

LEADER MANUAL

CONTENTS

VISION & FOUNDATIONS	4
What Are Grow Groups?	
Up, In, and Out Approach	
What Every Grow Group Needs	
What Makes a Successful Grow Group	
End of Semester Email	
Why Closed Groups Matter	
GROUP STRUCTURE & RHYTHM	9
Yearly Rhythm	
Weekly Rhythm	
Formation of Groups	
LEADERSHIP ROLES & EXPECTATIONS	12
Leader's Qualifications & Expectations	
Ridgepoint's Doctrinal Beliefs	
Host's Qualifications & Expectations	
Take Attendance & View Your Roster	
LEADING GROW GROUPS	18
Teaching & Curriculum	
Tips For Having a Great Discussion	
Confidentiality in Grow Groups	
Choosing Your Out Project	
Sharing Your Faith Guide	
HELPING YOUR GROUP STAY HEALTHY	24
The 3 Challenges Your Groups Will Face	
Dealing with Tough Situations	
Troubleshooting Guide	

If you have any questions, please contact us by emailing us at grow@ridgepointwichita.com.
Updated 2026.

What are Grow Groups?

At Ridgepoint, we believe discipleship is not just about gaining information; it's about experiencing transformation. To help people FIND and FOLLOW Jesus, we believe people need Christ-centered relationships, and Grow Groups are a key part of that vision.

Every Grow Group pursues spiritual growth through the UP-IN-OUT Approach:

- **UP: A daily relationship with God.**
- **IN: A shared life together.**
- **OUT: An outward-focused faith.**

We believe discipleship happens best when all three are present, not in isolation, but together. Grow Groups also embrace a healthy rhythm. Each summer provides space for rest, allowing leaders and participants to reflect on what God has done and prepare for what's next. After each year, leaders prayerfully discern their next step, whether that's continuing, multiplying, or concluding their group.

Because the heartbeat of Grow Groups is relationships.

Grow Groups are small groups designed around semester rhythms, meeting weekly in the fall and spring, with clear on-and-off ramps between seasons. Their goal isn't simply to last, but to accomplish. Each group is intentionally designed to help people take meaningful next steps in their relationship with Jesus and with others.

Circles, Not Rows

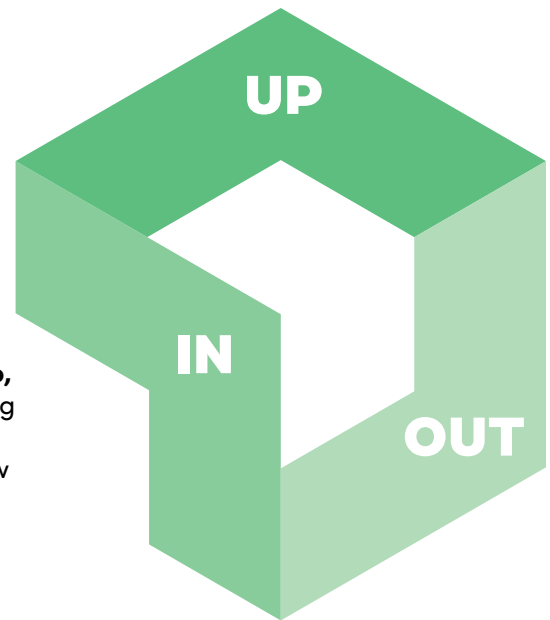
We believe life change happens when people are known, challenged, encouraged, and cared for in the context of authentic community. That's why relationships are not just a part of discipleship; they are the engine of it. Grow Groups exist to create spaces where people move from simply attending church to actually being the church together. In these circles, Scripture is not just heard but lived out, prayer is not just spoken but shared, and faith is not just personal but practiced in community. Through intentional relationships, we create environments where people are formed, not just informed, and where transformation becomes a shared journey.

Simply put:
A disciple is a follower of Jesus.
Therefore, discipleship is becoming
more like Jesus—together.



Up, In, and Out

Grow Groups are built around a simple and intentional rhythm: **Up, In, and Out**. This approach is what sets Grow Groups apart, helping each group stay healthy, balanced, and mission-focused. Rather than drifting toward just Bible study or just social connection, Grow Groups intentionally pursue all three: growing closer to God (**Up**), growing deeper in community (**In**), and growing outward in love and service (**Out**).



We use the Up, In, and Out approach because it:

- Creates authentic community, not just meetings
- Keeps spiritual formation centered on Jesus, not personalities
- Prevents groups from becoming inward-focused or program-driven
- Helps every group live out our mission in a practical, local way

This approach ensures Grow Groups are not just about information, but transformation, shaping how we live, love, and follow Jesus every day. While the emphasis may shift from week to week, all three elements are present over time, creating a healthy discipleship environment.

UP — A DAILY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

UP invites us into an ongoing, living relationship with God, not just a knowledge of him. The goal isn't religious performance or spiritual achievement, but learning to abide and stay connected to God in the everyday rhythms of ordinary life. UP focuses on:

- Engaging Scripture together
- Prayer and spiritual practices
- Applying God's Word to everyday life

IN — A SHARED LIFE TOGETHER

IN is where faith becomes tangible through community. We grow best when we feel known, safe, and cared for, and that kind of trust only develops through consistent, honest presence with one another. IN focuses on:

- Checking in on how their lives are going and sharing stories
- Caring for one another through prayer and practical support
- Accountability and encouragement
- Building trust and belonging

OUT — AN OUTWARD-FOCUSED FAITH

Out keeps us from turning inward and challenges us to let faith flow beyond ourselves. While we focus on occasional service projects, we will also develop a long-term posture of faithful presence toward the people and places God has put in our sphere of influence. **Out** focuses on:

- Serving a specific need, demographic, or area of the city
- Participating in service projects together
- Seeing faith expressed through action



What Every Grow Group Needs

As a Grow Group leader, you are stepping into something deeply meaningful.

Hebrews reminds us:

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24–25)

We were designed for connection. God never intended for us to follow Jesus alone. Growth happens when we are consistently with others, encouraging, challenging, and walking alongside one another in faith. Simply put, we cannot become who God is calling us to be in isolation. Discipleship requires relationships.

That's where you as leaders come in.

But it's important to remember this: **you are not responsible for someone else's spiritual growth.** Only God can transform a heart. Your role is not to force growth, fix people, or have all the answers. Your role is to faithfully create an environment where growth has the opportunity to happen—where people can encounter God, be known by others, and take their next step.

At its core, being a Grow Group leader comes down to two primary responsibilities:

1. Hear from everyone every time.

Growth happens through participation, not just observation. When people share, process, and engage, they move from passive listeners to active disciples. Your role is to help draw people out, ensuring that everyone has a place in the conversation. We want every person to have a voice. Your role is to create space for that. Draw people out, ask good questions, and make sure no one gets overlooked.

