

WITH ANSWERS



FALL 2014 LAUNCH

ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH

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# WELCOME

Greetings-

Welcome to the Lifegroups Launch and the Fall 2014 Season! We went out of our way to make this the most exciting, different launch ever. If you were looking for an opportunity to go through the Lifegroup training materials again, then you are really going to hate this launch! But if you want to play some games, get to meet and connect with some other Lifegroup leaders, and learn a few (we mean just a few) things that will help with Weird: Because Normal Isn't Working, then you are in the right place. Hopefully you already got something to eat. If you didn't, stop reading now and go get something.

We are so thankful to have you on the Lifegroups team. We are a family working together to make a real, eternal impact in the lives of others for Christ. Thank you for being the church.

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'Jeff' and the second is 'Michael'.

Pastor Jeff, Michael, and the Lifegroups team.

## THE LIFEGROUPS TEAM



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## WHY ARE LIFEGROUPS IMPORTANT?

*The purpose of Lifegroups at Abundant Life is...  
...to connect the unconnected to a place of growth.*

## KEY DATES

Fall Lifegroups in Session	October 5 <sup>th</sup> – December 6 <sup>th</sup>
Worship Night	November 19 <sup>th</sup>
Lifegroups at Rest	December 6 <sup>th</sup> – January 25 <sup>th</sup>
Women's Christmas Event	Saturday December 7 <sup>th</sup>
Winter Lifegroup Registrations Due	Monday January 5 <sup>th</sup>
Winter Lifegroup Sign-ups Begin	Sunday January 11 <sup>th</sup>
"Ladies Night" – Women's Event	Tuesday January 20 <sup>th</sup>
Spring Lifegroups in Session	January 25 <sup>th</sup> – April 4 <sup>th</sup>
Lifegroups at Rest	April 4 <sup>th</sup> – May 10 <sup>th</sup>
Men's Summit	April 17-18 <sup>th</sup>
Women's Tea	Saturday, April 25 <sup>th</sup>
Spring Lifegroup Sign-ups Begin	Sunday April 19 <sup>th</sup>
Spring Lifegroups in Session	May 10-July 4 <sup>th</sup>
Lifegroup Summer Break	July and August

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT LIFEGROUP LEADER

1. PERFECTION is not the goal - LOVE is the goal

*"If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing." - 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NLT)*

Great Lifegroup Leaders possess...

1. a sincere LOVE OF GOD
2. a genuine LOVE OF PEOPLE
3. a commitment to CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*"We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's good news but our own lives, too." - 1Thessalonians 2:8 (NLT)*

*Thank you for being a GREAT Lifegroup Leader!*

## LEADING A WEIRD LIFEGROUP

### WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

*“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” - Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV)*

The Normal Life leads to stress, overwork, living paycheck to paycheck, lust, broken marriages, and an absence of God in our lives.

God does not call us to NORMAL. He calls us to be WEIRD.

This study will challenge us to follow Jesus and risk being Weird in a God kind of way.

### BREAKDOWN OF THE SIX SESSIONS

Session One: The God Kind of Weird

Session Two: It's Time to Be Weird

Session Three: Weird That Money Can't Buy

Session Four: Pleasing God is Weird

Session Five: Weird Makes You Truly Sexy

Session Six: The Weirdest Blessing Possible

## HOW TO USE THE WEIRD STUDY GUIDE

**Checking In:** Each week (after the first session) this section will ask a couple of questions to encourage group members to think back to the lessons from the previous week. It's a great way to get started.

**Video:** Each week you will watch a short video teaching on the topic to be discussed. The videos are approximately 17 min. long.

**Group Discussion:** These are questions designed to help the group engage in conversation together. The first half of questions will reflect on the teaching from the video. The second half of questions will connect directly to a passage of scripture. The last questions will draw out personal applications.

**Individual Activity:** Take some time for this each week. This section is designed for your group members to personally reflect on the topic being discussed. This is to be done as an individual not as a group.

