

BRENTWOOD BAPTIST
GROUPS

**OFF-CAMPUS
LEADERS**

OFF-CAMPUS ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

Guiding Principles of Brentwood Baptist Groups:

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INTRODUCTION

Be more like Christ next year than this year by engaging the whole person with the whole gospel of Jesus Christ—anywhere, anytime, with anybody.

ICE BREAKER:

Everyone, tell about your family in four sentences or fewer.

Groups are where people become like family to biblically learn, love, and laugh together to impact friends, neighbors, and co-workers with Christ.

“Group is not the same as community!
The church creates groups, but you create community together.”

—Andy Stanley, *Circle Up*

Begin every session with an **ice breaker**. These open-ended discussion questions give everyone the opportunity to talk as the group session begins. The ice breakers we have written into the [Host Starter Kit](#) help lighten the mood and help people feel more comfortable. [Brentwood.Church/new-host](#)

Here are some examples of ice breakers*:

Surface Level:

- What is something in your house you want to get rid of but can't?
- What was your first vehicle?
- If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? What is your favorite road trip snack?

Deeper Level:

- Who has been a spiritual hero in your life? Why?
- Even if you have moved around a lot, everyone has a “heart home.” What is that place for you?

Very Deep Level:

- What is one hard-learned lesson from your life?
- As you grow older, what is one quality you hope to retain?

INTRODUCTION

The Bible book of **Acts** is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Both were written by Luke, a physician who traveled with the apostle Paul. Acts ends with Paul under house arrest, awaiting trial before Caesar, c. a.d. 62. Many scholars assume Acts was written then because it does not record Paul's defense, release, and further preaching of the gospel.

Acts 2:42-47 will be our guiding verses for these four sessions and for your group, whether you host, lead, or participate in the group.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

Acts 2:42-47

REFLECTION:

- Which of these actions (*fellowship, discipleship, prayer, and evangelism*) do you more naturally gravitate toward?
- Healthy groups balance these four actions by enlisting people (Sharing The Load) to champion these areas. Who can you enlist to champion these areas for your group? (See item #7 for more information.)

1. GREAT COMMANDMENT

The Great Commandment: Love God and Love Your Neighbor

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:36

Brentwood Baptist Groups are life giving biblical communities that equip people to be disciples who make disciples.

Sharing The Gospel

Drue and Laura Warner share from their life story of being the presence of Jesus on their street.

“There are many ways to share the gospel, and certainly not all of those ways are oral. We’ve shared the gospel through Christmas cards and by including our neighbors in emails and prayer requests when we learned during Laura’s pregnancy that our daughter had a heart defect. Laura and Drue share the gospel by their actions more than their words. “We’ve been intentional about not verbally sharing our faith— that is, evangelizing—with our neighbors or inviting them to events until we’ve built a foundation of trust and respect,” explains Drue. “We don’t want to be perceived as having an agenda of trying to convert them or get them to come to our church.” After relationships have been forged, however, Drue says they are able to share the gospel freely because of the mutual trust they’ve established. They strive to show their neighbors unconditional love and acceptance, rather than judging them. The couple wants to serve their neighbors with an attitude of humility, love, and acceptance. “We view our home as a primary tool for ministry.” –Laura Warner, Field Guide to Neighborhood Outreach

REFLECTION:

- Who in your group is sharing the gospel with friends, neighbors, and coworkers? How can you bring attention to this commandment to love our neighbors?

“When you believe that nothing significant can happen through you, you have said more about your belief in God, than you have said about yourself.” –Henry Blackaby, Experiencing God

2. GREAT COMMISSION

The Great Commission: Making Disciples Who Make Disciples

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

Plan a social or a way to gather potential Group members for your initial meeting. Consider hosting Saturday brunch, BBQ or open house for neighbors who expressed interest in building a greater sense of community. At this social, cast vision for Group meetings and outreach ideas.

There are **three expectations/goals** for every Group that helps them experience the Great Commission as a Group:

1. Every group is expected/challenged to **identify an ongoing mission opportunity** for their group to begin serving with twice per year. One way to live out the Great Commission is to plan a mission experience for your area, neighborhood, school, fire house, etc. Watch for new babies, new movers, graduation celebrations, emergencies, etc. as times to minister and serve your neighborhood. We have found that those unconnected with your group, and even those yet to believe, will serve alongside you if you invite them.