2. Keep God's Word at the center.

Lasting transformation doesn't come from opinions or good advice; it comes from the truth of Scripture. As a leader, you help anchor every conversation, discussion, and moment back to God's Word, trusting that He will do the work in people's lives. Our opinions don't change lives. God's Word does. Whether you're using the discussion guide, watching a video, praying, or just having a conversation, always bring it back to Scripture.

You don't need a perfect night. You don't need all the answers.

You are not called to be perfect. You are called to be present, faithful, and intentional.

Thank you for saying yes to this role. What you are helping create is more than a group; it's a space where lives can be shaped, faith can grow, and disciples can be made.



What Makes a Successful Grow Group

A successful group is not defined by how big it is, how long it lasts, how strong the leader is, or even how smooth the meetings feel. Instead, a successful group is one where people are genuinely growing spiritually and making an impact both inside and outside the group.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP:

Spiritual growth is happening — People are taking next steps with Jesus, applying Scripture to their lives (not just discussing it), and becoming more like Jesus.

The Bible is the center — Scripture is being discussed and prayed over at each meeting.

Relationships are real — There is honesty, respect, care, accountability, and people truly doing life together.

The group is outward-focused — It doesn't turn inward but actively serves, invites others in, and lives on mission together.

Leadership is being developed — Future leaders are identified, given opportunities, and equipped to lead.

Ultimately, success isn't about maintaining a group—it's about growing people and multiplying disciples.

End of Semester Feedback Email

At the end of each semester, everyone—including leaders—will receive a feedback email asking about your Grow Group experience, including your weekly discussions and **Out Project**. LEADERS are required to fill out this form at the end of each semester.

This is an important part of how we grow. We are constantly working to improve Grow Groups, and we need your help. Your feedback helps your Group Leader, Host, and our staff understand what's working and what can be better.

This is required for each leader and host but optional for each participant. It helps us evaluate our strengths and weaknesses so we can continue building healthy, impactful groups.

Why Closed Groups Matter

Groups are closed once they begin each semester. Closed groups are essential for real, lasting growth. Discipleship isn't just about learning information; it's about becoming someone new in Christ. That kind of formation requires consistency and trust. So twice a year, there will be open enrollment windows where people can join a new group or an existing group with openings, but once each semester starts, groups will become closed.

Closed groups create a natural progression:

Stable membership → Predictability → Trust → Vulnerability → Spiritual Growth

When a group knows who will be in the room each week:

- Conversations go deeper
- Honesty increases
- Accountability becomes natural
- Shared spiritual practices can take root
- Leaders can build week-to-week without resetting expectations

WHAT IF SOMEONE WANTS TO JOIN MID-SEMESTER OR IN THE SUMMER?

We love that people want to jump into community. However, because Grow Groups are closed during the semester, we typically don't add new members mid-semester. This protects trust, consistency, and deeper spiritual growth within each group.

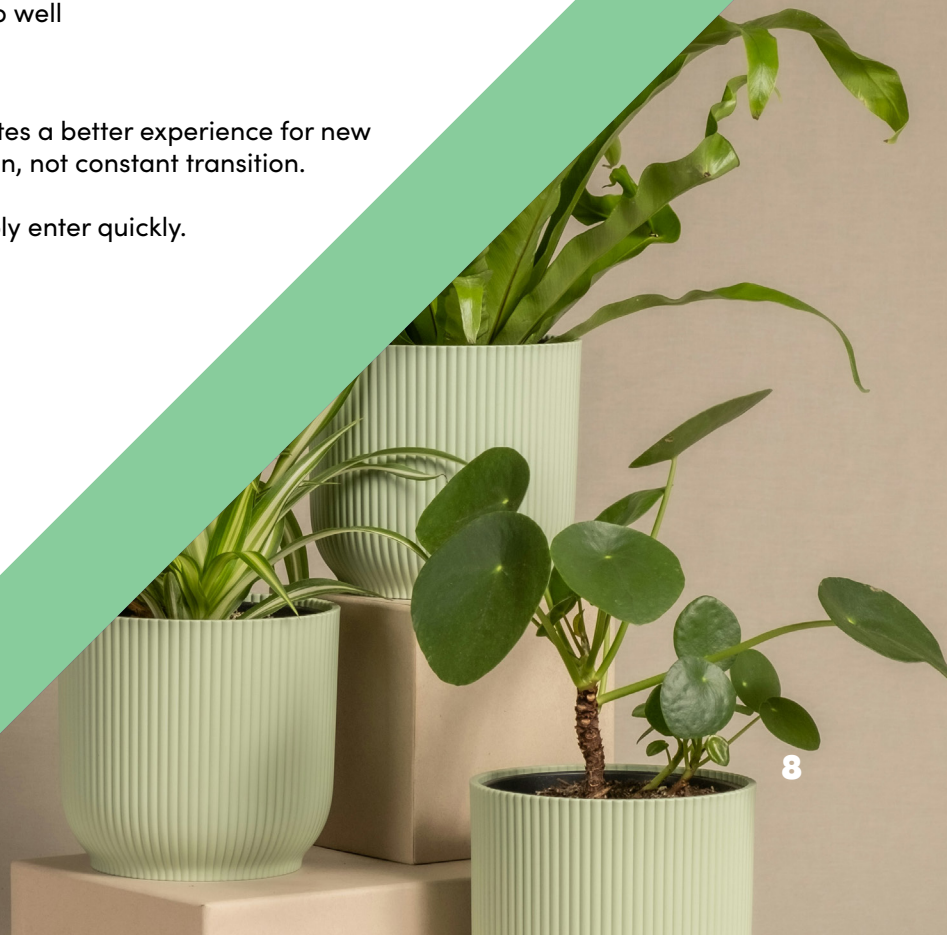
Options for New People:

- Wait for the next enrollment period (August or January) to join a group at the start of a semester
- Join a Starter Group (when available), a short-term, flexible group designed to prepare people to enter a Grow Group well

WHY THIS MATTERS

This approach protects existing groups, creates a better experience for new people, and keeps the focus on real formation, not constant transition.

We'd rather help people enter well than simply enter quickly.



Grow Groups Yearly Rhythm

As a Grow Group leader, you're not just leading week to week; you're leading within a bigger rhythm designed to create health, momentum, and long-term discipleship. Twice a year—August (Fall) and January (Spring)—existing groups can open for new members, and some new groups are launched. During these windows, people can join a group, transition out, or move to a different group. After the first week of each semester, groups close to new members until the next enrollment period.

