

The background features a network diagram with various nodes and connecting lines. The nodes are represented by circles in shades of cyan, white, and grey. The lines are thin and white, creating a web-like structure across the dark blue background. A large white circle is positioned on the left side, containing the title text.

**LIFE
GROUP**
LEADERS' HANDBOOK

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Letter from Senior Minister

Dear Life Group Leader,

Thank you for your willingness to give your time and energy to leading a Life Group. We really appreciate you taking on this important responsibility and we believe that God will do some wonderful things through your life and ministry throughout this year.

Next to our relationship with God, loving people is to be our highest priority. Life Groups are small relational groups that are especially designed for reaching people with God's love and then helping them to grow in discipleship, ministry and outreach. We believe that being an active part of a Life Group is vital to the Christian life.

Being a Life Group Leader is a high calling because at its heart it is about being a 'shepherd' or a 'pastor' to people. God himself is a shepherd who cares, feeds, guides and watches over his people with diligence. We are called to do the same.

Here at CityLife Church our mission is to 'raise up fervent followers of Jesus Christ who will reach out and impact communities, cities and nations for the kingdom of God.' May you be a fervent follower of Jesus Christ this year and lead others to do the same. As we do we will make a tremendous impact for God's kingdom both locally and around the world.

We pray for God's abundant blessing on you as you lead this year. Remember that in the person of the Holy Spirit you have all the resources you need - love, power and wisdom (2 Tim. 1:7). So, go for it!

Together let's believe for many hundreds of people to come to Christ this year and for all of us to grow more like Jesus every day. Imagine what could happen if we simply lifted our faith to believe God for greater things than we've ever seen before. Why not?!

Once again, thank you!



Andrew Chisholm
Senior Minister

Letter from Associate Minister

Dear Life Group Leader,

On behalf of our CityLife Pastoral team of CityLife church I would like to thank you for your willingness to help us pastor the people of our church. This year is going to be an awesome year!

As a Life Group Leader you are serving in a vital ministry of this church. Life Groups are the core of our church and central to church life. It's always exciting to see that as new people join our church, they get immediately connected to a Life Group. Church is more than just a crowd; it's a community of people in meaningful relationships and doing life together.

The strength of the church lies in the very heart of our Life Group ministry. The Apostle Paul is the most notable team-builder of the early church. Paul referred to himself as a "wise master builder" (1 Cor. 3:10). As a wise master builder he developed strong bonds of love and companionship by devoting time to people. Even Nehemiah needed the cooperation of a team of people to accomplish the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He motivated his team by saying, "Let us arise and build" (Neh. 2:18). So, let us accept this challenge of being a part of a thriving team of Life Groups Leaders here in CityLife by together declaring, "Let us arise and build".

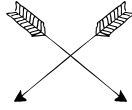
Please take time to read thoroughly this "Life Group Leaders Handbook" and familiarizing yourself with the material. It will be a great tool in your hands as you minister to people.

We highly value your service as a Life Group Leader and thank you for partnering with us in making CityLife Church strong in pastoral care.

Thank You.



Daljit Gill
Associate Minister



OUR MISSION

*is to raise up fervent
followers of Jesus Christ
who will reach out and
impact communities,
cities and nations for the
kingdom of God.*

MISSION

Our Mission reflects the kind of people God wants us to be and the work He wants us to accomplish.

Our Mission is ...

To raise up fervent followers of Jesus Christ who will reach out and impact communities, cities and nations for the Kingdom of God

Profile of a Fervent Follower

The focus of all of our church ministries is to help raise up disciples of Jesus Christ, who we call "fervent followers." Only as we become fervent followers will we be able to reach out and impact communities, cities and nations for the kingdom of God, which is our ultimate mission while here on earth. A fervent follower is defined more by how they live, rather than just what they believe, as important as beliefs and core values are.

A Fervent Follower:

Experiences God ... both personally (through practices such as daily prayer and Bible reading) and together with others (through active participation in service and small group gatherings).

Engages with others ... both within the church community (through fellowship and accountability) and outside of the church community (through friendship evangelism). Equips themselves and others ... receiving input themselves and giving to others what they can.

Expresses their purpose ... both within the church community and outside to the wider world. Our desire is that these practices will demonstrate our commitment to live out our mission and our core values as a church community.

CORE VALUES

Values are what we consider important and worthwhile. Commonly held Core Values are the key to unity and are the foundation upon which all activity must be based. Paul encourages us to be “like-minded” and “one in spirit and purpose” (Phil.2:2). We are committed to developing and pursuing Biblical Kingdom values. The following core values define who we are and what we are committed to:

Jesus Christ - we are a Christian church. The person of Jesus Christ is central to all we do and through Him we have relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible - we are a Bible-based church. We are committed to the Bible as the Word of God and our final authority for rule and practice.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit - we are a Spirit-filled church. We believe that each Christian should develop the fruit of the Spirit and seek to use the gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of others.

Discipleship - we are a maturing church. Our goal is to help people become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Prayer - we are a praying church. Our goal is become a house of prayer for all nations.

Worship - we are a worshipping church. Our goal is to express our devotion to God through joyful praise and intimate worship.

Loving Relationships - we are a loving church. Our goal is to see every person loved and cared for in such a way that they feel accepted, valued and have a sense of belonging.

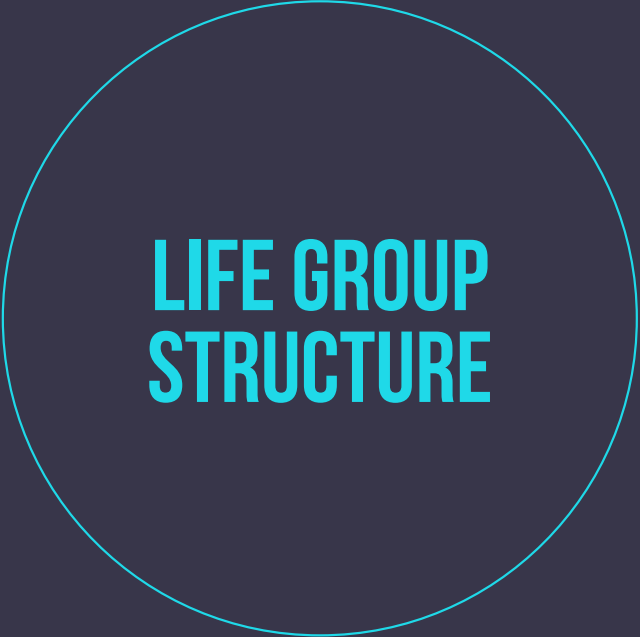
Servanthood - we are a serving church. Our goal is to see every member developing their God-given abilities and using them to serve others.

Outreach - we are an evangelistic church. Our goal is to reach lost people both near and far and influence our community for righteousness through evangelism, community outreach, missions and church planting.

Relevance - we are a contemporary church. Our goal is to present the message of Christ in a way that is meaningful to regular attendees and comprehensible to outsiders.

Diversity - we are a multicultural church. Our goal is to bridge cultural and generational gaps so as to create a community where different people can relate together in a spirit of love and unity.

Excellence - we are a quality church. Our goal is to pursue excellence in all aspects of church life in order to bring glory to God.



**LIFE GROUP
STRUCTURE**

PURPOSE

A Life Group is small group of people (ideally less than 15) who meet regularly for the purpose of spiritual edification and evangelistic outreach (with the goal of multiplication) and who are committed to participate in the life of the local church.

A Life Group is a Care Group

'It is a place where Christians can come together to care for one another through prayer, encouragement, and practical expressions of love and kindness.'

They can also come to find intimate relationship and fellowship with others of like faith and interest levels.

Jesus really emphasised the importance of caring practically for people (Matthew 25:34-40). People respond well to being cared for and this is a key to having a successful group. Also getting to know one another is really important and this takes time.

- Have each person around for tea or supper during the year.
- Visit and pray for them if they are sick or in need.
- Take an interest in their life (activities, work, interests, etc).
- Learn their children's names.
- Look out for the people in your group at church on weekend meetings.

These things will help you to build a good relationship with each person, which will be a foundation to seeing them grow in Christ and becoming an important asset to your group. There is a deep cry in people's hearts wanting to be cared for. When people know that you genuinely care for them, only then will they allow you to speak into their lives. Good times of fellowship and care make a real impact on people's lives.

A Life Group is a Disciple-Making Group

'It is a place where Christians can grow together to become fervent followers of Jesus Christ through the process of discipling, teaching and mentoring.'

A disciple is a committed follower of Jesus Christ who seeks to live a life marked by continued growth in understanding and obedience. The Word is completely adequate for every area of life as it teaches, reproves, trains, and equips you in order that you may mature in Christ.

Help them make the necessary changes in their lives to be conformed to the image of His Son.

- Know where they are at in God.
- Help them be a doer of the Word.
- Spend 'out-of-meeting' time with individual ones.
- Disciples are made intentionally.
- Disciples are made in relationships.
- A Leader needs to be able to speak and confront issues in the disciple's life.

By doing this we are therefore building, raising and empowering people. Helping them develop their potential in God through encouragement, affirmation and challenge.

A Life Group is a Ministry Group

'It is a place where Christians can develop and use their God-given gifts and abilities to help others.'

People feel fulfilled and a part of something when they are able to contribute. Leaders do not need to do all the leading. One person does not possess all the gifts, energy and time to do everything needed by the group. Find out people's gifts (ask them) and involve them in those areas.

- Involve people in prayer, worship, discussion, games, supper, children's program, etc.

- Don't force people to do something they're not comfortable with. Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something.
- Praise and acknowledge those people working behind the scenes.
- Model things and then delegate.
- Direct what is happening without appearing to control.

Team ministry provides a great deal of variety and people will be more committed to something they are personally involved in.

A Life Group is an Outreach Group

'It is a place where Christians can bring their friends, neighbours and relatives in order for them to experience the life that is in Jesus Christ.'

God has called us to love our 'neighbour' and share the good news of Jesus Christ with whoever we can.

- Look out for new people on weekend meetings. Be friendly and invite them to your group.
- Pray regularly for unsaved friends and relatives as a group.
- Plan informal activities around hobbies or general interests with unsaved friends.
- Look for people with an evangelistic gift in your group and encourage them to be the initiator for any group outreach activities.
- Have discussion on the subject of evangelism and how we can reach those who don't know the Lord. Come up with some creative strategies for your group.

By doing these things we help people develop an outward and others-centred focus. We also provide opportunities to see others come to the joy of knowing Christ.

LEADERSHIP STANDARDS

Being in leadership means being in a position of influence – that influence will either be positive or negative, depending on the quality of our lives. This is why Paul emphasized so strongly to his young leaders that they each needed to be an example of a believer in every area of their lives.

In any local church it is important that there are some protective mechanisms in place to ensure that people are well cared for and being influenced in a positive way. For this reason, CityLife Church has in place the following objective leadership standards with which any person occupying the privileged position of leadership in the Church needs to comply.

The CityLife Church leadership standards are outlined below.

