

# STARTING OFF STRONG



## Before your first group:

1. Print out or screenshot your list from Victory Connect and start praying for those who have signed up for your group.
2. Meet with your co-leaders in the month before your group starts to plan your semester
3. Make one last contact with each person signed up a few days before your first meeting. (text or personal email).

## Your first LifeGroup session:

1. Start and end on time. This shows respect for people's time.
2. Be prepared. At group start time, be ready to focus on the people, not on your materials or logistics.
3. First 15 minutes, welcome each person, allow people to arrive, get a snack, introduce people to each other.

## Use nametags.

1. Gather group and be sure room dynamic is good for conversation. Think circles not rows.
2. Welcome, Ice breaker. This can be longer for your first meeting so people connect. (Longer: up to 30 minutes).

## Openers seem trivial, but they achieve some important things:

1. Help people transition from life to a spiritual focus.
2. Create common ground around an area everyone can share on (first car, favorite hobby, best sports team, etc. Don't use biblical topics for ice breakers. These exclude seekers and those who don't "have a favorite Bible verse" yet!) People connect naturally before they can connect spiritually.
3. Where can you find openers? Google "ice breakers," or go to the LifeGroup leader resource page.

## Leaders help group know what to expect.

1. Leaders introduce LifeGroup topic and give vision to what people can get out of the group. Share the purpose of your group with excitement, passion, and build expectation for what God will do in your time together. Show an introductory video if there is one.
2. Leaders should share:
  - a. Group plan (syllabus), dates, what's being read for when, etc.
  - b. Group expectations: Go over LifeGroup Agreement found on the LifeGroup leader resource page on our website.
  - c. Opportunities to share roles by being a coordinator. Share each area of group, have a sign up out, but in the following week, individually contact people and invite individuals to do things. Explain that the purpose of a group is spiritual development and we grow by serving.
  - d. Introduce the idea that your group will serve those outside the church this semester (Big Day of Service). We are here to make a difference. Together, we will have the opportunity to help people in our world experience God.
3. Ask if there are any questions.
4. This is optional, but you can ask people to write down on a card what they expect to get out of the group. Collect cards. This may be helpful to you.
5. Leave time for prayer for one another. Communicate that if people are not comfortable praying out loud, they won't be required to.
6. Talk, eat, dismiss on time.
7. I don't recommend using the first meeting for the first lesson. Why?
  - a. Many haven't gotten their books yet.
  - b. Be intentional about connecting people relationally. Take time for this. Have fun! People learn more and attend more when they are connected relationally.
  - c. Take time to lay the groundwork for a strong group. Moving people into serving is as important as your curriculum or activity, so take time with this.
  - d. Get feedback from those with whom you lead. Use the group evaluation form at your last group meeting.