**Prayer:** Also take some time to pray together to close each meeting.

**Between-Sessions:** This is a series of study tools and exercises designed for group members to use during the week. Encourage your group members to take advantage of this. This helps people develop the habit of a regular quiet time.



## WHEN TO SUB-GROUP

Sub-grouping is breaking into SMALLER groups within the same LOCATION

It's a good idea to sub-group:

1. When the group is large to promote greater participation.
2. During prayer time, so everyone has time to share.
3. Into gender specific groups when covering certain topics beyond the scope of your group.
4. Session 5 of Weird is the perfect time to subgroup by gender.

## WHAT IS RIGHTNOW MEDIA

RightNow Media is an awesome, Online Streaming Video Library Resource for our Church. Think of it as Christian Netflix. It is also our video distribution channel for Weird: Because Normal Isn't Working Session Videos. Setting-up to stream RightNow to your television will provide benefits for not only this season, but future seasons as well, and it is a tremendous resource to have available for your whole family.

Abundant Life Church has partnered with RightNow to make this resource available to our entire church family.

The first step is to setup your account by following the directions in your invitation email. We can resend that email if you did not receive it. Please let us know at [groups@alcpdx.com](mailto:groups@alcpdx.com) and we will send another invite.

## HOW TO ACCESS RIGHTNOW MEDIA

### How to Access RightNow Media

After setting up your account, you will have a login and password that you can use to access RightNow Media. The next step is establishing connectivity to your television so that you can show the videos at your Lifegroup. There are lots of ways to do this:

1. If you have a SmartTV, you may be able to install the RightNow App directly on your television and play from that app, similar to how a Netflix app works on SmartTVs.
2. Possibly the easiest way is to use a laptop with HDMI and connect directly to an open HDMI port on your TV with an HDMI cable. This will create mirroring onto the TV and whatever is displayed on your laptop will be displayed on the TV as well when you select that HDMI input on the television.
3. You can use a streaming media device like a Roku, AppleTV, or Chromecast to stream Rightnow. They connect to your home network wirelessly and plug directly into your television.

If you have an older television you may need to use a DVD to get the Weird: Because Normal Isn't Working study. DVDs are widely available online for purchase and we would suggest asking your Lifegroup members to each chip in a couple dollars towards the price of the DVD.

1. **Active Listening:** Communicating to someone that you hear what they are saying so they feel heard and understood.

*"...everyone should be quick to listen..." - James 1:19B (NIV)*

It's early in the Lifegroup season and you noticed that a couple of people in the group have opened up a little bit and shared a little bit about their personal story, but the conversation seemed to quickly move on to a new topic. You don't feel like the people who risked sharing from their lives were acknowledged or fully heard by others in the group. As the leader what are some ways that you can demonstrate and practice active listening so everyone in the Lifegroup feels like their story and input is valued and heard?

2. **Asking Good Questions:** There are two types of questions you should ask during your group meetings. They are questions that: Discover more information (information exchange), or explore experience (thoughts, feelings, etc.).

*"The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but a person with understanding draws them out." - Proverbs 20:5 (NIV)*

As you get into the discussion part of the Lifegroup you are feeling like the conversation is staying on the surface. People are responding to study questions with simple one word answers or simply not responding to the questions at all. What are some ways that you can encourage your Lifegroup to open up? Specifically what are some types of questions you can ask to encourage a more honest or deeper response from Lifegroup participants?

**3. Giving and Receiving Feedback:** This is noticing and expressing what you think, feel or perceive about someone for their benefit and awareness. This feedback can be either positive or negative.

*"It's better to heed a wise man's rebuke than listen to the song of fools."*  
- Ecclesiastes 7:5 (NIV)

Anytime a group of people gather together conflict is inevitable. As you get into the Lifegroup season you are feeling that one of the group members is being disruptive when other people are sharing. He/she is interrupting or talking over people in the group. What are some ways that you can approach this group member in order to give feedback?