- All Leaders need to be committed members (partners) of the church and are expected to fulfil the ongoing requirements of partnership, which include maintaining their own devotional life, weekly service attendance (including prayer meetings), and regular giving of tithes and offerings.
- All Leaders should be actively involved in the Life Group ministry.
- All Leaders are to set an example both inside and outside the church in attitude, speech, life, love, faith and purity.
- All Leaders are expected to be a Christ-like example to other people in every area of their life and to endeavour to be a Godly influence through their words, attitudes and behaviours (1 Timothy. 4:12; 1 Corinthians. 11:1).
- All Leaders should maintain a good standard of personal hygiene and grooming. Dress should be appropriate to the occasion, neat and modest.
- All Leaders are to be an example in interpersonal relationships by treating people with gentleness and respect. In the event of conflict, resolution should be sought as soon as possible in an attitude of humility.

- All Leaders should protect and guard the unity of the Spirit in the church.
- If there are concerns involving any Leader of the church (decisions made or action taken), these should be addressed quickly with those directly concerned so as to avoid allowing murmuring or gossip to undermine the unity of the church.
- In view of our standing in the local community, all Leaders need to be willing to undergo a police criminal record check and any other checks (such as a Working with Children Check), as the church deems necessary for their area of involvement.
- Leaders may in the course of participating in the life and ministry of CityLife Church have access to information of a private and confidential nature. Information of this nature includes financial, emotional, physical and social information of members of our congregation and information relating to operations of our church. All Leaders will take reasonable precautions to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any such information and not permit such information to be used for purposes other than CityLife Church purposes.

We recognise that to comply with these standards may require some lifestyle adjustments for some individuals. Impacting one life for eternity is worth any lifestyle sacrifice that Leaders may have to make.

Our desire is not to become Pharisees who focus only on external conformity and who develop an attitude of superiority by looking down on those who have different standards. We want to simply be an example and not give any reason for causing someone to stumble, especially young people and new believers. Where people are disobeying the absolutes of God's Word, we must lovingly confront them. Where there are differences over non-essential issues, we must graciously accept one another and allow people's consciences to dictate their own decisions.



**LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT**

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Personal Development

Your friendship with God is your most important friendship of all. No matter how long you have been a Christian, there is always room for growth. The different seasons of life and pressures you face can determine how close your walk with God is, at times.

In response to what the most important commandment is, Jesus replied...

Mark 12:30-31 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

We have included a simple questionnaire, in the Appendix section, designed to be used as a self-assessment tool, to enable you to find ways that could strengthen your faith & relationship with God. It is not intended to produce a sense of guilt or frustration but rather to see how your faith has grown throughout the year.

The Priority of Prayer

Prayer really does make a difference. All of us are called to intercede.

As leaders, it is essential that we give ourselves more to prayer and encourage others to do the same. Prayer is our "life-link" to God and is the only way to know His heart and will for each day. It also provides us with His unlimited strength and blessing. Please make an effort to be in any scheduled prayer meetings throughout the year.

The Priority of the Word

The Bible is not just a book filled with good moral philosophies. It is God's instruction manual for our lives. As we spend time reading, studying and meditating upon His word, we allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us, to lead and guide us. In turn, we, as leaders, lead and guide His people.

Do make time each day, to read the Bible. As you do so with an open heart, be ready to hear from God, and receive revelation, encouragement and empowerment to be the leader He wants you to be!

People Development

As Leaders, we have two major roles to help people fulfil their fullest potential in God.

Influence people – definition

Develop people – responsibility

Many Leaders enjoy influencing but we must also help to develop the potential that lies within others.

Potential - from the Latin word meaning “something powerful lying within”.

A leader is great not because of his or her gifts, but because of his or her ability to empower others. Deep within every person lie nuggets of gold waiting to be discovered. Some need to be excavated, some slowly chipped away at, and others need to be blown open with dynamite.

Biblical terms for potential

Seed Matthew 13:19-28 “The source beginning of anything”

Treasure Matthew 12:35 “The place in which valuables are kept and laid up”

Talent Matthew 25:15-28 “A gift or ability”

Gifts Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 14:1 “The blessing of God with the intention of giving

There are many people in our churches who have “something powerful lying within”. But we often look for people as trained and equipped as we are.

What stops people?

Believing a lie

Living in the past

Discouragement

Laziness - apathy is a subtle attack

What can we do?

Attitude of Excellence

Daniel 5:12

We need to encourage people to become excellent. Most people today settle to be second best. Excellence is not professionalism - it is an attitude. The way we view things, the way we think about things. To build excellence, we must practise excellence. People laughed at Michelangelo for wanting to sculpture an image out of a piece of granite. He could see the statue of David. Do not let people settle for mediocrity.

Believe they are there

"According to your faith, be it unto you". Matthew 9:29

Often our negativity stops allowing people to be released. We must learn to see a statue of David in each person. People will only rise as far as we believe they can.

"People tend to become what the most important people in their lives think they will become".

Develop a Plan for People to follow

To bring out the best in people, we must have a plan and a strategy by which they can measure their growth. *"Success is the progressive realisation of a predetermined goal".* Give people ownership. Make them feel important.

Develop an ability to know People

Isaiah 50:4-6

What are their major strengths? What is the intent of their heart? Hebrews 4:12.

Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom. We must meet people and pick up on where they are at.

My success in developing others will depend on my high:

Value of people - This is an issue of attitude

Commitment to people - This is an issue of my time

Integrity with people - This is an issue of my character

Standard for people - This is an issue of my vision

Influence over people - This is an issue of my leadership

LIFETRAX

What is LifeTrax All About?

LifeTrax is CityLife's life development and leadership training course. It is designed to help you build solid theological foundations, understand church life, explore deep personal and spiritual issues and prepare for active service in the church.

Why LifeTrax?

LifeTrax exists to support the Church by producing effective Leaders who are committed to discovering, developing and exercising their gifts, in service meetings, Life Groups and other ministry areas of CityLife.

Trax Details

Trax 1 - Christian Life serves to provide a solid foundation for our Christian faith and beliefs and covers topics such as grace, God's Word, prayer, baptism and spiritual warfare.

Trax 2 - Church Life provides an in depth understanding of CityLife's mission, values, vision, statement of faith, structure and governance model, and, upon completion, provides you with an opportunity to become a partner of CityLife Church.

Trax 3 - Personal Life is a personal encounter course that confronts heart issues that impact a person's life. It encourages participants to take an honest look inside and to have the courage to work through some of the painful issues that may be impacting their life.

Trax 4 - Leaders Life is a leadership training course. The objective is to produce quality leaders and ministry contributors.

Other provides tremendous ongoing equipping for all who have completed the four Trax.

What Life Group Leaders Need to Know:

- LifeTrax is not a smorgasbord teaching program where people pick and choose the subject they would like to study or whatever session they are interested in.
- LifeTrax is CityLife's life development and leadership training pathway for the purpose of producing quality contributors to ministry.
- LifeTrax needs to be completed in sequence. For example, no one should be attending Trax 2 without having completed Trax 1.
- Completion of Trax 1 and 2 is a pre-requisite to Partnership and Leadership roles at CityLife.
- Other courses are available to people who have completed Trax 1-4.

What Life Group Leaders Need to Do:

- Make LifeTrax a personal priority. You cannot motivate others to do something you are not doing yourself. Commit yourself to personal and spiritual development.
- Encourage group members to be attending a Trax.
- Make LifeTrax a discussion point in your Life Group. Get the members to talk about what they are currently doing. This will help reinforce the value of LifeTrax while inspiring others to attend. At the end of each term celebrate with those who have successfully completed a Trax.
- Keep accurate records of each group member's progress, what they have completed or what they are working towards.
- LifeTrax exists to assist you as leaders in the development of your people. Make sure you utilise this important resource. Your attendance and your encouragement and interest in their progress will make a big difference.

WATER BAPTISM

What is Water Baptism?

Water baptism is not just a religious tradition or meaningless ceremony. It is an important experience and act of faith in the Christian's life. Baptism is a visible act with a spiritual meaning.

In baptism believers identify themselves with the death, burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-9, 11-12; Colossians 2:12, 3:1). It is a symbolic yet real experience.

Baptism is a symbol of a believer's new life in Christ. We bury "the old life" and we rise to walk in a "new life" (Romans 6:1-12). Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you have made in your heart. Just like a great wedding doesn't make a great marriage, so a great water baptism doesn't make a great Christian life. Our commitment has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis.

Why be Baptised?

Jesus himself was baptised (Matthew 3:13-17). He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.

Jesus commanded it (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:16-20). Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to the commands of Christ. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15; James 2:17-18). Water baptism is not optional. To refuse baptism is to disobey the clear word of God.

Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a public confession of your faith in and commitment to Jesus Christ. It is a public celebration announcing your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is the next step after salvation through repentance and faith and is an important foundation for the Christian life (Hebrews 6:1-2).

Baptism by immersion is also one of the requirements for partnership at CityLife. It's one of the ways people in the Bible said, "I am part of this family called Christians."

Life Group Leaders are to encourage group members to take spiritual growth steps, such as being baptised.

A water baptism form needs to be completed for anyone in your group who desires to be water baptised and return it to the Church office. Water baptism forms are found in the stands around the church, or you can apply online www.citylife.church/baptism

For more information about water baptism, please contact your Pastor.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

When we become a Christian, by inviting Jesus Christ to come into our life to be Lord and Saviour, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes to live inside of us (John 3:6-7; Romans 8:9-11). Jesus also wants to baptise us with the same Spirit so that we are filled with the power of the Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is equal with God the Father and God the Son. Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the Comforter or the Helper (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit comes to give us power to be God's witnesses, to guide us and to help us communicate with God directly through prayer.

Examples of being “Baptised (or filled) with the Spirit”

Here are some examples of people being born again and then filled with the Spirit's power.

- Jesus' disciples – John 20:19-22; Acts 2:1-4. They were told to wait for the power of the Spirit.
- The Samaritans - Acts 8:5-7, 14-17.
- Cornelius' household - Acts 10:44-48.
- The Ephesian believers - Acts 19:1-7.

The Biblical evidence of being filled with the Spirit is speaking in “tongues” or in spiritual languages.

The Importance of your “Spiritual Language”

- Jesus introduced it (Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4)
- It was given at the birth of the church (Acts 2:4). All 120 believers spoke in tongues.
- It was God’s idea - He created and endorsed it.
- The early church continued to experience it. (Acts & Epistles)
- Paul promoted it (1 Corinthians 14:5, 18, 39). He spoke in tongues more than anyone, told no one to forbid it and encouraged its proper usage.

Therefore, it must be important!

The Purpose of your “Spiritual Language”

- To help us communicate with God (1 Corinthians 14:2a) through prayer (1 Corinthians 14:14; Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:18) and praise or worship (Acts 2:11; 1 Corinthians 14:14-16).
- To edify or build ourselves up (1 Corinthians 14:4a; Jude 20).
- To reveal mysteries to us (1 Corinthians 2:7-16; 14:2b; Matthew 13:11) from the Bible or from God’s heart.
- To release power within us (Acts 1:8; 4:31; Ephesians 3:16).