Or, maybe you would like to start with a mission experience that Brentwood Baptist has already planned. [Here are the local partners the church works with on a regular basis:](#) [Brentwood.Church/local](#)

“Nothing unites a group like a common project or common enemy.”

–Eddie Mosley, *Connecting in Communities*

2. Every group is expected/challenged to write out a “praying for those yet to believe” list within their first three months. These people might be neighbors, coworkers, or teammates. The hope is that each group, through such consistent prayer, would have the opportunity to share the gospel with someone yet to believe and then **baptize someone each year**. Your group members may be new to the idea of Christ, church, or Bible study, so it may take some time to see people come to Christ, but this is a challenge that

2. GREAT COMMISSION

“keeps the main thing the main thing.” Your role as leader is to help guide the spiritual growth opportunities of members. The first step in this growth is knowing where they are currently. Many times, the children of group members will come to Christ (or “get saved”) before their parents do, so get to know the spiritual condition of every family member, too. We would love to celebrate with you in the baptism event. That may take place at the church, but we have also attended baptisms in hot tubs and swimming pools between 2019 and 2021.

3. One unique way to inspire the group toward living out the Great Commission is to send a group member on an international mission trip. We expect/challenge every group to **participate in some way on an international mission trip at least every two years**. Collect items the team needs, sponsor a group member on the trip, offer daily prayer support for the team during the trip, etc. Find out more information about Brentwood Baptist Global trips at [Brentwood.Church/global](https://www.brentwoodchurch.org/global).

Your group may want to start by supporting one of Brentwood Baptist’s **Global Workers**. Our church sends individuals and families to answer God’s call by serving nationally and globally. Join us in praying for and sending those whom God has called. This could be a fantastic way to introduce your group to Brentwood Baptist or even the mission field! [Brentwood.Church/global-workers](https://www.brentwoodchurch.org/global-workers)

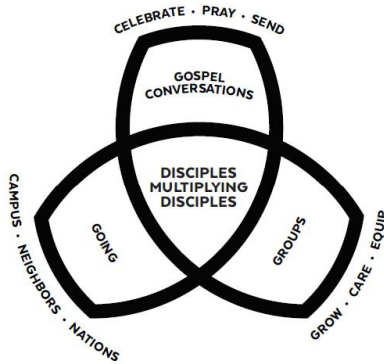
Disciples Multiplying Disciples (DxD) Strategy

Our DxD strategy serves as a road map for carrying out the Great Commission by emphasizing the necessity of gospel conversations, the role of groups, and the importance of going on mission to serve our campuses, our neighbors, and the nations. We are disciples of Jesus who multiply disciples with Jesus (Matthew 4:19-23; 28:18-20), so we must approach our lives with Christ and His work strategically. To make disciples was Jesus’ single command to us. The command is then reinforced by three participles: go, baptize, and teach. Going, gospel, and groups are highlighted in the DxD strategy. We go to our campus, our neighbors, and to the nations. We proclaim the gospel to those who have yet to believe, and we pray for them to confess Jesus as Lord and be baptized. And we are belonging to groups where we learn to imitate (or obey) Jesus’ way of life.

Our groups hope to exemplify this strategic approach within their group through sub-groups or “DxD groups.” A DxD group is a sub-group within your group anywhere between 2-10 people (gender-based, preferably), having an apprentice or

2. GREAT COMMISSION

co-leader, with the aim of holding each other accountable to gospel conversations and going in service to your campus, neighbors (whether literally or figuratively), and the nations (see DxD Group Leader Guide for more).



The **Brentwood Baptist DxD strategy** is a pictorial representation of the Great Commission. We measure each of these facets of disciple-making to help us learn where we might concentrate our training and equipping. We are not saying that if one simply does these activities then that one is necessarily a disciple; rather, we are saying that if one is a disciple, then these activities are things that they will do.

1. We pray that every group baptizes one person a year. What a day to celebrate when a group member is baptizing who they disciplined in front of our congregation!
 - Begin by creating a “praying for those yet to believe” list that you and the group pray through, name-by-name.
 - Have a gospel conversation testimony each week. The group will only be as vulnerable as you are, so you lead the way by sharing each week for the first month. And be honest that if you didn’t have any, that you’ve committed to pray for more opportunities and to alter your routine to possibly engage more lost people.
 - Report a rough average of gospel conversations per month.

