

Next Steps for Leaders

Leading Women Through Launch and Onwards

Congratulations for completing the Leader Training Experience (LTX)! Over these weeks together, you have been given both the **experience** of being in a Nextlevel Covenant Group and an **explanation** of why and how we operate. Now we will address three areas: 1) how to form your new group, 2) how to lead your new group through Launch, and 3) how to lead your new group after Launch is completed.

FORMING YOUR NEW GROUP

- Pray for God's selection of women to invite into your new group
 - sit down with your co-leader and pray
 - come up with a list of 10-12 women who you both feel would benefit from being in a Nextlevel group (personal friends, women from your church)
 - remember to choose women in the same age and stage of life (~10 year span)
 - begin to pray over this list before you meet again
 - now choose 8-10 who you will personally present this opportunity
 - choose a date, time and venue for your first meeting
- Present the opportunity
 - write a one paragraph, 2-3 minute, invitation
 - rehearse this so you can present this personally and verbally
 - set up a personal visit (at a coffeeshop?) to share your opportunity
 - don't attempt to explain this or invite them by email or text
 - be sure you emphasize that this is something you need for yourself, and that you are looking for other women who will consider journeying with you
 - simply ask for a one or two week commitment to come and see if this might be something of interest and value to them
 - tell them that those interested can choose to continue for another 8 weeks
 - be sure to communicate to them with enthusiasm and sincerity, expressing (again) your need for this as well as your confidence that it will be life changing for them too

LEADING THROUGH LAUNCH

- this is a tried and proven "course"—stay on script!
 - don't be led down rabbit trails
 - remind the women that together you can address these topics of interest or concern after the completion of Launch
 - record what topics they are most interested in discussing in the future
 - if a woman needs focused ministry during a meeting, deal with it immediately, and return to the material when you feel led
- begin EVERY session with a reminder:
 - here's why we are here and what we desire to accomplish
 - commitment to the full 10 weeks is crucial to the success of this 10 week journey
 - authenticity and trust is foundational to building healthy community
- end EVERY session with a summary, and how it relates to your overall goal of community

over...

- end EVERY session with an “action assignment” (determine to be “doers of the word”)
- communicate often during the week: (see more below)
 - a thank you email within 24 hours
 - a reminder of the action assignment” within a couple of days
 - a reminder email (“looking forward to seeing you tomorrow at...”) 24 hours prior to meeting
- work as CO-LEADERS!
 - divide up responsibilities according to
 - gifting
 - circumstances
 - leader development (stretch yourselves)
- get the women INCREASINGLY involved
 - reading
 - prayer, prayer recording
 - discussion
 - preparation
- personal preparation
 - invest time in preparing to lead your group
 - pray, pray, pray

LEADING AFTER LAUNCH:

- connecting the women to Nextlevel Ministries:
 - Celebration events
 - mailings (add contact information to the NL mailing list)
 - financial partnership (the NL organization depends on the generosity of its participants)
- proportioning your small group time (see handout)
 - NL Law of Thirds
- small group retreat (see template)
- next topics
- balanced discipleship
 - vary topics, resources and teaching styles
- calendar-year decisions (breaks: Christmas; March Break; summer, fall start-up)

Q&A

BEST PRACTICES

1) **Leader Communication:** We highly recommend that our NL group leaders send out two emails per week between meetings—specifically regarding the meeting:

- One email can be sent a day or two after the meeting, thanking each one for their contributions, and perhaps a sentence or two in summary of what the Lord taught us. A brief focus on the assignment for the coming week is also helpful to each one.
- A second email can be sent a day or two prior to the meeting. Let them know you are looking forward to seeing everyone and to discussing the valuable material that is lined up for the next meeting. (You can give a taster or hint of the topic and its relevance in a sentence or two: e.g., “In our next group time we will be discovering what the Scriptures have to teach us about _____. This will have a direct impact on our lives by _____.” You can also send a friendly reminder of the assignment, and why it is a valuable personal exercise, and how it will enhance the group discussion time.

These emails are not merely administrative tasks; they are part of the process of developing “spiritual interdependence”—a community of spiritual friends. Together with notes and prayer requests/answers, by the women between the women, email communication (or texts in some cases) within the group can be a significant contribution to the communal disciple-making process.

Oversight of these email notes should be shared, to one degree or another, by both co-leaders. One leader could take the “follow up” email while the other could take the “preparation/anticipation” email. OR... one could do the primary leading (discussion and self-discovery teaching process) of the meeting while the other does the mid-week interpersonal connecting. You could take turns in these roles based on a variety of factors (which we could discuss at some point).

2) **Individual Preparation:** Each person needs to come *prepared* (every week) to share the heart-level things we are experiencing as of late:

- what are you learning and experiencing in your walk with Christ?
- what sin are you tempted by and most in danger of committing? (bringing it into the light will weaken its power in your life, and allow us to pray for you)
- what sin have you committed (or are you committing) that you can tell us about (confessing = telling on yourself) so we can walk with you through repentance?
- what have you learned (or re-learned) in the Scriptures this past week that strengthened or enlightened you, or renewed your hope?
- what burden are you carrying that we can bear with you? (emotional, relational, vocational, physical...) (Gal 6:2)
- what gladness are you experiencing? what accomplishment won? what goal completed? (“a joy shared is doubled; a burden shared is halved”)

3) **Individual Participation:** We all need to be graciously *curious* (every week), to lovingly probe one another, encouraging each woman to be real, transparent and vulnerable, assuring her of the grace we will extend and the desire we have to know and love her—the real and entire her—more deeply. Let’s be fully committed to obeying the “new commandment” Jesus gave all His disciples: to “love one another”.

The sisterhood we now share is amazing, rare, and delightful! Let’s endeavour to make it even better.

The biggest difference between a small group that is spiritually, relationally, and biblically edifying and one that feels like an awkward waste of time is leadership. Good leaders do not always get good followers. But it almost never happens that you get good small groups without faithful, wise, skilled men and women to lead them.

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