How to receive the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”

- Prepare your heart by having a clear conscience (1 John 1:7-9; 3:21).
- Believe that it is available and that God wants to fill you (Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38-39).
- Ask for the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9, 13).
- Give praise to God with your voice (Luke 24:49-53).
- Have someone pray with you and lay their hands on you if necessary (Acts 8:17).
- Speak forth in a new language as the Holy Spirit gives you the words (Acts 2:4).
- Continue to use your new spiritual language on a regular basis and believe for God to increase the flow of His Spirit within you (Ephesians 5:18).

CITYLIFE CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

Partnership at CityLife Church is highly encouraged as it develops commitment, ownership and active participation in church life. As a leader of CityLife you are a representative of the church leadership and also have influence over those whom you lead in your Life Group.

As you journey with people, it would be a great benefit to them and the church for you to encourage them to take another step of commitment and become a partner of CityLife Church. Individuals have the opportunity to apply for church partnership after completion of Trax 2 of LifeTrax.

Application for Partnership can be done by completing the Partnership Application Form online at www.citylife.church/partnership/apply and being in agreement with the following four partnership commitments:

1. I commit myself to experiencing God through discipleship:

- a) By being a fervent follower of Jesus Christ
- b) By actively participating in service meetings
- c) By living a godly life that sets an example for others
- d) By regular prayer and reflection on the Scriptures

2. I engage with others in relationship:

- a) By active involvement in a Life Group
- b) By loving others and protecting the unity of the Church
- c) By co-operating with and supporting the church leadership
- d) By being warm and friendly to those who visit CityLife meetings or programs

3. I equip myself to serve through good stewardship of my resources:

- a) By discovering and using my gifts
- b) By developing my God-given potential through learning, training and hands-on experience
- c) By regularly giving my time, tithes and offerings to support God's work through CityLife

4. I express my purpose:

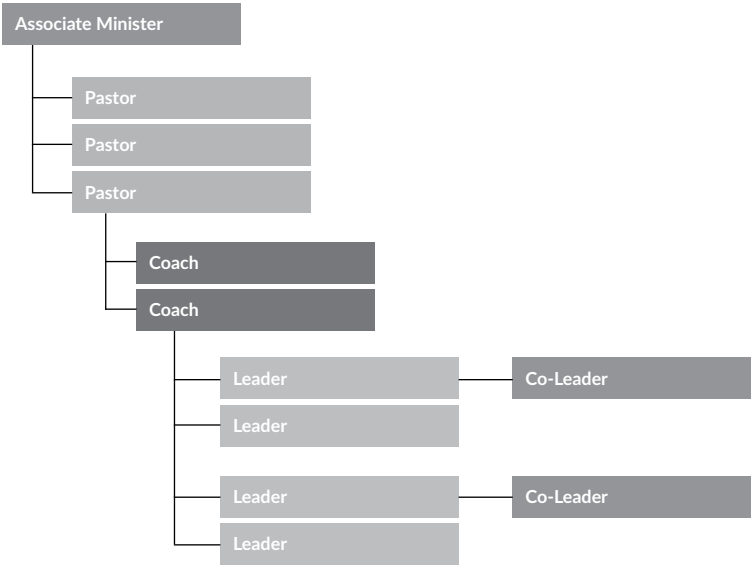
- a) By using my gifts and abilities to serve others, both inside and outside CityLife
- b) By developing relationships and sharing my faith
- c) By using my gifts to reach out, i.e. through community outreach, church planting and missions

LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Leadership Structure

Our commitment to Life Groups is demonstrated by our pastoral structure.

Life Groups are organised relationally. They are referred to as Life Group Networks, with a pastor leading each network of Life Groups. The Associate Minister for Pastoral Ministry oversees the pastors, who in turn oversee the Life Group Coaches within their network. Each Life Group Coach will have a number of Life Group Leaders that they look after and each Life Group Leader is encouraged to raise up one or more Co-Leaders, so that when ready to multiply, they can assume leadership of the new group.



At each congregation there are the following Life Group Networks:

- Adult (age 30+)
- Young Adult (age 18-29)
- Youth Senior High (School Year 10-12)
- Youth Junior High (School Year 7-9)

LIFE GROUP COACH

The role of a Life Group Coach is primarily focused on supporting the Life Group Leaders in their role. This role involves overseeing between two to five Life Groups and their Leaders and is directly responsible to a Pastor.

Life Groups exist for the purpose of pastoral care, discipling, ministry development and evangelism. The Life Group Coach is responsible to ensure that Life Group Leaders under their care provide a healthy environment where these activities take place.

Your ministry as a Coach takes place as you perform the following:

Huddles: a meeting with all your Leaders.

Visits: a visit to one of the Life Groups of your Leaders.

One-on-Ones: a meeting with one of your Leaders (or couples).

Responsibilities

Your ministry of a Coach involves:

Pastoral Care

- Be the primary care giver to those Leaders whom you coach.
- Spend time one-on-one with the Leaders on a regular basis.
- Be open and transparent with your Leaders in building authentic relationships with them.
- Observe your Leader's relationships with their Life Group members when you visit.

Leadership Development

- Remind Leaders of the "vision" of Life Groups.
- Create a huddle whereby the Life Group Leaders and their Co-Leaders come together once a term for a time of input, vision and encouragement.
- Help Leaders to identify and train a Co-Leader.
- Challenge Leaders towards the development of their Co-Leaders.

Ministry Development & Expansion

- Provide Leaders with the necessary tools, knowledge and resources they need to develop and become more effective.
- Regularly visit the groups under your care and observe group dynamics and group formation.
- Assist Leaders towards a smooth multiplication process in such a manner that the new Leader feels supported and encouraged.
- Provide constructive feedback to Leaders towards the development of the health of the group.

Weekend Service Support

- Help connect people to Life Groups at service meetings and assist in the growth of the groups.
- Assist Pastors at celebration services in areas of altar call support, hospitality, communion coordination, sign-up boards, etc.
- Attend Coaches meetings with your Pastor.
- Attend all Leaders Summits and any major church events.

Accountability

The Life Group Coach is accountable to the church leadership through displaying a teachable attitude, receiving input from their Pastor, developing their life and ministry, and being supportive of the vision and direction of the church.

Time Commitment

The Life Group Coach should make every effort to attend weekly service meetings, all major church events and all Leaders Summits. In addition to the above and the leadership of their own Life Group, the Life Group Coach will be involved in reporting to their Pastor, coaching, and meeting the various needs of their Life Group Leaders through care and other Life Group related administrative duties.

LIFE GROUP LEADER

Basic Function

Life Groups exist for the purpose of pastoral care, discipling, ministry development and evangelism. The Life Group Leaders' role is to ensure that his/her group provides a healthy environment where these activities take place under the responsibility of their Life Group Coach and Pastor.

Responsibilities

Pastoral Care

To provide pastoral care to the group members through regular prayer, visitation, personal interest, contact outside of the Life Group meetings and emergency assistance, if required.

Discipling

To ensure the spiritual growth of each member through personal input, accountability and monitoring their progress in the LifeTrax program.

Ministry Development

To ensure each member develops their ministry through helping them discover their spiritual gifts, giving them opportunities for expression of their gifts and contribution within the Life Group, providing personal feedback and encouraging them to consider involvement in Life Group Leadership and/or another ministry.

Evangelism

To provide an active outward focus for the group through reaching out to new people, praying for unbelievers and actively contributing to the community, mission and vision of the church.

Leadership

To provide a healthy balance of the above four components, and to prepare for successful multiplication through the development of a competent Co-Leader.

Accountability

The Life Group Leader is accountable to the church leadership through displaying a teachable attitude, receiving input from their Life Group Coach and Pastor, developing his or her own life and ministry, completing the required Life Group reports, and being supportive of the vision and direction of the church.

Time Commitment

The Life Group Leader should make every effort to attend weekly service meetings, all major church events and all Leaders Summits. Outside the above and the regular Life Group meetings, the Life Group Leader will be involved in meeting the various needs of their Life Group members as and when the need arises, follow-up of new Christians and other Life Group-related administrative duties.

LIFE GROUP CO-LEADER

We encourage every Life Group Leader to raise a Co-Leader(s). We view the role of a Co-Leader as that of a “Leader in training”. This is someone who will eventually lead a group having the potential to do so.

If you already have a Co-Leader, we ask you to include them in the leadership of the group and ensure that they learn by experience the various aspects involved in Life Group Leadership.

It is essential that you notify your Life Group Coach or Pastor prior to approaching anybody (who must have at least completed track 1 and 2 and be a Partner of CityLife) for the role of a Co-Leader.

What Information Does a Potential Co-Leader Need?

Help them understand the job description of a Life Group Leader. Make sure to let them know that they are not expected to fulfil the job description requirements to the same degree as a Leader would. Remember, they are a developing Leader so they are simply working towards this.

Give them a clear picture of the time frame for Co-Leader development. Some Co-Leaders require approximately 6-12 months, others 12-18 months before leading a Life Group of their own. However, this varies depending on the needs of a given ministry and the maturity of the Co-Leader.

Explain that adequate training and resources are available for their growth and encouragement. Tracks 3 and 4 should be undertaken as you train and develop them in their practical experience, then they can embark upon other courses.

Make sure they understand clearly the vision and values of the Life Group ministry. They should attend the required training events of the church.

The Four Responsibilities of a Co-Leader

Love

Love and support your Leader and your group, doing all you can to be an example of the love of Christ for your people. Take an active role in loving and caring for them. Work with your Leader to share the care of the group.

Learn

Learn from what your Leader does and from what your Leader does not do. Talk with your Leader and debrief each meeting, discussing the pros and cons of the process. At this point, leadership is both caught and taught. Also take advantage of skill training as it is offered or recommended.

Lead

Ask your Leader to give you experience leading the group in various ways. Begin by leading the prayer time or one or two discussion questions. Over time, work to take more ownership and leadership in the group. You become a better Leader by practicing leadership skills in a "live" setting. Now is the best time to do that. Take advantage of this time to grow and master a variety of skills.

Look

Throughout your ministry as a Co-Leader you ought to be looking for another Co-Leader as well.

- Ask yourself questions like:
- Who looks like they might have leadership potential?
- Who has a servant's heart?
- Who is willing to learn?
- With whom do I spend time at church that is not yet a Leader?



**LIFE GROUP
MEETINGS**

FACILITATING THE LIFE GROUP

Hosting Life Group Meetings

Here at CityLife, Life Group meetings are held fortnightly. We will ask you to plan your meetings well ahead of time. You are free to plan your meeting dates on any day of the week **AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT CLASH WITH MAJOR CHURCH EVENTS.**

From time to time, we will provide you with discussion notes based on the weekend messages and encourage you to utilize this material.

Generally, most Life Groups meet for 1½ hours. An evening Life Group would generally meet from 7:30pm-9pm. We do encourage Leaders to be time sensitive, especially when the group comprises of families with children.

Host Homes & Hospitality

Host homes may be the same for the whole year or may be rotated depending on what is best for the group. Beware of overtaxing one home and make sure they get plenty of help before and after each meeting.

