

Note from Pastor Jeff...

Dear LifeGroup leaders,

Happy August!! Are you getting used to the heat yet?

I thought I'd drop you a quick note and say I haven't forgot about you!! I'm praying for you and your groups and am very excited about the fall and getting things kicked off again. A few quick reminders...

Our all-church concert series kicks off this week. For the next three Wednesday nights we will be turning our parking lot into a family picnic / concert arena. Invite your group to show up a little early for a "nutritious" meal and some hang time.

If you haven't chosen your curriculum direction for the fall yet I'd encourage you to spend some time thinking, praying and dreaming about what's next for you and your group. I've included an article about choosing curriculum. Give it a quick read – it might help with your decision.

Our first Huddle of the fall is critical so please make plans now to be there. We will be meeting during first service at 9:15 September 20th. We are asking all our LifeGroups to kick off for the fall the week of September 13th.

Enjoy the summer and get ready for a great fall!!



Upcoming Huddles

- **SEPTEMBER 20**

9:15 AM IN UPSTAIRS CHAPEL AND ROOM 203

(NOTE ROOM CHANGE)

- **JANUARY 23**

**SATURDAY MORNING
BREAKFAST
PASTOR STEVE SHARING
WORKSHOPS**

Thought for the week...

When Christianity turns into a noun, it becomes a turnoff. Christianity was always intended to be a verb. And, more specifically an action verb. The title of the book of Acts says it all, doesn't it? It's not the book of Ideas or Theories or Words. It's a book of Acts.

Mark Batterson from his book - "Wild Goose Chase"

Planning Ahead...

Sept. 7	Labor Day—church office closed
Sept. 8	Marriage: Portrait of Grace starts—7 PM
Sept. 15	Financial Peace University starts—6:30 PM
Sept. 15 & 16	Men's Genesis Bible studies start 6 AM on Tuesdays and 7 PM on Wednesdays
Sept. 16	Way of the Master starts—7 PM
Sept. 20 & 27	Membership Class—3 PM
Sept. 23 & 30	LifeGroup Leader Training—7 PM
Sept. 23	Women's Fall Bible Study sessions start—9:15 AM and 6:45 PM
Sept. 25 & 26	Women's Fall Event
Sept. 27	Group Link—11 AM

Want to read through the Bible in 2 years with your family or LifeGroup? Pick up a bookmark at the Info Center in the lobby or go to the following website courtesy of Randy Ketchem:

<http://www.ketchem.net/twoyearbible/>

Contact Information

- JEFF GEISE
LIFEGROUP PASTOR
(JEFFG@CHCCBW.ORG)
- TERRI RUPPERT
ADULT MINISTRIES
ADMIN
(TERRI@CHCCBW.ORG)
- CHURCH PHONE:
425-488-4121

For Your Information

To research or order curriculum, go to www.christianbook.com or www.amazon.com



CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT CURRICULUM

Choosing a curriculum can be an overwhelming task considering the number of options now found in bookstores. We have compiled a list of materials that our LifeGroup leaders have used in the past and enjoyed. We also have several video / DVD based curriculums available from the LifeGroup curriculum library. The *Choosing a Curriculum* flowchart on the next page was designed to help you sift through the myriad of materials to find something your group needs.

