



Facilitator's Guide

Table of Contents

The LifeGroup Experience

What is a LifeGroup?

What happens when a LifeGroup meets?

How are LifeGroups formed?

What could a LifeGroup look like?

How often should a LifeGroup meet?

How long do LifeGroups stay together?

Can a LifeGroup continue to grow once it's established?

Can a person be part of more than one LifeGroup?

Who can become a LifeGroup facilitator?

How is a facilitator different than a leader?

What are the responsibilities of a LifeGroup facilitator?

How does a facilitator create and implement a covenant with their LifeGroup?

Why is the covenant seasonal?

When should the covenant be created?

What is a LifeGroup Coach?

Appendix:

WRBC Purpose, Vision & Values

Our Purpose

Our Vision

Our Values

Our Philosophy of Discipleship

WRBC Statement of Faith

WRBC Covenant

LifeGroup Covenant Template

Making Use of Sermon-based Studies

How to grow a LifeGroup in Sharing and Praying Together

Service Opportunities Brochure

The LifeGroup Experience

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.

Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives . . .

Colossians 3:16 (NLT)

Our purpose as Whyte Ridge Baptist Church is to *nurture followers of Jesus Christ through healthy relationships*. Acknowledging that, though we cannot create friendships for others, we aim to create a variety of environments where Christ-honouring friendships can either begin to form or continue to develop. One of the ways we do this is through LifeGroups.

What is a LifeGroup?

LifeGroups are the primary means by which we want to encourage our church family to take intentional steps forward in relationally-based discipleship. We desire to gain a better understanding of what it means to live as the body of Christ in our day and age.

The main feature of a LifeGroup is that those involved *share a common desire to journey towards Christ-likeness together*. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have the wonderful promise that, as our lives are given and submitted to Him, the Holy Spirit will continually transform us into the image of Christ until the day we see Him face to face. Our greatest calling is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves . . . and we are told to do that *together*.

With that in mind, LifeGroups are *based on existing and/or developing friendships* – they are relationally focused, not information or task driven. LifeGroups are dynamic, and two main factors will impact their makeup:

1. Depth of Sharing

When friendships are new, it's reasonable to expect that the level of sharing and praying for one another will be less than once the friendships have been better established or matured. A LifeGroup consisting of new friends may decide to spend more of their time learning together, but their primary focus still remains on the development of Christ-honouring friendships.

2. Desired Size of Group

There is no correct size for a LifeGroup. It may be a group of 8-12 people who are learning to journey towards Christ together or a more intimate group of 3-4 people set on intentionally discipling one another.

Once a LifeGroup is formed, it is *given shape by the use of a seasonal covenant*. At the beginning of every season (fall, winter and spring), LifeGroups will meet to renew or establish their covenant with one another. It is the creation of this covenant which gives shape to the time that they commit to spending with each other.

<p>In short, a LifeGroup <i>is a group of people who share a common desire to journey towards Christ-likeness together</i>. They are <i>based on existing and/or developing friendships</i> and are <i>shaped by the use of seasonal covenants</i>.</p>

What happens when a LifeGroup meets?

With relationally-based discipleship as our goal, there is a lot of freedom in how we use our time together. Whether our time is spent in studying Scripture together, sharing together, praying together or serving together – the key word is *together* in Christ-honouring friendships.

As a church, we are committed to *expository preaching that is based on working through books of the Bible*. We provide sermon-based studies that focus primarily on deepening our understanding of the Scripture passage the Sunday morning message is based on. We encourage LifeGroups to make these sermon-based studies their main source of study together.

Do LifeGroups have to make use of Sermon-based Studies?

No - but we do recommend that they be a LifeGroup's normal focus of study for a number of reasons:

- They serve as a conversational connecting point between members of a particular LifeGroup and others in our church family, fostering a sense of unified growth with each other.
- Their use will increase both attentiveness and note-taking during the Sunday morning messages, as people know that they will be revisiting the Scripture passage that week (a facilitator is to encourage their group in this).
- We have resource materials created and available for them to use for free (if downloaded online) or at cost (\$10 – notes only; \$15 with binder)

With relationships being the primary focus of LifeGroups, time in sharing and praying together is important. The amount of time spent engaged in authentic sharing and praying will depend on the makeup of each particular LifeGroup. The key is that people take *steps* towards deeper, Christ-honouring relationships with one another. Whatever time they give to sharing and praying, their aim is to make those moments personal in ways that demonstrate dependence on God and one another.

