

MeadowBrook Church | JANUARY 2020

life GROUP

Life together for the Kingdom of God



MeadowBrook
CHURCH

Life Group Vision Series

Living on Mission at MeadowBrook



MeadowBrook CHURCH

MeadowBrook seeks to CONNECT people to Christ and His church, GROW them as disciples to be disciplers, and equip them to SERVE through missions, ministry, and worship, all to GLORIFY God.

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life GROUP

Life together for the Kingdom of God

Mission | Values | Vision

Nearly 2000 years ago, Jesus gave his church their mission:

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

Since then, churches around the globe have been faithfully chipping away at the mission of their King. Today is no different. MeadowBrook seeks to live out God’s mission for his church by connecting people to Christ and his church, growing them as disciples to be disciplers, and equipping them to serve through missions, ministry, and worship, all to glorify God. That is who we are. Everything we do is funneled through our mission.

In this curriculum, we will take an extended look at the Great Commission as we break down our mission as a church, specifically in our Life Group Ministry, highlight the values of our Life Group ministry, and detail the specific vision of what we’d like to see God do in our ministry over the next year.

Before we begin, it may be helpful to define some terms.

Mission: Our mission is the unchanging compass that guides everything we do. We never stop working to fulfill our mission. Our mission does not originate with us, but is given to us by Christ in his Word.

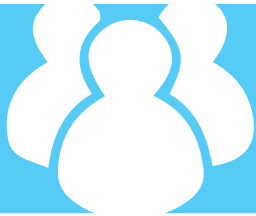
Values: Values are the attitudes and core principles of the heart we must embrace to live out our mission effectively.

Vision: Vision is the preferred future at which we’d like to arrive. These are specific, achievable goals as opposed to one’s mission, which is more timeless. One’s vision must serve the mission, not the other way around. A good vision serves the overarching mission and helps prevent one from simply drifting through life and ministry.

My prayer is that this curriculum refreshes us all so that we might effectively live life together for the Kingdom of God in our Life Group ministry.



In Christ,
Hunter Hindsman



CONNECT

people to Christ
and His church

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If we are to fulfill this mission as Life Groups, we must be...

- Christ-centered
- Community-driven
- Kingdom-focused

Scripture Passages for the Week

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Act 1:8 ESV)

At MeadowBrook, we seek to connect people to Christ and his church through Spirit-empowered evangelism where we invite others to repent and believe the gospel and then to be baptized.

"If you know enough of the gospel to be saved by it, you know enough to share it." – Matt Queen

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ for all the world and the means by which God builds his kingdom. If we as Life Groups are truly Christ-centered, community-driven, and kingdom focused, we will be evangelistic. Through evangelism...

- We exalt Jesus as the vindicated Messiah, the resurrected Son of God.
- We love our neighbor as ourselves as we invite them to be reconciled to God as his children.
- We participate in God's work of expanding his kingdom throughout all nations, tribes, and tongues.

Evangelism is one of the most profound ministries we are privileged to participate in as disciples of Jesus Christ. **But are we participating?**

Objectives for this Week's Lesson

1. Better understand your own salvation and the gospel.
2. Receive greater clarity regarding your role in the mission of Christ and how to fulfill it.
3. Envision specific ways God might use to connect people to Christ and his church and intentionally pursue them.

The Gospel: Our Foundation

Because Adam sinned in the garden and rejected the Word of life, all of humanity inherited his sin nature and the resulting brokenness. We are born children of wrath who do not seek after God, but are in fact his enemies, deserving of eternal death and bound for judgment.

But God, in his love for the world, sent his Son, Jesus, to save the world. Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary and was fully God and fully Man. In his life, he fulfilled God's holy standard on our behalf as the Messiah, anointed by the Holy Spirit of God. He was perfect in righteousness, tempted in every way we are, yet without sin. His own people and the nations of the world rejected him. Betrayed by Judas, he suffered under Pontius Pilate death by crucifixion according to the will of God.

In his death, God poured out on Jesus the punishment we accrued through the entire sum of our sinning. He who knew no sin, became sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus was buried, bearing the curse of death, but God did not leave his body to decay. On the third day, God raised Jesus bodily from the dead. After appearing to his disciples, Jesus ascended to be with the Father where he reigns over his spiritual kingdom. One day soon, Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead, resurrecting all of humanity, some unto eternal life, others unto eternal judgment.

Those who are resurrected unto eternal life are those who have...

