
LAUNCH

KIT

LEADING YOUR FIRST CONNECT GROUP





CELEBRATION CORE PRACTICES

1. WE ARE ON MISSION.
2. WE ARE ALL IN.
3. WE COLLABORATE TO MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS.
4. WE PREPARE BEFORE THE GAME.
5. WE TAKE OWNERSHIP.
6. WE WORK TO MAKE IT BETTER.
7. WE CARE ABOUT HOW YOU ARE DOING, NOT JUST WHAT YOU ARE DOING.
8. WE OPERATE WITHIN THE VISION OF THE CHURCH.
9. WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN PERSONAL GROWTH.
10. WE TREAT EVERYONE WITH HONOUR AND RESPECT.

WELCOME TO YOUR CONNECT GROUP

Connect Groups are all about **connecting people and growing faith**.

This is an opportunity to further spiritual growth in the context of building friendships within Celebration Church. In other words, this is how you make a big church feel small. Your Connect Group is directly impacting your group members' experience at Celebration Church.

People need community. It is your job as a Connect Group host to be a connector of people – connect people with people, and connect people with God.



CORE PRACTICE

WE ARE ON MISSION



We want to encourage people to take the next step in their walk with God. As a host, help your group members move from where they are now to where they should go next.

To be an excellent Connect Group host you don't have to be perfect or have all the answers, you just have to be committed:

- Committed to seeing people impacted by Jesus.
- Committed to offering a place for people to connect with God and each other.
- Committed to being there for people as they navigate the different seasons of life.



CORE PRACTICE

WE ARE ALL IN



Along the way, we are here for you. We want to equip you, encourage you, and empower you to become the leader God created you to be.

This is just the starting point. The best is yet to come!



LAUNCH KIT OVERVIEW

CONNECT GROUP ESSENTIALS:

A healthy Connect Group will be a welcoming place with encouraging conversations that foster healthy growth and organic relationship building. This section breaks down the essential aspects of every Connect Group. Whether you are on-site, off-site, common interest, or a care group - this applies to you!

YOUR FIRST MEETING:

Everyone wants to make a good first impression. This section covers some tips and tricks to help you prepare! Use the checklist and suggested outline to put you at ease.

CONNECT GROUP RESOURCES:

After you've successfully led your first Connect Group, you'll be ready to keep going. The church has plenty of resources to choose from; from Sunday message recap to a variety of book studies and video series. Check out our list of available materials!



CONNECT GROUP ESSENTIALS

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAD:

1. CREATING ATMOSPHERE
2. LEADING A GREAT DISCUSSION
3. CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE
4. TAKING THE NEXT STEP

CREATING ATMOSPHERE

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CORE PRACTICE

WE PREPARE BEFORE THE GAME

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As leaders, the last ten percent of our preparation often becomes the first ten percent that people notice.

As people come in to your Connect Group, they should be greeted by not only you, but by a sense of welcome - great smells, comfortable seating, and soft lighting. It is so important to create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable and safe to share. Although it may not seem like an important detail, these last adjustments can often be the tipping point that allows people to feel welcome, invited, and cared for in your group.

HERE ARE A FEW EASY WAYS TO CREATE A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE AND FACILITATE A GREAT CONNECT GROUP EXPERIENCE:

● TIDY UP

Whether you are an on-site group at the church, or in your own home, take pride in what your space looks like. Cleaning up a little bit will go a long way. Sometimes you might need to throw some things in a closet or spare room, and that's okay!

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CORE PRACTICE

WE TAKE OWNERSHIP

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● SET THE MOOD

Just like a coffee shop, we want to create a comforting atmosphere. Soft lighting and music will help put people at ease as they arrive and get settled. Providing food and coffee will also help break the ice as you start off your group.

● PROVIDE ENOUGH SEATING

Having enough seats shows that you are prepared for the people in your Connect Group and makes them feel valued and welcome.