We are called to love others as ourselves, and an important way of doing this is through helping others with tangible needs. Once or twice a season, we suggest that LifeGroups participate in some form of service that stretches them in their understanding of sacrificial giving of themselves to others. While you will be provided with a brochure that lists a variety of service opportunities (e.g. within our church, with partners of our church, or with organizations recommended by our church), we encourage you to think of ways you can serve the surrounding communities that members of your LifeGroup are naturally part of (e.g. helping one of your neighbours with yard work, etc).

Spending time together in recreational activities is an important way of deepening our friendships as shared joy and laughter help bond us together emotionally. Every season we encourage LifeGroups to set aside at least one occasion where the goal is to create healthy, God-honouring memories with each other.

Another option for LifeGroups to incorporate in their covenant is the attendance of *LifePath Seminars* that our church offers at a variety of times throughout the year (e.g. in Oct they may be on Monday nights, in Nov on Thursdays, etc). *LifePath* is the name we've adopted for all relationally-based discipleship initiatives we promote to *foster the nurturing of followers of Jesus Christ through healthy relationships*. On a yearly basis, we offer one or two *LifePath Seminars* that address a topic important to developing Christ-honouring relationships. These seminars generally consist of three consecutive 1.5 – 2 hour sessions.

LifeGroups are encouraged to schedule in the attendance of one, or both, of these seminars at some point during the ministry year. We desire this for two main reasons: to equip attendees in a topic important to Christ-honouring relationships (e.g. *Understanding your story with Christ; Seasons of faith, etc.*) and to provide an entry point for new relationships to be made.

How are LifeGroups formed?

LifeGroups are created through relationships – whether established or new. There are no sign-up sheets for LifeGroups – they are created by the initiative of a facilitator who prayerfully considers whom s/he will approach to invite into a LifeGroup with them.

Depending on the facilitator's main focus, the approach of developing a LifeGroup will differ according to the facilitator's desired *depth of sharing* and *size of group*.

For example, if you're interested in a larger group where the depth of sharing is appropriate to newer friendships, you could invite a number of people to have an initial meeting together where you discuss what a LifeGroup together might look like. If this is your approach, let people know that their commitment to the LifeGroup only needs to be made after this initial meeting.

Or, you may decide that you want to focus on two or three friends where your primary focus is on intentionally discipling one another. If that is the case, it would be wise to approach one person first to see if that person is interested. If you receive a positive response, mention to the individual the other people you are considering and then decide together whom to approach next – building your LifeGroup one person at a time.

What could a LifeGroup look like?

However you want it to look! The options are almost limitless – here are a few examples:

- Three men meeting over their lunch hour every Tuesday.
- Five women going out for coffee every other week.
- Four couples that meet on seven different, but agreed upon, dates within one season

LifeGroups are meant to be dynamic and will change in their makeup and meeting times as members deem necessary from season to season. We do recommend that a LifeGroup consist of at least three people so that dialogue can occur and that it be limited to twelve so that opportunities for sharing can occur within a reasonable amount of time.

*Note: While LifeGroups are meant to *nurture followers of Jesus Christ through healthy relationships*, they can also be a venue for your non-Christian friends to consider the claims of Christ and the reality of Christ-honoring living.

How often should a LifeGroup meet?

We recommend that LifeGroups meet weekly – but that may not always be possible or desirable. The main thing to stress is that your LifeGroup covenant to specific times together and follows through on those commitments to each other (i.e. it's better to make a smaller commitment to each other and follow through than to establish a lofty goal that is not met).

The covenant template provided for LifeGroups is meant to assist the facilitator in discovering the level of commitment that is reasonable for their specific members.

We suggest that all team members bring their day-timers/calendars to the first meeting so that firm dates can be chosen and agreed upon.

How long do LifeGroups stay together?

As long as is healthy - LifeGroup members need to be sensitive to God's leading in this area. It may be that the Holy Spirit leads you to invest in deepening a few close friendships over a period of years. At some point, He may lead you to open yourself up to new relationships and ask you to invite people you are just beginning to know to join you in a LifeGroup.

The key point to consider is whether or not your current LifeGroup is serving its purpose in maturing you as friends into Christ-likeness. If you can answer that positively, chances are you should remain together. If not, talk about that openly with your LifeGroup members and consider a healthy conclusion to your LifeGroup experience with each other.

It is also possible that certain members will be lead to initiate, or join, a different LifeGroup while the majority of your members renew their covenant with each other and continue on as a LifeGroup for another season.

Can a LifeGroup continue to grow once it's established?

Yes – but we encourage you to use the following guideline for a basis of growth:

Our guideline is that invitations to others to join our LifeGroup will not be extended without discussion and approval by current LifeGroup members.

