



HIGH POINTE
LIFE  **GROUPS**
... EXPERIENCING LIFE TOGETHER

**GROUP
DESCRIPTION PACKET**



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A LIFE GROUP?

Consider ABC ...

Accountability :: *We need each other. God has designed us for relationship and encouragement. Our walk with Christ is best lived involving others. Accountability is a way to ask questions in a safe environment, raise the standard of Christian living at home and at work, and even find greater peace and understanding.*

Bible Study :: *One of our main goals is to encourage every participant to be reading the and engaging in the Word of God. Bringing your Bibles and reading them in between group time would be the ideal. We need to spend more time in the Word and allow it to transform our lives ... therefore, the Word is central to Life Groups!*

Connecting & Caring for each other :: *Through life's great moments and difficult challenges, we often find ourselves either giving or receiving care. It's a wonderful blessing for us to respond to other's need (helping with a move, providing a meal, mowing the lawn or whatever is needed). Caring for others - and receiving care FROM others - is a simple way that our faith is confirmed and expanded.*

Other Group Options ...

Compassion Projects > Many of our groups get involved with several different compassion projects throughout the year. This is a great way to incorporate the entire family with the Life Group. Here are some ideas ...

Byron Community Ministries: Through this great ministry, you can adopt a family for the holidays, collect non-perishable food, or volunteer to serve families as they come in to receive food. Contact them at 878-6000.

Mel Trotter Ministries: This urban mission in Grand Rapids has several opportunities to reach out and meet the needs of our city.

Church Mission Projects > Sometimes, High Pointe needs an army to pull off an event. Your Life Group could serve as the perfect group of people to pull off some of these great events. Here are some ideas ...

Easter Eggstravanga: This annual outreach event takes a great deal of creativity and recruitment.

Family Fall Festival: This annual outreach event takes a huge amount of people to serve and work the games. Your group could be huge in helping!

Church Picnic: There are quite a few details in figuring out the best way to organize the best picnic of the year. Your group would be a natural organization to help get that done!

Fellowship Ideas > A group that plays together stays together ...

Fall Orchard Trip: Take the family to experience a beautiful Michigan fall day!

Family Movie Night: Experience a great family movie together!

Progressive Dinner: Travel from home to home eating one course per stop.

Game Night: Get together for snacks and games.



2008 | September

So you might be interested in participating in a **LIFE GROUP**? Fantastic! We hope this introductory packet answers many of your questions about what this ministry could look like for High Pointe.

As you look over the information here, begin praying for your personal involvement. From a group facilitator to a group participant, there is room for everyone. You can determine what type of group you'd like to be a part of - how often the group meets - when the groups meets - what the group will study - what the group might do (with various compassion project ideas) - and more!

The first step to participating with our **LIFE GROUP** ministry is to attend our first Entry Pointe event:

ENTRY POINTE LUNCHEON

Sunday, October 12, 2008

12:00 PM to 1:15 PM

RSVP by Wednesday, October 8

(RSVP by signing up at Discipleship Booth or email terry@high-pointe.org)

Lunch Menu:

BBQ Sandwich | Potato Salad | Chips | Veggie | Drink | Dessert

Hotdogs available for children

(everything is provided ... just come and enjoy)

LIFE GROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Pastor Terry Bate, Associate Pastor