2. **Groups** are ongoing biblical communities that grow, care, and equip. To grow means to mature in the faith, to care means to nurture one another, and to equip means that individuals are prepared to make disciples. We use the DxD Spiritual Health Assessment to gauge our progress in these areas. Scan the code to access the assessment!



2. GREAT COMMISSION

3. **Going** consists of serving our campuses, our neighbors, and the nations. It's easy to find opportunities for each of these through the Brentwood campus website. Our expectation is that each group serve on-campus at least once per month, serve in the local community at least twice per year, and engage global missions at least once every two years.

Visit [Brentwood.Church/serve](#) for campus service opportunities.

Visit [Brentwood.Church/missions](#) for local and global mission journeys.

4. Over the course of your group's lifetime, you will ensure your group is taking a balanced approach to attaining spiritual maturity. Scan the QR Code to see studies from each of the following categories (signposts).



3. COMMUNITY

Leading a group incorporates the Great Commission in three ways:

1. Pursuing Spiritual Transformation (Discipleship):

*And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
–Matthew 4:19*

Looking at Matthew 4:19, transformation happens when the person allows Scripture to be spoken into their life by the Holy Spirit. Spending time with God in his Word daily is the biggest transformer of a life. Do not allow your group to simply gain information; they must pursue a personal transformation.

2. Shepherding (Span of Care):

We strive to build trust in the group through nurturing and encouraging.

- This may come natural to some, as they know Christ is with you.
- Spend time with Him, praying for each member.
- Prepare for the Bible study early in the week.
- As your group grows in number, care becomes more difficult. (Consider enlisting care-group leaders who can offer ongoing care to 10-12 members of the group.)
- Serve together quarterly.

3. Build Authentic Relationships (Accountability):

"In the first study of its kind, a University of Kansas professor has defined the amount of time necessary to make a friend as well as how long it typically takes to move through the deepening stages of friendship. Jeffrey Hall found that it takes roughly 50 hours of time together to move from mere acquaintance to casual friend, 90 hours to go from that stage to simple "friend" status and more than 200 hours before you can consider someone your close friend." –Associate Professor of Communication Studies, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.

Strive for balance between building friendships and building accountability. Trust and transparency are necessary for accountability. Vulnerability can be key, and as you are transparent, so will the people be. Pray for one another!

3. COMMUNITY

Once again, the guiding verse for Groups is Acts 2:42-47:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47

REFLECTION:

- What does it mean to live on mission for God?
- Why is doing life together such an important aspect of living intentionally for Jesus?

4. HOSPITALITY/OPEN & CLOSED GROUPS

We treat groups like families.

What is the difference between fellowship and hospitality?

Fellowships are more like a social where everyone is friendly and chatty. Hospitality is what we do intentionally to include everyone and help them feel like they belong, which over time becomes like family. Seeking to show hospitality implies we don't just stumble into it; we pursue it. Becoming hospitable requires actively pursuing opportunities to welcome strangers and outsiders. Although being a gracious host for your group is a wonderful thing, seeking hospitality is an attitude you put on every day. This is about the common grace of God being extended through the people of God to strangers in need. The kingdom of God advances through us when we look for ways to be hospitable.

The more transparent a group becomes, the more quickly it closes its doors to new members. Most groups will first discuss inviting a friend to the group. However, after a few months, groups become resistant to the possibility of BBC sending people to their group because of the closeness, issues they are discussing, or a crisis they are dealing with. (Reflect back to when you met your significant other's parents or attended your first holiday meal at their house. How awkward were the first few minutes?) That is why we allow groups to be closed for a season by their own choice. However, group life typically lasts three years as it original began (much like your life changes about every three years). People come and go, move, change jobs or situations, but the group can continue and simply add new members. So, there will come a time when the group feels it need to invite new friends and neighbors or to let the church know they are open to new people.

Hospitality also means understanding the rhythms of life. Most on-campus groups meet weekly on Sunday mornings for one hour, plus a social quarterly and a mission project quarterly. They usually do not formally meet on Easter, the last Sunday in December, or the first Sunday of new year. These times are given to serving and attending the festivities of the Brentwood Baptist Easter and Christmas seasons: concerts, banquets, and the Christmas Eve Candle Light service.

4. HOSPITALITY/OPEN & CLOSED GROUPS

How do we find people for our group?