DATES

Fall Semester (10-12 weeks) September – November	December and early January No Groups	Spring Semester (12-14 weeks) Mid-January – April	Summer Off May – July	Sign-Ups: August & January
--	--	---	---------------------------------	--------------------------------------

END-OF-SEMESTER FLEXIBILITY

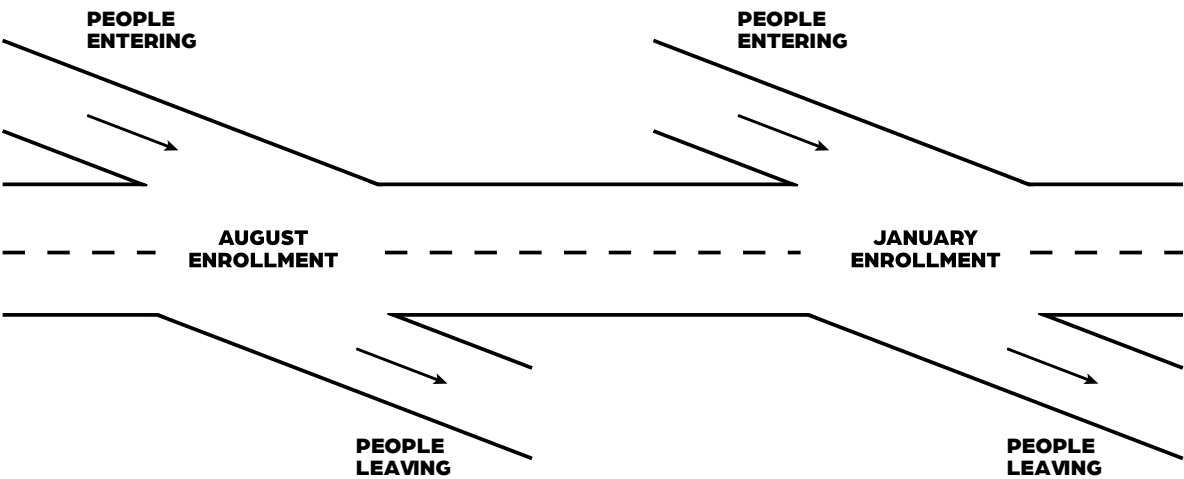
At the end of each semester, every group intentionally decides what's next. As a leader, you help guide this conversation, giving both leaders and members the freedom to transition, continue, or make changes without awkwardness, pressure, or guilt. Groups can:

- Continue as is
- Re-open and refill if some stepped out
- Multiply or branch into new groups
- Conclude and help members find their next step

Between semesters, all groups reopen for enrollment (unless they are physically full). This ensures we stay accessible, healthy, and mission-focused. This makes it easier for people to transition between groups if they wish.

ON-RAMPS, OFF-RAMPS & GROUP TRANSITIONS

- We operate on a semester system with clear on-ramps and off-ramps:
- Open Enrollment: August (Fall) and January (Spring)
- During these windows, people can join, leave, or switch groups
- After the first week, groups close for the semester



A Grow Groups Weekly Rhythm

Every Grow Group night follows a simple rhythm designed to help members grow **Up** toward God, **In** toward each other, and **Out** toward the world. While groups can adjust based on size or personality, this outline provides a healthy, balanced flow for most gatherings.

Please plan for 90 minutes each night (and add 30+ minutes if you include a meal).

TIME (Approx.)	FOCUS	PURPOSE
20 min	Welcome & Icebreaker (optional meal)	Start relationally. Use a fun question, short activity, or quick game to break the ice and build comfort. <i>If your group shares a meal, this time naturally extends to include fellowship around the table.</i>
40 min	Bible Study & Discussion	Use the sermon-based curriculum, starter series, something from <i>rightnowmedia.com</i> , or another pre-approved study. Discuss what God is saying through His Word and how it applies to everyday life.
10 min	Mission & Application	Talk about your group's ongoing Out Project or service project. Share updates, plan next steps, and encourage practical application of faith beyond the meeting. Ask, "How can we live this out together this week?"
20 min	Life Check-In & Prayer Response	Each person gives a brief life update: highs, lows, or prayer needs from the week. Close in prayer—either as one group, groups of men or women, or in pairs.
Optional	Hangout or Fellowship Time	Many groups choose to linger, share dessert, or just talk afterward. This unstructured time often builds the strongest relationships.

Note: Groups meeting on Wednesday nights should align their schedule with Kids Ministry programming for families who need childcare.

WHAT IF A GROUP NEEDS CHILDCARE?

Ridgepoint provides childcare only on Wednesday nights from 6:30–8:00 p.m., in alignment with our Kids Ministry. Priority for rooms on Wednesday nights will be for Grow Groups that have childcare needs. For any group meeting outside of Wednesday nights, leaders are responsible for arranging and coordinating their own childcare.

Formation of Groups

Forming a Grow Group is simple, but it requires intentionality. Our goal is to create healthy, sustainable groups where real discipleship can happen, not just fill spots.

STEP 1: COMPLETE THE LEADER FORM

Prior to a group starting, every Grow Group leader will receive an email requesting information about their preferred group. This information will be used to create your group listing and help people find the right fit.

- Leader & host name (along with a profile picture of each)
- Meeting day and time (start and end)
- Childcare needs (if applicable—only offered on Wednesday nights)
- Host address, where you will be meeting (on-campus or off-site)
 - Meet at Ridgepoint or at a person's home
- A short bio/description of you and your group
 - Include at least one hobby or interest to make it personal
 - Clearly communicate who your group is for (e.g., empty-nesters, young families, disc golfers, multi-generational groups, etc.).
- Maximum group size based on your space (12-14 is ideal)

*Optional: If your group has a specific **Out Project** focus, you can include that in your description so people can join based on that shared mission.*

STEP 2: OPEN ENROLLMENT & SIGN-UPS

Groups are formed during our open enrollment periods (August and January). During this time, people will sign up online and request to join your group. To help us maintain clarity, communication, and healthy group dynamics:

- Every person must register through the website
- Both the Ridgepoint staff and the group leader must approve each request

Once a person requests to join your group, we ask leaders to respond within 48 hours.

Important: Leaders are encouraged to personally invite and recruit people, but no one fills a group privately. Every person must go through the official sign-up process.

STEP 3: GROUP SIZE & CAPACITY

Healthy groups matter more than full groups, but the ideal size is 12-14 people. At the end of enrollment, if a group is too small (around 7 or fewer, including leaders/hosts), we will work with you to either add more people or combine with another group.

THE BIG PICTURE

We don't just want to create groups, we want to build healthy environments where people can grow, belong, and be seen. As a leader, your role starts before the first meeting. It begins with creating a group that is clear, intentional, and ready for people to step into.

Leader's Qualifications & Expectations

QUALIFICATIONS

- Committed to Christ for at least a year & have participated in a Grow Group before
- Committed to integrity, character, and spiritual growth
- Be a regular attender/member of Ridgepoint and attend weekly worship services
- Agree with Ridgepoint's Core Beliefs (page 13)
- A cleared background check
- Able to relate and connect well with others

EXPECTATIONS

Prepare for and lead the meeting

- Lead the group in our "Starter Series" when a new group has been formed
- Choose a curriculum or study guide from our pre-approved list after the starter series

Care for group members and their families (with help from your host)

- Stay connected with group members as they experience personal problems & needs
- Partner with Ridgepoint staff for any special needs
- Pray regularly for your group members

Lead the weekly discussion using the Up, In, and Out model:

Up – A Daily Relationship With God

- Lead the group into Scripture and prayer
- Help members engage the Bible meaningfully and apply God's Word to their lives
- Encourage dependence on God through prayer and spiritual practices

In – A Shared Life Together

- Foster a safe, welcoming environment where members feel known and cared for
- Encourage honest sharing, accountability, and mutual support
- Help the group share life together and care for one another in practical ways

Out – An Outward-Focused Faith

- Lead the group to live out their faith by serving beyond themselves.
- Guide the group in your **Out Project**
- Regularly remind the group that spiritual growth leads to outward impact

Strengthen your leadership through trainings

- Essentials (New Leader and/or New Host Training) in August or January
- Kick-off (all Grow Group Leaders and Hosts) in August
- End-of-Year Appreciation Dinner (all Grow Group Leaders and Hosts) in May

Ridgepoint's Doctrinal Beliefs

An important part of leading or hosting a Grow Group at Ridgepoint Church is understanding and aligning with our doctrinal beliefs. The statements below are a summarized version of the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith. You can view the full version here: usmb.org/confession-of-faith-4.