Once established, your LifeGroup has made a *seasonal* covenant together that needs to be honoured. Inviting new people into your covenant is possible, but should be approached as a collective decision. Chances are it may be easier to invite new members into your LifeGroup at the start of the next season rather than to incorporate them part way through.

****Note:** If you desire to include someone into your existing LifeGroup, please be sure to extend the invitation as a joint effort from all your members rather than approaching that individual/couple first. This will help to avoid hurt that can be caused by inquiring about their interest before your group agrees to their inclusion.

Can a person be part of more than one LifeGroup?

Yes – but take time to prayerfully consider how much personal discretionary time and emotional energy you actually possess before making additional commitments. The timing and focus of each LifeGroup you are considering to establish, or be a part of, should also be a contributing factor in your decision.

As an example of how being part of two LifeGroups could be both possible and healthy, consider the following scenario. Perhaps one of your LifeGroups may take place during breakfast or lunch with two other close friends, while your other LifeGroup may be with three couples every other Thursday night. While such an arrangement is doable – we recommend that you establish your covenant with one LifeGroup before making commitments with another.

Who can become a LifeGroup facilitator?

Anyone who meets the following criteria –

A LifeGroup Facilitator is someone who:

- Is a maturing disciple of Christ
- Will serve as a “friendship-hub” for their LifeGroup
- Will facilitate the creation and implementation of their LifeGroup covenant
- Is a regular attendee of WRBC (we are his/her home church) who agrees with our Purpose, Values and Statements of Faith.
- Will have connection to a LifeGroup Coach for support and accountability (e.g. assuring the coach has a copy of the LifeGroup’s current covenant, informing the coach of prayer concerns or visitation needs of members, etc).

How is a facilitator different than a leader?

A facilitator is the person who is responsible for establishing the LifeGroup and who helps things move along, providing guidance and accountability when needed. Outside of those responsibilities, the facilitator’s role is the same as every other member of the LifeGroup. Particularly in regards to studying Scripture together, being a facilitator differs from being a leader in that the facilitator’s preparation for their LifeGroups meeting is no different than the others. S/he is not required to be the “expert” in the group, but rather a sojourner with his/her friends with the goal of learning together.

What are the responsibilities of a LifeGroup facilitator?

- *To discern why you want to facilitate a LifeGroup* – what is your primary focus in investing yourself in this way?
 - For example, to establish new friendships or to deepen existing ones.
- *To prayerfully approach those you wish to invite into your LifeGroup*
 - Before approaching others, touch base with your LifeGroup coach so that s/he can check whether or not those people are currently connected to an existing LifeGroup

- *To lead your LifeGroup through the creation of your covenant and hold them accountable to it.*
 - To forward a copy of your covenant to your coach each season.
- *To be aware of the various needs within your group, and when needed and appropriate, relay that information to your coach or one of our pastors (without breaking any confidences)*

How does a facilitator create and implement a covenant with their LifeGroup?

They will be provided with a template that guides them through the process of developing a *seasonal covenant* with the LifeGroup they develop (*see attached*).

The main purpose of the covenant is to help their LifeGroup *commit to specific times* together that have a *specific purpose* in mind. It also helps the LifeGroup *establish responsibilities for each member* (if applicable).

Why is the covenant seasonal?

- to provide a LifeGroup with natural entry and exit points
- to help a LifeGroup make reasonable commitments to one another.
- to help members to evaluate the effectiveness of their time together and to make new plans based on those observations
- to make time for breaks within the ministry year where church-wide events can be planned (e.g. Christmas, Easter)

When should the covenant be created?

- The best time to create, or renew, your LifeGroup covenant is at the start of each season during your first meeting. LifeGroups are to use the covenant template to guide their conversation – but not limit it.

What is a LifeGroup Coach?

Each LifeGroup facilitator will be assigned a coach (most likely the person leading you through this material) who will serve as their primary contact person.

Beyond meeting the requirements of a LifeGroup facilitator, a coach is:

- trained by, and accountable to, our Associate Pastor of Relationally-based Discipleship
- someone who approaches, equips, and shepherds potential LifeGroup facilitators
- a facilitator's first contact in times of need regarding their LifeGroup

APPENDIX

WRBC Purpose, Vision & Values

Our Purpose

Our Vision

Our Values

Our Philosophy of Discipleship

WRBC Statement of Faith

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LifeGroup Covenant Template

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Service Opportunities Brochure



Our Philosophy of Discipleship

“How do we approach making disciples of Jesus Christ in our church?”