Brentwood Baptist strongly advises you to invite 3-4 couples, neighbors, coworkers, friends, and other parents from your children's ball teams to a group social. First, explain to them why your group is hosting this event. One of the Adult Group Team members will send emails reminding those who are unconnected about the importance of being in a Bible study group. This would be a great time to offer a Group social during class time or one evening in a home. The social is an opportunity for prospects to meet members of the group and to learn about the Bible study style of the group. If you've decided on a study to start the group with, tell the group about it.

If you inform the Adult Groups office that your group is open to new members, we will activate your group on the website. Please make sure all the information is accurate: **Brentwood.Church/groups**. This way anyone searching the website will see your group and email us for more information.

The addition of a new person or couple to your group is more traumatic than you often realize. Not only are the people in your group feeling a sense of newness to the environment, the person/couple coming in may be ignorant to all the jokes, stories, and life the group has experienced in the past. Remember, we treat each group as a family. Therefore, you don't just add another one or two to your attendance; you are introducing a new family member to your existing family. That takes conversation, time, warmth, texts, emails, and for sure introductions. Each new person or couple needs to be introduced to at least seven (7) other people in the group before they begin to feel a sense of belonging. (If your group has fewer than 12 people, I suggest introducing them to each member of your group through a social.)

REFLECTION:

- Who are 3-4 couples/4-5 singles that God is calling you to invite to your group? Pray for them daily, by name, this week.

5. CURRICULUM/RESOURCES

[Sermon Studies to Spiritual Health Assessment](#)

Remember, the first way leading a group incorporates this Great Commission is through the pursuit of spiritual transformation (discipleship). Looking at Matthew 4:19, “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” Transformation happens when a person allows scripture to be spoken into their life by the Holy Spirit. **Spending time with God in his Word daily** is the biggest transformer of a life. Do not allow your group to simply gain information, they must pursue a personal transformation.

Where do we find what to study?

By offering studies that have a daily-devotional feature along with the study you increase the opportunity for transformation. Brentwood Baptist has a sermon-series study line that is accompanied by a daily devotional.

1. Go to leadership.brentwoodbaptist.com
2. When prompted “I’m a...” select “Adult LIFE Group Leader”
3. Select “Curriculum” on top menu bar
4. Select “Current Foundation Series”

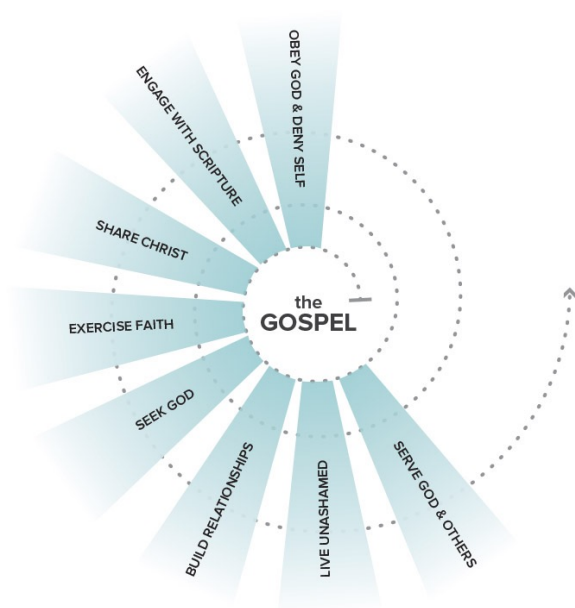
DXD Spiritual Health Assessment is also available to discover the areas the group needs to focus their studies for a season. Each member of the group can take this online assessment and share their results, or the leader can take the assessment for the group. The **Spiritual Health Resources document** will offer study suggestions for each of the results from the assessment. We suggest targeting the area with the lowest score first.

Other options for curriculum can be found through LifeWay research. They have identified eight signposts of discipleship or personal transformation which they support with curriculum. These are lifestyle patterns that ought to be growing in ever-increasing measure the longer a person walks the pathway of discipleship.¹ This pathway is built on our Disciples Making Disciples (DMD) strategy: **Gospel** (*centered on the gospel*), **Groups** (*experiencing growth through a group*), and **Go** (*displayed in real life by going with Jesus on mission and serving*).

¹LifeWay Church Resources, <https://www.lifeway.com/en/special-emphasis/balanced-discipleship>

5. CURRICULUM/RESOURCES

Over the course of your group's lifetime, you will ensure you are taking a balanced approach to attaining spiritual maturity.