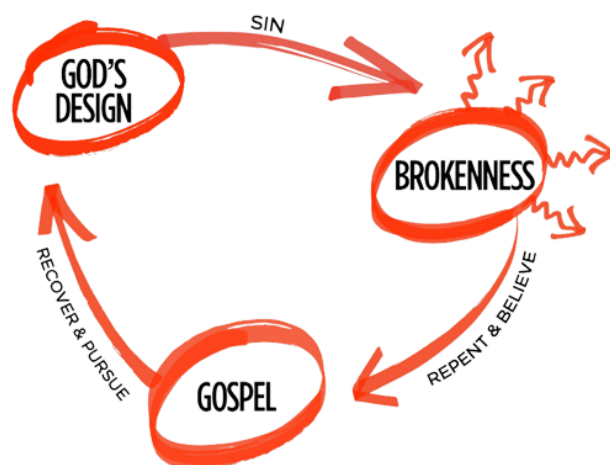
- Recognized their sinfulness before a holy God and their need for a Savior.
- Repented, that is turned from their sinful ways toward Jesus Christ, the door by which all who wish to be saved must enter.
- Believed in the message of salvation that Jesus fulfilled God's righteousness, died in our place, was raised bodily from the dead, and is coming back for his people.
- Confessed Jesus to be Lord, denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following after him.
- Called upon the Lord to be saved.

These individuals are sealed by God, made righteous, and given new life in the Holy Spirit. He works within their new hearts to bring about transformed living. Having been made new, they publically proclaim their faith through believer's baptism and live out their new life in Christ in the community of his church.

Now, revisit your testimony. ***Does it reflect one who has truly believed the gospel, receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord? If not, will you repent and believe the gospel today?***

Write Out Your Testimony

What is the story about when you repented and surrendered in faith to Jesus Christ?



What is evangelism?

Evangelism is the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and invitation to eternal life in Christ to those who are still dead in their sins. Those who respond in faith are then called to be baptized.

While some may be more proficient in evangelism, the ministry of evangelism is entrusted to every disciple of Jesus Christ. To help us better understand evangelism, let's break down the above definition.

- ***Proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ***

Inviting someone to church, being kind, meeting physical needs, sharing your testimony, or telling someone "Jesus loves you" are all good things that support evangelism. None of them, however, by themselves are evangelism. The good news is the message of what Jesus has done in his life, death, burial, and resurrection and what he will do at his return. We need not fool ourselves into thinking we are doing evangelism, when in fact we are not. (See 1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians 2, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Colossians 1)

- ***In the power of the Holy Spirit***

Evangelism is a divine work in which we participate. God opens the eyes of the blind, reconciles others to himself, and calls people into his kingdom. He does that through his church (Romans 10:14-17). However, the power to save is not ours; it's God's. Better methods avail us nothing. We need the Holy Spirit. We proclaim the good news of salvation and leave the results to God.

(See Acts 28, 2 Corinthians 3-4)

- ***Invitation to eternal life***

This is the last and easiest to forget step in evangelism: invite the other person to be saved. Peter pleaded with his crowd to repent and be baptized. Paul sought to persuade. We do not strong arm, we do not manipulate, and we do not dumb down the gospel to make it easy to receive, but we do invite others to respond. We must call them to repent and believe. (See Acts 2, 2 Corinthians 5)

Why Encourage Baptism?

Baptism is an important next step for the individual for many reasons, but let me just give two reasons why it's important for us to call people to be baptized:

1. Jesus commanded it in his Great Commission.

Sharing the gospel is only the first step of fulfilling Jesus' great commission. Baptism and discipleship are steps two and three. If we stop short, we are failing in our mission.

2. It is the means God established for people to publicly identify themselves with his people.

Baptism pictures our immersion into Christ and his church (see Romans 6 and 1 Corinthians 12). Thus, baptism becomes a personal declaration of what Christ has done for and in a person, while also connecting an individual to the body of Christ, the church. As theologian, Michael Svingel, put it, "Your 'I believe' becomes a 'we believe' in baptism."

What are two ways you can be more intentional this year in sharing the gospel?

Vision

- 1. Parents/Grandparents:** Take the time to sit down with your children and explain the gospel on their level. Ask them questions to help them see whether they have responded in surrendered faith.
- 2. Life Group Member:** Identify one person who needs to believe the gospel. In order to discern who that person is, look at your circles of influence either at work, the ballfields, your neighborhood, the restaurants or gas stations you frequent, etc. Pray for that person and intentionally seek to share the gospel with him or her.

Take the next step: Identify one person for each of your circles of influence, write their names down, pray for them, and intentionally seek to share the gospel with them.

Remember, you may not plan to share the gospel with someone, but it never happens by accident! Seize opportunities as they present themselves.

Ways to Serve at MeadowBrook in Evangelism: Counsel at Open Hands, go on a Mission Trip, or be a host for our international students. Email hunter@mbchurch.com today to get connected to your place of ministry!



GROW *them as disciples and equip them to*

MeadowBrook seeks to CONNECT people to Christ and His church, GROW them as disciples to be disciplers, and equip them to SERVE through missions, ministry, and worship, all to GLORIFY God.

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And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV)

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:23-25 ESV)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:42 ESV)

¹ You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV)

At MeadowBrook, we seek to grow people as disciples who make disciples by the power of the Spirit through the active engagement of the Word of God in corporate worship, Life Groups, and intentional relationships.

