

LIVING THE WORD



**LEGACY
COVENANT GROUP
LEADER TIPS**

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LCG COVENANT (SAMPLE)

It is important each Legacy Covenant Group (LCG) agree upon and document their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such agreements will help avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. Feel free to modify the LCG Covenant “template” to align with your specific group.

Type of Legacy Covenant Group: _____ (Growth/Explore/Action/Care)

We agree to the following values:

- **Fellowship Together** – The development of committed authentic relationships that demonstrate transparency. We will foster this through confidentiality and accountability with one another.
- **Study God’s Word Together** – The study of God’s word using approved curriculum. Our goal is to learn God’s Word, apply His truths in our lives, and be His witnesses wherever He leads us.
- **Serve Together** – Each of us will participate and contribute, so that we may positively impact our group and others. Our serving can be within our group, from our group to others within Legacy, and/or from our group to others outside Legacy.
- **Pray Together** – Together we will worship God and grow through group and individual prayer.
- **Multiply Together** – We will strive to bring others to our group, so that they too may come to know God and serve Him as part of the Legacy biblical community. We will develop leaders so our group can multiply and support the growth of the LCC family and God’s kingdom.

Everyone is encouraged to arrive a little early so we are assured of starting on time. We will give the group meetings priority, and if unable to attend or running late, we will call ahead.

We also agree to the following items:

When we will meet (day of week): _____

Where we will meet (location): _____

We will start at (time): _____ and end at (time): _____

Refreshments: _____

Childcare: _____

Other agreements/assignments (i.e. social events, service activities, prayer request distribution, etc.):

Review date for this agreement: _____

RESOURCES FOR LEGACY COVENANT GROUPS

Whether your Legacy Covenant Group (LCG) wants to use our LCG Leader resources that go with each week's message or you are looking for materials to help you and LCG members mature spiritually, there are many resources for small groups and individuals easily accessible through this site:

<http://resources.lcc.org>

The "resources" link is on the www.lcc.org home page and serves as the hub for valuable information for leaders, individuals, families, etc. The new Legacy Resources site will continue to expand in the coming months so visit the site often to check out "what's new."

We have several categories to ease navigation including Children, Students, Young Adults, and Adults as well as links to view/download devotions, sermons, Legacy Covenant Group materials, and other valuable resources.

If you have recommendations for resources to add to the Legacy Resources site, please contact Joe Greenhaw at jgreenhaw@lcc.org.

TROUBLE-SHOOTING ISSUES

Human beings are broken, so everywhere there are people there can be problems. Below are some tips that address some of the challenges that might arise in your Legacy Covenant Group.

We Have a Constant Talker:

- Ask, "What does someone else think?"
- Use body language to address other people.
- Direct questions to other people by name.
- Talk privately with the person and ask them to help get others involved.

Some People Never Talk:

- Ask easier questions.
- Direct easy questions their way.
- Enlist the help of other group members to draw them out.
- Express appreciation (both publicly and privately) for the contributions they make.

The Group Is Not Engaging in the Discussion:

- Play "Devil's Advocate."
- Ask "Why?" questions.
- Use humor and say something like... "This is the participation part of our meeting."

A Group Member Reaches an Obviously Wrong Conclusion:

- Ask, "What does someone else think?"
- Redirect their attention to Scripture which leads to a correct conclusion.
- Speak with them one-on-one if the wrong conclusion is still held.

The Group Drifts into Irrelevant Tangents:

- Be flexible; sometimes the issues need to be discussed even though they are not scheduled.
- Explicitly bring the discussion back on topic.
- Agree to discuss the topic at a later date.

A Difficult Question Is Raised:

- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."
- Invite others in the group to share their insights relative to the question.
- Agree to research the question and bring an answer next time.

A Controversial Question Is Raised:

- Set ground rules before the discussion begins.
- Acknowledge that Christians hold different views on a variety of topics.
- Scripture must substantiate all viewpoints.
- We are not going to settle this question for all Christians for all time in this one discussion.
- Focus on what the divergent opinions have in common.

6 KEYS TO BETTER LISTENING

Listening skills are critical for Legacy Covenant Group Leaders. Make sure to exercise the following skills when you are meeting with your group. As you utilize them they will become habits, and you'll be an even better leader!