Please read each statement carefully. If there is something you disagree with, it does not automatically disqualify you from serving. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about it in person.

God

We believe in the one true God, the source of all life, who reigns over all things as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and who lovingly cares for all creation. God the Father planned the redemption of humanity and sent Jesus Christ the Son to be the Savior of the world. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, bringing good news to the poor and triumphing over sin through his obedient life, death, and resurrection. God, the Holy Spirit empowers believers with new life, indwells them, and unites them in one body.

Revelation of God

We believe God has made Himself known to all people. Beginning with creation and culminating in Jesus Christ, God has revealed Himself in the Old and New Testaments. All Scripture is inspired by God and is the authoritative guide for faith and practice. We interpret the Scripture in the church community as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Creation and Humanity

We believe God created the heavens and the earth, and they were good. Humans, God's crowning act, were created in the image of God. Sin has alienated humanity from the Creator and creation, but God offers redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

Sin and Evil

We believe sin is individual and corporate opposition to God's good purposes and leads to physical and spiritual death.

Salvation

We believe God saves all people who put their faith in Jesus Christ. By his obedient life, sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, Christ delivers people from the tyranny of sin and death and redeems them for eternal life in the age to come. All creation eagerly awaits its liberation from bondage into the freedom of the glory of God's children.

Nature of the Church

We believe the church is the covenant community called by God through Jesus Christ to live a life of discipleship and witness as empowered by the Holy Spirit. The local church gathers regularly for worship, fellowship and accountability, and to discern, develop and exercise gifts for ministry.

Mission of the Church

We believe the mission of the church is to make disciples of all nations by calling people to repent, to be baptized, and to love God and neighbor by sharing the good news and doing acts of love and compassion.

Christian Baptism

We believe baptism by water is a public sign that a person has repented of sin, received forgiveness, died with Christ, and has been raised to new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is also a public declaration of a believer's incorporation into the body of Christ as expressed in the local church.

Lord's Supper (Communion)

We believe that in obedience to Christ, the church observes the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of His atoning death and to celebrate forgiveness, new life, and the fellowship and unity of all believers.

Discipleship

We believe Jesus calls people who have experienced the new birth to follow him in a costly life of service to God. The power of the Holy Spirit transforms believers from the unrighteous pattern of the present age into a life of joyful obedience with God's people.

Marriage, Singleness, and Family

We believe that singleness and marriage are honored by God and should be blessed by the church. God instituted marriage as a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman for the purpose of companionship, encouragement, sexual intimacy, and procreation. Children are a gift from God and should be nurtured by parents in the ways of God.

Society and State

We believe that God instituted the state to promote justice and to maintain law and order. Christians' primary allegiance is to Christ's kingdom. Believers are called to witness against injustice, exercise social responsibility, and obey all laws that do not conflict with the Word of God.

Love, Peacemaking and Reconciliation

We believe that God in Christ reconciles people to Himself and to one another, making peace through the cross. As peacemakers, we alleviate suffering, reduce strife, promote justice, and work to end violence and war, that others may see as a demonstration of Christ's love. As in other Peace Churches, many of us choose not to participate in the military, but rather in alternative forms of service.

Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that God is creator and giver of life, and highly values each person. Procedures designed to take human life are wrong. We oppose all attitudes which devalue human life, especially the defenseless lives of the unborn, disabled, poor, aging, and dying.

Stewardship

We believe the universe and everything in it belongs to God the Creator and that we have been entrusted by God to manage its resources. All God's gifts, including money, time, abilities, and influence, are to be received with thanksgiving, used responsibly, and shared generously.

The Lord's Day, Work, and Rest

We believe God's act of creation provides the model for work and rest. In work, we use our abilities to glorify God and serve others. In rest, we express thanks for God's provision and trust in God's sustaining grace. In worship, we gather to commemorate the resurrection through worship, instruction, fellowship, and service.

Christianity and Other Faiths

We believe God's atoning work in Jesus is the only means of reconciling people with God. God has not left any without a witness to the Creator's goodness and power. Christians treat people of other faiths with respect, but urgently proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation.

Christ's Final Triumph

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return triumphantly at the end of this age to destroy all evil powers, condemn all who have rejected Christ to eternal punishment, and unite believers with Christ to reign forever with God in glory.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Host's Qualifications & Expectations

QUALIFICATIONS

- Committed to Christ for at least a year
- Committed to integrity, character, and spiritual growth
- Be a regular attender/member of Ridgepoint and attend weekly worship services
- Agree with Ridgepoint's Core Beliefs (page 13)
- A cleared background check
- Able to relate and connect well with others

EXPECTATIONS

Create a clean, comfortable setting

- The host can offer their home or the home of someone else, but is responsible for either
- Make sure the host house is clean (including pet odor) and picked up by meeting time
- Check for any pet/food allergies
- Provide enough comfortable chairs and space for discussion
- If children are at home, have a plan for them while the group is meeting
- Ridgepoint offers a childcare option, but only on Wednesday nights, coordinating with the kids ministry (groups are responsible for their own childcare needs outside of Wednesday nights)

Foster a warm and friendly environment

- As part of the leadership team, hosts help members feel loved, accepted, and welcome
- A key way to help create a warm and friendly environment is by organizing the weekly refreshments, semester potlucks, socials & community service projects

Partner with your Grow Leader

- One of the contributions of the host is to discuss and evaluate the group with the leader on a regular basis.
- Help the leader by jump-starting the discussion when it lags
- Help the leader care for members and their families by staying connected to members as they experience personal problems and needs (reaching out between meetings)

Strengthen your leadership through trainings

- Essentials (New Leader and/or New Host Training) in August or January
- Kick-off (all Grow Group Leaders and Hosts) in August
- End of Year Appreciation Dinner (all Grow Group Leaders and Hosts) in May

Take attendance

- Take attendance weekly using your email or Church Center app
- Attendance is one of the key ways to help you shepherd your group, as well as help us know how your group is doing and how to care for you

Take Attendance & View Your Roster

WHY ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Attendance is an important part of caring for people, not just tracking numbers. By taking attendance each week, we can:

- Follow up with members who may have stopped attending or need care.
- Track participation throughout the semester.
- Identify potential future leaders who have completed a full Grow Group semester.
- Maintain accurate records as groups multiply, launch, or welcome new members.