Suppers at a Life Group Meeting

We do encourage Life Groups to foster a culture whereby group members share the load of providing supper, preferably on a roster basis. We prefer the host only provide refreshments and not the supper as they are already opening up their home.

Please mobilise all members of the group to help out with clean up. This includes reorganising the lounge, cleaning up the dishes and vacuuming where necessary. It's important that such duties are not left to the host to perform.

Hospitality of a Life Group Leader

We would encourage you to invite each one of your members over for a meal or supper at your place through the year (perhaps one family at a time) and even visit them regularly. They will become your friends. Let's love people with Jesus' love.

People Focus

Please remember that all ministries are focused on gathering, encouraging, motivating, equipping and discipling people. We are in the people business. As Leaders we must continually model a genuine love for people through all that we do and say. Warmth and friendliness make a big impact; so keep up the good work and keep smiling.

Ice Breakers

Ice breakers are activities that help people take the focus off them, so they will feel at ease with one another. They bring everyone in the Life Group to a common focus by binding people together, usually on a superficial level – and that is what it is supposed to achieve.

They are extremely valuable for Life Groups where people are beginning to know each other, as well as for Life Groups that have been together for a long time. They help members take the first step to enter into each other's lives after being absent from one another for several days. They are to focus the group as it meets.

Prayer

One of the most powerful aspects of small groups is the opportunity to offer prayer requests, to pray together, and then to see how God follows through on those prayers. It's amazing to see how God works over three months or six months or a year. Prayers get answered, situations change, hearts change—your group sees God work in mighty ways.

Just as powerful as the group dynamic of prayer is the impact that a praying Leader can have on his or her group. A praying Leader ministers to the group not only by showing how much he or she cares about their needs but also by modelling a life of prayer.

As with most things, becoming a small group centred on prayer doesn't just happen. Here are 7 tips on how you can minister to your small group through prayer:

Dedicate the last half hour of each bible study to "personal prayer needs".

Write each member's prayer requests down on either 3x5 cards or in a book. Bring these to every study so you can check back on their requests.

- After the requests are given, pray immediately with your group.
- Set up a prayer-partner system where each member has another member praying for him or her, and vice versa.
- As a Leader, continue to pray for each specific prayer request of each of your members (use your cards as reminders) daily.
- Call mid-week (or mid-session) to see how things are going.
- Call or e-mail whenever the Holy Spirit prompts you. God may use you to help answer a member's prayer. If you feel the Holy Spirit giving you wisdom that could help a member in a quandary, let that person know.

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COMMUNION

Many have expressed a desire to celebrate communion together as a Life Group. We believe this is a great place for communion to be shared. After all this is what the early church did (see Acts 2:42-47). The following paragraphs are meant to give you some guidelines to make this a meaningful experience within your group. Please feel free to contact your Pastor with any further questions.

What is Communion?

It is the regular remembrance and celebration of the Lord's life, sacrificial death and resurrection. The breaking and eating of bread has to do with Christ's body being broken on the cross. The drinking from the cup has to do with the shedding of Christ's blood whereby we are forgiven. Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24.

What is the Purpose of Communion?

The primary purpose of communion is to take time to remember all that the Lord did for us. It is a time to worship and give thanks for the forgiveness of our sins and the new life and relationship that we have in Jesus Christ. This time of remembrance was initiated by Jesus just before His death. Because we tend to be forgetful people, in the Old Testament believers were called to remember the faithfulness of God through various memorials. In the New Testament, this is the way that Jesus wanted us to remember His love and forgiveness of our sins. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

These verses also explain that communion is a time of personal examination. It is a time to examine our relationship with the Lord and others. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32.

Where and how often should we celebrate it?

We believe that it is a good thing for Christians to celebrate not only “at church” or in the “church building” but also in homes and Life Groups. We can celebrate regularly and often. God invites us to celebrate as often as we feel is appropriate.

Here at CityLife we would recommend that Life Groups do this once a month as appropriate.

How can we serve communion?

There are many ways to serve communion. The Bible does not dictate a certain method. Feel free to be creative. The important thing to remember is that this is a time of worship. This is a time of celebration. This is a time of remembrance and reflection. The book ‘Table Talks’ by Kevin Conner is available from the bookshop and contains 52 different communion exhortations, one for every week of the year.

Here are a couple of ideas to get you started:

- Use biscuits/crackers and some grape juice.
- As you begin your time of celebration, read some selected passages of

Scripture that remind us of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection:

Psalm 22 , Isaiah 53 , Mark 15:21-29, John 19, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Galatians 2:16-21, Ephesians 2:1-10, Philippians 2:1-11

- After a time of reading, pass the elements around.
- Encourage each member to spend some quiet minutes in prayer and reflection after the bread and juice have been taken.
- After all members have been served, close in prayer.

Please note that communion cups are available from the Life Group Resource Centre or contact your Pastor.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

Message Discussion Notes

Sermon Discussion notes are found on the CityLife website at www.citylife.church/read

Useful suggestions for leading discussions

- Plan ahead
- Write out questions before the discussion.
- Avoid asking questions off the top of your head - they usually lack focus and clarity.
- Focus on your task
- Don't become side-tracked with conversation and forget that it is your responsibility to lead the discussion.
- Start slowly.
- Begin with impersonal, non-threatening questions and work toward personal questions.
- Silence is acceptable.
- Don't get nervous if no one answers immediately.
- Give time to think.
- If people look puzzled you may need to restate the question or clarify your meaning.
- Be sensitive.
- Don't force anyone to participate who is not comfortable in speaking in groups. This practice will be counterproductive.
- Be willing to help.
- Help the overly verbal person control his or her participation. Don't allow them to dominate week after week. Talk with them privately.
- Don't put people on the spot.
- Avoid calling on people by name in the early stages of the group.
- Don't compel people to speak.

SOCIALS

We encourage Life Groups to organise socials from time to time as it is a great way to build relationships and team building. It also provides an opportunity to invite friends, neighbours and church members that are looking for a Life Group. It is important that these socials do not clash with service meetings or other major church events.

KIDS

Many groups have a large number of children and this can be quite a challenge when conducting a Life Group meeting. But children are precious to the Lord and naturally to parents, and we need to value and involve them. Some ideas that various groups have used for caring for the children are as follows:

- Have a parent (on a rotation basis) take a lesson and activity for the children while the adult meeting is on.
- Choose an appropriate video for the children to watch (care needs to be taken in choosing videos), or a tape for them to listen to or play along with (children's musical, dance or drama).
- Provide some games (jigsaw puzzles, Bible quiz, colouring books, etc.). Have each child bring their own activity, toy or game.

For one of the meetings a month, have just the ladies come, with the Dads at home with the children. The following month, reverse it and have the men come, with the Mums staying home with the children. The other meetings in the month could include everyone together for an activity.

Care of Kids in Life Groups

Whenever a leader-child relationship exists, the Leader has a special duty of care. "A Leader is to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a child under the Leader's charge from risks of injury that the Leader should reasonably have foreseen." (Richards v State of Victoria 1969)

Children attending a Life Group with their parents remain under the care of the parents at all times.

The Bible says to avoid any appearances of evil. For this reasons, even when children are being cared for by other parents within the Life Group as part of a shared care arrangement, it is important that any physical contact with the child be limited. This not only protects the child but also the Leader from any false accusations. Leaders should never be left alone with a child. They must always be in view of other leaders or children. If in a closed-up room, ensure there are 2 adults.

The CityLife Child Protection Policy details policy statements and procedures aimed at fulfilling the commitment by CityLife Church “to providing a safe and secure environment for all children across all of our congregations and work sites”. The CityLife Child Protection Policy states that “It is not the responsibility of the church or its leaders to discipline a child”.

In general, any steps taken to manage the behaviour of a child under the supervision of a Leader must be seen in terms of the child’s overall welfare and the welfare of others. No disciplinary steps are to involve any form of corporal punishment or doing anything that would unduly shame a child. It should be expected, that children are respectful to you, other children and property

In the following situations, it is most appropriate to refer the child back to the parent or their guardian:

- A child needs to use a toilet or requires a nappy or underwear change
- A child is disruptive to the group of children
- A child is not abiding by the rules set down by the carer
- A child is threatening or may cause harm to other children
- A child is in distress and would benefit from physical comfort

“Creating a Session for Kids” at Life Groups

You can create your own exciting children’s ministry plan for the children in your Life Group! Begin with a Bible story or story book; read through it several times (a Children’s Bible will tell the story at “kid level”).

Think about:

- What is one specific principle in this story that I want to teach the children?
- How is this specific principle demonstrated in the story?
- How is this specific principle demonstrated in my life? In the lives of children?
- What objects, activities or experiences could I provide to help children understand this story?
- Collect visual aids or props that will help you tell the story. Build in opportunities for the children to participate. Ask questions; create body motions or sound effects they can do as you tell the story. Remember that young children think concretely, not abstractly; they learn by doing and experiencing.

Create an activity that relates to the story or main principle:

- Role-play the story with props.
- Make puppets from paper bags, cardboard tubes, and paper plates.
- Use play dough to create objects or scenery from the story.
- Make a collage from magazine pictures or from various types of paper (provide pre-cut shapes or paper to be cut or torn by children).
- Make puzzles. Trace a simple shape related to the story for each child; add a Bible verse; allow children to colour then cut apart the shape to make a puzzle; children may take turns putting together each other's puzzles.
- Create a surprise bag. Place items related to the story into a bag; children take turns pulling out one item and telling about its relevance to the story.
- Your ministry time can include singing, story-telling, discussion, prayer, Bible memory, activities and a snack. Keep things moving and be excited about learning together. It's contagious! Any videos viewed by children will need to be age appropriate and will uphold the standards of Christian living and morality.

ATTENDANCE AT YOUR LIFE GROUP

Some thought-provoking questions every Leader should ask themselves.

- Do I call up my Life Group members regularly?
- Have I gone over to visit them at their home?
- Have I invited them over for a meal?
- Am I building a 'team' concept/atmosphere within my Life Group members?
- Do I give others the opportunity to own the group?
- Do I get them involved in the running of the group? Are they all rostered in some activity or do I do it all myself?
- Have I ever expressed my appreciation to them or sent thank you cards, telling them how much I love them and value their presence?
- Have I taught them the principle of commitment, not only to the Lord, but to one another?
- Am I myself displaying a lifestyle of commitment to my oversight?
- Do we have a group agreement?
- Do my members always look forward to the next meeting? (Evaluate what attracts them and what does not).
- Do I pray for them regularly and make it known to them that I pray for them?
- Have I told them that I am available to them and that my home is open to them?
- Do I cultivate a family atmosphere in my group? Do I cater for the children?

GROUP SIZE & MULTIPLICATION

It is important for every Life Group to work towards multiplication. The ideal group size is 12 adults. This enables personal care and personal involvement to take place at an optimum level. Once numbers get bigger than 12, the quality of these important ingredients rapidly decreases. Thus preparations for multiplication, sowing the vision and raising Co-Leaders need to happen as you approach this number.

If your group does grow large quickly, there are a number of ways you as a Leader can effectively manage a large group before you multiply the Life Group. Your Co-Leader could lead one group and you the other. The ideal time to multiply is when you reach 15 adults.