Our Purpose

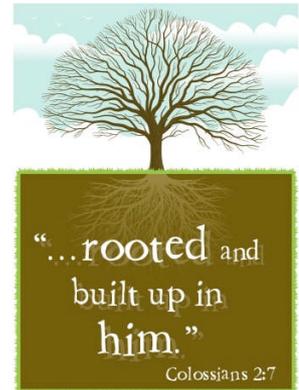
Nurturing followers of Jesus Christ through healthy relationships

Vision Statement

To be a family of believers who act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God, making disciples in our families, friendships, neighbourhoods and among people of all cultures.

*He has shown you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6:8



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whyte ridge
lutheran church

We Value:

- Intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ (Spiritual & Scriptural Connection)
- Loving relationships within our own families (Family Connections)
- Authentic relationships with one another in the Church Family (Friendship Connections)
- Caring relationships with our neighbourhoods (Community Connections)
- Meaningful relationships with people from other cultures (Cultural Connections)

As Followers of Christ We Journey:

From Infancy
(Practices &/or Experiences)

Towards Maturity
(Lifestyle)

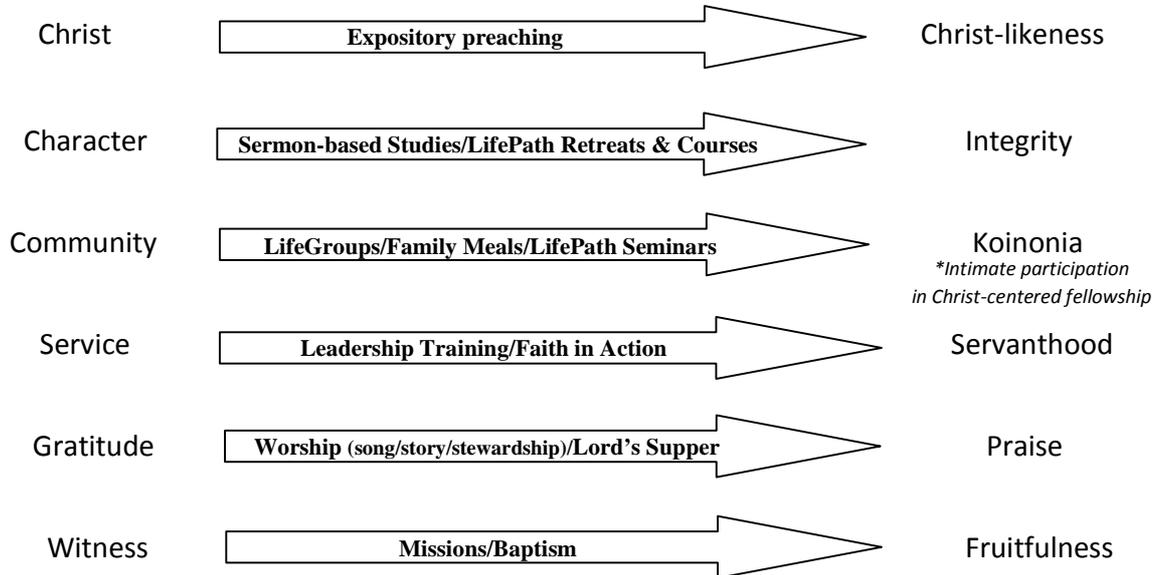
Christ	→	Christ-likeness
Character	→	Integrity
Community	→	Koinonia*
Service	→	Servanthood
Gratitude	→	Praise
Witness	→	Fruitfulness

**Intimate participation in Christ-centered fellowship*

How we walk with each other on the Journey:

From Infancy
(Practices &/or Experiences)

Towards Maturity
(Lifestyle)



WRBC Statement of Faith

In continuity with our immediate forefathers and the larger fellowship of Baptists throughout history, we seek to practice and propagate by God's grace the following convictions:

1. We believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of Himself to humanity (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error – the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (I Peter 1:23-25; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17). It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (John 20:31; I John 5:9-12; Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2).
2. We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 86:15; Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He exists eternally in three co-equal persons who act together in creation, providence and redemption (Genesis 1:26; I Peter 1:2; Hebrews 1:1-3).
 - a. God the Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe; He hears and answers our prayer (I Chronicles 29:11-13; Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Saviour (I John 4:9-10; John 3:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31).
 - b. God the Son became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18). Being fully man, He revealed God through his sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules over all creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever present Lord (Romans 8:34; John 14:23).
 - c. God the Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, He convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Saviour, and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18; John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5-6; Romans 8:16). At regeneration and conversion, the believer is baptised in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 12:5-8; I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christ-likeness in all who yield to Him (Acts 4:31; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:16; 22-23).