1. Stop talking. You can't talk and listen at the same time.
2. Don't interrupt. Interrupting people discourages them and makes it less likely that they will contribute to your group's conversations in the future.
3. Use body language. Sit or stand up straight and look the other person in the eye.
4. Actively listen. Don't think about what you're going to say while the other person is talking.
5. Listen for themes. Try to identify and understand the speaker's main idea.
6. Be alert. Watch for nonverbal cues that indicate a speaker's mood.

FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS

While curriculum is a great place to start with group discussions, it is also helpful to know these tips in order to keep a good discussion going as well as to handle awkward or difficult questions that may arise:

- Ask open ended questions. Ask questions like "How does that make you feel?" or "What would you do if...?"
- Avoid "yes" or "no" questions. They tend to stop discussion rather than promote discussion.
- Ask "Why" questions. These make people really evaluate their feelings and thoughts. For example, "Why do you think Jesus said that?"
- Don't be afraid of silence. Let the group think through what has been said or viewed.
- Be ready to share first. As the leader, be prepared to be the first person to share. Your openness will encourage others to open up as well.
- Do your best not to interrupt. Interrupting people makes their future input less likely.
- Practice the art of listening. Really listen to what others are saying, rather than thinking about what you are going to say next while they are still talking.
- Thank people for sharing. This will encourage them to share again.
- Pre-view the video or printed materials beforehand. Being familiar with the discussion material beforehand is a key to keeping the group focused during the discussion period and should be a part of leader preparation.
- Be flexible. Sometimes other issues need to be discussed even though they are not scheduled.
- Keep the discussion on topic when needed. Say something like, "Let's refocus for just a minute and talk about this week's topic."
- Treat others with respect. Treat everyone's comments and questions with consistency. Keep in mind there's no such thing as a "dumb" question or comment.
- Don't think you have to be an expert. Remember, leading a Legacy Covenant Group does not require you to be a Bible scholar, theologian, counselor, or any other kind of expert.

- Be willing to say, “I don’t know.” No one expects you to know everything so be prepared to admit when you don’t have an answer.
- Look it up. When you don’t know an answer to a question, tell the group that you will do a little research and attempt to bring an answer next week. Encourage them to do the same.
- Ask for help. Don’t hesitate to ask a Legacy Covenant Group Coach or a staff person for advice or insight.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT

- Address issues quickly. If you have an issue with someone, go quickly and talk to them rather than allowing the issue to grow.
- Use “I” statements when talking about what you are feeling and experiencing. Say, “I get angry when...” Rather than saying, “You make me mad.”
- Listen closely for underlying messages. Remember tone and body language communicates as much if not more than the words.
- Try to communicate in person. Try to avoid the use of e-mail or phones when conflicts occur.

TIPS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT

Conflict is the natural result of people spending time together. In Legacy Covenant Groups conflict should be embraced rather than avoided. Conflict may occur between group members. Group members will definitely experience conflict with people outside the group. When properly handled, conflict can spur groups to a deeper level of intimacy and community.

Use the following questions to gain perspective when working through conflict in your Legacy Covenant Group:

- Who is involved?
- What is the issue or concern?
- What are the needs of the individuals involved?
- What are the needs of the whole group?
- How can this be an opportunity for growth in the following areas?
 - Relationship with God
 - Relationship with One Another
 - Relationship with Self
 - Relationship with the World
- What Scripture(s) are relevant to this situation?
- How can I pray for this situation?

TIPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

While dealing with conflict is difficult to do at times, when handled properly, conflict can build intimacy within your group. Matthew 18:15-17 serves as our guide for conflict resolution within groups:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Step One: One-on-One Meeting to Seek Reconciliation (Matt 18:15). If you have conflict with someone, go to him or her one-on-one to seek reconciliation. If someone in your group comes to you to talk about a conflict they have with someone else in the group, your first question should be “Have you talked to them about it?” If they say no, don’t even listen to the issue before they go and attempt to make it right. If they have talked to them, then you can move to step two.

Step Two: Mediator is Included (Matt 18:16). Someone should be included if the problem is not resolved in a one-on-one meeting (or several one-on-one meetings). You, the leader, should serve as mediator for unresolved conflict for your group members. If you, the leader, are involved in the conflict, then the mediator should be a qualified staff member or a Legacy Covenant Group Coach.

Step Three: Offense is Made Public (Matt 18:17). In the rare case that the problem cannot be resolved with outside mediation, the offense should be brought out into public. This can be a discussion among the group as a whole. This should be considered as a last resort to restore the relationship, and this step should not be taken without gaining consent from your Campus Pastor.

Adapted from a LifeChurch.TV document titled: “Lifegroup Leader Tips & Tricks”