It is our desire to see that each group multiply at least once every two years, (in view of influx of new people into CityLife). Each Life Group must have the capacity to accommodate new people into their group at any time.

OUTREACH

Evangelism is something that we have to intentionally plan in our Life Groups in order to make this happen. We will encourage you to regularly have outward focus awareness within your group and this can be done through various means, such as - the “Empty Chair” and having social gatherings, such as BBQs, etc. It would be good if you have a list of unchurched people that your Life Group regularly prays for. Please ensure that you set aside time to pray for those people regularly. Let’s keep praying for a high influx of these people both in your Life Group and in our Church.

FOCUS 1

Our heart and vision at CityLife is to see many people come to know Jesus as their saviour and also to see their lives transformed by the power of God. To facilitate this, our ministries will have a continual emphasis on the activities of Engage (‘reach out’) and Connect (‘raise up’).

FOCUS 1 is a practical way to reach out to our unchurched families and friends. FOCUS 1 simply means each person thinking about 1 person they know who is not yet a Christian and intentionally reaching out to them with the love of God in practical ways – to pray for them, to listen and hear their story, to share a

meal, to serve them in some way and, perhaps, to share the story of Jesus in our life. Focus 1 is not another program but a way of life and practices.

So, as part of our Engage activities, all Life Groups will be encouraging their members to make it a priority to intentionally focus on at least one unchurched person or family within their sphere of influence through a variety of ways i.e. it could be by praying for them, extending hospitality, doing acts of kindness, inviting them to some group social activities or church events.

We know that Jesus is the Transformer of people's lives. FOCUS 1 is an intentional strategy to reach out to one person at a time and share Christ with them, so they can experience this power of transformation.

Matt 18: 12 "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost?..."

BRIDGE GROUPS

Bridge groups are intentional groups constructed to invite unchurched people with the purpose of building relationships and the opportunity to either pray or share the gospel of Jesus Christ. These groups can be hobby based groups with like-minded people that does activities such as sports, coffee, biking, running and craft.

ONE2ONE – Personal Discipleship Guide

The One2One booklet is a guide for people who are discovering their journey with God. It is designed to encourage and help new believers to begin to learn who God is; how to have a relationship with him; and discover his plan.

This resource helps you to disciple new Christians, working with them through the Activities, Actions and Prayer responses found at the end of each chapter. Make a regular time to meet with them, encourage and pray for them, and take time to listen to what God is doing in the life of the individual and in their family. You do not have to do this alone - empower your members who are matured enough to disciple these individuals.

VOLUNTEERING

The church is like a body which has many different members with unique gifts and contributions to make. With busy lives, it can be hard to find time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering are enormous to you, your family, and your community. The right match can help you find friends, reach out to the community, learn new skills, and even advance your career.

There are so many areas for you to activate your potential and contribute to the work of the body. To learn more about each ministry below visit our website

- www.citylife.church/serve
- Register online or fill out a “Serve” form and hand it in at the Connect Desk on the weekend.

We would love to help you activate your gifts and potential into an area that suits.

“God will not forget your labour of love.” Hebrews 6:10.

One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to commit to a shared activity together. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, especially if you are new to an area.

MISSION ADOPTION

Cross cultural missions are a priority at CityLife and as a church we actively support missions workers in 10 regions of the world. Every Life Group is strongly encouraged to participate in this priority by actively supporting a worker through prayer, financial support (fundraising or giving) and/or going on a mission trip. The first step in all this is to adopt one of our missionaries.

Adopting a Missions Worker

Your Life Group can adopt a mission’s worker through the leaders section of the CityLife website.

- Go to www.citylife.church
- Click on “Sign In” on the top right, then click on “Leaders”. You will be prompted to login.

- Click on “Useful Links” and then “Missions Adoptions”
- Fill in the form and click “Submit”

Once you do this, the World Impact office or a missions Support Group Leader will contact you with further information about what your Life Group can do.

Finding Out More

Each of our missions workers have their own profile page where you can find out more about them, sign up for their newsletter and make a donation.

- Go to www.citylife.church/missionaries

* Note that to access workers in more sensitive regions of the world, you will be prompted to use your leaders sign-in.

All through the year, CityLife World Impact organises missions related events, like LIFETRAX missions courses, fundraising events, and major missions events like World Impact Week and International Night. To find out about these events, Go to www.citylife.church/world-impact and click on “What’s On” on the top right.

Staying Connected

Facebook – “CityLife World Impact”

“Like” us to keep updated on the latest news about missions at CityLife.

Missions Rep – appoint a person in your Life Group to liaise with World Impact or the support leader for your adopted missions worker. A missions rep’s role is to keep the group updated on relevant missions news and help to organise missions support activities like prayer, fundraising, and joining a CityLife missions trip.

Visiting Missionary – most of our missions workers visit Melbourne once every few years. When you get notice of this, organise a time for them to visit your Life Group and share.

Email / Skype – these are two great ways to connect with our missionaries to encourage them while they are on the field and to find out more about them. Contact the World Impact office for more information on how to do this.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the World Impact ministry on 9871 8300 or email world.impact@citylife.church



**PASTORAL
CARE**

PASTORAL CARE

Flowers For All Occasions

As a church family we recognise that there are many ways in which we can show our concern and support when our congregation members are experiencing difficult circumstances. Flowers are often an appropriate way of expressing our support as a church in these times and the following guidelines are written for these situations. All orders for flowers for CityLife congregation members (i.e. listed as part of CityLife Church database), are to be made via the appropriate Pastor.

It is appropriate to send flowers to members and partners of CityLife Church in the following situations:-

Births: birth of a child.

Deaths: death of an immediate family member. An “immediate” family member is defined as spouse, child, father/mother, brother/sister, grandparents or grandchildren. This will also include step children or parents.

Hospitalisations: overnight hospitalisation. This generally does NOT include day surgery.

Baby Dedications

The following should answer some common questions and give information for new parents about having their baby dedicated to God.

Children are a gift from God and baby dedications are a very special time for parents to dedicate their child to God and to declare that they will train their child in the ways of God.

Baby dedications are predominantly conducted once a term at our weekend services. To book in for a family service, please contact the church office on 9871 8300 or email pastoral@citylife.church

We also encourage baby dedications to be performed as part of a Life Group gathering or at a separate time where the parents can invite their friends, relatives and Life Group members to this special event. As Life Group Leaders, we would appreciate it if you could provide any assistance to your Life Group members in facilitating these events.

What are Baby Dedications?

Our children are a gift from God. Jesus was brought to the temple by Mary and Joseph to be prayed over and dedicated back to God. It is an acknowledgement that, even though this child is a gift from God, this is God's child and He will guide you as you raise this child before Him.

At this time, parents are also prayed over for wisdom and God's blessing as they honour Him in raising this child.

To dedicate your baby back to God is to declare that you will train this child in the ways of the Lord. You are placing this child in God's hands and trusting that He will be guiding you as you have asked Him to. It is acknowledging that this child is safer in the hands of the God than trying to do it alone without Him.

Is a Dedication a substitution for Baptism?

Baby dedication is an act of the parents, whereas Baptism is an act of the individual before God.

Baptism is something that is done by a believer with the full understanding of what they are doing, making a declaration and choice for themselves to take this obedient step in their walk with God.

A baby dedication is done by parents for the baby where the parents are placing the child in God's hands, and cannot be a substitute for something that is done by free will and choice of the child concerned (at some later date).

Weddings

Whilst people are naturally welcome to have any Marriage Celebrant officiate their wedding, they will usually request a pastor at the church. There are a number of pastors at CityLife who perform weddings as Registered Marriage Celebrants.

However, it is strongly advised that the couple make contact with the pastor before they book their Reception Centre, to prevent disappointment, in case the pastor they want is unavailable at that time.

Do encourage them to call the church and ask for a pastor who performs weddings. We encourage pre-marital counselling to be completed before the wedding. This process would be handled by the pastor officiating the wedding.

Weddings may be held at CityLife Church, however, there are limited times available due to the busy usage of the church building. In order to make arrangements to book a wedding at CityLife Church, they are to contact the church office.

House Blessings

Proverbs 24:3-4 (NLT) A house is built by wisdom and becomes strong through good sense. Through knowledge its rooms are filled with all sorts of precious riches and valuables.

The Bible teaches us that a home is far more than a physical structure. It's a place where we can experience a peaceful and restful atmosphere, where relationships are shaped, children are raised, plans are forged, responsibilities are carried out and where hospitality is extended.

Here are some practical ways we can dedicate our homes.

In the bedroom: pray for refreshing sleep.

Psalm 3:5 I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the LORD was watching over me.

Psalm 4:8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

In the kitchen: pray the promises of provision & strength.

Exodus 23:25 You must serve only the LORD your God. If you do, I will bless you with food and water, and I will protect you from illness.

In the living room: invite the Holy Spirit to fill the home & family life with the fullness of God's love & goodness.

Joshua 24:15 ...but as for me and our household, we will serve the Lord.

In the hall way & entrance: pray for safety in your comings and goings.

Deuteronomy 28:6 Lord you have said, wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be blessed.

As Life Group Leaders, we ask that you do this in liaison with your pastor who will be able to provide you some further appropriate guidelines.

PASTORAL MATTERS

Responsibility to Refer Pastoral Situations

There are a number of difficult situations that life group members may face that are beyond the responsibilities expectation of a life group or its leader. It is the responsibility of a life group leader to immediately refer to a pastoral staff when faced with the following situations:

Suicidal or suicidal thoughts

- Self-harm (predominantly amongst youth)
- Family violence
- Serious Marriage issue including potentially leading to divorce
- Physical abuse or inappropriate behaviour
- Sexual abuse or inappropriate behaviour, including Paedophilia activity
- Immoral activity
- Substance abuse
- Criminal activity (murder, theft, etc)
- Mental Health, including depression
- Financial borrowing difficulties
- Anything that could potentially drain a Life Group leader

Guidelines when faced with a crisis or death of a loved one

- Contact your pastor immediately.
- Clarify the situation - it is important not to over-react.
- You need to be sure it is a genuine crisis, and not a long-standing problem. Problems are solved differently.
- Try to stay calm yourself. Stay cool in the head and warm in your heart.
- Empathy is vital. People will trust you and can develop a genuine connectedness when empathy is shown.

If further assistance is needed, contact your pastor or CityLife Community Care.

Family Violence

CityLife Church takes Family Violence (FV) seriously and is committed to providing a safe place for all people, including victims of family violence and their dependants, across all of our congregations, services and worksites.

Family violence in all its forms including 'physical assault, harassment, emotional abuse, sexual assault, deprivation of resources, destruction of property or confinement clearly violate women's (and children's) rights to be free from violence' and it prevents and inhibits women and children's ability to realise other human rights (Burton, Duvvury and Varia (2000) pp 9).

Where a reasonable belief of family violence is reached either through observations, indirect admission, direct report, or some other means, the required procedure is to:
Encourage and support disclosure by the victim
Immediately refer the matter to a pastoral staff member, even if the victim is unwilling to seek assistance themselves.