Tammy Bate

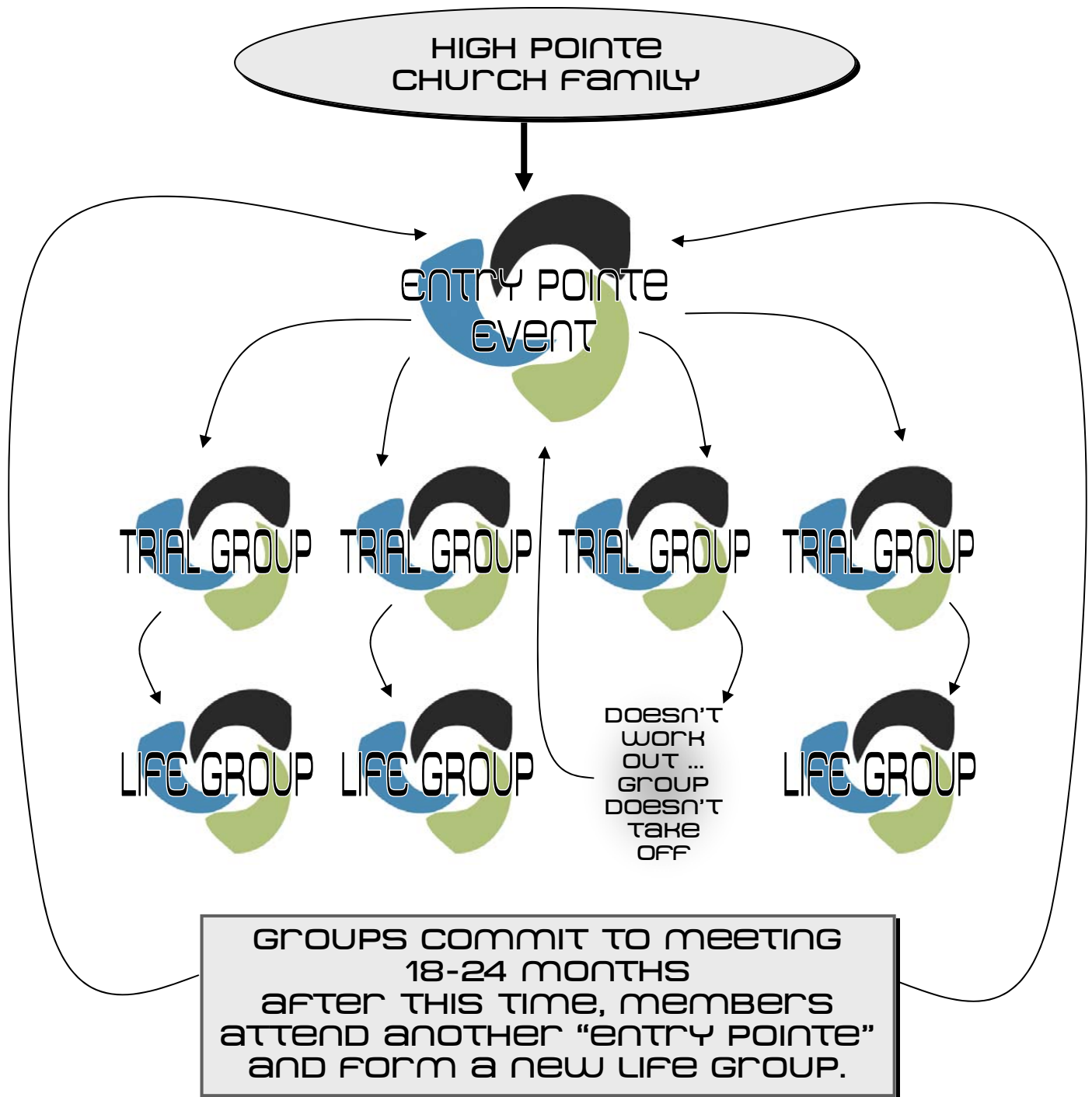
Monica Brummel

Donna Garrett

Doug Reinsch

Jodi Venema

Flow Chart





LIFE GROUP DEFINITIONS:

Entry Pointe Event: This event will be held 3-4 times a year at High Pointe. Each event could look much different than the next. The focus isn't what we will do at the event as much as what the outcome of the event will be. At every "Entry Pointe," we'll hear a testimony from someone who has benefited from participating in a group and then we will actually form our groups on the spot!

Group Facilitator: A facilitator basically serves as the point person for their group. Facilitators organize the group meetings and communicate with the group about upcoming meetings and other gatherings. Facilitators do not have to lead each discussion - as a matter of fact, we encourage shared responsibility for leading the discussion time.