Groups, programs, and events do not make disciples. Spirit-filled disciples make disciples.

Objectives for this Week's Lesson

1. Understand the ingredients of Christian discipleship.
2. Deepen your love for the local church.
3. Seize the discipleship potential for Life Groups.

As we seek to make disciples in Life Group, it is important to keep at least these four things in mind.

- **There are no five-step programs. You need the Spirit.**

Discipleship is not a program nor an assembly line. Each individual's walk with Christ is unique. There is no silver bullet. Discipleship is the product of the Spirit working through the body of Christ to build up the saints. This type of discipling ministry means that we need to be varied in our approach and grounded in relationships. We need to be patient in the process because it never goes as we think it will or should. And lastly, before we think about methods and strategies, we simply need to seek God's favor through prayer. Because ultimately, discipleship is his work. We are simply vessels being used by him.

Why do we gravitate towards formulaic approaches to discipleship? How can we avoid those?

- **The Word of God is essential.**

This should go without saying, but unfortunately, even for Bible believing Christians, discipleship can sometimes devolve into discussions centered around one's experiences and opinions. Since the Bible is inspired by the Spirit and if we are to rely on him in our discipleship efforts, we should fixate on the words he inspired to be written. The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is essential to, and profitable for Christian growth.

First, the Spirit through the pages of the Bible introduces us to Jesus Christ who is the perfect revelation of the Father. Our faith in Christ serves as the foundation upon which the entire Christian life is built. Indeed, anything that does not proceed from faith in Christ, the Bible calls sin (Rom. 14:23). Secondly, in a world that is confused regarding our purpose in life, the Bible clearly reveals God's will for his people and helps them live it out. The Scriptures teach us the way we should walk, warn us of paths not to traverse, correct our course when we stray, and strengthens us for the journey of faith on the narrow road that is difficult and few find. Our experiences and opinions fall infinitely short of God's eternal wisdom. Our lives must be planted in the word of God.

What are some attitudes that keep the Bible at arm's length in both our personal discipleship efforts and our conversations with others?

- **The local church gathering plays a vital part in your discipleship.**

God in his sovereign wisdom placed the corporate worship gathering squarely in the center of his plans for the discipleship of his people. Oftentimes, we think of discipleship in one-on-one or small group settings—and that is a good thing! Discipleship requires depth of relationship. We see this clearly modeled in Jesus Christ. However, the temptation can be to render the church gathering as a superfluous addition to Christian discipleship, rather than the vehicle of Christian discipleship it is.

How does discipleship occur in the local church gathering?

- We are disciplined through the Spirit-empowered preaching of God's Word. God gives the church pastor-teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry.
- We are disciplined through the public reading of Scripture.
- We are disciplined through the corporate singing of God's praises. We sing not only to God, but to one another as well.
- We are disciplined through the participation in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- We are disciplined through corporate prayer.
- We are disciplined through the multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural relationships in which we are stirred up to love and do good works and reminded of the hope we have in Christ.

All this to say: The corporate worship gathering stands uniquely among the rest of the ministries of the local church. It is certainly not an optional add-on to Christian discipleship.

What are specific ways you can better engage the corporate worship gathering as a disciple and a disciple-maker?

- **Life Groups are an opportunity for deep and meaningful discipleship to occur.**

Life Groups at MeadowBrook are designed to be where the discipleship and fellowship ministries described in Acts 2:42-47 are lived out. However, they are only an opportunity for discipleship to occur not a guarantee. You and your Life Group must lay hold of that opportunity in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Remember: Groups, programs, and events do not make disciples. Spirit-filled disciples make disciples. So, be intentional to abide in Christ, abide in his church, and seek to help others grow in their walk with Christ so that they too can be disciple-makers.

How can your Life Group be more intentional to grow one another as disciples who will make disciples?

Highlights from Discussion:

Vision

1. **Parents/Grandparents:** Make disciples of your children. Plan out specific times of instruction, develop opportunities for discipleship to occur (walks, car rides, meals together, camping, coaching, etc.), and take advantage of unplanned opportunities to reset the moment according to the Word of God.
2. **Life Group Member:**
 - Ensure that genuine discipleship takes place in your Life Group.
 - Ask God to help you discern who God has placed in your life so that you might disciple them. Then, follow through.

Take the next step: Fast and pray one day this week, asking God to give direction in how you might best serve as a disciple-maker at MeadowBrook.

Ways to Serve at MeadowBrook in Evangelism:

- Life Group Leader/Support member for new Life Groups
- Student Ministry – Sunday Mornings and Wednesday Nights
- Mission Trips – Pastor Conferences
- Curriculum Writer

Email hunter@mbchurch.com today to get connected to your place of ministry!



SERVE *through missions, ministry and worship*

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⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:4-8 ESV)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV)

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:36-39 ESV)

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20 ESV)

At MeadowBrook, we seek to serve as the body of Christ, helping each other understand how the Spirit has equipped us to live out our mission in love, service, and worship to the glory of God, not self.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45 ESV)

This week let's discuss six ways we can serve as Christ served.