Attendance is required for every Grow Group each week. While the Host is typically responsible for taking attendance, the Leader may do so if needed.

PREFERRED METHOD: CHURCH CENTER APP

The easiest way to manage attendance is through the free Church Center app. Using the app allows you to:

- Take attendance quickly and easily.
- Communicate with members through group chat and email.
- Access group resources and files.
- View and manage your group roster.
- Stay connected to multiple groups if applicable.
- Receive leader-specific resources and updates.

Getting Started

- Download the Church Center app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- Create an account or log in using the same account you use for online giving at Ridgepoint Church.
- Verify your account using the text message sent to your phone (2-step verification).
- Once logged in, select Groups from the bottom menu and choose your Grow Group.

Group Features

Within your group page, you can:

- View upcoming meetings and events.
- Access resources and files.
- View group members and contact information.
- Send group chats or emails.
- Invite new members.
- Manage notifications and communication preferences.

TAKING ATTENDANCE IN THE CHURCH CENTER APP

- Open the Church Center app.
- Select your Grow Group.
- Open the current event or meeting.
- Tap Take Attendance.
- Check the box next to each person who attended.
- Tap Submit to save your attendance.

Attendance can be completed during or after the meeting.

**THIS IS
THE CHURCH
CENTER APP**



Need to Edit Attendance?

If you forget to take attendance or need to make changes:

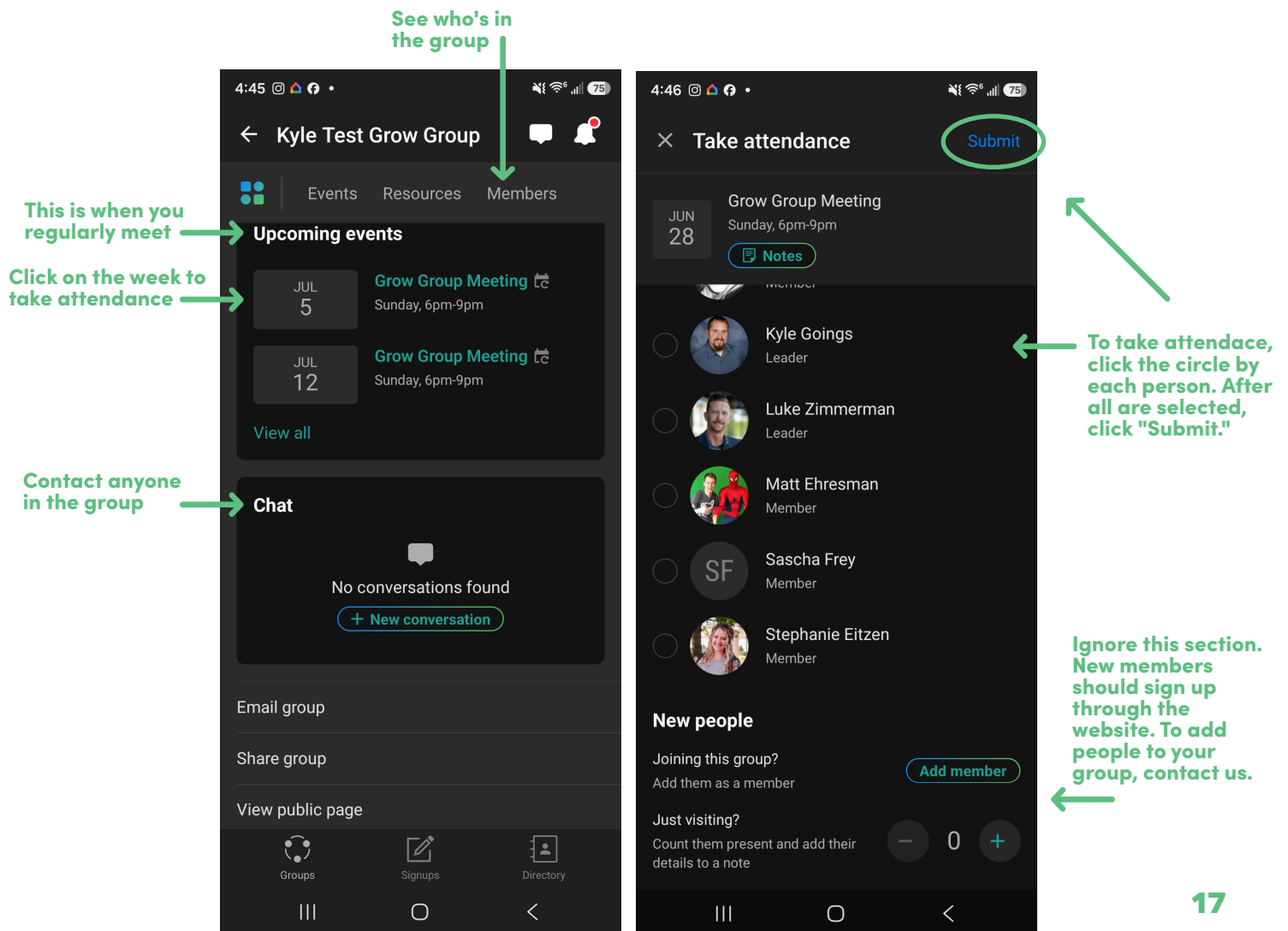
- Open your group in Church Center.
- Select Events.
- Choose See Past Events.
- Select the meeting you need to update.
- Edit attendance and save your changes.

ALTERNATIVE METHOD: EMAIL

If you prefer not to use the Church Center app, attendance can also be submitted through email.

- 60 minutes before each scheduled meeting each week, you will receive an attendance email.
- Open the email and click Take Attendance.
- Check the box next to each person who attended.
- Click Submit to save attendance.

If changes are needed after submission, simply reopen the attendance form and update the roster.
Thank you for helping us care well for the people in your Grow Group!



Leading Grow Groups

Teaching & Curriculum

At Ridgepoint, our goal isn't just to go through content—it's to create environments where people are formed, not just informed. That's why we've designed a simple, flexible approach to curriculum that keeps God's Word at the center while giving leaders room to lead well.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH: SERMON-BASED CURRICULUM

Visit Each Week: ridgepointwichita.com/growleaders

Each week (starting Sunday), you will have access to:

- That week's sermon video
- Leader's notes and a discussion guide with questions based directly on the sermon

We strongly encourage every leader to attend or watch the sermon before your group meets.

5-WEEK STARTER SERIES (REQUIRED FOR ALL NEW GROUPS)

If you are leading a brand-new Grow Group, you will begin with our 5-week Starter Series.

This series is designed to:

- Build connection and group culture (**Up, In, and Out**)
- Set expectations and rhythms
- Introduce what Grow Groups are all about
- Help your group choose an **Out Project**

This is a required starting point for all new groups and helps set a strong foundation for everything that follows.