On the flip side a person in the Lifegroup approaches you to offer you feedback or criticisms on how you lead the group. He/she feels like you are not valuing the input and sharing of group members during the discussion time. How can you respond to this feedback in a positive way?

*\*Information taken from ReGroup: training groups to be groups, Henry Cloud, Bill Donahue, and John Townsend, 2007.*

## SCHEDULE FOR THE WEIRD SEASON

Don't underestimate the importance of starting the season with an Intro and Welcome Week. Don't rush into the study! Use the first week of your Lifegroup season to:

- Get to know each other or reconnect with each other
- Get to know anyone who is new to your Lifegroup
- Discuss key dates for the season
- Review the Lifegroup Participant Covenant together
- Delegate! Assign group responsibilities and create Lifegroup Coordinators

### EXAMPLE LIFEGROUP SEASON SCHEDULE

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Week 1:	Intro and Welcome Week & Review Group Covenants
Week 2:	Study Session 1
Week 3:	PLAY WEEK
Week 4:	Study Session 2
Week 5:	Study Session 3
Week 6:	Study Session 4
Week 7:	Study Session 5
Week 8:	Study Session 6
Week 9:	End of Season Party

- *Please note that you are encouraged to insert weeks as needed for SERVE / PLAY activities. This just one example of how to create a season schedule – each Lifegroup's schedule may vary.*

# LIFEGROUP PARTICIPANT COVENANT

Leader(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Day and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

A *Lifegroup* is a small community of people who meet regularly for a season to make new friends, care for one another, and help each other grow to be more like Jesus as they **STUDY**, **PRAY**, **SERVE**, and **PLAY** together.

Each meeting we will discuss and **STUDY** an appropriate personal or spiritual growth topic. We will take the time to share prayer requests and **PRAY** for each other.

Lifegroups will **SERVE** the needs of the church or community at least once per season. A primary purpose of Lifegroups is to grow relationships. Lifegroups will have a week set aside for a fun activity to **PLAY** together at least once over the course of the season. The purpose of the Lifegroups ministry is to connect the unconnected to an environment of growth.

## We will be studying

\_\_\_\_\_

Please get these materials as soon as possible.

## Childcare is: (circle one)

Not provided -- available at a cost of \_\_\_\_ per child, per week --

-- provided by the church at HV campus during a service --

-- Lifegroup members rotate responsibility -- children meet with the Lifegroup

**Healthy Lifegroups Commit to** make spiritual growth a priority, care for other members of the Lifegroup, treat others in the Lifegroup with acceptance and respect, make the Lifegroup a top priority in their schedule, pursue authentic relationships within the Lifegroup, do any homework or study on time, and keep confidentiality within the Lifegroup a high value.

Your Lifegroup should be important, but health, family, and work are all more important. If I can't make a meeting I will let my leader know.

**I agree to this commitment.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## FALL LIFEGROUP SERVE PROJECTS

*"A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves." - Luke 22:24-27 (NIV)*

Jesus defines greatness as SERVING

Lifegroups help people live GREAT lives for Jesus.

### GLOBAL SERVE PROJECT: SUITCASES FOR UGANDA

The orphans we sponsor in Uganda have a tremendous opportunity to attend school. These children have very little and their belongings can all fit into one suitcase. However, most often they don't even have this. One piece of hard-sided luggage would be incredibly helpful to these students for storage and transportation. It would be used as a "dresser" of sorts. Donations will be shipped with previous clothing donations on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Ask your Lifegroup leader for details about being a part of this project.

### LOCAL SERVE PROJECT: ANGEL TREE

Angel Tree Ministries reaches out to the children of those in prison and their families with the love of Christ. With the permission of the inmate, Angel Tree gathers the names and addresses of the children and distributes them to local churches. This year our Lifegroups will have the opportunity to participate in this outreach. Participating groups will receive the names of inmates' children in our area and will purchase, wrap, and deliver a Christmas gift for each child on behalf of their parent. Talk with your Lifegroup leader about your group participating in Angel Tree this year. More information will be coming in October.