Trial Group: This is the name we've given those groups who form at our Entry Pointe events. This group commits to meeting together for 6 weeks to "try the group out." At the end of the 6 weeks (or sessions) any member of the group can decide - without judgment - that the group isn't for them. For those who do decide to continue, there is a commitment made of either 18-24 months (time should be determined by the facilitator). If a group member chooses to not continue after the "trial time" is over, they hope they will attend the next Entry Pointe event to try another group.

Closed Group: This term refers to the idea that we are encouraging groups to not receive new members once they form. Those interested in a Life Group should attend our next "Entry Pointe" event and form a group of their own - rather than assimilate into existing groups. The purpose for this is to encourage trust and security in our groups - we feel that new members can jeopardize the depth of that trust. Since our groups have a relatively short life span (18-24 months), we hope that members of our groups feel safe to share as much about life as they feel comfortable. (Note: we are open to groups operating as an "open group" if a facilitator feels strongly about that or if there are circumstances that warrant it)

Open Group: This term refers to the idea that groups operate with an "open chair" model where new members are always welcome. In the past, our Care Groups operated this way. We are encouraging our new Life Groups to function differently (see Closed Group from above); however, we are not interested in micro-managing this process. If a group desires to operate as an "open group," that is fine.

Group Size: Groups will be limited to 10-12 individuals (or 5-6 couples). If groups should grow to more than that, we'd like groups to consider multiplying (this applies to open groups).



COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

When will groups meet? The easy answer is whenever they want. Sundays tend to work well for many groups but a night of the week can be just as effective. It really depends on the desire of the group. (NEW OPTION: We would like facilitators to consider having their group meet on Wednesday evenings during “reFuel.” Just think ... your kids/teens are taken care of and you could use that hour to circle up some chairs and connect.)

What will groups study? Discipleship and time spent in the Bible is a key component to what our vision of Life Groups are. This can be accomplished by a group just having a particular Bible reading plan or using a professional Bible Study to guide them. We are working on a list of “suggested” studies you can choose from. The only limitation on this question is that we would want your study to be approved by Pastor Terry.

How often will groups meet? It’s our hope that each Life Group would meet every other week at a minimum. We also hope there would be groups who would commit to meeting every week. Groups that meet weekly should be able to accomplish their group time in an hour - while groups who meet less frequently will likely need more time at each gathering.

Will groups still organize showers and meals for families like our Care Groups did?
Yes. As we “experience life together,” we believe that we will be sharing the greatest moments of our lives together as well as the challenging ones. We hope that our Life Groups will be on the front lines with each of their fellow members in providing care, support, encouragement and guidance.

What if you don’t find a group to join after attending an Entry Pointe event? We recognize that this is very much a possibility. We see two options at this point:
1) Work with Pastor Terry in forming a group outside of an Entry Pointe event.
2) Wait patiently until the next Entry Pointe event to discover a group.

What types of groups will there be? The goal is for no one group to look like another! We want groups with couples, and groups with singles. We’d love groups for ladies or men only and groups for parents of teenagers. We even think that a group can form that is for the entire family (kids included). What’s your vision for a group? Our hope and desire is that the Lord will lay that on your heart!



WHAT DOES A FACILITATOR DO?

By far, the most crucial member of each Life Group will be its facilitator. Though there are several important roles of the facilitator, we really hope the roll of leading and guiding the Life Group will be a grass roots effort involving all its participants.

To help give you an idea of what a facilitator is responsible for, we've put down some of the tasks here ...

Establish group meeting dates and locations :: Using either one standard location or a rotation, the facilitator needs to create a calendar of meeting times and places. We want to encourage our facilitators to be creative with when their group meets - it could be on a night of the week that works best, a Sunday afternoon or evening, or even on Wednesday evenings during "reFuel."