● START AND END ON TIME

This shows people that you respect them and their time. The people who walk in late will realize quickly and won't want to miss out. A solid end time will give those who need to leave permission to go, and casual conversation can continue with those who would like to stay as you see fit.



LEADING A GREAT DISCUSSION

Every Connect Group looks different, but there is a common thread in every Connect Group that sets it apart from any other gathering of people: a Christ-centered, meaningful, and encouraging discussion.

You don't need to have all the answers, in fact, you'll probably find that you're able to help people grow in their faith the most when you can stop talking and facilitate a discussion among your group.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO TRY:

- **START WITH SOMETHING EASY**

Break the ice with a game, a few laughs, or simple, surface-level conversation. This opens the door for your Connect Group members to participate at a deeper level later on in the conversation.

- **ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS**

Pay attention to what your Connect Group members are saying and don't be afraid to ask for more details. Though most people rarely share the full depth of their feelings at first, your follow-up questions give them permission to fully express their thoughts.

- **ALLOW ROOM FOR SILENCE**

Give your questions some time to breathe. Silence can give your Connect Group members time to gather their thoughts and find a way to honestly approach a challenging subject.

- **FOLLOW THE RABBIT TRAIL (SOMETIMES)**

Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion by following your Connect Group's answers, even if they seem slightly off topic. Use your instincts and allow the Holy Spirit to speak through you about anything your Connect Group is dealing with.

- **END WITH ENCOURAGEMENT**

Wherever your discussion leads, offer an uplifting insight, thought, or action step that will give your Connect Group members the hope they need to continue through the rest of the week.



CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE

The intention of a Connect Group is to help make a big church feel small. People can often feel lost in the crowd if they are not connected in a smaller group of people that they know and trust. As a Connect Group host, you are meant to bridge that gap and create a space where connection happens.

HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR GROUP:

- **INVITE PEOPLE INTO YOUR WORLD**

Investing into people's lives by including them in yours is one of the easiest ways to stay connected. When people know your story, they feel closer to you. When they know what is happening in your life, they know how to pray and support you. As a Connect Group host, if you open up, people will follow.

- **INITIATE CHURCH ATTENDANCE TOGETHER**

We know that a healthy soul comes from spending time leaning into God. Be encouraging your group to attend and volunteer at church. This is when connecting people and growing faith are integrated. Why not make it fun and volunteer on a Sunday or at an event together as a group!

- **STAY UP TO DATE**

Create a space (group text, Facebook message/group, etc.) where you can communicate as a group. This allows people to share praise reports, ask for prayer, or simply just chat. This will create a sense of belonging for your group members.

- **WHO IS IN YOUR GROUP?**

If people are communicating, they are a contributing member of your group. Just because someone isn't attending every week doesn't mean they aren't engaging. Sometimes people have a hard time committing to every week (especially at the start). Don't be discouraged by this. If people are contributing, make an effort to keep them in your group.



TAKING THE NEXT STEP



CORE PRACTICE

WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR
OWN PERSONAL GROWTH



Everyone who comes into your group has a different story. Some may have been believers their whole lives, while some may be new believers or may not even believe yet. As a Connect Group host, you get to learn your group members' stories and help them decide what their next step should be. Just like Jesus does with us, meet them where they are at and go from there.

We know we are winning when people are taking their next steps.

HERE ARE SOME POTENTIAL STEPS FOR YOUR GROUP MEMBERS TO TAKE:

- **QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH**

Alpha Connect Group

- **RECEIVING SALVATION**

- **ATTENDING CHURCH REGULARLY**

- **NEW TO CHURCH / NEW TO FAITH / BAPTISM**

Next Steps - Sundays at 11:30am and 1:30pm in Meeting Room 1. Guides you to discover your purpose and live the life God created for you. Topics include: church vision, values and culture, water baptism, Connect Groups, and volunteering.

- **VOLUNTEERING**

Encourage them to take Next Steps and join a team.