ADDITIONAL CURRICULUM OPTIONS

After the Starter Series, groups have flexibility in what they study:

Option 1: Continue with Sermon-Based Guides

Stay aligned with the church and go deeper each week

Option 2: RightNow Media (free to use)

Access our library at: rightnowmedia.com/ridgepoint

This includes pre-approved, video-based studies with hundreds of options.

WANT TO USE SOMETHING ELSE?

If you'd like to use a study or curriculum outside of these options, please reach out for approval:

grow@ridgepointwichita.com before use. We're happy to help guide you toward resources that align with our vision and theology.



Tips for Having A Great Discussion

1. Listen More Than You Talk

As a leader, you should be talking less than 50% of the time. Your goal is to draw others out, not dominate the conversation.

2. Practice Active Listening

Don't just wait for your turn to talk; really listen to what they are saying before responding. Pay attention, make eye contact, and respond to what people are actually saying.

3. Don't Give Advice Unless Asked

You don't need to have all the answers. Unless someone directly asks for advice, resist the urge to jump in and fix things. People grow when they process, not when they're immediately given solutions.

4. Find the Balance in Self-Disclosure

Sharing your own life builds trust, but there's a balance. Be intentional and appropriate. Share in a way that helps others open up, not shuts them down.

- Don't share too little (it creates distance)
- Don't share too much (it can take over the space)

5. Embrace the Silence

Silence is not your enemy; it's your friend. When you ask a question, slowly count to 10 in your head before saying anything else. People may be thinking, processing, or building the courage to speak. Be confident in the silence. Don't rush it.

6. Be Curious

Curiosity helps people go deeper rather than stay surface-level. Ask good follow-up questions:

- *"Can you say more about that?"*
- *"What led you to that?"*
- *"How does that connect to your life right now?"*

7. Know When to Challenge

Not every answer needs to be accepted at face value. Don't be afraid to guide people toward the truth. As a leader, it's okay to gently challenge:

- *"What do you think Scripture says about that?"*
- *"Is that always true?"*

8. Keep the Conversation on Track

Sometimes discussions drift; that's normal. Redirect with kindness, not harshness. Your job is to bring it back in as smoothly as possible. And sometimes it's not smooth, but it's your responsibility to keep the conversation on track.

Confidentiality in Grow Groups

Creating a safe environment is essential in Grow Groups—but it's important to understand what that actually means.

WE DO NOT PROMISE FULL CONFIDENTIALITY.

While we want people to feel safe sharing, we never want leaders to make promises they may not be able to keep. There may be situations in which something needs to be shared with staff or trusted leaders to ensure that person's safety, care, or support.

Instead of offering confidentiality, we encourage leaders to say something like:
"I hope you trust me enough with that information to know what to do with it."

This sets a healthy expectation—it builds trust without creating unrealistic or unsafe promises.

The goal is to handle information appropriately, not secretly.

If a situation becomes serious or approaches a point that requires additional care (such as safety concerns, abuse, or major life crises), it's important to involve the right people.

You are not meant to carry those situations alone. Contact a Ridgepoint Staff member right away if you have any questions or concerns (email: grow@ridgepointwichita.com).

At the same time, respect what is shared. Don't gossip, overshare, or ask for unnecessary details. Maintain trust by handling conversations with wisdom and discretion.



Choosing Your Out Project

LIVING OUT THE UP, IN, AND OUT LIFE TOGETHER

Grow Groups are built around a simple but powerful rhythm: **Up, In, and Out**. **Up** is your relationship with God, growing through Scripture, prayer, and worship. **In** is your relationship with each other, building authentic community, care, and accountability. **Out** is where your faith moves beyond your group and into the lives of others through service and mission. Most groups naturally do **Up** and **In** well. You gather, study, pray, and build relationships. **But Out is what truly sets Grow Groups apart**. Without it, groups can become inward-focused and comfortable. With it, faith becomes active. You begin to live out what you are learning, not just talk about it. **Out** helps your group move from simply meeting together to living on mission together.

Your **Out Project** is a shared mission your group commits to for a season. It is not about individuals serving on their own, but about choosing something your group can rally around together. It can be something completed within a semester or something you continue long-term. Either way, the goal is the same: to live outward-focused lives and make a meaningful impact.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR OUT PROJECT

1. Start with Prayer

Take time as a group to ask God where He is already at work and how He might be inviting you to join Him. This step helps shift your focus from just picking something to aligning with God's mission.

2. Explore the Options

Visit the **Out** opportunities page: ridgepointwichita.com/out. Where you can see options for both inside Ridgepoint Church and outside. Or you can choose your own, not on the list.

- Read through the available opportunities together
- Pay attention to what your group feels drawn toward

3. Narrow It Down

As a group, begin focusing on your options:

- Decide if you feel called to serve inside the church or outside in the community
- Narrow your choices down to 2–3 strong options
- Consider what fits your group's availability and capacity

4. Choose Together

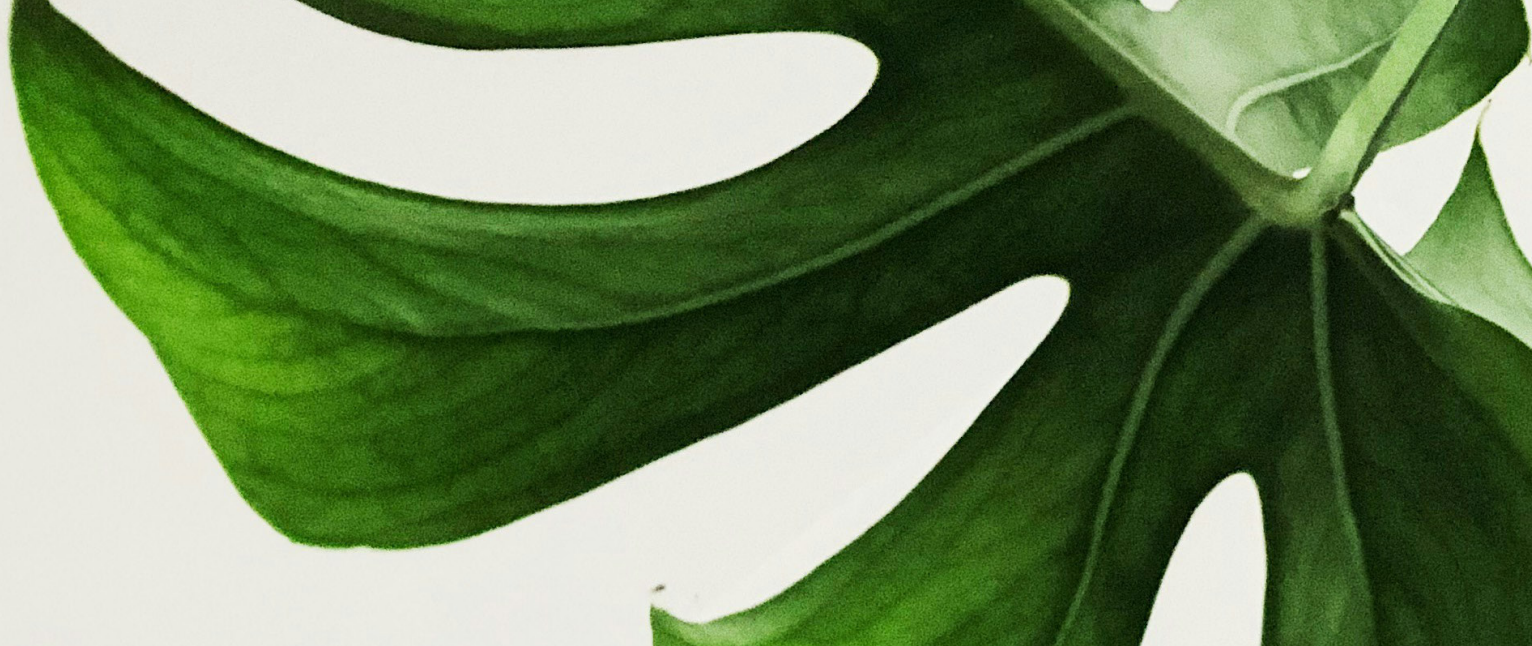
Have an honest group conversation and make a shared decision:

