

Welcome

Welcome to Connect 40 – Forty Days of Evangelism and Discipleship! For the next 6 weeks, your group will embark upon a spiritual journey that will change lives forever. As a H.O.S.T., we want to thank you for allowing God to use you in leading your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors to a closer walk with God.

H.O.S.T.ing a Community Group is an amazing experience! You don't have to be a perfect orator or a bible scholar. Just a willing vessel that God can use. We created this supplemental booklet to help you effectively lead your group. Please read it in its entirety and refer to it when necessary.

At Linked UP North, our model for Connect Group ministry is the early church. The book of Acts records tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem. Meeting in homes was the foundation of the early church. [Acts 2:46-47]

Community Groups have one simple purpose – to bring people together. We believe God created us to live in community, not isolation. Our culture devalues personal relationships, but the scripture requires relationships. [Hebrews 10:25].

Let's GO!!!!

What Does It Mean to H.O.S.T.?

Have a group. Open your home.

Serve a snack. Talk it out

HOW TO H.O.S.T. A COMMUNITY GROUP

Gather people from your immediate household, your network, and reach out to newcomers Co-workers, neighbors, and friends. Meet in homes, libraries, conference rooms, recreation centers, parks, or cafes. Provide snacks. Encourage open conversation with participants speaking most of the time. Keep discussions positive, focused, and inclusive. Adjust the meeting (if needed), prioritizing a loving environment.

H.O.S.T.ing a Group

Have a Group

- Start with people who are already in your sphere of influence (family, friends, co-workers, neighbors).
- Find people around you who are new to the church, new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people who you think you can help draw out their potential.
- Pray for God to send people to you who you haven't already discovered.

Open Your Home

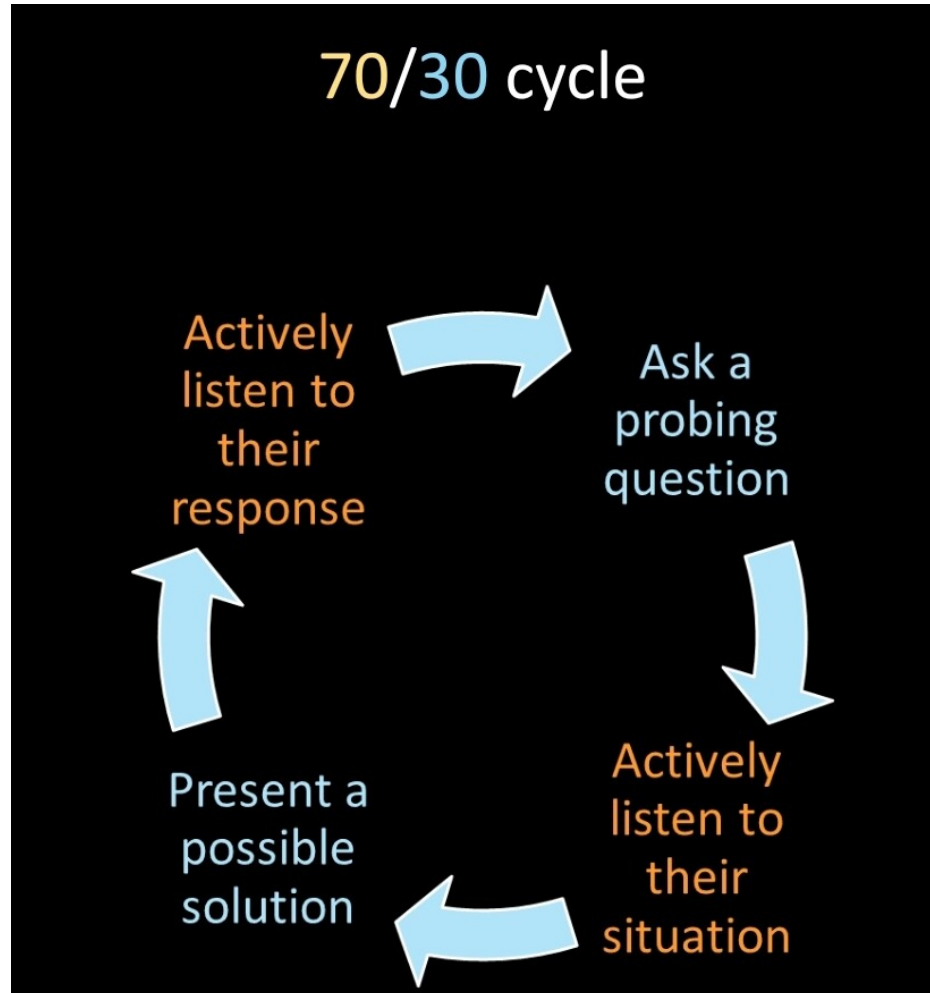
- We encourage all groups to meet outside of the church building.
- If you cannot meet in your own home, look for a host home (possibly the home of someone attending your group).
- Other possibilities for meeting locations include:
 - Library
 - Conference Room
 - Recreation Center
 - Subdivision Clubhouse
 - Just a Park
 - Restaurant
 - Coffee Shop