Objectives for this Week's Lesson

1. Come to an understanding of your spiritual gifts and your ministry at MeadowBrook.
2. Be mobilized to live on mission with the right attitude and goal.

The Spirit uniquely equipped you for the upbuilding of MeadowBrook.

“Spiritual gifts are not what God gives to us, but what God gives to the church through us.”
– Michael J. Svingel

At the moment of conception, God begins crafting us uniquely in his image so we might possess various talents and personalities that reflect God. Then, when we come to faith in Christ and are reborn, the Spirit indwells us and expresses himself uniquely in our lives through spiritual gifts. Together, our unique reflection of God’s image and the expression of the Spirit in our lives empower us to be a source of upbuilding for the brothers and sisters at MeadowBrook. Have you thought of that before?

You are unique and are empowered by the Spirit to have an impact at MeadowBrook that no one else could have. In fact, we (the entire church body) need your ministry. We are one body and members of one another. If one member grows anemic through lack of service, we all suffer.

Are you using your gifts? If not, why not?

Discuss Michael Svingel’s quote above. Do you agree with it? Disagree? How does it change the way you view your place in the ministry of the church?

Pastors and teachers help equip the members to do the work of the ministry. We all play a part.

Re-read Ephesians 4:11-12. What stands out? One thing that stands out is this: Ministry is not the work of the staff. Everyone shares in the work of ministry. No one sits on the sidelines. We all have a part to play. The pastors are there to equip you with the Word of God that you might grow in Christ and better serve his kingdom.

Are you viewing ministry as the work of a few? Why is it easy to do so? How can we change the mindset about church ministry?

Develop a ministry of love.

Love should mark the whole of Christian ministry. It binds it all together. However your Life Group fits into fulfilling the mission at MeadowBrook, may you do so in love.

Where do we struggle to love?

How has God created you and gifted you for Kingdom service at MeadowBrook?

Ask yourself these questions:

- In what ways do I love serving others? What am I passionate about?
- What needs do I see at MeadowBrook?
- What roles do I often find myself in?

****You do not need a survey to discover your spiritual gifts, but if you’d like some help in learning more about your personality and spiritual gifts you can take our spiritual gifts survey online. It may help you discern how God has created you and how the Spirit has equipped you.****

Directions:

- Go to mbchurch.com/next-steps/connections/
- Click Button “Click Here to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts”
- Enter Code: 6222
- Email mike@mbchurch.com to set up a follow-up meeting to discuss results.

Live on mission.

Christian ministry is not a Sunday morning thing. Our life is our ministry. We do not flip a switch on or off. Everywhere and at all times, we are called to maintain a faithful Christian witness. How are we called to do that?

- **Evangelize the lost.** Witnesses give testimony. And our testimony is that Jesus is the Son of God who fulfilled God's righteous standard, bore his wrath in the place of sinners, and rose from the dead that all who repent and believe in him will be forgiven, cleansed, and will be resurrected unto eternal life when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead. We are Christ's ambassadors. There's a world of people around us who are lost in darkness, like sheep without a shepherd, and we have the message of hope. Let's proclaim the good news to them!
- **Build up Etowah County.** As we evangelize the lost, we want to love our neighbor in other ways such that we reflect the character of Christ. We do that, in part, by seeking the well-being of our community. Provide for the poor. Stand up for the oppressed. Be righteous in your business dealings. Be gracious and kind to those who differ from you. Serve your neighbor. God has placed you in this county to live out the values and ideals of his perfect kingdom.
- **Expand Christ's kingdom among the nations.** We are called to more than just our hometown. We are called to make disciples of all nations—many of whom still have very little gospel access. You can do this by engaging the nations that live and work in our community or are studying at Gadsden State. You can go overseas on short or long-term missions. However you fulfill it, the call upon our lives to make disciples is a global one.

Discuss as a Group: How can your Life Group live on mission?

Serve the Lord and your brothers and sisters through worship.

As mentioned last week, your participation in Corporate Worship is a vital part of discipleship. It is also a vital part of your ministry at this church. When we go into worship, it's an opportunity for us to encourage one another in conversation, song, and prayer, extend Christ's hospitality to those new to MeadowBrook, and serve one another in a variety of little ways where we put others' needs before our own. When thinking through how your group might effectively serve others, do not lose sight of how the corporate worship gathering fits in.

What are specific ways you can serve others at MeadowBrook during the corporate worship hour?

Live unto the glory of God.

This last idea undergirds all the other statements. Everything we do we do for the increase of Christ's glory in this world. It's not about building up the name of MeadowBrook. It's about Jesus. It always has been. It always will be.