There is a plethora of Bible studies on the market. However, BBC has taken time to vet resources that align with our philosophy and theology and can be found in the library. Curriculum can be chosen based on your group/family's needs. Sermon-based studies seem to be the easiest way to get people engaged in the Bible and the group. Please do not offer a study to the group that the church has not approved. If you find a study you would like to use but it is not on the BBC list, please email the Adult Groups office about this study and give them three weeks to review the material for theological and philosophical accuracy.

The Adult Groups Team also provides you with a commentary of the Bible, an Emergency Handbook, and a helpful resource book on groups.

REFLECTION:

- Who is/was your greatest teacher ever? What was the characteristic that made them the greatest? Remember their traits as you prepare and lead your next group meeting.

6. COMMUNICATION

Beyond Regular, Formal Meeting to Doing Life Together

“There is a certain level of staying connected that is required to maintain and grow our relationships. We simply cannot build relationships apart from a steady stream of regular interactions and conversations.”

–Rick Rusaw, Brian Mavis, Kevin Colon, & Krista Petty, *The Neighboring Life*

Remember that leading a group incorporates the Great Commission by building authentic relationships (accountability). Strive for balance between building friendships and building accountability. Trust and transparency are necessary for accountability. Vulnerability can be key, and as you are transparent, so will the people be. Pray for one another!

Conversations lead to relationships which lead to opportunities for transparency to develop making way for discipleship to happen.

We have discussed the value of practicing the biggest transformer of a life: spending time with God daily in His Word. The same is true for your impact on your group members. Spend time with them!

1. Share and keep current contact information for each other.
2. Text weekly, through a GroupMe or group text.
3. Share birthdays and anniversaries, and place them on your calendars.
4. Send a list of group members and contact information for your group’s roster to Nastasia (nklump@brentwoodbaptist.com) at the Adult Groups office. This helps us know who is in which group and how to respond in a crisis. e. Download the **BBC app** so you, or someone you have enlisted, can easily share attendance and notes about your group. You may also use the paper version of the scanning attendance sheet. Make notes on this page concerning new members or updating member information.

REFLECTION:

- Do you have each person in your group in your contacts? Did you text or email each other this week?

7. SHARE THE LOAD

Everyone needs a place to belong, and leaders need help with group responsibilities.

A way to enhance this feeling of belonging is by each person getting to use their gifts and passions for the group. Not only does this give them a sense of ownership, but it also puts into practice the gifts God has given them and serves the larger group in an important group/family task. Long gone are the days where the leader is expected to do everything for the group!

- ____ Food: Who loves to cook or plan meals?
- ____ Host: Who has the hospitality gift and can host a social or be in charge of decorations?
- ____ Prayer Requests Notes: Who loves to take notes or journal and can send emails with the prayer requests?
- ____ Journal: Who likes to read and write stories and could share stories of your group's spiritual journey, mission trips, mission projects, etc. with the Adult Groups office?
- ____ Missions: Who has a heart for others, the nation, and the world? Could they research and organize group mission projects, trips, and events?

The Leader is a guide to helping the members of the group develop in their living out of Christian practices and values. The *Share The Load Principle* is listed as a means to enhance this opportunity.

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.”

Ephesians 4:11-13

Your role is not to transform a person, but to help them stay in an environment where they can hear from God.

7. SHARE THE LOAD

Suggested Group discussion to help people find their passion and gifts:

- What makes you unique?
- What activities make you lose track of time?
- What do you love to do?
- What are your hobbies?
- What areas of your life, school, work come easy to me that most people find to be a struggle?
- How would your closest friends and family members describe you using 5 adjectives?
- What do people compliment you on frequently?

–Team *I am Unique*, *IAmUniqueBook.com*

“I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: Shepherd God’s flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

1 Peter 5:1-3

1. Model Christlikeness before your group.
2. Help them discover how to serve each other and the church (the body of Christ).

REFLECTION:

- Go back to the list of roles in your group and place the initials of those whom you plan to ask to serve in each role.

8. ONE CONVERSATION/DISCUSSION

Conversations → Relationships → Transparency → Discipleship

One of the ways we help each other is by striving to have only one conversation going on in the room. We learn this by having one conversation with God on a regular basis, not a one-sided conversation or multiple conversations. As you engage the Bible (spend time with God daily in his Word) or engage the group, strive for one conversation. **One example of this** is taking turns letting everyone share their **God-story**. The leader goes first and sets the example. This is often called your testimony. Spend time on how you came to Christ and what He is doing in your life now. Don't be fearful; no one can deny your story or argue about what you have experienced.