If practical and possible, sensitively let the victim know that your responsibility as a leader requires you to immediately refer the situation to a pastoral staff member.

Depression

What is depression?

Depression is more than just a low mood, it is an illness. At times, we can all experience feelings of sadness, be moody or feel low, some people experience these feelings intensely, for long periods of time and often without any reason. During this time, those experiencing depression find it difficult to function each day and may be reluctant to participate in activities they previously have enjoyed.

It can be difficult knowing how to help someone who is experiencing depression.

Here are some tips:

- Listen to what the person is saying (often they may not be seeking your advice) but need a friendly ear to listen to their concerns.

- Talk to the person about how they are feeling.
- Use open-ended questions, e.g. “Tell me about ...?” which requires more than a yes or no answer. This is a good way to engage in conversation.
- If conversation becomes difficult or if the person becomes agitated or gets angry, stay calm, be firm and consistent.
- Often, spending time with the person lets them know that someone cares and wants to understand them. Encouraging the person is important and letting them know they are valued by you (others) and to God is important.
- This often is not an easy task and requires constant reminders.
- Avoid giving advice or telling them to “snap out of it”, “be grateful” or “have more faith.”
- Encourage the person to seek professional help.

Suicidal Thoughts

People who have suicidal thoughts are often experiencing emotional pain. They can see no other way to make this pain go away, and see suicide as the way to end their intense pain. People considering suicide usually communicate their intentions to others in some way. While everyone is individual, some common warning signs include:

- Talking about suicide and discussing their plan.
- Self-harming and/or prior suicide attempts.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Giving away possessions and putting affairs into order.
- Feelings of hopelessness.
- Unexplained crying.

There are many different reasons why someone would consider taking their life. **These can include:**

- Experiencing pain, loss or grief.
- Relationship breakdown or relationship stress.

- Feeling no one cares or understands.
- Feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope/inadequate.
- Depression or mental health issues.
- Being abused or experiencing bullying.
- Unemployment and/or financial issues.
- Substance abuse.
- Guilt and shame.

If you are concerned about the person's immediate safety, do not leave them alone. If you are on the phone with them, keep them talking, find out where they are and if anyone else is with them. Try to get a safety guarantee from them (that they will not harm themselves for the next 24 hours and will agree to seek help from a professional in that period). Please refer to Appendix for a list of Services and

Emergency Telephone Numbers.

It is important to take the suicide threat seriously and organise assistance and follow-up immediately.

Eating Disorders

There are a number of different forms of eating disorders which include:

Anorexia Nervosa characterised by severe restriction of food intake, a fear of getting fat and commonly a distorted body image.

Bulimia Nervosa characterised by a preoccupation with food and weight, often resulting in out of control eating patterns, which include binge eating or attempts to compensate for binges and avoid weight gain through self-induced vomiting, excessive exercise or periods of strict dieting.

Binge Eating Disorder characterised by periods of binge eating without compensatory behaviour such as vomiting or excessive exercise.

Determining if someone has an eating disorder can at times be difficult. The person will often be ashamed, defensive and secretive about their behaviour. If you have concerns that something is wrong, it is better to broach the topic with the person.

Communicate with them. Be honest and open regarding your concerns.

Assure them you are broaching the subject because of your concern for them. Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements (“You” statements can make the person feel they are being attacked).

Avoid using labelling or judgmental language. Instead focus on the person’s behavioural changes, rather than weight, food consumption or physical appearance.

Offer information (readily available from CityLife Community Care), so that the person has a brochure and list of services. Suggest they talk to a professional and seek further assistance.

HEALTHY MARRIAGES

Keeping a marriage healthy can be a challenge for many couples due to work, children and financial stress. Keys to success are:

- Maintain clear perspective. Don’t let the small things turn into big issues.
- Make major decisions as a couple. Don’t make major decisions without consulting your partner.
- Try to schedule regular dates and time together (this will keep the sizzle alive).
- Agree to disagree. There will be some things that, as a couple, will never be agreed upon by both parties.
- Passion works wonders - give it a priority and keep the sparkle alive.
- Trying to change the partners annoying behaviours or habits never works.
- Accept them for ‘who’ they are.
- Appreciate differences rather than find fault. Be quick to praise and

apologise.

- Support your spouse in disciplining children.
- Never criticise your spouse to the children.
- Agree to solve disagreements where/when children cannot hear.

When both partners are willing to work on the marriage, many issues can be overcome. A little maintenance is also helpful. Future strategies to build and enhance a marriage are available from CityLife Community Care.

Helping Families Under Pressure

When difficult financial circumstances fall upon a family or individual, there are a number of ways that practical support can be provided. Practical help to assist with the basic needs i.e. a meal prepared, grocery shopping, helping pay a utility bill.

Support through CityLife Community Care is available to assist with practical, financial and emotional needs. Practical help from close friends and Life Group members.

Saints Relief

This is provided to people of CityLife Church. It is an opportunity for the church to help those who have financial needs. Wise management of this facility is important when providing assistance so as not to make them feel dependant. Financial assistance in this area may be provided in the form of food vouchers or alternatively, household bills may be paid for other smaller appropriate financial needs, however this will need prior approval from a Pastor.

It is important to note that it is also CityLife church policy never to pay for people's credit card debts.

Barnabas Fund

Barnabas Fund is set up to help those who have significant financial challenges e.g. purchase of white goods, rental repayments or vehicle expenses etc.

PRAYER MINISTRY

This is a ministry specifically for those who may have ongoing challenges in their lives and have been through counselling or have sought to deal with their issues, but have become stuck in some way. This ministry is for Christians who are part of CityLife. It is neither deliverance nor prophetic ministry, but will include the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life as they are ministered to.

The team consists of a group of people who are gifted in this area and have real love for people and a high level of spiritual discernment being experienced in this area of ministry.

If you become aware of someone in your group who you feel would benefit from Prayer Ministry, and they want this ministry, then you need to first contact your Coach / Pastor to discuss it with them. They will then decide with you the next best course of action, whether it is a referral to CityLife Community Care or straight to Prayer Ministry.

Any questions about this area of ministry please discuss it with your Pastor.

ADMINISTRATION

As a Life Group Leader, there is some simple administration that you will need to do.

Life Group Report

The Life Group Report is a monthly report that includes information such as attendance at each meeting, a brief outline of the meeting format, new visitors and any other matters.

We appreciate your diligence in getting the monthly reports to your Pastor on time. These reports are very important as they keep us up-to-date with the progress of each group and enable us to see who is involved in a group on a regular basis.

Life Group Resource Centre

We have a dedicated Life Group Resource Centre which is set up specifically for Life

Group Leaders, Co-Leaders and Coaches.

The Centre is furnished with tables and chairs and may be used as a place to catch up with your Life Group members. Apart from being a meeting place, the Centre has the following resources:

- A dedicated photocopier
- Study Guides (DVDs/Manuals), books and Movie DVDs for loan
- Communion cups
- Anointing Oil
- Pastoral pamphlets/brochures/forms
- One-to-One booklet
- New Christian Packs
- Bibles
- Discussion Notes

For further information or suggestions to enhance our Centre, please contact your Pastor.

Forms and Links

CityLife Contact Information www.citylife.church/contact-info

Water Baptism Application www.citylife.church/baptism/apply

Partnership Application www.citylife.church/partnership/apply



**YOUTH
LIFE GROUP**

YOUTH LIFE GROUP

This section is for Youth Leaders as an addition to everything else in this handbook.

Life Group Leader and Co-Leader

The role of a life group leader and co-leader is primarily focussed on supporting and providing care for your Life Group members. This role involves overseeing between 5-15 people. Life group leaders and co-leaders are directly responsible to their Year Level Pastor as well as the Youth Pastor.

Life groups exist for the purpose of pastoral care, discipling, ministry development and evangelism. Life group leaders provide a healthy environment where these activities take place. Life group leaders also play a significant part in our corporate LIVE meetings by overseeing and connecting with the young people on any given night.

Your ministry as a life group leader takes place as you perform the following:

- **Calls/contact:** Calling/contacting your life group members on a regular basis to touch base with them communicate what is happening at EPIC Youth
- **Life Group Nights:** Once a fortnight leading a life group study and discussion
- **LIVE events:** Once a fortnight helping to assist with our corporate Youth meeting. Touching base with your life group members and also connecting with new people
- **Coaching:** Once a term with your Youth Pastor and/or your Year Level Pastor
- **Leaders meetings:** Once a term on a Saturday night after the PM2 service for training and updates

Your ministry as a Life Group Leader involves:

Pastoral care

Being a care giver to those in your life group

Empower and equip all youthers in your care to bring out and use their God-given gifts

Handing on any difficult situations to your Year Level Pastor and Network Pastor for further action

Church/LIVE event Support

Help connect people to life groups through church meetings and through LIVE events

Assist Youth Pastors at church services in areas of altar call support, hospitality, communion coordination, sign-up boards, etc. (when needed)

Accountability

The life group leader/s are accountable to the church leadership through displaying a teachable attitude, receiving input from their Year Level and Youth Pastor, developing their life and ministry, and being supportive of the vision and direction of the church.

Time Commitment

The life group leaders should make every effort to attend weekly church meetings, all major church events and all Leaders' Summits, as well as EPIC events on Friday nights. All EPIC events run from 7-9:30pm on Friday nights during the school term. A leadership requirement is from 6:30-10pm on those nights to include a leaders brief and pack up time.

Life Group Structure

The youth pastoral structure is set up a little differently. Life Groups typically consist of members from the same year level at school; as such every group that's in a particular year level is placed under the care of a pair of Year Level Pastors. Year Level Pastors are generally Youth Leaders who have a proven track record of leading Life Groups, growing them and multiplying them; plus coaching other Leaders. Each pair of Year Level Pastors oversees a network of Coaches, Leaders and Co-Leaders.

Life Group Meetings

Life Group meetings alternate with the youth corporate meetings, so are held up to two times a month on a Friday. However, if another day works better for you and your Life Group members, feel free to chat with the youth staff about having your meeting on a different day and time.

Tips for Facilitating a Life Group Meeting

Here are some general DO's and DON'TS to help you feel empowered and free to make your life group the best it can possibly be.

DO

Have FUN: It is so important that life group is a place of joy and fun for our youth. Of course we talk about God and life but we never want to lose the joy and craziness of being young. Judah Smith had a powerful reflection on his first few years of youth ministry when he said: I tried to turn our youth into adults with skinny jeans. His point was that it is ok to let teenagers be teenagers! So have fun and never apologize for doing so J

Tick off 3: The success of a Life Group night is not hinged upon whether your study went for 2 hours. We have 3 specific outcomes we want for every life group: LIFE, GOD and LOVE. LIFE speaks about connecting with each other and getting to know one another more through ice breakers, games and conversation. GOD speaks about looking at the Bible and reflecting on who God is and encountering Him through conversation and prayer. LOVE is about doing something different and changing

through prayer and goals. If you can honestly say you ticked these 3 things off then your night was awesome! If your GOD section only goes 10 minutes that is ok J
Know your AGE: Age is a massive factor! Year 7's probably won't have a DNM about evolution for 3 hours, Year 12's probably won't want to play charades for 2 hours. This is ok! Feel free to chat with your coach about ideas for connecting with your age more.