## FALL LIFEGROUP SERVE GOALS

Global Serve Goal: 600 hard cased suitcases for Uganda

Local Serve Goal: 160 Angel Tree kids delivered gifts for Christmas

Don't forget the socks! Abundant Life also wants to collect 25,000 pairs of socks for distribution in our local communities.



## LIFEGROUP LEADER EXPECTATIONS

*What am I supposed to do as a leader anyway?*

### **Before Sign-ups Begin:**

- Organize the basic Lifegroup details (think who, what, where, why)
- Register the Lifegroup online at [alcpdx.com/startgroup](http://alcpdx.com/startgroup)  
*This gives the Lifegroups team all the details for listing in the catalog*

### **Sign-ups (about 3 weeks):**

- Invite people to your Lifegroup
- Follow-up with all sign-ups by phone and e-mail within 24 hours
- Plan the first meeting and a season schedule
- Begin contact with your Support Team Member
- Don't lead alone – secure a coordinator(s) for your Lifegroup
- Send a reminder e-mail out the week before your Lifegroup meets

### **In Session (about 8-12 weeks):**

- Facilitate regular Lifegroup meetings
- Be prepared. You don't have to know everything, just stay one step ahead
- Send weekly prayer request e-mails and meeting reminder e-mails to the Lifegroup
- Make sure to faithfully lead your Lifegroup to SERVE and PLAY during the season
- Identify potential leaders within my Lifegroup and give them opportunities to step up and coordinate parts of the Lifegroup
- Take attendance for your Lifegroup in Groups Manager
- Communicate off-ramps. Let your people know it's okay to switch groups
- Stay in contact with your Support Team Member
- Start planning for next season

### **At Rest:**

- Communicate the plan for next season by letting my Support Team Member know
- Let my Support Team Member know who in my group is preparing to lead next season
- Share a story from my Lifegroup's season at [alcpdx.com/mystory](http://alcpdx.com/mystory)

## LIFEGROUP LEADER COVENANT (REFERENCE ONLY)

As an Abundant Life Church Lifegroup leader, I commit to the following:

1. I am an active member of Abundant Life Church and living out the membership covenant. If not yet a member, I will attend the next available membership class.
2. I will strive to worship God daily by attending weekend services and practicing spiritual habits that draw me closer to God. (Matthew 22:36-40)
3. I will strive to live a life of service by caring for the members of my group and leading my group to SERVE together once during the season. (John 13:13-15)
4. I will strive to share the hope of Jesus by sharing my story with others and regularly inviting them to attend church and my group. (Matthew 28:18-20)
5. I will strive daily to grow in my faith by spending time in God's Word and in prayer. (Psalm 1:1-3, 1Thessalonians 5:17)
6. I will give generously and sacrificially of my finances first to the church and then to other needs as God leads me. (Malachi 3:8-10)
7. I will honor the Lifegroup seasonal strategy and lead my group one season at a time.
8. I will lead my group to STUDY, PRAY, SERVE, and PLAY together each season.
9. I will encourage my group members to take their next spiritual steps and strive to raise up new leaders in my group.
10. I will stay in regular contact with the Lifegroups Team and will respond promptly with updates and important group information.
11. I will make Lifegroups launch and training a priority, and make every effort to attend when I am able. If I am unable to attend, I will let my Support Team Member know.

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*I understand as a follower of Jesus serving in a role of spiritual leadership that, I am to "live above reproach."  
(1Tim. 3:2) This means I will live my life in such a way that no serious accusations against my character could lead me to be disqualified for serving as a spiritual leader.*

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Sign Name  
Please print name here:

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Date

## Wednesday, November 19th – Worship Night

### 1. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the next step in your spiritual growth if you have made the decision to follow Jesus and make Him the Lord and Savior of your life. Baptism is an outward expression of your inward commitment to follow Jesus Christ. The decision to get baptized is out of obedience to Jesus and publicly illustrates that identity with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. It also publicly illustrates to your church family that you are a follower of Jesus.