Recommend a group study :: Discovering what the group would like to study is a very important piece to the group puzzle. The facilitator needs to bring a list of options to the group or have clear direction on what they would like to study. This can happen as a result of the type of group is forming, too. For example, empty nesters might want a study that applies more to their season of life - or - the young marrieds might be looking for a particular study on their season of life. Discovering the direction of the group study is a critical first step to forming a solid team.

Set the tone of the group :: The facilitator does not have to lead each group discussion, but they should be the one who gets the gathering started. Either by beginning with prayer, sharing announcements, or organizing an "ice breaker", it's the facilitator who sets the tone of the gathering. This also occurs throughout the gathering by setting the example on sharing input and peeling the layers back in order to deepen relationships. This doesn't mean that you should dominate the conversation ... just set the tone for what type of sharing the group will benefit from.

Delegation :: We would love to see a shared responsibility with the studies, the prayer time, and general group operation (activities, food, etc). The facilitator cannot possibly manage all of these areas. However, they should allow others in the group to use their gifts and talents by taking the lead in each of these areas. Sharing the responsibility of leading the discussion time has great impact on group participation.

Facilitators should be people of ...

Integrity :: *living for Christ in private and in public*

Christian Faith :: *seeking a deeper walk with Jesus Christ and trusting Him for your future*

Positive of Church Mission :: *you are helping the church accomplish its mission ("To Know Christ and Make Him Known")*

Prayer :: *seeing the value and acting on the privilege of speaking to God daily*

Discipleship :: *a disciplined self-learner of the ways of Jesus*



WHAT CAN A LIFE GROUP STUDY?

Simple Ideas ::

Bible Reading Plan > Use High Pointe's Bible reading plan of the year to discuss the Word and how it's applying to your life. The accountability of sharing with the group can help you stay on target throughout the year!

Transformation Questions > Agree upon some questions that will help you grow as a disciple of Christ. Some examples of these questions could be:

1. Have you been a testimony to the greatness of Christ in words and actions this week?
2. Have you honored God with your financial dealings this week?
3. Have you been honoring, understanding and generous in your important relationships this week?
4. Have you continued to be angry toward someone else this week?

Sermon Discussion > As you experience the spoken Word on Sunday, you can take the thoughts and scriptures to another step by discussing the sermon further as a group. Use your sermon notes insert as a guide or take your own notes - either way, wrestling with the scriptures share by Pastor Kip can make a huge impact in your walk.

Great Media Options ::

North Point Media > Andy Stanley's church in Atlanta has created some dynamic small group studies. Topics in the HPLG library include: Discovering God's Will, Parental Guidance, Prayer, and more. Most videos come with an optional book for group members to engage in the study further.

Nooma > These videos created by Rob Bell of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville are great teachings based on God's Word. Each video stands alone (in other words they aren't in a series of videos). Several copies of the Nooma DVD's are available at HP.

Life Together DVD Series > This is a Purpose-Driven Life series. Each DVD and book deals with one of the 5 purposes for our life as outlined by Rick Warren's popular book.

More In-Depth Ideas ::

Family Life Today > These great book studies require members to do their study ahead of group time. They are typically focused on marriage and parenting and are full of great application. Learn more about these at www.familylife.com

InterActions Series by Willowcreek > Topical booklet series on relevant issues.

Pursuing Spiritual Transformation by Willowcreek > This spiritual development series is in a book form. Book options include: Gifts, Grace, Growth, Groups, and Fully Devoted.

Designed for Discipleship Series > This series investigates the Christian journey. Perfect for a newer Christian or the one who is desiring a deeper understanding of their faith.

New Community by Willowcreek > This series is focused on one book of the Bible at a time. This is perfect for the group who wants to dig deeper into the Word.

Raising the Bar Ideas ::

The Truth Project > This 12 week DVD curriculum is a challenging course on developing a Biblical worldview.

*This is a starter list that is designed to help your creative juices flow!
If you have found a study that you would like to teach, please contact Pastor Terry to have it reviewed and approved. A more complete list of curriculum ideas will be posted on the Life Group page of our High Pointe website soon!*