Serve a Snack

- Have food and snacks available

Talk it Out

- Make time for talking and sharing ideas in your group. Please remember to follow the “70-30” rule, where participants speak about 70% of the time and the host speaks about 30% of the time. People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Allow your group to do the majority of the speaking.



- Keep the conversation positive and focused. Bring the discussion back to the main topic if it goes off track. If sensitive or complex issues come up, address them privately after the meeting.
- Make sure everyone can join in the conversation. Remember that some people may not understand certain phrases or terms we use, like “spiritual warfare.”
- Be ready to adjust the direction of the meeting if necessary. The most important thing is to create a loving and accepting environment for everyone.
- Preparing for your Community Group Meeting:

- Invite people to your group.
- Email or call the day before your group meets as a friendly reminder.
- Create nametags for those who have called or emailed.
- Have food and snacks available.
- Create an inviting environment.

Community Group Meeting Agenda

- Casual Fellowship. A laid-back time for group members to talk and get to know each other or just fellowship if you're already acquainted.
- Activity or Discussion. For Connect 40 we are studying the weekly messages delivered by Pastor George during Sunday services. The discussion guides are in our Connect 40 booklet.
- Prayer. Start by asking participants if they have anything to celebrate or if they need prayer. It's important to recognize and be grateful for the things God is doing. Make sure to include a time of prayer at the beginning and/or end of each group meeting.
- Spiritual Component. The special thing about Connect Groups is the spiritual aspect that sets them apart from regular gatherings. During Connect 40, the discussion guide helps us have meaningful spiritual conversations, and the action steps guide our activities. As hosts, we start each new meeting by giving each participant a chance to share their experiences with the action steps from the previous week.

Four things we ask you **not to engage in during meetings:**

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial Topics

These resources are designed to help you learn how to host a group during Connect 40. Gathering together is the most important part, and these resources provide a brief overview of the leader training provided to Connect Group leaders. We believe that your experience during Connect 40 will give you a valuable understanding of the significance of Connect Groups at Linked UP North. We hope it will also ignite your desire to participate in a group during the upcoming semesters.

SUBMIT ATTENDANCE

We're asking hosts to submit their group attendance every week during Connect 40. Once registered, we'll add your group to the system and send a confirmation email with detailed instructions on how to submit attendance. Attendees do not need to submit attendance because hosts track their attendance for them.

We are praying for transformative experiences in Connect 40, believing it will contribute to the spiritual growth of all participants. Tracking weekly attendance allows us to express gratitude for God's work and celebrate collective progress. Also, we are praying for you as a host and offer support throughout your journey.

Thank you for helping to make Connect 40 impactful!

Support

Do you need help? Please email us for assistance.

Who should I contact in a difficult situation?

As a leader, if you encounter a difficult situation within your group, please know that you are not alone. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask! Email info@linkedupnorth.com and we will respond accordingly.

Icebreakers

Remember, the best icebreaker is transparency. Here are questions to start a session or to open discussions as you teach:

- What is the one thing about you that is unique?
- Who is someone who has influenced your growth as a Christian disciple? What did they do?
- How did you end up at this Connect Group meeting?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?
- Where did you live when you were growing up?
- What is your earliest recollection of God?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- Where is the farthest place you have ever traveled?
- What do you most like about your life's calling?
- What is one thing that gives you satisfaction?
- What is your greatest joy in your faith and how would you like to grow your faith in the next few years?
- If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be, and why?
- Where would you live if you could move anywhere in the world, and why?
- How would you like to see your closest relationship develop in the next year(s)?
- If you could have three wishes, come true, what would they be?