### 2. Who Should Be Baptized?

Every person who believes in Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of their life. Baptism is your public testimony that you are a follower of Jesus.

### 3. When Should I Be Baptized?

As soon as you believe and put your faith in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life you can and should be baptized. There is no reason to delay. If you wait until you are "perfect", you will never feel "good enough!"

### 4. How Should I Be Baptized?

The Greek word for "baptize" literally means to immerse or dip under the water. And every baptism in the bible, including Jesus', involved being fully immersed under the water. The picture of someone being fully immersed under the water best symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. For these reasons we practice baptizing people by fully immersing them under the water at Abundant Life.

### 5. What do I Wear?

You can come prepared by wearing swim trunks, shorts, or whatever clothes you don't mind getting wet in. You can also simply wear the clothes you came to church in. You will get a towel to dry off with and a dry T-shirt to wear home. There are bathrooms to change in if you bring a change of clothes.

### 6. Can I Invite Family and Friends?

Absolutely! We love to have them share the significance of this special day with you! In fact, family and friends are invited to come up around the baptismal to support you as you are baptized.

\* If anyone wants to be baptized, please e-mail Pastor Jeff or Cori Unglert at [involvement@alcpdx.com](mailto:involvement@alcpdx.com) with name and contact info.

Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-4:30pm at the HV Campus Community Room

### 1. What is Membership?

Membership is when you make the commitment to become part of a spiritual family. You receive care and encouragement from other members and are able to offer it to others as well. You also become a ministry partner in the mission and vision of the church. You then have a place to serve and give, using the gifts that God has given you. The difference between a member and attender is one word: COMMITMENT!

### 2. Who Should Become a Member?

If you have been attending Abundant Life and would consider this your church home, then attending Membership Class is a good idea. You will be given an “insiders look” at the church and have the opportunity to join Abundant Life Church as a member. Membership is required to lead a lifegroup at Abundant Life Church

### 3. Who Teaches the Membership Class?

The class is taught by the pastors at Abundant Life.

### 4. Does Attending the Membership Class make me a Member?

No, you will be given an opportunity at the end of the class to sign the Membership Covenant if you believe that Abundant Life is the church God is leading you to join. We ask that Members at Abundant Life have expressed faith in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of their life, have been baptized by immersion, and have completed the Membership Class and signed the Membership Covenant.

To sign-up to attend the next Membership Class on December 7<sup>th</sup>, just e-mail Pastor Jeff at [involvement@alcpdx.com](mailto:involvement@alcpdx.com) with your name and contact information.

\* If anyone in your group wants to attend membership class, please e-mail Pastor Jeff or Michael Inman at [involvement@alcpdx.com](mailto:involvement@alcpdx.com) with their name and contact info.

## ONLINE TOOLS

1. Lifegroups Web Page: [alcpdx.com/Lifegroup](http://alcpdx.com/Lifegroup)
2. Lifegroups Sign Up Tool: [alcpdx.com/findgroup](http://alcpdx.com/findgroup)
  - Allows people to sign-up for your group in just one simple step
  - Sends you, your support team member, the Lifegroups staff, and the person signing-up a notification when someone signs-up for your group
3. Group Manager: [alcpdx.com/leaders](http://alcpdx.com/leaders) Group Manager allows you to:
  - Communicate with others who are in your group
  - Find your group's roster and contact information for your group participants
  - Track your group's attendance for Lifegroup meetings
  - Easily e-mail your entire group.
  - Take attendance for your Lifegroup
4. Lifegroups on Facebook: [facebook.com/LifegroupsatALC](https://facebook.com/LifegroupsatALC)
5. RightNow Media: [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)
  - The gold mine! Think of it as Netflix for Christian content, Lifegroup studies, leadership training, and Christian children's content.
  - If you need help with your login (you should have an e-mail invite) email [groups@alcpdx.com](mailto:groups@alcpdx.com) for assistance.