

HOW TO:

LEAD A GREAT LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

1. *Sample Group with Recommended Life Group Flow*
2. *Best Ways to Prepare for Life Group*
3. *Art of Asking Questions*
 - a. *Why questions are important*
 - b. *25 tips for asking GREAT questions*
 - c. *How asking GREAT questions helps build relationships*
4. *How to access the leader**hub** and your Life Group Materials*

SAMPLE LIFE GROUP FLOW

INTRODUCTIONS AND SET EXPECTATIONS | 2-3 minutes

ALWAYS make introductions of everyone there... it helps your Life Group get to know each other.

ALWAYS set expectations... it helps your Life Group learn how to interact and relate to one another respectfully.

Example Expectations - go over "House Rules" and other things like, be respectful, only one person talking, no cell phones, etc...

House Rules:

We love deeply.

We speak highly.

We like to party.

Friends become family.

All are welcome.

No one sits alone.

Jesus is better.

Everyone Contributes.

TAKE ATTENDANCE (Clermont) | 2-3 minutes

Take attendance on your CCB app. See Joy Mauderli for access and some basic instructions.

ICE BREAKERS | 3-5 minutes

SPEND TIME BREAKING THE ICE!

Do something fun like get-to-know-you games or "This or that" questions.

Think of this as a warm up for the rest of the time in Life Groups

LIFE GROUP CHECK-UP | 5-10 minutes

This is also time to follow up on prayer requests from the week before. Make sure to spend time getting students to open up about their week, this is one easy way by asking everyone share 3 things:

1 thing good that happened this week

1 thing bad that happened this week

1 thing funny that happened this week

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS | 10-20 minutes

Discussion questions are provided each week and sent in your "Leader Weekly" (email).

These materials are recommended conversation guides to help make discussion real. Your role as a leader is not a "teacher" or "preacher" but you're here to help students take what we talk about home and applied in their lives **through** the relationships that you make.

PRAYER REQUESTS | 2-3 minutes

Prayer is super important, it's also important to record it so we can follow up and over time, show that God answers prayers, one way or another.

REVIEW ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PLAN FOR TIME OUTSIDE OF LIFE GROUP | 1-2 minutes

Use this as an opportunity to talk about and plan life group outings and make sure students know what's going on at student**life**

CLEAN LIFE GROUP ROOM | 3-4 minutes

Our space is usually shared space, so please respect it and use it as a way for students to take ownership of a space that they've been given.

BEST WAYS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR WEEK

PRAY IT | *Spend time with God*

Ask God for wisdom, to help you be real, and to help you see the potential opportunities to reach students.

TEXT IT | *Reach out to your students*

By taking the time to text/contact students throughout your week helps set your Life Group time up for success.

Bring up things that students share - think prayer requests or insights about their week/life.

Even a text that just says "Hey what's up? Just praying for you and look forward to seeing you at studentlife this week!" can be a game changer.

READ IT | *Read over your Leader Materials*

Look out for your Leader Weekly email (is always available on Tuesday)!

It contains a devotional for leaders, information about the week, and how to access your Leader Materials.

By reading over your leader materials helps build your confidence during conversation, and leads room to help you improvise.

PERSONALIZE IT | *Reflect how it affects your life first*

Make it personal by applying what's going on this week into your life, this gives you a way to share and relate with students.

The best way to lead is to model for students how to live it out.

TALK ABOUT IT | *Encourage and spend time with other leaders to get their perspective too.*

THE ART OF ASKING [GREAT] QUESTIONS

Remember the Point of Life Groups: *Build relationships and share truth.
Meaningful relationships come from meaningful conversations and intentional investments.*

BOTTOM LINE

Your answers aren't nearly as powerful as your questions.

SUMMARY

This isn't an easy truth to accept! Even grizzled youth ministry veterans love to talk and talk and talk....on and on and on....

Consider your journey. How often did you listen and learn from others? Especially when you were younger?

The World fights fiercely for our attention, everywhere we turn there is another agenda forced in our face.

What if there was a better way to make a difference? What if there was an alternative to talking AT or talking TO or talking DOWN to the students God has entrusted to us?

We don't have to add to the noise. Instead, we can create a silence that speaks volumes.