Vision

1. **Parents/Grandparents:** Look for opportunities to serve together as a family both at church and in your neighborhood.
2. **Life Group Member:**
 - Serve together as a Life Group at least twice a year.
 - Do not sit on the sidelines. Pour your heart into one of the ministries at MeadowBrook... or create new ministry at MeadowBrook!

Take the next step: Go on a mission trip in 2021 or 2022.

See Appendix for ways to Regularly Serve at MeadowBrook.



Life together for the Kingdom of God

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- *Christ-centered*
- *Community-driven*
- *Kingdom-focused*

Accomplishing the Mission

Over the past three weeks, we’ve been unpacking the MeadowBrook’s mission as it relates to Life Groups and have settled into the following ideas:

- 1. At MeadowBrook, we seek to connect people to Christ and his church through Spirit-empowered evangelism where we invite others to repent and believe the gospel and then to be baptized.***
- 2. At MeadowBrook, we seek to grow people as disciples who make disciples by the power of the Spirit through the active engagement of the Word of God in corporate worship, Life Groups, and intentional relationships.***
- 3. At MeadowBrook, we seek to serve as the body of Christ, helping each other understand how the Spirit has equipped them to live out our mission in love, service, and worship to the glory of God, not self.***

As we’ve learned, Life Groups play a significant role in living out our mission.

What are some things that have stood out to you the past few weeks?

Highlights from Discussion:

Now that we understand the “what” a little better, let’s look at some attitudes we need to embrace as a ministry if we are going to be successful in our endeavors.

Objectives for this Week’s Lesson

1. Understand the attitudes that we must embrace to live out our mission.
2. Have honest and reflective discussion as a Life Group that helps correct where correction is needed and encourage where encouragement is needed.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 ESV)

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21 ESV)

First, we need to be Christ-centered in our ministry.

This is the attitude that should not only set apart Life Groups, but the church itself. Our Life Groups center around the person, work, and message of Jesus Christ. If we have everything else but miss this we have nothing. We can talk about work, vacations we want to take, our kids, Alabama / Auburn football, investments, where we like to eat, etc., anytime. Those things are fine and are natural conversations to have each week. We must remember, however, that the focus of Life Group is not to be a community, but a Christ-centered community. The Life Group hour is an opportunity to let our conversations refocus our hearts and minds on Jesus.

Our time together and exhortations should be grounded in the gospel of Jesus, guided by his Word, and focused on his reward. This is foundational. For if we're not careful, we'll devolve into a group that loses any Christian distinctiveness and cares more about building better marriages, families, and lives rather than our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is not opposed to those things, but he's above those things. If our conversations in Life Groups mirror the self-help section in the book store and could easily be embraced by someone who does not follow Jesus, then we are missing the mark. The gospel must be what grounds every lesson. The Scriptures should guide our conversations, and our hope must be fixed on the eternal and not the temporary.

In your own words, what does it mean to be Christ-centered?

How can we better center our conversations around the person, work, and message of Jesus Christ?

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2 ESV)

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15 ESV)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16 ESV)

Second, we need to be community-driven in our hearts.

Although we are a Christ-centered community and not just any community, we are a community nonetheless. Some of the deepest relationships we have on this planet should be developed through our Life Groups. Our hearts need be given to one another in the group.

Life Groups should care for one another, love one another, know what burdens each others' souls, pray intelligently for one another, confess sins to one another (small number within the group, not necessarily the entire group), rejoice together in the days of joy, and weep in the days of sorrow. That's the picture of Christ-centered community. It's a group simply revealing the love and mercy of Christ to each other in humility throughout every stage of life.

*How can we develop this kind of community? Be specific.
What holds us back from this depth of relationship?*

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience--by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God--so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." (Romans 15:17-21 ESV)

Third, we need to be Kingdom-focused in our priorities.

Being Christ-centered helps the community of Life Group from losing its Christian distinctiveness and being Kingdom-focused in priorities helps prevent the community from becoming a country club. An easy temptation for groups to fall into is to grow complacent in the relationships and lose sight of the fact that others are longing for Christ and the community we enjoy.

Our Life Groups must develop a culture of evangelizing the lost, discipling one another, and multiplying groups so that the kingdom ministry of MeadowBrook might expand. This is not about growing MeadowBrook. It's about reaching lost souls with the gospel. We cannot let the comfort of the norm keep us from the uncomfortable kingdom ministry God has called us to as his followers. Don't buy the lies of the enemy that say people in your age-group have already made their decisions. We have no idea who the Spirit might be working in to bring to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord.

Live with kingdom purpose.

*How can we better be kingdom-focused in our priorities as a group? As individuals?
Are we ready to multiply as a Life Group?
How can we invest into the coming generations as a Life Group?*

lifeGROUP

Life together for the Kingdom of God

MeadowBrook seeks to CONNECT people to Christ and His church, GROW them as disciples to be disciplers, and equip them to SERVE through missions, ministry, and worship, all to GLORIFY God.

If we are to fulfill this mission as Life Groups, we must be...