► A Few Tips About Curriculum

1. Curriculum should never “drive” a group. It is a mistake to forfeit opportunities for extended prayer or service, or to cut short a necessary community-building activity because “we have to get through the curriculum.” Remind group leaders that Jesus did not say, “Go therefore into all the world and complete the curriculum!” Your goal is ultimately to make disciples – Christ followers – who are obedient to Jesus, yielded to the Spirit, and loving toward others.
2. Never substitute a curriculum for the Bible. Curriculum and study guides should be used to enhance the group’s purpose and move people into the Scriptures.
3. Don’t feel obligated to finish all the questions. Competent leaders know what questions to use and how many of them to use. If a curriculum has too many questions, then choose a few good ones (five to seven questions at most). Many times, two to three good questions followed by the right kind of group process are more than enough. Better to have a great discussion grappling with a few good questions than answering all the questions at a superficial level. The goal is to actively engage people with the truth of God’s Word as it relates to their own heart and growth.
4. Make sure the curriculum is “group friendly.” Many small group studies are designed for understanding the Bible, not building relationships or generating a deep sense of community and caring. Look closely at not only the questions but also the process. Does the curriculum allow for lots of interaction? Does it ask personal disclosure questions that challenge people to open up and share their lives? Or is it filled with content-based “what” questions, often ignoring personal “why” questions?
5. An application section that simply asks, “How would this apply to your life?” is weak. But if the writer asks questions like, “It’s clear from this passage we need to share our faith with others. And it is clear that we all know how and that it would please God. But let’s talk about why it is so hard for you and me to start spiritual conversations with seekers. Are there fears or other barriers you face in communicating the Gospel? How does it feel when you picture yourself talking to an unsaved person about Christ?” These questions will get at people’s motives, thoughts, feelings, and needs. Only then can we truly encourage and pray for one another.

► Key Questions When Choosing a Curriculum

What is our purpose?

Each group has a purpose, and the curriculum should support the purpose. This purpose may change as the group moves through seasons of growth, maturity, and experience. If a group starts out as a grief support group for people who have lost loved ones, the curriculum should reflect that purpose. But as people move through the stages of grieving, a leader may see that the group members need to understand more about God. As a result, a curriculum on the attributes of God may be appropriate.

Where is the group spiritually?

It is wise to take the spiritual pulse of your group to determine the level of curriculum appropriate for it. If new believers dominate the group, then make sure the questions are basic. Listen without making judgments; don’t appear to have all the answers all the time, and deal with the issues facing them as newer believers. Allow them to process information, ask hard questions, and raise objections.



New and growing believers can handle more difficult Bible discussions and are more willing to tolerate religious jargon. Even so, try to avoid using a lot of religious terminology. While believers who have been around the church longer may feel comfortable with terms like *redemption* or *justification*, avoid using them too much with newer Christ followers unless you expect to spend the time to adequately explain what those terms mean.

What are our key needs?

This question relates to the purpose question but allows a group to tie in real needs with the purpose of the group. For example, a couples group may desire growth in marriage relationships. But they may actually be in a serving group designed to help meet needs at a local homeless shelter. As couples, they could meet for thirty minutes prior to serving together for a brief study and discussion about marital issues.

What is our current focus?

Sometimes we choose a curriculum based on needs but fail to consider the long-range vision for the group. Your group may be currently completing a study on Christianity in the workplace. Now some in your group want to study Galatians. Why? How does this fit with the overall group direction for the coming year? Are there elements in Galatians that would be appropriate to focus on, or would it be better to study this book when it makes more sense in the life cycle of the group?

Try to provide a flow unless the situation absolutely dictates an abrupt change in focus. For example again, let's suppose your group is completing a personal growth curriculum like *Honest to God?*, by Bill Hybels, which has a study guide in the back. Now, it might be appropriate to identify one of the areas covered in that book and do an extended series or study on it. The section on finances and money for instance, could be expanded to deal with using finances in a compassionate way toward the poor. This would be a great step toward casting a vision for serving others, and would not appear as an abrupt curriculum change.

What are our limitations?

Don't waste your time looking at curriculum designed for a two-hour study when your group only has 40 minutes to meet each week. Make sure you have considered the time, location (are you in a distracting environment?), and size of group (four people can deal with more questions than nine people can, assuming you want to allow everyone to participate).

Should you do a long series on an issue, or should it require just two to three weeks? If you are starting groups out of an event (like a women's retreat), then ask for no more than a six-week commitment from them. Pick a shorter, topical curriculum (*Serendipity* Bible studies are an example). But if you are a more established group a commitment to a longer study may be appropriate.

What is the best curriculum?

Once you have chosen your curriculum, remember that it is your servant, not your slave. Use it to help people grow. Regularly evaluate and adjust your expectations. Set it aside if it gets in the way. Focus on biblical truths and life change and you won't be disappointed. Regardless of your approach – Scripture study, topical, or sermon questions – you won't go wrong if you apply truth to life.

Remember, all materials used must be approved by the LifeGroup Pastor before you use them in your LifeGroup.