Larger groups may consider sub-grouping by gender, by care-groups, or even by corners of the room. This is one way to allow more people to talk in your group. The decrease in numbers and dividing by gender can help with transparency and increase the discovery of people's lives. You may enlist someone prior to the meeting to facilitate the other sub-group or work through your care-group leaders to facilitate the discussion.

Another key is to always start and end the group meetings on time. This respects members' time and builds up the trust in them that it is okay to speak in the meetings. Many of the most valuable conversations happen after the meeting. Consider saving time at the end of the meeting for chatting.

Example: We meet from 9:00-10:00 AM on Sunday mornings

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 9:00-9:10 AM | Greeting, snacks, fellowship, and conversation |
| 9:10-9:15 AM | Recap the week's assignments and prayer requests |
| 9:15-9:50 AM | Bible study and sub-group by gender once every 5-6 sessions |
| 9:50-9:55 AM | Prayer Requests and announcements |
| 9:55-10:00 AM | Casual conversation and clean up. (This is often when people really share what is going on in their lives.) |

REFLECTION:

- Do you remember a group or club you were part of where you could never depend on the meeting to end on time? What were your feelings about attending those meetings?

9. REFRIGERATOR RIGHTS/TOUGH CONVERSATIONS OR TOPICS

If you need creamer, it's in the fridge.

Refrigerator Rights: Why We Need to Let People into Our Hearts, Our Homes (And Our Refrigerators)...and How to Bring Even More Close Relationships into Our Lives
is a book written by Will Miller.

“Many Americans today feel stressed-out, over-extended, and disconnected...but they’re not sure why, or what they can do about it. Therapist and ordained minister Dr. Will Miller has the answer. He advocates changing our hectic lifestyles to embrace the idea of “Refrigerator Rights”—establishing close connections with friends and family who are trusted enough to enter our homes and help themselves to whatever is in the refrigerator. Dr. Miller offers suggestions on how to accomplish this through:

- Reaching out to those beyond our immediate family
- Balancing self-care and care for others
- Creating a sense of true community
- Re-establishing vital social networks
- Getting comfortable with not being constantly ‘productive’
- Learning to go with the flow, take a detour, lose track of time in the company of friends
- ...and rediscover the nourishment of relaxed, mutually satisfying relationships.”

This is the principle that grows as your group becomes more familiar with each other through Bible study, socials, and mission projects. It is a practical, Acts 2:44-45 Principle... “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.” Refrigerator Rights builds transparency into our discussions and lives as well. It becomes easier to discuss tough subjects or have hard conversations as your “refrigerator rights” grow. The closer your group becomes, the more discipleship and accountability opportunities can take place.

REFLECTION:

- Who has “Refrigerator Rights” in your Group? Why?

10. SOCIALS

Your group should have a group social once a quarter

Every group should calendar a quarterly social. It is a chance to live out what you have been discussing in Bible study, do life together, and share family time with the kids. Socials should be part of every group's natural rhythm. Calendarizing is important for groups to stay on track and offer consistency in a life of chaos.

One of the keys to small groups having an impact on people starts with a neighborhood social. If you have not offered a neighborhood social (a brunch, dessert, appetizer, cookout, or BBQ night), this is truly something to consider.

We learn from Levi in Luke 5:27-29 about having socials for Jesus:

“After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.”

A simple way to start planning for a social is by drawing your neighborhood, workplace, or hobby in the space below.

My neighborhood. My neighbors' names. Their careers. Their hobbies. Their kids.

Pray for them by name this week. Set a date for a social. Drop off invites at their house. (Brentwood Baptist can map our database for your area and send email invites for you to other Brentwood attendees.)

At the social discuss: What are some of your favorite hobbies? How could you use these to begin a conversation about starting a group/inviting them to your group?

To build relationships that lead to disciple-making, God provides common interests or hobbies. We can make a decision to love our neighbor as our self, host a social as Levi did, and include others in our schedule.

For Eddie, it was baseball. As his son became involved in the sport, Eddie took on a role of assistant coach (dugout mom). Soon he realized that 9 of the 11 boys were unchurched as well as most of their parents.

10. SOCIALS

This became his “neighborhood” for many years, baptizing several of the players and some of their parents.