- *Christ-centered*
- *Community-driven*
- *Kingdom-focused*

2021 Vision for Life Group

1. Reach an average of 450 in-person Life Group attendance.

How to accomplish:

- Recognize the kingdom value of Life Groups and fully commit.
- Groups develop a good structure for staying in touch with one another.
- Invite people to Life Group.
- Evangelize prayerfully.

2. Every Life Group member share the gospel with at least one person, a peer, in their relationship circle in 2021.

How to accomplish:

- Have a list of people you regularly pray for to hear and believe the gospel.
- Practice sharing the gospel with one another.
- Share stories of evangelism, recognizing every instance where the gospel is shared is successful, regardless of response.
- Pray for opportunities and effectiveness, and seize the opportunity when it presents itself.

3. See the start of a discipleship movement in Life Groups that is lived out in our homes with parents/grandparents discipling their children and spreads throughout our community.

How to accomplish:

- Be intentional in your relationships in the Life Group.
- Be purposeful with your children, training them to be disciple-makers.
- Pray.

4. Multiply two new Adult Life Groups, and see at least four adults mobilized to serve in our kids and student ministries.

How to accomplish:

- Identify those with gifts of teaching/shepherding/hospitality/outreach who will support the new group.
- Cast clear vision and purpose behind multiplication.
- Commission those multiplying, praying over them in the name of the Lord.

5. 2-4 times a year, each Life Group moves to serve together in areas they are passionate about.

How to accomplish:

- Identify a ministry your group is passionate about.
- Be intentional to put it on the calendar and stick to it.

What is the vision (preferred future) of your Life Group?

Take some time to discuss the above five goals and other specific ways you're hoping your Life Group will accomplish ministry in 2021.

Questions to Guide Discussion:

What would you like to see God do through your Life Group this year?

What changes need to occur for that to come about? Do we need to repent of any sin?

What has stood out the most to you personally throughout this series?

What specific action steps need to take place? Who will be responsible?

How do we need to pray specifically for the direction of the ministry of our Life Group?

How can we remind ourselves of our purpose, keep track of what has been done and needs to be done, and hold one another accountable throughout the year?

Prayer Time as a Life Group

Take a moment to use this prayer adapted from the Puritan Prayer Journal “The Valley of Vision” to guide a prayer time for your Life Group: Adapted from “The Servant in Battle”

[Have a representative read the below section & praise God for the work Christ accomplished]

O LORD,

We bless you that the issue of the battle
between you and Satan
has never been uncertain,
and will end in victory.

Calvary broke the dragon’s head,
and we contend with a vanquished foe,
who with all his subtlety and strength
has already been overcome.

When we feel the serpent at our heels
may we remember him whose heel was bruised,
but who, when bruised, broke the devil’s head.

Our souls with inward joy extol
the mighty conqueror.

[Have a representative read the below section & pray for the burdens of the class]

Heal us of any wounds received
in the great conflict;
if we have gathered defilement,
if our faith has suffered damage,
if our hope is less than bright,
if our love is not fervent,
if some creature-comfort occupies our hearts,
if our souls sink under pressure of the fight.

O you whose every promise soothes,
every touch is life,
draw near to your weary warriors,
refresh us, that we may rise again
to wage the strife,
and never tire until our enemy is trodden down.

[Let the teacher read the below section & pray over the ministry of the Life Group in 2021]

Give us such fellowship with thee
that we may defy Satan,
unbelief, the flesh, the world,
with delight that comes not from a creature,
and which a creature cannot mar.

Give us a draught of the eternal fountain
that lies in your immutable, everlasting love
and decree.

Then shall our hands never weaken,
our feet never stumble,
our sword never rest,
our shield never rust,
our helmet never shatter,
our breastplate never fall,
as our strength rests in the power
of your might.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our King, Amen

life GROUP

Life together for the Kingdom of God



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Appendix

Ministry Opportunities at MeadowBrook

APPENDIX

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT MEADOWBROOK

Local Missions

Allay Ministry: Allay Ministry is MeadowBrook's efforts to care for our homebound and nursing home members. We reach out to them through sending cards, phone calls and visits.

Contact Person: Bill Chance – bill@realtyplus-gadsden.com

Caring for the Fatherless: MeadowBrook is engaged with the Foster Care system in Etowah County in a variety of different ways in order to impact the fatherless and those who engage them in life for the sake of the Gospel. Not only do we have several foster families among us, but we also are involved in hosting CPR and Water Safety Training for foster families, hosting a monthly Parents' Night Out for foster parents and facilitating a biblically based parenting class for the biological parents of kids in the foster system called, "Families Count".