3. We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and to do His will (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). The holy angels are obedient spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7, 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice, revolted and fell from their position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1; I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).
4. We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be steward over His creation (Genesis 1:26-27). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God, this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation. (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 8:22). Therefore everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9-18, 23). Nonetheless, everyone has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12; I Timothy 2:5).
5. We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 20:21). An individual is united to Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). As a child of God, the believer is acquitted of all guilt and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 3:12).
6. We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptised upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. (Acts 2:41-42, 47; Luke 24:45-48).

The ordinances of the Church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Saviour Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

To express unity in Christ, local churches form associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship, and a more effective fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 15; I Corinthians 6:1-3).

7. We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27; John 8:32; II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21; Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other (Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders, and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.
8. We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christ-like spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 9:23; Titus 2:12; Philippians 4:8-9; I John 3:16-17; James 2:1-4).
9. We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10; Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7, 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41-46; Revelation 20:10; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).
10. "We believe the Bible teaches that marriage refers to the covenant relationship between one man and one woman, as instituted by God in the beginning, to the exclusion of all others." (Genesis 1: 20b-24)
11. We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 6:1-4).

WRBC Church Covenant

As members of Whyte Ridge Baptist Church, led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of our lives, publicly demonstrated through baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we sincerely and joyfully enter into covenant with God and one another. By the aid of the Holy Spirit we pledge the following:

With respect to God, we desire to be obedient children of our Heavenly Father by rejoicing in our salvation and Christian life, giving thanks to God in all things, being faithful in the practice of prayer and fostering a life of growing faith.

With respect to the Body of Christ, we will strive for the advancement of this church by upholding its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine, contributing our tithes and offerings cheerfully and regularly, and supporting its evangelistic and missionary endeavors.

With respect to our interpersonal relationships, we agree to walk together in Christian love by remembering each other in prayer, aiding each other in sickness and distress and being courteous in our speech. We further agree to be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation, and mindful to seek God's Word without delay.

With respect to our personal lives, we pledge to walk wisely in our world by being just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our conduct, and abstain from every appearance of evil. In addition, we pledge to maintain personal and family devotions and instruct our children through word and example.

With respect to our membership, we promise that upon moving from this church, we will unite as soon as possible with some local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Our LifeGroup Covenant

FACILITATOR: _____ Ph #: _____ Email: _____

FOCUS OF LIFEGROUP (e.g size; depth of sharing; main purpose): _____

LENGTH OF COVENANT (e.g. 10 weeks, Fall 2012, exact dates, # of meetings): _____

Our policy is that, once established, invitations to others to join our LifeGroup will not be extended without discussion and approval by current LifeGroup members.

LifeGroup Members & Responsibilities (where applicable):

*Examples of Member Responsibilities (where applicable – based on size of LifeGroup):
Host/Hostess, Timekeeper, Prayer leader, fellowship leader, phone caller, outreach leader*

Name	Responsibility	Name	Responsibility
_____	Facilitator	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Focus: Studying Scripture (SS) (suggest this as regular focus)

- Meeting Place: _____
- Meeting Day/Evening of Week _____ Starting Time: _____ Ending Time: _____
- Focus of Study: _____
- Typical Meeting will include time for:

Sample Meeting:

- Transitional time (includes refreshments, day to day chat, future plans ~30 mins)
- Relationship building: (Share & Prayer time ~ 45 mins)
- Study: (Typically discussion based on our Sermon-based Studies ~45 mins)

Focus: Serving Together (ST) (suggested ~1-2 times/season)

Coordinator: _____
 Place Serving: _____
 Date: _____ Time: _____

Coordinator: _____
 Place Serving: _____
 Date: _____ Time: _____

Focus: Social Event (SE) (*suggested once/season*)

Event: _____
 Location: _____
 When _____

Focus: LifePath Seminar (LP)

LifePath is the name we've adopted for all relationally-based discipleship initiatives we promote to *foster the nurturing of followers of Jesus Christ through healthy relationships*. On a yearly basis, we offer one or two *LifePath Seminars* that address a topic important to developing Christ-honouring relationships. These seminars generally consist of three consecutive 1.5 – 2 hour sessions.

LifeGroups are encouraged to schedule in the attendance of one, or both, of these seminars at some point during the ministry year. We desire this for two main reasons: to equip attendees in a topic important to Christ-honouring relationships (e.g. *Understanding your story with Christ; Seasons of faith, etc.*) and; to provide an entry point for new relationships to be made (we encourage your members to intentionally sit with others).