REFLECTION:

- When is your group’s next social? In your next meeting, ask the group what type of social activities they would like to see in the coming year?

11. SERVE

[Help members of your group serve on and off-campus, on mission projects, and through mission trips.](#)

Being part of the body of Christ requires us to understand that we are all important parts!

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- Brentwood Baptist has many opportunities for people to serve the body of Christ at all different commitment levels, discipleship levels, and maturity levels. Check out some of them for members of your group: [Brentwood.Church/serve](#)
- Every group is expected and challenged to **identify an on-going mission opportunity** for their group. One way to live out the Great Commission is to plan a mission experience for your area, neighborhood, school, fire house, etc. Watch for new babies, new movers, graduation celebrations, emergencies, etc. as times to minister and serve your neighborhood. Or maybe you would like to start with a mission experience that Brentwood Baptist has already planned. Here are the local partners that the church works with on a regular basis: [Brentwood.Church/local](#)

11. SERVE

- We expect and challenge every group to participate in some way on an international mission trip at least every two years. Collect items the team needs, sponsor a group member on the trip, and offer daily prayer support for the team during the trip! [Brentwood.Church/global](https://www.brentwoodchurch.com/global)

A serve idea that also allows you to meet your neighbors is to do a collection of community needed items (food boxes, light bulbs, batteries, coats, etc.), help neighbors around their homes, or serve food at a local shelter. Find an opportunity to serve as a group in your community. Another way to share the load is to let someone in the group lead the service function of your group.

REFLECTION:

- What is your group's service project? Who has been on an international mission trip? Consider having them share in your next meeting.

12. CO-LEADERS

You need a vacation; we need more leaders.

One of the most important areas to develop people is through a co-leader. You multiply your ministry by helping each member discover how to use their gifts, passions, and abilities for the kingdom. This is discussed in detail in BBC's **Discover You Class**. One of those vital roles is that of a leader. No one benefits from a 100% attendance/leader pen. You need a co-leader for when you are sick, on vacation, working late, etc. to facilitate and lead the meeting for you. You need a co-leader to invest in for future growth of your group or to begin a new group.

1. Develop your co-leader by praying for them and spending time coaching them.
2. Equip them to lead through increments of responsibility:
 - Crawl: Let them lead the ice breaker one session.
 - Walk: Have them lead a section of the study a few weeks later. Meet with them later to discuss their experience and coach them for the next leadership opportunity.
 - Run: Be absent and let them lead the entire next study.
3. Host a celebration event for anyone who leaves your group to start a new group with their friends, neighbors, or co-workers. This is God's way of growing His kingdom. Know that eventually God will move people to different jobs, cities, and groups. Our lives change about every three to four years; your group will, too.

REFLECTION:

- Who is going to be your co-leader?
- Have you completed your application? This automatically puts several steps in motion at church. [Application/Leadership.Brentwoodbaptist.com](https://www.brentwoodbaptist.com)

13. COVENANT/LIST OF AGREEMENTS

Commit to the group and your own spiritual growth.

Setting a list of agreements or a list of expectations is the first step toward real Christian community. Approximately 80% of group problems or issues could have been avoided if a clear covenant or list of agreements and expectations had been discussed as the group began. A sample covenant is shown below; we suggest you talk with the group and come up with a list of agreements unique to your own group.

Group _____ **Covenant**

We will commit to being active in this group for the next _____ weeks. We will gather every Sunday in order to gain a taste of community that comes by being involved in a group. We will meet for Bible Study and community building on _____ at _____ o'clock.

We agree to...

Grow through gathering and studying the Bible.

- Make our meetings a priority.
- Pray for our unchurched friends.
- Worship personally through our daily devotionals and corporately at BBC.
- Allow everyone to participate in discussion. ü Challenge each other on their spiritual health through the DxD model. The DxD Spiritual Health Assessment is also available to discover the areas the group needs to focus their studies for a season. Each member of the group can take this online assessment and share their results or the leader can take the assessment for the group. The Spiritual Health Resources document will offer study suggestions for each of the results from the assessment. We suggest targeting the area with the lowest score first.

Care

- Encourage members to serve each other as needed.
- Serve God through on-campus opportunities at Brentwood Baptist Church.
- Serve the world by praying for, encouraging people to go, and support participants of mission trips.
- Serve the community by identifying and adopting a project on a quarterly basis.
- Call on each other at any time. (Exchange cell phone numbers!)
- Respect each other's opinions.
- Keep discussions confidential unless permission is granted.

