

GROUP CHECKPOINT

Growing together

LEADER NOTES

We've created this group session to help everyone in your Partnership Group discuss the goals for groups at Maybridge and check-in with how your group is doing. Access downloadable group exercises at maybridge.org.uk/group-leaders. We hope this group session helps you and your group grow together.

A few things together as you lead group discussion:

- Encourage and make space for everyone to share about their experience of the group.
- It may be helpful to share the opening 'share' questions with the group beforehand so they have time to reflect.
- It can be tempting to get defensive when people share their perceptions of how the group is going. Try to listen and not explain away or give reasons – remember your group's responses give you insight into how you can help them grow.
- We'd love to hear the stories of how God is working in and through your group. If people are comfortable doing so, please share their feedback by emailing piero.regnante@maybridge.org.uk.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus never intended for faith to be a solo endeavour. We grow spiritually when we're connected – benefiting from others encouraging our growth, and playing a part in encouraging growth in others. This Group Checkpoint is intended to guide your group in a discussion to identify where you are today, share what God has been doing in and through your group, and to reflect on what adjustments you can make together going forward as we approach the next annual cycle for groups.

SHARE (5mins)

- What has been your favorite part of this group so far?
- What has surprised you about this group?

READ (10mins)

Scripture Cards

Historically Christians have always met in homes or smaller settings. Across the New Testament, there are many examples that give us a glimpse of what healthy christian community should look like, as well as instructions for how to 'do life together'. Together we'll spend time reading through a few examples from scripture, with space to reflect before discussing how they might help shape how our group looks moving forward.

Allow time to read the bible verses on cards. Preferably once aloud, encouraging different group members to participate, then giving time for everyone to read them on their own.

DISCUSS (10mins)

- What habits, characteristics and aspects of shared life do we see expressed in these biblical accounts of community life? What stands out to you?
- In what ways do you see these expressed in your group? What ways might you want to explore different spiritual habits or expressions of doing life together as a group?

EXPLAIN (5mins)

How are we doing?

The group that you are part of was formed with a purpose and goal in mind. You may have joined this group because you wanted to connect with others that face the same challenges as you do right now. Maybe a group member invited you in. Maybe you joined because you wanted to learn, study the Bible or grow spiritually. Many joined a different group to yours, because they wanted practical support and help growing spiritually alongside others. While each Partnership Group looks and feels different, at Maybridge our goal for all our groups is: *to encourage & equip as many people as possible to know Jesus, love Jesus, & copy Jesus.*

For us, Partnership Groups help us reach our goal and are a success when:

1. The Bible is being applied in a practical way to the lives of those in the group
2. The group is praying together throughout the year
3. The group is mindful of the wider community, looking to be good news to others.

With this in mind, there's one question that you should ask from time to time as it relates to your group. That is: How are we doing? The following activity has been created to help you discuss your answer to that question together. As a church leadership, we want your group to succeed and for everyone to have the best experience that they can in a group. An easy way of answering the question 'how are we doing?' is to think through and discuss three questions: What should we keep doing? What could we start doing? What should we stop doing?

REFLECT (5 mins)

To help guide your time together, there's a 'How we are doing' reflection activity for everyone to complete. With our aim for groups at Maybridge in mind, work through the questions within your leaflet and indicate where you think your group falls on the scales. You'll all have a chance to share and further discuss your responses using questions that follow, but try to complete the activity individually.

Take a few minutes for each group member to individually complete the 'How we're doing' activity. It's best to encourage everyone to do so quietly to give everyone the chance to form their own answers and feedback. You may wish to play a quiet worship song or piece of reflective motive to help people focus and reflect. When everyone is finished, discuss as a group the questions that follow.

DISCUSS (30 mins)

A few guidelines to consider

We all have a part to play in creating a safe and encouraging environment that helps everyone in the group to grow and feel supported. As you work through the following sets of questions and share with the rest of the group, it's important to remember this is not an opportunity to vent frustrations about particular individuals or situations that may have come up as your group has been meeting. Please be respectful of others, being brief and mindful that there are time limitations and everyone should have the opportunity to share.

We are all different, connecting with God and growing in unique ways, so we must recognise the temptation can be to expect others to grow or worship in the same ways we do. We can unintentionally assume people's opinions are the same as our own or expect things to change things in a way that suits our preferences. As you share and discuss together, try to use "I" statements. We can only speak from our own experiences and not others. Instead of saying "Everyone gets busy", say "I am busy."

Complete the three sets of questions below, inviting each person to answer one or more questions from each round. Take note of people's responses as they will be helpful when answering later questions.

Focus 1. The Bible is being applied in a practical way to the lives of those in the group

- How did you rank the group for these questions? Why so?
- In what ways can we help keep group time focussed on applying scripture to our lives in practical ways, so that we are 'doers of the word' and not just people who enjoy a good discussion?
- Do we lovingly hold each other to account in our commitment to follow Jesus, grow spiritually and to put into practice what we learn together?

Focus 2. The group is praying together throughout the year

- How did you answer these questions? Why so?
- How can we help create a space for everyone to feel they can share?
- How can we make space to encourage one another and pray for Holy Spirit transformation in our lives?

Focus 3. The group is mindful of the wider community, looking to be good news to others.

- Share how you ranked the group and why?
- What opportunities are there to serve together and be good news to the wider community?
- How can we encourage and support each other to be good news in our own situations?
- How can we remain outwardly focussed as a group? Do we need to consider multiplying in order to welcome new members?
- Are there ways you might participate more fully in gathered worship and community at Maybridge?

DISCUSS (15mins)

In light of your responses and earlier discussion answer the following questions to help you discern:

As a group:

- What should we keep doing?
- What could we start doing?
- What should we stop doing?

PRAY

End your group's time with prayer. Thank God for the encouragement shared and ask God for his guidance as you continue together as a group.

NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.