



BELONG | LifeGroups West Shore Free Church

What is a LifeGroup?

People who come together in a small group to experience Jesus and who are committed to growing together in Christ and to supporting the mission of the church.

There are two key components to this:

Grow in Christ – there is a commitment to growing in Christ and encouraging others in your LifeGroup to grow in Christ. This requires humility, patience, love, grace, laughter, and godly living.

Grow Together – our hope is that this will not just be a functional group, but that you will actually grow in community together. And not because we hope for social clubs all over our church, but because when you are known, when you invite others to do life with you, they are better able to help you grow in Christ.

LifeGroups are the primary way we encourage people to Belong at West Shore Free Church.

Commitment Required | Three Things*

1. **SHOW UP:** Make a commitment to be at the group meetings. You cannot form community with other people if you aren't around enough for them to get to know you.
2. **JOIN IN:** Take part in group discussions. Listen to what others have to say. Be part of the community you're trying to form. Pray for this group on a regular basis.
3. **BE REAL:** Let the people in this group know who you are. Be authentic and transparent. You don't have to reveal all your deepest, darkest secrets. But be open to the possibility that you may eventually form the kind of deep relationships in which you can share those secrets.

This is a Commitment! We are asking you to commit to 8 weeks of meeting.

* Taken from Andy Stanley's *Community: Starting Well in Your Small Group*; back page reference as well

Three Components of a Meeting

1. Sermon Discussion:

Spend time discussing the sermon from Sunday using the questions in our Sermon Handouts. For the first few weeks of a LifeGroup we ask that each member has a chance to share his/her story before you start these questions.

2. Prayer:

Protect time in the group meeting for prayer. When time is running tight, this is the first thing to go! Don't let that happen.

3. Socializing:

Offer a time to connect over a meal, snack, or simply a glass of water! Share life with each other and how God is at work in your lives.

Eight-Week Launch Plan

Week 1

Social event – gather together where and when it works for everyone, and spend time getting to know each other. This will look different for every group; don't be afraid to be creative!

1. Come open to how God might be at work here.
2. Pray for this time before you arrive.

*Lock in your regular LifeGroup day and times during this event.

Weeks 2-6

The focus of your discussion is on sharing and hearing each other's story of how each of you came to faith.

- Allow each person 30 minutes; you may need to do 2 stories each gathering depending on your LifeGroup size
- In sharing their story, each person should share 3-5 spiritually significant moments on their journey with Christ, including when and how did you come to faith in Christ as your Savior?

Allow time during these first few meetings to answering a few of the Sermon Discussion questions and also to spend time in prayer before you wrap up.

Weeks 7-8

The group should be just about done with sharing stories; the focus now is primarily on the Sermon Discussion.

Take time during your final meeting, **Week 8**, to talk about what is next for this particular group. Are you going to continue meeting? Don't be afraid to be honest and open.

NOTE: If you are a LifeGroup host/leader, we will be in contact with you about upcoming activities, and to see how your group is progressing.

LifeGroup Values and Goals*

A LifeGroup should provide a predictable environment where group members can pursue healthy relationships and spiritual growth.

Relationships

While prayer, story sharing, and sermon discussions are key elements, the driving force behind the group is the building of relationships, so that you can grow in Christ together.

Authenticity

The atmosphere should encourage openness and transparency among members. This is an environment where people should feel free to be themselves.

Confidentiality

For authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

Respect

Group members should never say anything that will embarrass their spouses or other members of the group.

Availability

A primary responsibility of the group is to prioritize specific relationships. This requires a willingness to be available to meet one another's needs.

We are excited for this journey ahead! And our team is praying for you as you explore this LifeGroup with others.

Feel free to contact Our Leadership Team with questions: belong@westshorefree.org



Seeking the good of the West Shore and beyond through deep truth,
deep lives, and deep love, for the glory of Christ

APPENDIX A: Optional LifeGroup Planning Sheet:

WEEK	Who is hosting	Who is bringing snack/food	Who is facilitating discussion	Who is telling their story	Who is leading prayer time
1	Social gathering time				
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					