Contact Persons:

(For CPR & Water Safety Training) Allycia Taylor – allycia.taylor@gmail.com

(For Parents' Night Out) Andrea Simmons – asimmons1972@yahoo.com

(For Families Count) Suzi Valentine – aumomof4@gmail.com

Etowah Baptist Missions Center: The EBMC engages with the poor in Etowah County to help provide them with basic needs and services such as food, clothing, hygiene, job coaching and resume building reading classes and other things. **Contact Person:** Karen Lee – ebmckaren@comcast.net

Etowah Pregnancy Testing Center: The EPTC comes alongside those who find themselves in a "crisis pregnancy" situation, whereby they seek to walk with these women and their families, all the while pointing them to the hope of Jesus. **Contact Person:** Tom Bentley – tom.bentley1@comcast.net

Good News Club: Will resume once Covid restrictions are lifted.

International Student Ministry: Will resume once Covid restrictions are lifted.

Open Hands: Open Hands is where we engage those who live at or below the poverty line in Etowah County through counseling, food, clothing, and hygiene products. For years the Lord has grown the ministry of Open Hands and He continues to show His faithfulness through our workers there. **Contact Person:** Mike Niemi – mike@mbchurch.com

Way of the Cross: Way of the Cross is an interdenominational ministry that engages the poor in our area. Every Thursday morning, MeadowBrook sends teams of people to prepare and serve a hot lunch to those who are hungry in our community. And each Friday night, we have people on site to teach the children Bible stories or help with the adult service. **Contact Person:** Mike Niemi – mike@mbchurch.com

Current Global Mission Trips in 2021 (Hoping to add more as COVID Restrictions Lift)

Contact Person: Mike Niemi – mike@mbchurch.com

Eastern Cuban Baptist Convention (Cuba) Next Trip Date: June 19th – 26th, 2021

This partnership is with the East Cuban Baptist Convention and focuses on primarily in-home evangelism alongside the local churches in that area.

Manassas, Virginia Next Trip Date: Either June 12th – 19th, 2021 or June 19th – 26th, 2021

This is a new partnership with Nations Next Door, an organization that seeks to engage in evangelistic and discipling relationships with the international population in the Washington DC metro area. The trip will be focused on learning about some of the different cultures and worldviews in the area, training on how to share the Gospel and get into spiritual conversations and then engaging in evangelism with those people groups throughout the week.

Bethel Covenant College (Uganda) Next Trip Date: November 26th – December 4th, 2021

This partnership is aimed at discipling and equipping the next generation of Africans to live their lives for kingdom expansion and to make disciples. Each year we send a team at the end of November to invest into the students at the school.

APPENDIX

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT MEADOWBROOK

Worship

Contact Person: Kevin Boyd – kevin@mbchurch.com

Abundant Life Choir: Choir opportunity for 55 and up. This choir will sing at nursing homes in the area and will also lead out in several worship events at MeadowBrook. Meets every Tuesday morning from 10:45 am – 12:00 pm in the Worship Center.

Kids Worship Choir: Coming Fall 2021! A new weekly opportunity for children in grades 1-5 to learn Scripture through songs to sing in special worship events throughout the year. Will meet on Wednesdays at 5:45 pm.

Praise Band & Horns: Leads in corporate worship every Sunday. Audition only

Contact Persons: Kevin Boyd or Curtis Burttram – cburttram26@gmail.com

Worship Choir: Leads in corporate worship each Sunday during the morning worship service and meets for rehearsal on Wednesdays for 6:30 – 8:00 pm.

Media/Communications

Contact Person: Daniel Doak; daniel@mbchurch.com

Lighting: Be available to run lighting for the Sunday morning service on a monthly rotation

Live Stream: Assist with operating cameras or running live stream on a monthly rotation for the worship service.

Photography Team: Help take pictures for special events or on a monthly rotation.

Radio Broadcast: Mix the audio for the Sunday morning service for the weekly radio broadcast.

Slides: Run the slides and lyrics for Sunday services on a monthly rotation.

Social Media Team: Help with content development and publishing for MeadowBrook social media channels.

Sound: Mix the live sound for Sunday morning services on a monthly rotation.

Welcome Team

Contact Persons: Hunter Hindsman – hunter@mbchurch.com or Taylor Hindsman – taylor@mbchurch.com

Guest Connections: This is where we hope to be the primary connecting point for guests as they walk into our facility. You will help guests connect to the community of MeadowBrook as you share information about Life Groups, receive their Connections card, and give our guests a small gift. We simply seek to minister to our guests with the hospitality of Christ so that they feel at home and cared for at MeadowBrook.

Indoor/Outdoor Greeters: Welcome members and guests into the Worship Center on Sunday mornings. As a greeter, you get to be one of the first people to show the love of Christ to those walking into our doors. Serving in this position is a great way to get to know other members as well as help connect guests to Christ and his church.

**Indoor greeters will also pass out handouts as people enter into Worship Center.

Crosswalk: Assisting others as they cross Brookhaven Dr. to get from the parking lot to the church. You get to be the very first face our guests and members see as they experience MeadowBrook.

Emergency Response: You will get to be a part of the team that makes sure our campus is safe. You will patrol the campus throughout the morning. This team is constantly on alert for potential threats to the safety and well-being of our church family.