13. COVENANT/LIST OF AGREEMENTS

Equip

- Share the load of the group by everyone using their gifts in their group.
- Develop a co-leader to lead the group, as needed and intentionally.
- Participate in mission experiences for our own leadership development.

Leader Expectations:

(Leaders are members of Brentwood Baptist Church who have completed an application, completed orientation, and met with two current leaders for coaching.)

- Be a member of, support the vision of, and worship regularly at Brentwood Baptist
- Complete the Orientation Leader Training
- Help enable every participant (including yourself) to grow spiritually
- Share the load and serve the group
- Prepare the Bible study, texting out homework or devotional suggestions, etc.
- Pray often for each member by name
- Model Christ-like behavior, invitation, and hospitality

Expectations for Group Members:

- Keep confidentially a priority
- Prioritize the meetings and parties
- Take responsibility for one of the areas under “Share The Load”

Group Leader Covenant

Believing that the privilege of serving and guiding others in their discovery and application of God’s Word is worthy of my surrender to God’s call for service, I covenant, as a lay leader and group leader of Brentwood Baptist Church, to:

- **Great Commission & Hospitality:** Prioritize my conduct in keeping with the principles of the Bible, continually develop my personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23 & Matt 28:19-20), establish an environment for group members to grow in theirs, and seek the Holy Spirit’s help in my life (2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 4:1).
- **Great Commandment & Socials:** Pledge to lead within the bounds of the Baptist Faith and Message, 1963 with 1998 Amendment (Titus 2:1), and practice the Great Commandment in my life and through the life of the group (Matthew 22:36-40).
- **Curriculum:** Support the established church leadership and the stated mission and vision of the church (Hebrews 13:17) by following BBC vetting guidelines for all our studies and enabling “refrigerator rights” to develop.
- **Serve:** Maintain a Christ-like witness consistent with the role of a spiritual leader (James 1:22, 2:15) as I guide the group to serve on campus, in community, and via mission endeavors.
- **Communication & One Conversation:** Prepare adequately to lead each meeting, including discussion starters and strive to text, email, call, engage on social media, etc. with the group weekly to grow relationships (2 Timothy 2:15).

13. COVENANT/LIST OF AGREEMENTS

- **Share The Load & Co-Leader:** Provide leadership to the group and co-leader(s) to insure that other areas beyond leading are accomplished (Acts 2:42-47).
- **Covenant & Community:** To pray for each other and our spiritual growth while demonstrating my commitment to the church and the group by regularly attending corporate worship and ongoing training opportunities and leadership gatherings (Hebrews 10:24-25).

If at any time I am unable or unwilling to fulfill this covenant in good conscience, I will relinquish my position of leadership in the Group Ministry of Brentwood Baptist Church by letting an Adult Minister know of my inability to continue in this role.

Prospective Group Leader:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

MORE ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

SURFACE LEVEL

1. What is the longest you have ever gone without sleep, and what's the story behind it?
2. What is something in your house you want to get rid of but can't?
3. What is the biggest way you've changed since you were a child? In what way are you still the same?
4. What zoo animal do you enjoy watching most and why?
5. What is one of your biggest pet peeves?
6. What was your first vehicle?
7. What did you most want to be when you grew up and why?
8. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
9. What has been your favorite road trip or vacation experience?
10. What is one specific item of clothing that you wore over and over as a child? Is there a backstory to it?
11. It's Friday night after a terribly busy week...how do you spend it?
12. What is one of your favorite activities from childhood that you wish you could do again now?
13. What is your favorite road trip snack?
14. What are three apps on your phone that you can't live without?
15. What is one ridiculous thing that you're passionate about?

DEEPER LEVEL

1. Who has been a spiritual hero in your life?
2. If you had something spiritual tattooed on your body, what would it be and what would it symbolize?
3. What is something important that a grandparent or older mentor has taught you?
4. What is one spiritual tradition you have or have always wanted to have in your life or with your family?
5. Even if you have moved around a lot, everyone has a "heart home." What is that place for you?

VERY DEEPER LEVEL

1. What is one hard-learned lesson from your life?
2. What prayer have you been praying the longest?
3. As you grow older, what is one quality you hope to retain?
4. Finish this sentence: "In order for a small group to feel safe, I need..."