

## Grow Group 1st Meetings Guide

In leading a GROW group, it is of extreme importance how you start the group and what you lay out for expectations. Just as Christ did, we must begin with the end in mind.

The following is how you should approach starting your GROW group. It is up to you how you will use this, but from experience, we have seen how important some of these steps are. Adapt it for yourself and your situation.

### **Starting a Group:**

1. Find group members - Identify, Pray, Invite, Invest
  1. Identify - Identify people God has placed around you. These could be people in the church or people you know. NOTE: discipling believers vs. unbelievers does make a difference. With unbelievers, you must be careful to constantly share, explain and relate to the gospel in everything you do, giving them opportunity to respond to the gospel. Without a gospel focus, they could simply become “good-looking” people who have no faith in Jesus’ finished work.
  2. Pray - As you’ve made a list of possible people, before you approach them, pray! Ask God to work in their hearts, to cause them to hunger for the fullness of Christ in their lives and help them see the need for a GROW group in their life.
  3. Invite - Have short, 1 on 1 discussions with each person and ask them consider joining your GROW group. Tell them a little what GROW groups are about like - “studying the bible, growing in their faith, accountability, prayer, sharing Christ...” If they are interested, invite them to the first meeting and tell them the first meeting will lay out what the GROW group is and does.
  4. Invest - sometimes people are not initially interested or are unable to join, that is okay. Tell them you will reach out to them again in the future when you will be starting another. Keep investing in the relationship, pray for them and see what God does in the future.
2. Schedule the pre-meeting - Once you have people interested, find a time and a coffee house/restaurant/etc you can meet at. This a “pre-meeting” because you will be laying out what the GROW group will be and what it will commit to. You will end the group by asking them to pray and consider if they can commit to this.

### **Pre-Meeting Plan:**

1. Introductions
2. Open with Prayer
3. Following the GROW Group Basics card (available on the back table or online at [ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups](http://ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups)), go through the “What is a GROW Group?” and “Why GROW groups?” Then flip the card and tell them the back shows what they will commit to - go through “What should my grow group do?” (Gather Regularly, Read & Study Scripture, Obey Jesus, Work Together). Let them know you will help teach them and lead them to be able to do what is listed on the GG Card.
4. Group Covenant - (Located online under GROW Group Resources & Bottom of this document) Go through the commitment required for a GROW group. Everyone should get a copy so they can go through it and keep for themselves.

5. Ask for questions about anything with the GROW group or covenant.
6. Share some of your personal desire of wanting to grow or any experience in a GROW group and how it transformed you.
7. Ask them to pray and consider if they can commit to being a part of the GROW group. Tell them you will reach out to each individually about their answer, but they need to take time to consider the commitment they are making.

After you have spoken to those who came to the “pre-meeting” and confirmed who has decided to be a part of the group, schedule your first group meeting.

### **First Meeting Plan:**

1. Open in prayer
2. Group Covenant - Ask them if they were able to sign and agree to everything in the covenant. Ask for any questions. Sign each covenant, but let them keep it as a reminder.
3. Introductions - Use these questions to get to know one another. These are VERY helpful for you as they can determine what areas your group may need growth in.
  1. Tell us a little about yourself & family. Where were you born? Grow up? Family?
  2. What is your testimony? (Sometimes people have a hard time sharing this, but it is critical you ask to share it as some people who think they are Christians actually have never placed their faith in Jesus for salvation).
    1. If someone needs help in this area, ask these questions: What was your life like before Christ? When did you grasp the Gospel and place your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior? What was your life like after faith in Christ?
    2. Listen for these 3 key areas in order to help shed light on their salvation. If someone seems to not be able to confidently answer this question, you should meet with them one on one to graciously talk about their relationship with Christ. For help with questions or direction, contact one of your pastors.
  3. What is the closest you have felt to God in your life?
  4. What is the farthest you have felt to God in your life?
  5. What is one question you have always wondered about in life or faith?
  6. What area(s) do you want to see growth in through this group?
4. Talk about the normal meeting schedule and the when/where that works best to meet regularly.

### **Typical GROW Group Meeting:**

- **Fellowship** - Take time catching up. As a leader, you might ask what has been going well? What has been difficult?
- **Accountability**
  - **Scripture Memory** - Find a verse(s) and challenge one another to memorize it. It is best to all try and memorize the same verse. As the group starts, it could be a simple verse everyone agrees to. Once you begin the PATH journals, you might use a verse from a book of the bible you study. KEY: Learn to memorize verses by heart and mind. Resist the urge to see simple memory as the goal. Learning the text “by heart” is secondary; taking the text to heart is primary.
  - **Questions** - Ask 1 or 2 accountability questions to check in spiritually in areas like bible reading, prayer, sexual immorality, family, finances, actions, etc. These questions can be found online at [ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups](http://ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups) As you begin to do the PATH, you will also want to ask how each person did putting their application into practice.

- **Share the Gospel** - Every week, starting with you explaining and laying it out, a group member will share the gospel story. This is also a good time to ask “What opportunities have you had?” As the group is starting, you will have to explain the Gospel story in detail and help them see the main points. You share, they help. Then begin to ask them to share solo. Eventually you may start doing Gospel Conversation Scenarios where you act out how you might start a gospel conversation, share the gospel, pray for a person or get rejected. For help with sharing or teaching others to share, look online for the resources under Sharing the Gospel - [ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups](https://ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups).
- **PATH Journal** - The PATH journal is meant to help someone take the word from reading to studying to understanding to applying. Application is the end goal, but truth is key! Blank PATH journals or sample PATH studies can be found online [ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups](https://ccspearfish.com/groups/grow-groups). As you start the group, take a meeting to walk them through the PATH. You should ask them to go or provide an empty notebook or journal for them to do their PATH Journal in.
- **Pray for one another** - Always close a meeting by praying for one another out loud. At first people can be uncomfortable with this, but it is part of growth. Ask for prayer request, use your notebook or journal to write down request so you can continue to pray for each other. It is easy to tell them to pray for the person to their right or left each week. As you start the group, this will be something you have to teach and lead well. If it is a struggle, do a study on prayer and different scriptures that talk about it. Then practice it together.

## Group Covenant

I will agree to the following expectations:

1. I commit myself fully to the Lord, anticipating that I will be encouraged and challenged to grow deeper in my faith.
2. I commit to gathering regularly with my GROW group and, unless providentially hindered, I will faithfully be there.
3. I commit to complete the PATH journal and/or assignments by the leader before I come to the gathering so I can contribute and find personal responsibility for my faith.
4. I agree to being held accountable for my actions and intentions by my group, growing to confess sin, find forgiveness and repentance through Christ.
5. I commit to maintaining honesty, transparency, respect and confidentiality with those in my group, not allowing any sharing outside of the group, unless otherwise agreed.
6. I commit to pray regularly for the others in my group and on this growing journey with me.
7. I commit to begin to pray for God to help me see others in my life who will need a group like this and to eventually start my own GROW group.

Signed Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Leader \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_