This fall, our LifePath Seminar is *Understanding your story with Christ* and will take place on the following Thursday nights in November: 15th, 22nd, & 29th. They run from 7 pm – 8:30 pm at WRBC. This course is primarily based on guided self-discovery and will serve as a great connecting point within your LifeGroup.

September 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Sept 16th LifeGroup Kickoff Lunch

Oct 8th Thanksgiving
 Oct 12-13th MBA AGM in Swan River
 Oct 14th Orientation Supper & Seminar
 Oct 27th Men's Breakfast
 Oct 31st Harvest Fest

Nov 2-4th Women's Retreat
 Nov 11th WRBC Supper Annual Meeting
 Nov 17th Good Sense Budgeting Course
 Nov 18th Estate Planning (aft)
 Nov 15, 22, 29 LifePath Seminar

- We agree to meet on the following dates below with a clear focus on our time together.

Date	Focus	Date	Focus
1. _____	/_____	6. _____	/_____
2. _____	/_____	7. _____	/_____
3. _____	/_____	8. _____	/_____
4. _____	/_____	9. _____	/_____
5. _____	/_____	10. _____	/_____

Group Focus: Main Focus for Meeting:
 /SS = Studying Scripture /ST = Serving Together /SE = Social Event /LP = LifePath Seminar

Making Use of Sermon-based Studies

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God,
a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed,
correctly teaching the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15 (HCSB)

As a church family, we desire to grow in the whole counsel of God believing that “[all] Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Along with our commitment to *expository preaching that is based on working through books of the Bible*, we provide *Sermon-based Studies* that focus primarily on deepening our understanding of the Scripture passage on which the Sunday morning message is based. Our hope is that their use will increase both attentiveness and note-taking during the Sunday morning messages, as people know that they will be revisiting the Scripture passage that week in their own personal study and potentially in discussion with their LifeGroup and/or other significant relationships.

Sermon-based Studies can be found free online at <http://whyteridgebaptist.ca> or can be bought at cost from our information centre (\$10 – notes only; \$15 with binder)

Included in our *Sermon-based Studies* for the **Gospel of Mark** are four separate documents that have been given the following headings:

Notes

Designed as the primary resource in the Sermon-based Studies, this document contains the following elements:

- the Scripture passage to be studied from both the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB) and the *New International Version* (NIV)
- Notes from the *HCSB Study Bible*, the *HCSB Apologetics Study Bible*, and the *New Living Translation* (NLT) *Life Application Bible*
- Occasionally, notes from *The New American Commentary* and the *Complete Biblical Library*

Harmony

Many of the stories found in Mark's Gospel are also found in Matthew, Luke and John. This resource juxtaposes the four Gospels, story by story, helping the reader understand the similarities and differences in how each writer has, or has not, made use of the story in question.

Questions

This document contains numerous discussion questions created by the developers of the best-selling *Life Application Bible* and are designed to support a natural teaching flow: Open it, Explore It, Get It, and Apply It.

Use these questions to stimulate your study of the Scripture passage – *but do not aim to work through them all*. Skim the questions and make use of the ones that resonate with you the most. If you have only a brief time to spend in this document, take special note of the questions that are highlighted with an “*”.

If you’re part of a LifeGroup, we suggest that you contribute to the discussion by coming prepared with one or two questions for your members to discuss. Feel free to create your own questions – in fact, that is preferable.

Xrefs (cross-references)

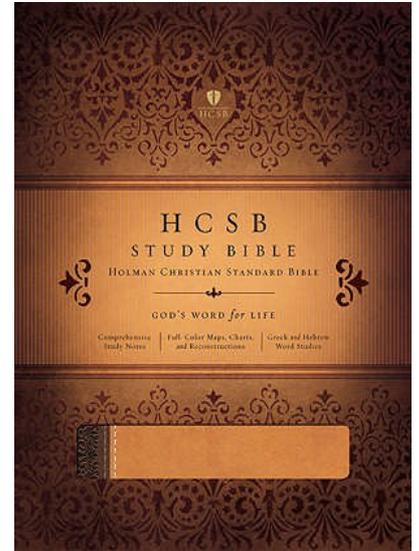
With our desire to grow in the whole counsel of God, this document highlights how particular verses relate to other passages of Scripture. This resource is not provided in the binder, but is available for free online at our website.