Pray TOGETHER: Empowering the youth to pray is so vital, no matter how simple they think their prayer is. A good template to remember is 4 F's: Faith, Family, Friends & Future. These are the foundational areas of life and are great to constantly pray over. We always needs prayer for at least one of these. Faith is our relationship with God including our prayer and Bible reading, Family is things at home, Friends include our Christian friends and those who don't know God yet, Future is our gifts and direction for where we are going.

DON'T

Do everything ALONE: You are not meant to do everything by yourself. In fact you exist to make your role obsolete (let the youth be empowered). So share the load. Get your youth in charge of different parts of your group (e.g. pick a game or icebreaker). There is power in releasing your youth to get involved.

Speak the whole TIME: You don't have to preach for 45 minutes. In fact the more conversation you can get going the better! Be sure to have lots of discussion questions (the study has a few but add your own). Make sure they are open ended and not closed (e.g. Yes or No questions).

Underestimate the LITTLE: Little things make a big difference. Never underestimate the small steps you're making. Even if you can't see the change, God is at work. So many groups who have had months and years of seemingly no change will testify about God turning things around in a moment. Even our little steps make a big impact.

Life Group Retreats or Activities

Anytime you want to organize an activity other than your normal Life Group meeting, you must obtain a signed permission slip from the parent(s) of each young person. A generic permission slip can be downloaded from the youth section of the church website. Please download this and update it with all the details of the activity that you're having; i.e. times, venue, details of activity. If you're watching a movie/ DVD, let their parents know what you'll be watching. Please take note of our "Movie Policy" before selecting what you watch. The same applies for video/console games to be played as a part of a Life Group activity.

It is your responsibility to ensure the safety of the young people under your care. If you are unsure about any activity that you or your kids want to do, the youth staff will be more than happy to chat with you about it.

If during the course of a regular Life Group night, you plan to take your group down to a local park, you will also need to let their parents know. A good idea is to get a blanket permission slip from their parent(s) right at the start of the year that gets consent for this in particular; e.g. "Permission to go to the local park during Life Groups in 2009".

Confidentiality

Trust is one of the foundations of good leadership. When people know that they can trust you with their circumstances, showing the utmost respect and sensitivity, they will allow you to minister to them at a deeper level than they would anyone else. This is both a great privilege and responsibility.

A large part of this trust comes from knowing that you will always keep your word. Occasionally, a situation may arise where a person will come to you and ask you to promise to keep a secret that they are about to tell you. It is extremely important that you do not make such a promise as they may then reveal to you a situation that is beyond your qualifications or responsibility to handle. Instead, reassure them that you have their best interests at heart and therefore, if you feel that they need more help than you can provide, you will need to let a Pastor know so that they can receive the help they need. Reassure them also, that you will protect their privacy and only tell their situation to a Pastor.

Pastoral Issues

As Leaders, we are required by law to report any suspicion of physical abuse or sexual abuse. In June 1993, the Victorian Government introduced an amendment to the Children's and Young Persons Act. This amendment, known as the Children and Young Persons (Further Amendment) Act 1993, mandates certain professionals to report to Child Protection Victoria suspected cases of child physical and sexual abuse. These professionals are required to report, when in the course of practicing their profession, they form the belief, based on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection as a result of physical, sexual abuse or neglect. The mandated professional must notify Child Protection Victoria of that belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as possible after forming the belief and/or after each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for that belief. Youth Leaders (as youth workers) fall into this category.

When confronted with an issue, here are some appropriate steps to follow:

- Listen to their story without judging, jumping to conclusions or feeling sorry for them, show empathy (consider what it would be like to be in their shoes right now). Endeavour to show them Christ's love which is unconditional.
- Don't feel pressured to come up with solutions.
- Don't be too quick to tell your story, keep the focus on how they must be feeling (help them name the feelings, i.e. guilty, scared, angry, sad etc).
- Re-assure them of your trust and commitment. Don't promise what you cannot deliver.
- If the situation falls into the category where you have to inform your oversight, help them to realise this, and that this is the best course for them to receive the help they need.

Serious Depression / Suicidal Thoughts

Any issue of suicide (whether it be self-harm, notes or talk about suicide) must be taken seriously and the information immediately taken straight to a Pastor so that help can be found.

Life Group Discussion

Youth Life Groups have a set curriculum planned out for the entire year; this curriculum is loosely based upon the weekend service topics. At the start of every term, all the discussions/studies for that term will be made available to you so that you can plan what to do ahead of time. The more you prepare, the more confident you'll feel in leading the discussion and the more your Life Group members will get out of it.

Please make every effort to follow these studies; feel free to create your own study based on the same topic. If however, there is a completely separate topic that is immediately relevant to your Life Group and you feel that it is a topic that needs to be covered, you can create your own study and have that discussion (or series of discussions). Run it by the youth staff so that we know that that's what you're planning to do and possibly offer you additional thoughts and resources to help you.

After you've completed your extra-curricular topic, please return to doing the normal studies that we set out. This helps us to know and ensure exactly what our young people learn in their journey with us.

Life Group Reports

Please submit your Life Group Report after every Life Group meeting before the following Monday.

CityLife Contact Information Form

The Youth Department has its own Contact Information Form for young people to fill in. It is located on the church website at www.citylife.church/contact-info/youth



**SERVICE & EMERGENCY
NUMBERS &
POLICIES**

SERVICES AND EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMBULANCE, FIRE, POLICE 000

In a life threatening or time critical emergency
Digital Mobile Phone Emergency Service

If you are calling from a digital mobile outside your own provider's network coverage area, you can dial **112** as an alternative to 000.

You may not be able to access 112 from your phone or if you are outside all network coverage areas.

LIFELINE 24 HRS	13 11 14
SUICIDE LINE	1300 651 251
KIDS HELP LINE 24 HRS	1800 551 800
GAMBLING HELP LINE 24 HRS	1800 858 858
MENS LINE AUSTRALIA 24 HRS	1300 789 978
PARENTLINE 24 HRS	13 22 89
WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS	1800 015 188
NURSE ON CALL	1300 606 024

A phone service that provides immediate expert health advice from a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE **13 11 26**

24hr advice on all exposures to poisons, medicines, plants, bites/stings

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) - CHILD PROTECTION

Assists children and young people at risk of harm or where families are unable or unwilling to protect them. They investigate allegations of child harm, refer children and families to services, deal with legal issues and provide accommodation services for children and adolescents.

After Hours **13 12 78**

During business hours – Eastern Suburbs **1300 360 391**

(Eastern Suburbs covers Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges)

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) - CHILD FIRST

Provides support and assistance to vulnerable children, young people and their families where there are concerns about the wellbeing of the child or young person. They can provide guidance in deciding whether to make a report to Child Protection or to refer to Child First.

Knox, Maroondah **1300 369 146**

Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse **1300 762 125**

POLICIES

CityLife Church has various policies that support and govern our pastoral care and ministries. As leaders it is important to be familiar with these policies. Below is a brief description and link to our policies.

Life Group leaders are expected to be familiar and comply with the following Policies and Procedures:

POLICY	DESCRIPTION
Child Protection	Contains guidelines to protect children in our care.
Child Protection Code of Conduct	A list of do's and dont's when caring for children
Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage	Contains guidelines concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage.
Movies	Sets out the guidelines for movies that are considered acceptable viewing at official CityLife activities (Youth, Life Group, etc.) within CityLife Church.
Alcoholic Beverages	Serves to govern the serving and consumption of alcohol at official CityLife activities.
Business Promotion Within CityLife	Provides guidelines for the conducting of business within the church community in and around church activities, to protect unity, to preserve the foundation and integrity of relationships and to safeguard the church community from business pressures when participating in church activities.
Privacy	Contains guidelines about collection and use of an individual's personal information and details.
Family Violence Policy	Outlines best practise when family violence is likely to have occurred, there is reasonable suspicion of it having occurred, or is reported, either directly or indirectly. Available on the Leaders webpage only.

All these policies are accessible through our Leaders Area on the church website – www.citylife.church/leaders

CHILD PROTECTION

[Click here for the full policy](#)

This policy is accessible through our Leaders Area on the church website

- www.citylife.church/leaders

Child Protection Code of Conduct

[Click here for the code of conduct](#)

This policy is accessible through our Leaders Area on the church website

- www.citylife.church/leaders

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

[Click here for the full policy](#)

After much prayer, study of the Scriptures and discussion, the Board of Elders of CityLife Church have agreed to the following policy, which contains guidelines concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage.

Marriage

We believe that marriage is ordained by God to be a life-long, exclusive partnership between a man and a woman. This relationship is to be characterised by loving care, friendship, sexual intimacy and commitment.

CityLife Marriage Celebrants may perform a marriage ceremony provided the following criteria/conditions are met:-

1. The persons involved have fulfilled all the requirements of the laws of the Commonwealth of Australia and have reached the age of 18; and
2. A "Notice of Intention to Marry" form has been completed, at least one month and one day prior to marriage; and
3. Before agreeing to perform the ceremony the celebrant must have met with the couple to review the CityLife policy on marriage and divorce and must have completed a pastoral checklist regarding any current concerns or any issues arising from past relationships and discussed these with the couple.

4. The couple have completed a pre-marital preparation program as approved by CityLife.
5. The couple are of a different gender and living the appropriate lifestyle as defined by their genetic make-up.

In the event that these criteria are met and;

- a. neither party has been previously married and
- b. both are Christians

then CityLife Marriage Celebrants may perform the wedding ceremony. CityLife Church Marriage Celebrants would not ordinarily perform a marriage ceremony when only one of the parties is a Christian.

CityLife Church Marriage Celebrants may consider performing a marriage ceremony in the following situations:-

1. When both parties are not practising Christians, provided the ceremony is consistent with this policy and they both understand and accept the sacredness of the marriage relationship.
2. When either or both parties have been divorced and have met the criteria for remarriage (see the "Remarriage" section of these guidelines).

Marriage Conflict

The church is committed to the preservation of quality marriage relationships and as such will do all that it can to assist couples that are experiencing conflict to work through the issues. The church will not encourage divorce but will seek to work towards restoration and reconciliation of all marriage conflict. We believe that divorce was never God's intention for any marriage relationship and when marriage conflict occurs, forgiveness and reconciliation should be pursued, and both parties should make every effort to preserve the marriage.

1. If the married couple are not able to resolve their issues, pastoral care and counselling with appropriate accountability are recommended.

2. If one or both parties demonstrate an unwillingness to work on their issues and there is a lack of repentance or evidence of change, then loving confrontation and even church discipline may be appropriate.
3. In some situations, separation for a period of time may be appropriate, with the aim of eventual restoration of the marriage.

Divorce

We believe that God never mandates divorce and requires married couples to make every effort to resolve conflict, reconcile and live at peace. However, when marriage vows have been broken without evidence of repentance, there can be scriptural grounds for divorce, including marital unfaithfulness (Matt.19:9) and desertion (1 Cor.7:12-15).