Host: Help create a warm environment in the Worship Center by walking around and greeting guests and members.

Ushers: This team helps seat people in our Worship Center, take up the offering during worship, and assist in greeting others as they walk in.

APPENDIX

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT MEADOWBROOK

Preschool (8 Weeks – 5 Years)

Contact Person: Vickey Weeks – vickey@mbchurch.com or 256-390-7834

Preschool Lay Minister: Do you have a love for the little children? Would you consider investing love and truth into them through our Extended Care and Sunday School opportunities? Servants are scheduled on a rotating schedule (monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly).

- Sunday Extended Care (9:00 am)
- Sunday School (10:30 am)
- Wednesday Extended Care (6:30 pm)

KidQuest Leader (VBS in June): Leaders are needed for groups K5 – 5th grade; Missions Studies/Missions Projects; Recreation

Hand in Hand Special Needs Ministry: Be a buddy to assist special needs children during church services. Provide individualized attention according to specific needs to special needs child.

MeadowBrook Weekday Education

MeadowBrook Weekday Education Reader: Visit the Weekday classrooms and read books to our preschool students correlating with their theme/lesson.

Contact Person: Kimberly Mummert – kimberly@mbchurch.com or 256-499-5534

Children (1st – 5th Grade)

Contact Person: Kristi Nichols – kristi@mbchurch.com

Sunday Mornings

Kids Worship Live Greeter/Helper: Greet the families upon arrival. Help with the kids during service

Kids Worship Live Praise Band: Sing/Play instrument leading children during worship time

Kids Worship Live Tech Team: Run sound, lights, power point, etc.

Sunday School Aid: Aid teachers during class time

Sunday School Greeter: Greet and welcome families upon arrival/help check-in children

Sunday School Teacher: Meet with children during small group time

Wednesdays

KidStuf Actor: Weekly skits featuring adults as children

KidStuf Audience Helper: Sit with kids during production

KidStuf Greeter: Greet families and help with check-in

KidStuf Production Helper: Run lights, sound, or operate camera

KidStuf Singer: Lead children in worship with songs and movements

Contact Person: Barbara Anne Garrett – bag1974@gmail.com

APPENDIX

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT MEADOWBROOK

Students (6th – 12th Grade)

Contact Person: Matt Fike – matt@mbchurch.com

Life Group Leader: Life Groups throughout MeadowBrook are to be the place where biblical community and Kingdom advancement are actively happening. Student Ministry LifeGroup Leaders are blessed with the privilege of pouring into the lives of students the gloriousness of the Gospel and the never-ending truth of God's Word! Furthermore, LifeGroup Leaders are encouraged to build a culture of community and service by initiating time for their groups to grow closer and to serve in the community.

MidWeek Connection Team: Student MidWeek worship meets Wednesday nights throughout the school year from 6:30-7:30pm. Middle School (6th-8th Grades) meets in the Hangar and High School (9th-12th Grades) meets in Clark Hall. MidWeek Connection team members are adults who are growing in their walk with the Lord and who have a desire to reach students with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The role of the team is to build relationships with students each week and be ready to serve as discussion group leaders.

Mission Trip/Retreat Leader: Adults who will travel with the student ministry on retreats or mission trips, seeking to connect with students and set a Christ-honoring example. On most trips, the Adult Leaders will be leading a discussion group concerning the biblical theme of the retreat.

Adult Discipleship

Contact Person: Hunter Hindsman – hunter@mbchurch.com

DivorceCare Facilitator: Facilitate or assist a group that ministers to divorced individuals on Wednesday Nights using the DivorceCare curriculum.

GriefShare Facilitator: Facilitate or assist a group that ministers to those battling grief over the loss of a loved one using the GriefShare curriculum.

Life Group Curriculum Writer: Help study for and write the MeadowBrook Life Group Curriculum.

Life Group Leader: Teach the Bible each week and lead a Life Group to connect people to Christ and his church, grow as disciples who are disciplers, and serve in the church, locally and globally all for the glory of God.

Wednesday Night Breakout Group Leader: Teach/facilitate short breakout groups that address highly specific felt needs with the Word of God.

General Opportunities

Administrative Aid during Office Hours: Answer the phones and assist with general office tasks.

Contact Person: Janet Hall – janet@mbchurch.com

Food Service: Help in preparation and service of meals for Wednesday nights and special events.

Contact Person: Patsy Snyder – snyd9767@gmail.com

Event Planner/Decorator: Plan logistics and decorate for various special events that take place throughout the year.

Contact Person: Hunter Hindsman – hunter@mbchurch.com

Hospitality/Bereavement Meals: Be available to cook food for grieving families or for special events.

Contact Person: Judy Cunningham – (256) 553-4377

Monthly Communion Preparation: Help with the preparation of communion bread on a monthly basis.

Contact Person: Randy Gunter – randy@mbchurch.com



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