Resource Details¹

The Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) Study Bible

Developed in direct response to what consumer focus groups asked for, only one study Bible delivers more than you'd expect - right where you'd expect it.

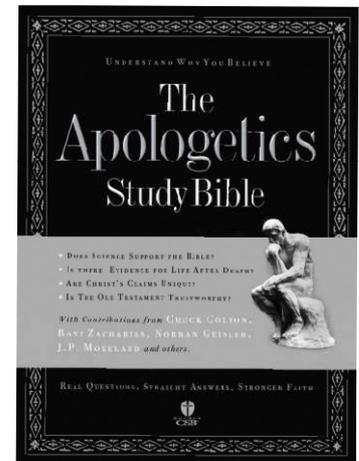
When reading a passage in the Bible, you shouldn't have to wonder where to find supporting reference notes and commentary that go along with it. That's why the HCSB Study Bible-featuring approximately 15,000 study notes is designed so that every clarifying resource is there ready to be used with the biblical text to which it refers. You'll never again forget what you were looking for because the pertinent note, map, chart, word study, or illustration is already there. And when an even deeper view is desired, there are also introductions for each book, outlines and timelines, a concordance, and more. For the growing believer whose desire is to know Scripture more intimately and live out its loving instruction, the HCSB Study Bible always keeps you and God on the same page.



The Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) Apologetics Study Bible

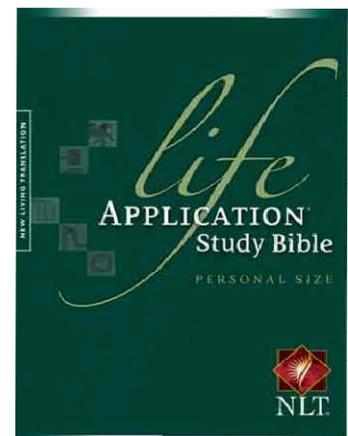
The Apologetics Study Bible will help today's Christian better understand, defend and proclaim his/her beliefs in this age of increasing moral and spiritual relativism.

More than 100 hundred key articles are placed throughout the volume relating the truth of the Bible to disciplines such as science, history, and philosophy. This dynamic feature prompts a rewarding experience at every reading. Highlights of this new thinking person's edition of God's Word include an introduction focusing on relevant apologetics issues and profiles of historic Christian apologists from Justin Martyr to C.S. Lewis.



The New Living Translation (NLT) Life Application Bible

The *Life Application Bible*® will help you understand God's message to you. Its notes explain difficult passages and give background information about Bible life and times, but they go a step further - they also show *how God's Word speaks to every situation and circumstance of your life*.

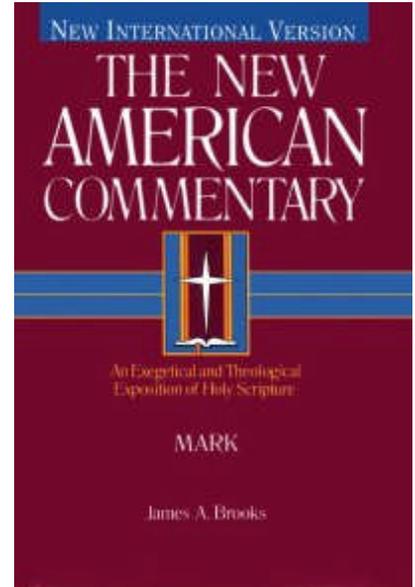


¹ Note: the description of these resources are as found on the WORDsearch.com website and were not written by WRBC staff.

The New American Commentary

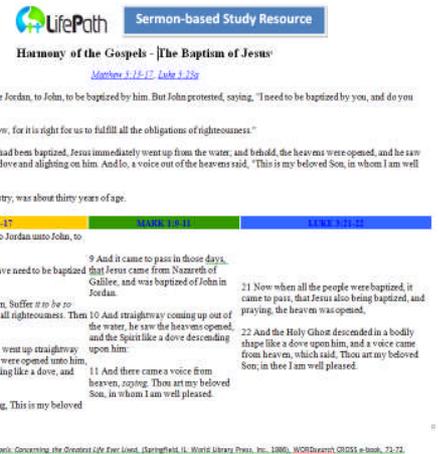
In development for over a decade, *The New American Commentary* series is for those who have been seeking a commentary that honors the Scriptures, represents the finest in contemporary evangelical scholarship and lends itself to the practical work of preaching and teaching. This comprehensive series serves as a minister's friend and a Bible student's guide.