In the event of a couple choosing to divorce, the church will offer support for both individuals. We acknowledge that divorce makes public and permanent the actual breakdown of the marriage, which has already occurred, often due to the hard-heartedness of one or both parties. While we believe that divorce is never God's ideal, the church will still aim to assist each person affected by divorce to move towards a place of healing and personal restoration.

Remarriage

If someone who has been divorced desires to marry again, a remarriage would be considered based on the following conditions:

1. Every effort has been made to resolve the previous marriage issues and the relationship is now beyond repair.
2. The person has repented of all personal sins that may have contributed towards the break-up of their previous marriage.
3. The person has given their best effort to address all obligations in regard to their former marriage (including divorce settlement, asset distribution, child support arrangements, etc).
4. The person did not divorce his or her previous spouse in order to immediately pursue another relationship.
5. An appropriate period of time has passed since the divorce.

6. The person undergoes pastoral counselling and engages with an approved pre-marital counselling course, to ensure that no destructive relational patterns are left unaddressed.
7. The person makes a firm commitment by God's grace to make their new marriage one that honours God.
8. The celebrant is made fully aware of the background of both parties and is willing to marry the couple. This may necessitate some contact with the former spouse by the celebrant or pastoral counsellor and would be handled with appropriate sensitivity to the uniqueness of each situation.

All remarriage is to be accepted as a valid marriage in the same way and by the same standards as apply to a first marriage.

MOVIES

[Click here for the full policy](#)

In view of the values of the church and its responsibility to uphold these values through keeping certain standards, the following guidelines will apply to all official church activities conducted at any church premises or as part of these activities in homes or other locations. By doing this, the Church seeks to be a positive example of these values to its congregation and the community.

Children's Ministry – New Born to Year 4

Only movies with a rating of General (G) will be considered within the acceptable range of movies to be viewed subject to the following additional criteria:-

the specific movie must first be approved by the Children's Pastor after personally viewing the movie and investigating reports on the content of the movie from a suitable Christian website. (To this end, the Children's Ministry will issue to SLT and the children's leaders a list of movies which it has approved for viewing.) where possible, the title of the movie is to be advertised prior to the screening at the event, so that parents are informed.

the specific movie must not contain scenes involving any nudity, sexual references, drug references, gratuitous violence, bad language, occultic themes or practices. Under no circumstances may any leader show or take children in their care as part of a Children's ministry activity to a movie rated above a 'G' rating.

Children's Ministry – Years 5 and 6

Only movies with ratings of General (G) or Parental Guidance (PG) will be considered within the acceptable range of movies to be viewed subject to the following additional criteria:-

the specific movie must first be approved by the Children's Pastor after personally viewing the movie and investigating reports on the content of the movie from a suitable Christian website. (To this end, the Children's Ministry will issue to SLT and the children's leaders a list of movies which it has approved for viewing.)
where possible, the title of the movie is to be advertised prior to the screening at the event, so that parents are informed.

the specific movie must not contain scenes involving any nudity, sexual references, drug references, gratuitous violence, bad language, occult themes or practices. Under no circumstances may any leader show or take children in their care as part of a Children's ministry activity to a movie rated above a 'PG' rating.

EPIC Youth Junior High – Years 7 to 9

Only movies with ratings of General (G) or Parental Guidance (PG) will be considered within the acceptable range of movies to be viewed subject to the following additional criteria:-

the specific movie must first be viewed personally and approved by the EPIC Pastor after investigating the content via a suitable Christian website. Also the movie must be approved by the parents of those to whom the movie is to be shown. (To this end, the Youth Ministry will issue to SLT and the leaders a list of movies which it has approved for viewing by EPIC age youth. For movies on this list only parental consent is required for specific screenings.)
where possible, the title of the movie is to be advertised prior to the screening at the event, so that parents are informed.

the specific movie must not contain scenes involving nudity, sexual references, drug references, gratuitous violence, frequent bad language, occult themes or practices. Under no circumstances may any leader show or take their Life Group or any EPIC youth to a movie rated for Mature (M) audiences.

EPIC Youth Senior High – Years 10 to 12

Only movies with ratings of General (G), Parental Guidance (PG) or Mature (M) will be considered within the acceptable range of movies to be viewed subject to the following additional criteria:-

the specific movie must first be personally viewed and approved by the EPIC Pastor after investigating the content via a suitable Christian Website. Also the parents of those to whom the movie is to be shown must approve of the movie. (To this end, the Youth Ministry will issue to SLT and the leaders a list of movies which it has approved for viewing by EPIC age youth. For movies on this list only parental consent is required for specific screenings.) where possible, the title of the movie is to be advertised prior to the screening at the event, so that parents are informed. the specific movie must not contain scenes involving nudity, frequent sexual references, drug references, gratuitous violence, frequent bad language, occult themes or practices.

Under no circumstances may any leader show or take their Life Group or any EPIC youth to a movie rated for Mature Adult (MA) or Restricted (R) audiences. Any movie carrying a G, or a PG rating movie may be viewed by EPIC age youth subject to the above criteria; however, it is required practice to inform the EPIC Pastor and parents of youth involved prior to the screening. If specific parents express concern, this is to be discussed with the EPIC pastor.

Young Adults

Only movies with ratings of General (G), Parental Guidance (PG), Mature (M) or Mature Audiences (MA) will be considered within the acceptable range of movies to be viewed subject to the following additional criteria:-

the specific movie must first be viewed and approved by the Young Adults Pastor after investigating the content via a suitable Christian website. (To this end, the Young Adults Ministry will issue to SLT and the leaders a list of movies which it has approved for viewing at Young Adults activities.)

the specific movie must not contain scenes involving nudity, frequent sexual references, drug references, gratuitous violence, frequent bad language, occult themes or practices.

Under no circumstances may any leader show or take their Life Group or any Young Adults youth to a movie.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

[Click here for full policy](#)

No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed anywhere on CityLife Church property or leased facilities or served or consumed as part of any CityLife Church sponsored event (see above). The only exception to this policy applies to events held offsite (i.e. a private home for a Life Group social gathering) being to allow for situations where a visitor or guest is unaware of this policy if the context of the situation allows for this exception - this would be determined by the leader of the event at the time).

Any leader who oversees a CityLife sponsored event (see above) and does not fulfil all of these requirements will be spoken to personally by the appropriate staff ministry leader, in liaison with their Head of Department and/or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) representative, and appropriate action will be taken. Violations may merit a warning, a suspension from leadership for an appropriate period of time or dismissal from leadership, depending on the seriousness of the situation. Each incident will be considered on a case by case basis.

BUSINESS PROMOTION WITHIN CITYLIFE

[Click here for full policy](#)

It is our desire to create a safe place for people to experience church life as part of our church family. We believe that people generally expect that church should not be a place where business is conducted and nor do we want to engender an environment where the motive for relationship is potentially influenced, or perceived to be influenced, by business opportunities. Therefore, we expect that people attending CityLife Church activities (such as weekend services, Life Group meetings, events, etc.) would not use these activities for any business-related purposes.

The Church and its activities is not generally an appropriate arena in which business is to be promoted for personal gain. The Church does not promote business dealings within its congregation, and bears no responsibility for professional advice, business enquiries or transactions occurring between individuals at any time or at any church activities. In terms of personal conduct, CityLife believes that:

All business should be conducted in a manner worthy of our Christian witness and values.

The contact details of CityLife members, visitors and staff are to be used only for the purpose for which they were originally supplied to CityLife, in strict compliance with the CityLife Privacy Policy. The church community is not to be viewed as a marketplace for the personal promotion of goods and services.

A direct approach to others in the church community with the intent of selling or promoting products or services is not an appropriate use of contacts made within the church. This includes approaches made in any form including electronic or by phone. The official activities of the church are not an appropriate place to be seeking or providing professional advice or engaging in business enquires.

The official activities of the church are not a suitable forum for significant commercial product deliveries between members.

CityLife Church will promote certain business activities, products and services where it is considered that these are primarily for the benefit of members and other attendees and are within the boundaries of their reasonable expectations of a church to do so. The activities will include, but not be limited to Conferences (including promotional material within policy guidelines), product/resources by visiting ministries, services provided by CityLife Community Care and Waverley Christian College.

Notify the Business Manager or a pastoral staff member if you are aware of any breach of these guidelines.

Breaches of this policy will be investigated by a suitable staff member or appointed leader as soon as practical upon it coming to the notice of the church leadership. Appropriate disciplinary action can be taken where a person is found to have breached any CityLife policy, including but not limited to this policy.

Activities and Fundraising in Life Groups

As a general guideline, fundraising in Life Groups is not encouraged. However, if you do feel the need to fund raise for a particular cause, e.g. a Life Group member going on a church organised missions trip, we would then ask that you seek prior approval from your Pastor before initiating any fund raising. The following is the activity approval process that you need to follow if planning any activities:

BACKGROUND

CityLife Church is committed to reaching the community with relevant and fun activities. There is an element of risk involved in any activity, and some children's and youth activities particularly may be perceived as having a higher level of risk, given that they are generally less risk averse than adults. CityLife recognises the need for everyone, including children and youth, to have fun in their programs but also recognises the need for this to be done in a safe environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

CityLife Church values the safety of its employees and members, and requires that the activities and events under its control are carefully planned and run in a safe manner, so as to minimise any risk of injury to participants.

Normal activities are those that are conducted on Church owned or leased premises, a normal life group venue or meeting format (including normal social event eg meal in restaurant), and involve people attending meetings where there is limited physical exertion and are safe from personal harm caused by impact or exposure to other persons, objects, hazardous substance or structures. Eg: All Celebrations Service activities, LIFETRAX.

The following procedures must be undertaken when planning activities other than those deemed as normal.

1. Network Pastors or appropriate ministry staff eg World Impact or Youth to complete Activity Risk Assessment Work Sheet in consultation with the coordinator of the activity or Life Group leader.
2. The Head of Department must approve any activity or event that requires any controlled solutions resulting from the Activity Risk Assessment.
3. A copy of the Activity Risk Assessment must be provided to both the PA of the Business Manager and Building Services Department for approval by CityLife's Insurers. The Building Services Department may assist with this risk assessment, but the overall responsibility remains with the relevant Ministry Leader including implementation of any risk management strategies and monitoring the activity on the day.

4. If the activity is fully approved by the insurers without any limitations, it may be undertaken once all Solutions have been discussed with the Head of Department.
5. If the activity is approved by the insurer(s) but with restrictions placed upon it, it may be undertaken once discussed and approved by the Head of Department and the SLT representative.
6. If the activity is declined by the insurers, but the department still wishes to undertake the event, the Head of Department may ask their SLT representative to take the event to SLT to request special approval. Note: In this instance, CityLife would be taking all risk on itself. As such, approval is likely to only be given in unique circumstances.
7. If the activity is being held off-site, or on-site but has higher than "normal" risks attached, an indemnity form must be completed by the child/youth's parent/guardian if the participant is under 18 years of age, or the participant if they are 18 years of age or older.

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 citylife.church/life-groups

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 **CityLife** Church