

# New Lifegroup Leader Training



## Session 6: Stages of a Lifegroup

Before starting this session, watch the “Stages of a Lifegroup” video under the “New Lifegroup Leader Training” tab at [leadershipgreenhouse.org](http://leadershipgreenhouse.org).

In this session, we are focused on how we can help every LifeGroup leader understand the lifecycle of a LifeGroup. Understanding principles about LG lifecycle can help leaders process and leverage what’s currently happening. When the group is in the decline stage, the leader can understand why and not experience false guilt. When the group is in the growth stage, the leader can know that it’s probably not going to last forever and can leverage the current momentum of the group.

Think back to your past life experiences. Have you ever been part of a start-up – a business, ministry, team, or school? What were some common characteristics of those start-ups? Have you ever been part of the closing of a business, ministry, team, or school? What were the common characteristics of those closings?

Our LifeGroup Resource Guide lists 5 possible stages in the LifeGroup lifecycle.

- 1) The Get-to-Know-You stage
- 2) The Risk-Taking stage
- 3) The Intimacy stage
- 4) The Growth stage
- 5) The Decline *or* the Multiplication stage.

**\*\*Note:** Each LifeGroup had the opportunity to decide whether to go into the Decline or the Multiplication stage. More on that later!

How does your experience with past or current LifeGroups line up with these five stages? Is there a stage listed that you’ve never experienced? Is there a stage missing? How might understanding the stages of group life make a LifeGroup leader better? How might understanding the stages of group life make a LifeGroup member better?

Our LifeGroup Resource Guide says that it's important not to rush headlong into an in-depth Bible study and skip through the "Getting-to-Know-You" stage of group life. Why is the "Getting-to-Know-You" stage vital for the health of a group? How long do you think this stage should last? Brainstorm some ideas that would help members of a new LifeGroup get to know one another. Write down 7-8 good ideas.

[Read through the scenario.]

*Pete was thrilled when his local church leadership asked him to be a LifeGroup leader. He remembered back to a group he was a member of in college. At the university, the members of the group freely shared their temptations, their family struggles, their hopes and dreams, their girlfriend wins and losses, and their fears. His experience in the small group as he pursued his undergraduate degree was the most formative experience in his Christian life. When he launched his group in the local church, he had high hopes to duplicate his college experience. At first, the church group seemed attentive and open. As they studied the Bible, the group members had a lot to say. But the conversations during the group time were mostly about proper interpretation and correct doctrine. One night, the group began to talk about the Holy Spirit. Pete pointed out that believers must not quench or grieve the Spirit. He asked the question, "How have you personally grieved or quenched the Spirit?" But no one would truly open up. Instead, the conversation kept turning to the idea of what it meant to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and whether or not a believer should speak in tongues. Pete was frustrated. Nothing he tried worked to help his members take risks. He wondered, "How have I not created a safe environment?" He called his group leader from college and asked what he could do to help his group members begin to open up, be more honest, and develop true intimacy with one another and with God.*

What advice would you give to Pete? What advice would you give to Pete's group? What are ways to create a safe and trusting environment? How do you develop an environment where people begin taking risks with each other?

The Growth stage is where members mature in their walk with Christ and in their relationship with each other. It's the richest time for your LifeGroup. Our LifeGroup Resource Guide says that in this stage you can expect...

- Group members seek accountability
- Conflict inside and outside the group is handled biblically
- Leadership will emerge in the group beyond the leader and apprentice.
- Relationship will extend past the weekly LifeGroup meeting
- Members willingly put into practice the truths that the group is uncovering.

Which of these expectations excite you the most? Why? Which one challenges you the most? Why? What expectation for the Growth stage would you add to this list?

The Decline stage is certainly one we want our LifeGroup leaders at Cuyahoga Valley Church to guard against. When group members get too comfortable with each other, they can get lazy and they can begin to stop giving to the group in a sacrificial way. That's when people get hurt and want to quit. Draw a circle below. In the center of the circle write "Avoiding LifeGroup decline." Draw 5-7 lines radiating from the top, bottom and sides of the circle. On the lines write down ways a LifeGroup can guard against group decline.

The Multiplication stage is, sadly, a stage that many group members resist. But we must remind members that groups that refuse to multiply will eventually enter the Decline stage. Our LifeGroup Leaders Resource Guide says that the wise leader will continually cast vision for multiplication throughout the group's life. Craft 2-3 clear, creative, and compelling paragraphs that a LifeGroup leader can use to cast vision for multiplication.

Our LifeGroup Resource Guide lists 3 ways a LifeGroup can multiply:

**Leader Multiplies**

In this plan, the apprentice becomes the leader of the existing group while the original leader takes on a completely new group.

**Apprentice Multiplies**

In this plan, the apprentice leaves the group to start a completely new group while the original leader stays in place with the original group.

**Core Group Multiplies**

In this plan, the original group splits into two (or more) groups where both the original leader and the apprentice start new groups with members of the original group splitting between the two new groups.

What are the pluses and minuses of each multiplication strategy? Which strategy do you think best fits your group dynamics? Why? Which strategy do you think best fits your personal leadership style? Why? Which strategy do you think would be best for you to implement with your current group?

What is one thing you will commit to do in the next 2 weeks to not only identify the stage your group is in but to leverage that stage for multiplication?

Spend 10 minutes praying for a LifeGroup Leader or your LifeGroup Leader Apprentice.