Divided into two parts, the first section explores 8 reasons WHY questions are essential for a healthy youth ministry. Not only will this help your leaders see the value of asking questions, it will also serve as a diagnostic tool by which they can evaluate their conversations with students. The second section contains 25 tips for asking better questions—more than enough material to equip your newer leaders and challenge your veterans.

This resource contains a simple two-page handout and some brief teaching notes. If anything in this resource is unclear, email Matt at matt@mcgill.email and he'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Great leaders master the art of asking questions, and this resource can help you improve this essential youth ministry skill.

25 Tips for Asking better questions

1. Accept the reality that **your answers are not nearly as powerful as your questions.**
2. **Pray** for discernment for each of your students.
3. **Define the goal** or objective for your discussion.
4. **Be ready to learn.**
5. **Be prepared** so you can ask questions in your own words.
6. **Be understandable**, stay away from Christian culture jargon.
7. **Ask the same question in different ways.**
8. **Be ok with awkward silence.**
9. **Create confusion:** push things to extremes, teaching opposing truths.
10. **Make eye contact.** Strive to be present, not just physically.
11. **Don't settle for the first answer—even when it's "right."** Learn to say, "Ok. Great. Who else would add to that?" And "Does everyone agree?"
12. **Affirm responses...**even "incorrect" ones.
13. **Be slow**—like glacier slow—to correct answers.
14. **Keep it practical, abstract ideas are interesting for only a few.** Jesus taught us to go and teach people to obey. Connect the abstract with the concrete, "theology" with "real life.
15. Be you, **develop your own style.** Grow and experiment, but don't try to be someone you aren't.
16. **Encourage students to ask their own questions.**
17. **Challenge easy answers**—test their conviction and ownership, especially don't settle for superficial answers.
18. **Don't answer your own questions...**ever in the beginning and rarely at the end.
19. **Speak less than a third of the time.**
20. **Be both focused and flexible.** Keep the goal of your discussion in mind, but be flexible if God goes in a different direction.
21. **Admit your confusion.**
22. **Start with scripture**, draw out principles, end by helping your students make applications.
23. **Avoid closed questions (one word answers).** There are a few expectations: when the group will be polarized, or if a simple question sets up a more complex question.
24. **Be passionate.** If you aren't, get recharged. If that doesn't work, talk to a mentor or set up a time to meet with a leader.
25. **After the discussion, reflect, and evaluate.** Talk to another leader, ask, how did your discussion go?

Ask yourself:

What would you add to this list? What else does it take to ask really good questions?

Review the tips, circle two that you are already doing well with. Put a star next to 2 that you will work on next month.

Why ASKING GREAT questions is essential for a healthy Life Group

1. Questions are personal

lecture has limits ... it's impersonal...one person speaking to many ... ALSO, the learners are passive... typically falling into mentally agreeing “yes, yes, yes” to every statement made by the teacher.

Questions—good ones—are tailored to individuals ... meeting their needs

2. Questions provoke thought

questions are active ... even if a person doesn't talk ... this is the beauty, everyone has the opportunity to be engaged

3. Questions create community

conversation connects deeper than spectating an event ... FANS of a particular team have a lot in common—but nothing personal... two fans can talk for hours without really connecting, because nothing intimate is shared ... questions change this

A good discussion isn't just a shared experience, people reveal their thoughts...

4. Questions draw out wisdom

people learn when other people speak ... seeing different perspectives is an essential aspect of life in God's kingdom ... as, God is doing different things in different people...

5. Questions reveal character

.... or maturity a person's answer reveals where he or she is “at” on a particular issue ... good questions will lead to answers that allow you to see, first hand, a person's spiritual condition

6. Questions spark more questions

creating a culture of questions isn't easy ... but asking questions will lead to more questions...

discipleship is about transformation, not the transfer of information ... if we want our students to own their faith, then they need to think about it—in their own terms—there is no ownership without personal processing...

7. Questions lead to undiscovered places

you can't FULLY control a good conversation... and that's good...wonderful...amazing...awesome ...

