the workplace. It meets twice a month for 9 months (Sept-May) on Sunday afternoons. Our sessions will cover various aspects of leadership, including vision casting, servant leadership, disciple-making, cultural leadership, and effective communication, all grounded in biblical principles.

## **Strategy**

### **Values**

- Grace – As God has shown us grace in Jesus, we strive to show grace to each other.
- Bible Study – Groups help each other experience God through His word.
- Prayer – Groups that pray together grow in intimacy with God and one another.
- Accountability – Groups help each other develop healthy habits and avoid bad ones.
- Authenticity – Groups are real about what is happening in their lives.
- Confidentiality – What is said in the group, stays in the group.
- Dependability – Groups are committed to one another.
- Multiplication – Groups should start new groups. The church exists to make disciples.
- Service – Groups should make an impact in the church and the community.

## Group Leader Qualifications

- Have a personal, growing relationship with Jesus Christ
- Complete the Adult Discipleship Leader Application
- Have the time, emotional capacity, and moral discernment to lead a group
- Have the desire to help others grow in their faith
- Commit to serving for one year.
- Be approved by a member of the adult discipleship team.

## A Group Leaders' Role

Group leaders are spiritual shepherds. They have the privilege of walking with people in their group toward spiritual maturity. Since spiritual growth is a community experience for the whole group, the Group Leader does not bear this responsibility alone. Leaders create a consistent environment where the central vision of the church (knowing Christ, growing in Christ-centered relationships, and sharing the Gospel) can be practiced and people naturally grow spiritually. They lead the way in continually pointing others in the group to Jesus, continually loving others in the group, and asking others to do the same.

## Responsibilities for Group Leaders

Be an intentional leader

- Pray for the group regularly
- Recruit people to join (personal invitations always work best)
- Lead meetings by facilitating discussion in a way that engages everyone and points them to biblical truth
- Communicate with group members regularly to bring encouragement and spiritual guidance

Create a relational environment

- Seek to establish friendships with people in the group. Get to know each other's stories. Be open about struggles
- Plan or have someone in the group plan occasional social gatherings for fun
- Promote participation in the group by delegating roles to group members

Implement a reproducible process<sup>2</sup>

- Develop a plan for meetings (day, time, location) and curriculum. Strive to be consistent

---

<sup>2</sup> Be an intentional leader, create a relational environment, and implement a reproducible process comes from Jim Putman. See Jim Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 35–36.

and strategic

- Identify future group leaders and mentor them into the leadership role

#### Other

- Meet with an Adult Discipleship team member for 3-4 group leader huddles a year.
- Appoint a Missions Champion and work with them to have a few service opportunities for the group.
- Report big changes to your coach and the Associate Pastor of Discipleship or Associate Discipleship Director
- Recommended one-year commitment.

### **LeadingWell (Leader Development)**

- LeadingWell Orientation – online video training introducing group leaders to the basics of leading a small group.
- LeadingWell Monthly – monthly newsletter with advice on leading small groups.
- LeadingWell Huddles – quarterly meeting with Adult Discipleship team members.
- LeadingWell Rally – gathering of all group leaders once a year for inspiration and fellowship

### **Responsibilities for Participants**

- Show up to the group on time / Join in the conversation / Be Real about what's going on in your life
- Listen intentionally to others as they share
- Let everyone have a role in the group (teach, pray, admin, host, meal, missions champion)
- Agree to pray for your group leaders and other group members on a weekly basis
- Show genuine care for each other

### **Goals for each individual in Groups**

- A healthy and consistent devotional life
- An increasing level of biblical literacy
- A spiritual family to belong to and depend on.
- A personal ministry to advance the Kingdom
- A surrendered life to Jesus Christ
- A heart to love all people, especially those far from God

### **Group Logistics – decisions before starting a group**

- Decide on the type of Group to lead:

- Biblical Education Class, LifeGroup, ReEngage group, Care Group, Mentoring group
- Choose a day, time, and location.
  - Classes typically meet at the church depending on availability.
  - Ideally, LifeGroups meet in homes unless over half of your group needs childcare or you meet at a time when there is not a lot of competition for a room at the church.
  - Mentoring groups typically meet in homes.
- Delegation
  - The fastest way to burn out is to do everything yourself. What can you delegate to others to help everyone in the group participate in the group's success? Let's empower people to further develop people for God's work in the world. It starts with everyone participating in our groups.
- Recruiting/Marketing Groups
  - Multiple times a year, the church provides opportunities for people to join your group, if your group still needs people.
  - The best and most effective way to create a healthy Group is to self-recruit. Find people who fit the profile of your group and invite them to join. "One invite can change a life!" People connect more with personal invitations and are more likely to commit to the group long-term. The most successful Groups are those where the leader self-recruited at least the core team! Of course, we will also do everything we can to set your group up for success. This includes posting it on the website, email blasts, and Sunday announcements.

## **Missions Champion**

A Missions Champion (MC) is someone with a heart to see their LifeGroup serving on mission together. Because the MC is a member of that group, he/she knows the group dynamics and understands its unique mix of gifts and passions, as well as its limitations. The MC also understands the challenges facing the group that must be overcome in order for the group to serve together. The primary objective of the MC is to work through the obstacles and help the group live on mission together, whether that means serving locally or globally, or perhaps both. While we do not want the MC to be the Group Leader, we would like the Group Leader to choose the MC for the year. MCs work directly with the Missions team to set the group up for success.



## **Tag Lines**

- Ministry flows from being a person of God.
- Quality of the leader, Quality of the team.
- We grow more spiritually when we are connected relationally.
- We are created for community!
- Care enough to confront!
- Sign up, show up, join in, and be real!
- Moving people from rows to circles.

## **Final Thoughts**

Finally, thank you for leading a Group. You are a blessing not only to our team and LifePark, but you are also a blessing to Jesus and the Kingdom of God. He certainly does not need us but we have the tremendous privilege of contributing to His kingdom. Thank you for loving Jesus! Thank you for serving!