- What excites our group the most?
- What can we realistically commit to your time frame?
- What allows us to serve together, not just individually?
- Remember: the goal is not perfection, but commitment as a group.

5. Confirm Your Project & Set Goals

Once your group chooses an **Out Project**, the next step is to create a clear direction by setting goals. Decide what you want to accomplish this semester (or beyond). Examples might include serving regularly, building relationships with a specific group of people, or completing a project together. These goals will help your group stay focused and intentional.

- Keep goals simple, specific, and realistic
- Focus on consistency and impact, not just activity
- When you have chosen your **Out Project** & its goals, contact Ridgepoint Staff
- If you want to pursue something not listed online, contact Staff for approval



GROUP FOCUS (NOT JUST INDIVIDUAL SERVING)

Your group may serve at different times depending on schedules, but you should still share the same mission. For example, you might all support the same ministry even if you serve on different days. What matters is that your group is united in purpose, encouraging each other, sharing experiences, and praying for the impact together.

REVISIT EACH SEMESTER

At the end of each semester, your group will decide what's next:

- Continue the same **Out Project**
- Adjust your goals
- Choose a new opportunity

This flexibility keeps your group fresh, adaptable, and consistently focused on living **Out** your faith.

GIVE REGULAR WEEKLY REMINDERS

You don't need to spend a large amount of time each week discussing or praying for your **Out Project**, but it is important to consistently bring it back into focus. Take a couple of minutes each week to share updates, remind the group of any upcoming opportunities or deadlines, and communicate any changes. Keeping it in front of your group regularly helps ensure it remains intentional and mission-driven, rather than becoming something that is easily forgotten or treated as routine.

Following Jesus isn't just about what we believe; it's about how we live. Your **Out Project** is an opportunity to put your faith into action, grow together, and make a real difference.



Sharing Your Faith Story

THE PURPOSE OF SHARING YOUR STORY

People can relate to you when you share your faith story. It's the most effective way to share the gospel. You may have times you share it one-on-one and other times before a group. Either way, this is one of the most crucial faith skills every Christian should know.

TIPS ON HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH STORY (OR TESTIMONY)

- In a 3–15 minute story, express how you came to know God personally and how this changed your life. Don't focus solely on you; it's really a story about God. The length depends on your setting and audience.
- Communicate the basis of the Christian faith in the context of your personal experience.
- Open the door for a more extensive conversation on spiritual matters.
- Explain to others the reason why you believe certain things or act in certain ways.

EVERY FAITH STORY SHOULD INCLUDE

- Past: How you first came to follow Jesus (when, where, who was involved, why did you do it). You can just say, "I was really young, but it was with my mom in my room." Explain how your life is different now that you belong to Jesus. If you were very young, this might not take as long, or share how your life was more of a journey than a single moment.
- Present: Where God is at work in specific areas of your life, how you are growing your faith now, spiritual practices, etc.
- Future: Where or how do you want to serve God?

OTHER TIPS

- Be authentic, be you! Tell your story the way it happened, the good and the bad
- Choose a theme or main verse to work around as your main point. This helps keep things concise.
- Find the balance. Don't focus on how terrible your life was without Jesus, and then in the last 30 seconds, you say, "but Jesus saved me, the end." Find the balance and tell the story of how you got to the point of trusting in Jesus and how your life is different with Him in it.
- Write it out. If this is your first time giving it, try writing it out and practicing it with a trusted friend. See if they can follow and understand your story.
- Don't just give information. This is your story, so make it personal. Go beyond dates and facts and share how you felt at the time.
- Prepare a 30-second, 5-minute, and 15-minute story of how God impacted your life.

Helping Your Group Stay Healthy

The 3 Challenges Your Group Will Face

Every Grow Group will face challenges; it's part of leading people. The key is not just responding, but knowing what kind of situation you're dealing with, because how you respond depends on what's actually going on. Most situations will fall into one of three categories:

1. LIFE CRISIS ISSUES

These are moments when something difficult has happened to someone: loss, illness, job loss, stress, family issues, etc.

How to lead: Be present. Show care. Listen well. This is not a time to correct, it's a time to support.

2. SIN ISSUES

These are situations where someone is making choices that are pulling them away from God. This is not about making accusations, but about coming alongside and asking questions about what's behind the decisions that led to the action and how they're processing it.

How to lead: Lead with both grace and truth. Care deeply for the person, but don't ignore what needs to be addressed. This is where loving, honest conversations matter most. Use Galatians 6:1 as a guide.

Galatians 6:1, "Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself."

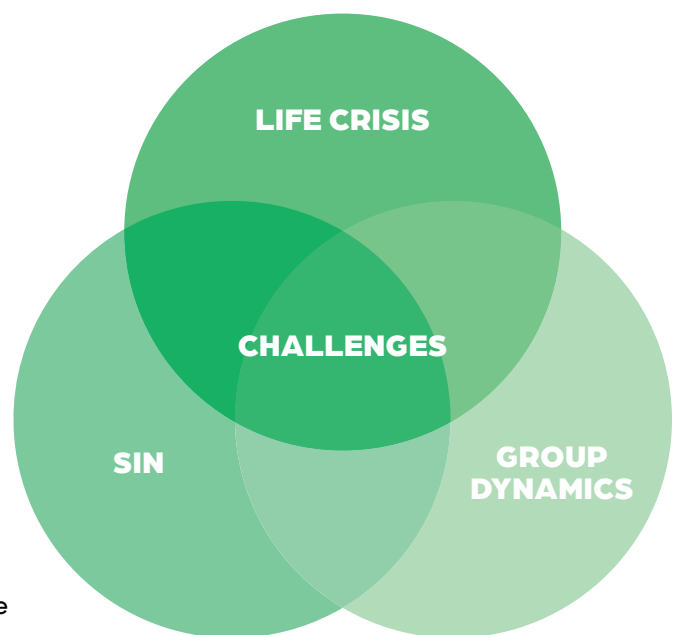
3. GROUP DYNAMIC ISSUES

These are challenges within the group: awkwardness, conflict, lack of participation, someone dominating, etc. This is often the most difficult to deal with because they appear to be personality-driven rather than morally or sinfully based. This tends to be the most subtle, yet the number one destroyer of groups.