The New American Commentary is based on the inerrancy of Scripture, focuses on the intrinsic theological and exegetical concerns of each Biblical book, and engages the range of issues raised in contemporary Biblical scholarship. Drawing on the skills and insight of over forty Bible scholars, *The New American Commentary* brings together scholarship and piety to produce a tool that enhances and supports the life of the church. The scholars used the *New International Version* as the standard in their translation.



The Complete Biblical Library – Harmony of the Gospels

This Harmony is different from any other. Robert Shank (author) is noted for his accurate juxtaposing of the 4 Gospels, story by story, from the birth of Christ through his ascension. All 4 Gospels (in KJV) are laid side by side in parallel columns. What makes this Harmony unique is the 5th column, known as a Diatessaron. This interweaves all 4 Gospels into a single narrative, in modern English. Every verse of all 4 Gospels is accounted for, but no verse is repeated. Such a combination of Biblical and theological material has not been produced in any previous work.



Questions for LESSONmaker

Contains thousands of discussion questions created by the developers of the best-selling *Life Application Bible*

Discussion questions designed to support a natural teaching flow:
Open it, Explore It, Get It, and Apply It.



How to grow a LifeGroup in Sharing and Praying Together

*We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you
not only the gospel of God but also our own lives,
because you had become dear to us.*

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (HCSB)

The key to fostering *authentic relationships* in one's LifeGroup is to focus less on helping others experience that with one another and more on how we, ourselves, are offering that type of relationship with them through our own willingness to be transparent. *Transparency begets transparency*. But this is not necessarily healthy unless what is shared is done through the enablement and wisdom given by the Holy Spirit.

In sharing ourselves with others, we need to be diligent to offer ourselves as it relates to the gospel being lived out in us – warts and all. A question to keep in mind as we choose to self-disclose is *How does my sharing point others to Christ, my need of Him and them, and my progressive journey in being formed into His image?*

*Come and listen, all you who fear God,
and I will tell you what he did for me.*

Psalms 66:16 (NLT)

Beyond being open with others, we also need to be wise and attentive listeners who are slow to speak and who use penetrating questions to help others discern God's voice in their own lives.

*Counsel in a man's heart is deep water;
but a man of understanding draws it out*

Proverbs 20:5 (HCSB)

When we do respond to someone's sharing, our feedback should always have truth and love knit together. One without the other is damaging – together they lead us towards Christ-likeness.

*But speaking the truth in love,
let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ.*

Ephesians 4:15 (HCSB)

Discuss with your group the importance of honoring truth together – avoiding any sense of falsehood in your LifeGroup. Be careful to discourage coerced sharing with each other - as that road leads to deception and half-truths.

*Since you put away lying,
speak the truth, each one to his neighbor,
because we are members of one another.*

Ephesians 4:25 (HCSB)

Evaluate the fruit of your sharing together. Has it created a greater sense of belonging between your members, or has it left you feeling more isolated? In what way has your LifeGroup been exhorted to live in loving obedience for the glory of God and the benefit of others? The fruit, or lack thereof, reveals to us our relational health and maturity with one another.

And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works,
Hebrews 10:24-25 (HCSB)

As we model authenticity in our sharing, we also demonstrate our reliance on God by requesting the loving prayers of others on our behalf.

*Now I appeal to you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit,
to join with me in fervent prayers to God on my behalf.*
Romans 15:30 (HCSB)

Take time to pray for each others' daily needs – both physical and spiritual.

*Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper in every way
and be in good health physically just as you are spiritually.*
3 John 1:2 (HCSB)

While the main focus of prayer during your time together is on how God is moving among your members – also take time to intercede for others who God has called you to journey with.

*Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request,
and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.*
Ephesians 6:18 (HCSB)

Prayer with one's LifeGroup is meant to be personal and powerful – during this time, avoid prayers that do not involve, or expect, your part in God's response. For example, rather than simply praying, *Lord, please bring comfort and healing to my co-worker who is suffering from cancer* – deepen that prayer with a commitment to personal engagement as the Lord enables, such as, *Lord, you have commanded me to love my co-worker as I love myself. Please help me to do that this week so that she can experience Your love and care through me.* Often a significant portion of God's answer to our prayers for others involves us – if we are open to being used by Him.

All prayer is to be in reliance on the Holy Spirit and grounded in the love of God. Talk with your members about how you can honour God and one another in your times of prayer together. If needed, set some ground rules that foster healthy praying practices for your LifeGroup. Your LifeGroup coach is eager to help you prayerfully think through such things.

²⁰ *But you, dear friends, as you build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit,*
²¹ *keep yourselves in the love of God, expecting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.*
Jude 1:20-21 (HCSB)