



PROVIDING CONNECTION

As Group leaders, we are given the awesome opportunity to play a key role in people's growing relationships with Christ when we help provide connection. Use the ESPN acronym to help you as the leader provide community and opportunity for spiritual growth for your group.

1. ENCOURAGE PEOPLE

- a. Encourage your group in whatever they are facing in life. Let them feel that your group is a place where they are supported and cared for.
- b. Create an atmosphere where you can engage the group in open discussion. If people in your Group feel that it is safe to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences then there is a greater possibility that they will develop a relationship with you and others in the group. This "safety" will help create a sense of authentic connection.
- c. As the facilitator of the discussion, your job is to get others to talk and for you to help guide the discussion. This is done by asking well-crafted, open-ended questions and being willing to allow others to speak (don't be afraid of the awkward silent pause in between questions).

2. SHARE SCRIPTURE

- a. Take a moment during your group time to share a scripture with your group. You could also share a short devotional or something you have read or even something that God has spoken to you during your quiet time.
- b. Encourage your group members to read the Bible for themselves. If they have never had a regular quiet time show them different resources, they can use to begin this. check out youversion.com, THE Bible App, and the First 15 App as great resources for Bible reading plans.

3. PRAY

- a. Pray with and for each other. This provides people in your group the opportunity to be open as they desire to have people join them in seeking God for a specific need. It may be beneficial to break up into groups of 3-4 to pray together.
- b. As God begins to answer prayers that have been offered in your Group it gives an awesome time to celebrate together as a group. This can be done through a quick email, text message, phone call, etc. This shows that your group is a place of sincere care.

4. NEXT STEPS

- a. We value taking Next Steps! As a Group leader you have the opportunity to encourage the individuals in your group to take the next step in their journey of following Jesus.
- b. For some individuals this step might be making the commitment to come to a group. For others it might be the steps they are making to seek God and decision to follow him. Some might make the steps to baptism or to begin serving on a Dream Team. Others might make leadership decisions, giving commitments, regular prayer and devotion time. We want to see each group member continue to take next steps in following Jesus.



TIMBERCREEK
CHURCH