How to lead: Step in and guide the room. Protect the environment. Bring clarity and direction so the group can stay healthy. (see troubleshooting guide p. 27)

HINT: Most groups have a "dominator," and if you don't know who it is, it could be you!

Bottom line, we need to keep in mind that it is a privilege to be in a group, NOT a right. There is a standard of social decorum that must be met to remain in the group. For groups to be effective, they must feel safe.



Dealing With Tough Situations & Challenges

When someone in your group shares something difficult (depression, a financial problem, pornography, health concern, marital issue, work conflict, etc.), your role isn't to fix everything; it's to listen well, care well, and help them take a next step.

ASK THESE FOUR QUESTIONS* BEFORE YOU CALL A STAFF MEMBER:

1. How long have you been dealing with this? (duration of issue)

This helps you understand the weight and depth of what they're going through, and the timely context for the potential severity of the issue.

- Listen carefully. The longer something has been going on, the more patience and care it will require. Don't rush the process, just seek to understand their story.

2. Who else knows? (involvement of others)

Find out who else knows about the issue or is involved. If you are the only person, it reveals their level of vulnerability. When was the last time they talked to someone about it? How did those people respond?

3. What advice or counsel have you already received? (level and quality of input so far)

This helps you see what steps they've already taken. Too many times, we give advice that has already been given because we don't ask.

- Affirm any healthy steps they've taken. If they haven't sought help yet, encourage them toward wise counsel, whether that's a trusted leader, mentor, or even professional help if needed.
- Finding out whether they received any input they disagree with can tell you a lot about how they are processing what they hear.

4. Do you have any plans for your next steps? (game plan from this point forward)

Help them think through clear and practical next steps. Keep it simple and doable. You're not solving everything, you're helping them move forward. Provide any resources (if they need to make calls for a professional or staff member, DON'T do it for them).

If you still think you need help after these four questions, then contact the Ridgepoint staff member or email grow@ridgepointwichita.com.

**You are not the Savior—you are a guide.
You don't need to have all the answers.
You just need to ask good questions, listen well,
and point people toward their next step.
That's where real growth begins.***

*Taken from *Circles Not Rows* by David Enns

Troubleshooting Guide*

Every group will face challenges that's normal. As a leader, your role isn't to avoid them, but to lean in, guide the room, and protect the environment so growth can continue.

SITUATION: ONE PERSON CONSISTENTLY TAKES THE CONVERSATION OFF TRACK

What to do:

- Gently bring the group back by restating the original question
- Don't be afraid to redirect in the moment, even if it feels a little awkward
- If it keeps happening, have a private conversation and ask them to help keep responses focused
- Lead with kindness, but be clear you're responsible for the group, not just the individual

SITUATION: YOU HAVE A CRITICAL OR NEGATIVE PERSON IN THE GROUP

What to do:

- Have a one-on-one conversation and remind them of the purpose and culture of Grow Groups
- Help them see how a critical spirit can shut people down and hurt trust
- Reinforce that your group is meant to be a safe, encouraging place for everyone to grow

SITUATION: SOMEONE STRUGGLES TO OPEN UP OR SHARE

What to do: (remember we want everyone to share each week)

- Create smaller moments (breakouts, pairs, etc.) where it's easier to share
- Take time outside of the group to connect with them personally
- Reassure them that the group is a safe place and remind them of your group covenant
- Follow up during the week—let them know you're glad they're there and that they matter

SITUATION: YOU HAVE AN EGR (EXTRA GRACE REQUIRED) PERSON

Some people simply require more time, attention, and care, and that's okay. But it's important to lead them well so they don't unintentionally affect the group's health.

What to do:

- Set clear and healthy boundaries early (why we use the starter series)
 - Be kind, but clear with your time and availability
 - For example, if they call, let them know upfront how much time you have
- Have a private, loving conversation
 - Gently address what you're noticing
 - Offer support and help where appropriate
 - Make sure they know you're bringing it up because you care about them
- Recognize when something is bigger than you
 - Some situations (abuse, addiction, etc.) require professional help (so contact a staff person for next steps)
 - Help connect them to the right resources, you don't have to carry it alone

SITUATION: SOMEONE TALKS TOO MUCH OR DOMINATES THE CONVERSATION

Your role is to create space for everyone to be heard, not just one voice.

What to do:

- Have a one-on-one conversation
 - Affirm their engagement, but explain how dominating the conversation can prevent others from sharing
 - Ask them to help create space for others
- Recast the vision of Grow Groups
 - This is about shared participation, not one person leading the conversation
- Give gentle, honest feedback
 - Help them understand how their communication style may come across to others
 - Encourage them to create space for others to share
- Lead the room intentionally
 - After asking a question, call on someone else directly
 - Guide the flow so others have a chance to speak

SITUATION: SOMEONE IS CONSISTENTLY LATE TO THE GROUP

This can affect the flow of your group and communicate something to the rest of the group, so it's worth addressing.

What to do:

- Have a private conversation
 - Ask what's making it difficult for them to be on time & see how you or the group can help (it might be a childcare issue)
 - If there's a legitimate reason, ask if they're comfortable sharing it with the group for understanding
- Reinforce the group rhythm
 - Occasionally remind everyone of the start time
 - Don't embarrass them if they are late again
- Set the expectation
 - Help them understand that being on time shows respect for the group and the time you have together



SITUATION: SOMEONE RARELY ENGAGES WITH THE STUDY OR COMES UNPREPARED

We don't want to shame people, but we do want to set a culture where engagement matters.
What to do:

- Create opportunities to do the study together
 - Meet early for coffee or dinner and walk through it
- Lead discussions in a way that naturally expects participation
 - Ask questions that invite everyone in
 - Over time, this reinforces that preparation matters
- Recast the purpose of the study
 - It's not busy work, it's a key part of how we grow together
- Remind the group of the commitment they made
 - This is part of showing up for each other
- Keep it encouraging, not heavy-handed
 - Make it engaging and inviting, not guilt-driven

SITUATION: PRAYER TIME IS TAKING TOO LONG, OR LOSING FOCUS (TOO MUCH SHARING)

Prayer is essential, but it should be intentional and engaging, not overwhelming or draining.
What to do:

- Break into smaller groups (maybe split guys and gals)
 - This allows more people to share and keeps prayer more focused
- Use a simple structure
 - Have everyone bring a written prayer request and exchange them to pray for each other
- Guide the moment
 - Introduce simple rhythms like "topical prayer" to help keep things clear and meaningful
- Encourage people to share briefly and pray as they go

*Taken from *Circles Not Rows* by David Enns