- **BECOMING A CONNECT GROUP HOST**

Someone will most likely rise up naturally during your group, and their next step may be to become a Connect Group host themselves. The person you want to lose the least is likely the person you need to lose the most because they are already showing signs of leadership in your group. Recognizing this next step for someone opens up an opportunity for others to connect with people and to grow their faith.



CORE PRACTICE

WE WORK
TO MAKE IT
BETTER





YOUR FIRST MEETING

YOU'VE SIGNED UP TO LEAD A GROUP.

YOU'VE STUDIED ALL THE CONNECT GROUP ESSENTIALS.

YOU'VE INVITED PEOPLE OVER.

**IT'S TIME TO LEAD YOUR FIRST
CONNECT GROUP.
LET'S DO THIS!**

INSIDE YOUR STARTER BOX:

- CURRICULUM MATERIAL (IF APPLICABLE)
- SIGN UP SHEET
- BALLOONS TO PUT ON DOOR/PORCH
- PENS
- NOTEPAD

LAST MINUTE CHECKLIST

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CORE PRACTICE

WE PREPARE
BEFORE THE GAME

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- ☐ Send everyone the meeting location.
- ☐ Use balloons to help people find your place.
- ☐ Prepare a few snacks.
- ☐ Clean up a little bit, or at least throw everything in a closet.
- ☐ Arrange seating to help people hear and see each other.
- ☐ Play some soft music in the background.
- ☐ Put out name tags. This will help you get to know each other!
- ☐ Pray that God would move this semester.

FLOW OF THE NIGHT:

- **HANG OUT (15-25 MINS)**

Welcome people as they arrive.
Get to know your group as people grab coffee and snacks.

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CORE PRACTICE

WE ARE ON MISSION

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- **DISCUSSION (40-60 MINUTES)**

Watch the video or review the group material.
Use the provided discussion questions and facilitate conversation.

- **PRAY (5 MINUTES)**

Finish by praying together as a group and/or taking prayer requests from your Connect Group members so you can pray for each other throughout the week.

FEEDBACK

It is important that we hear how your Connect Group is doing so we can continue to support you and improve our systems on a regular basis.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO KEEP US UPDATED:

- **FEEDBACK REPORT**

Each week that your Connect Group takes place, you will be sent a link via text message that will contain a report to fill out. It only takes a minute or less to fill out, helps us keep a record of attendance, and lets us know if and how we can assist you. We want to hear how you think we can improve Connect Groups as well! Don't be afraid to offer your suggestions or to ask for help.



CORE PRACTICE

WE COLLABORATE TO MAKE
THE BEST DECISIONS



- **TALK TO YOUR CARE LEADER**



CORE PRACTICE

WE CARE ABOUT
HOW YOU ARE DOING,
NOT JUST WHAT
YOU ARE DOING



We value how you are doing as a host and want to support you the best that we can. We have created a team of Care Leaders who are here to assist your needs as a host on a more personal level.

The Care Leader's role is to support you in caring for your group members and to supply you with resources when needed. Think of them as a Connect Group leader of Connect Group leaders.

GROUP RESOURCES



Deciding to host a Connect Group is a big deal. That's why we provide plenty of curriculum options for you to find the best fit for you and your group.

- **FIRST, YOU PICK THE TYPE:**

- MEN
- WOMEN
- EVERYONE
- COMMON INTEREST
- MARRIED COUPLES
- YOUNG ADULTS
- YOUTH

- **THEN, YOU PICK THE TOPIC:**

- **SUNDAY RECAP**

Every week, we provide a group guide on the Celebration Edmonton app (available in the iTunes, Google Play, Windows and Amazon app stores). It gives a summary of that week's message and provides discussion questions.

- **CONNECT GROUP STUDY MATERIAL**

If you would like to select study material for your group to go through, we have a variety of books and video series for you to choose from. Contact the church to see the list and choose your next topic!



CELEBRATION
CHURCH