
LAUNCH

KIT

LEADING YOUR FIRST CONNECT GROUP





CELEBRATION CORE PRACTICES

- 1. JESUS IS THE CENTRE**
It's about worship
- 2. WE CELEBRATE ONE ANOTHER**
It's about valuing people
- 3. WE ARE ON MISSION**
It's about reaching people for Christ
- 4. WE ARE ALL IN**
It's about taking ownership
- 5. WE COLLABORATE**
It's about team ministry
- 6. WE PREPARE BEFORE THE GAME**
It's about executing with excellence
- 7. WE MAKE IT BETTER**
It's about ongoing improvement
- 8. WE CARE ABOUT HOW YOU'RE DOING, NOT JUST WHAT YOU'RE DOING**
It's about community
- 9. WE ARE GENEROUS**
It's about finances, time, and talent
- 10. IT'S ALL MINISTRY**
It's about a servant's attitude



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 leader to be a connector of people – connect people with people, and connect people with God.



WE ARE ON MISSION



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

To be an excellent Connect Group leader 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.



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 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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**WE CELEBRATE
ONE ANOTHER**

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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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WE MAKE IT BETTER

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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.

- **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 AND PRAYER**
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 leader 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 leader, 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



JESUS IS THE CENTRE



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 leader, 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 - Alpha is a course that allows anyone to explore life, faith and God in a friendly, open and informal environment. Alpha is designed for anyone who is interested in exploring what Christianity is all about.

Freedom Connect Group - Freedom Groups build on the foundation of your faith in Christ to help you embrace the truth of God's Word as it relates to your worldview, your past, your sin, your personal value to God, and your purpose in His Kingdom.

- **RECEIVING SALVATION**

- **ATTENDING CHURCH REGULARLY**

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

Next Steps - Sundays at 11:00am 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 LEADER**

Someone will most likely rise up naturally during your group, and their next step may be to become a Connect Group leader 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.



**IT'S ALL
MINISTRY**





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!**

LAST MINUTE CHECKLIST

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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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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 (10 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.

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WE COLLABORATE

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:

- **ATTENDANCE**

Our current group database - PCO Groups - allows leaders to track attendance of their group. Each week you will be sent an email requesting the attendance. This will help us track the health and growth of our Connect Groups.

- **FEEDBACK**

Each semester we want to see Connect Groups improve and grow, which means there must be collaboration! We want to hear stories about group members taking their next step in their walk with God, how we can equip and support you better, how our systems can improve - you name it! Send your feedback and stories to our Connection Director.

- **TALK TO YOUR CONNECT GROUP COACH**

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

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

The coaches 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.



CELEBRATION
CHURCH