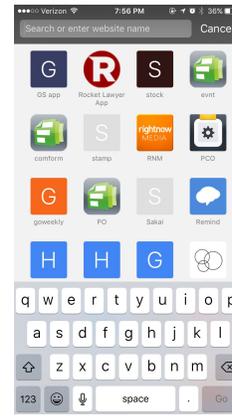
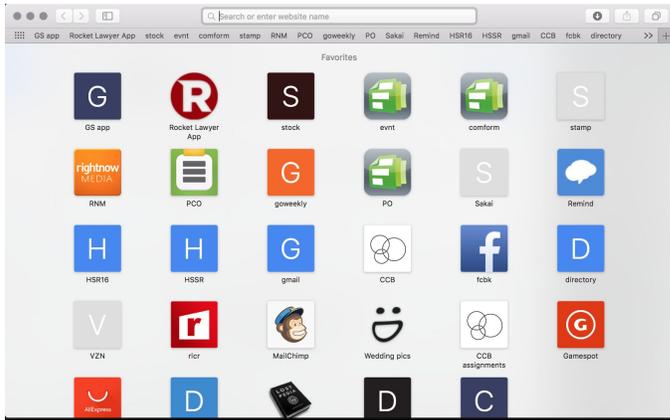
you should have an objective, a final destination in mind, but the journey to get there will be wild

8. Questions express humility

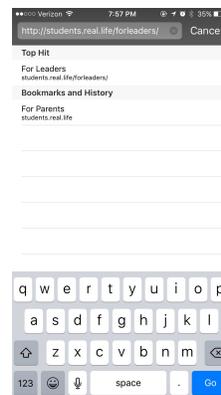
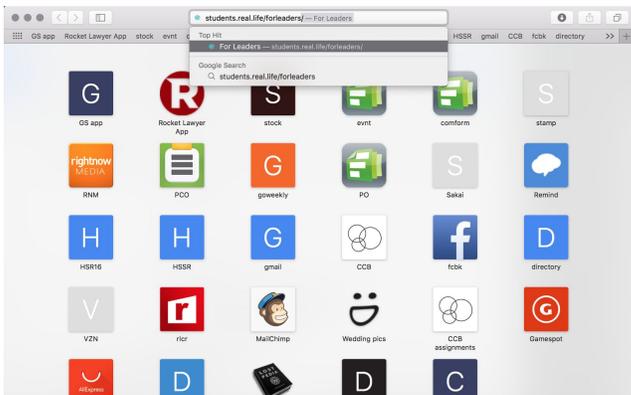
Our students already put us up on a pedestal ... great leaders lead like Jesus and this means leading in humility ... we don't know everything, and asking questions—even ones we don't know the answer—demonstrates humility to our students...

HOW TO ACCESS THE leaderhub

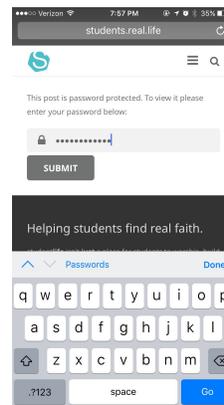
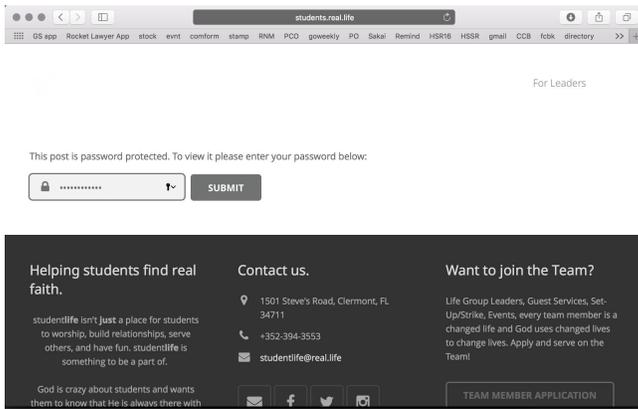
1. Go to your browser (phone or computer)



2. Go to "students.real.life/forleaders"



3. Type in the password “changedlives” - no spaces or capitals



4. Scroll down for:

a. Discussion Questions

b. Recommended Videos

c. Other Resources

d. Conversation Guides

i. Salvation Conversation Guide

ii. How to lead someone through baptism...

iii. How to lead a student who is being bullied...

iv. How to lead a student whose parents are going through a divorce...

v. etc...

e. ...and more! Try to continue exploring the website.

