

Identifying & Developing Emerging LIFE Group Leaders

Removing the Leadership Bottleneck

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One of the central jobs of the LIFE Group point leader is to identify and develop emerging LIFE Group leaders. If this job is not prioritized, then the LIFE Group's growth will bottleneck around the capacity of the point leader. This will inhibit growth and can even create an unhealthy culture in which a "personality cult" can easily develop around the point leader.

As a result, point leaders must look out for and develop FAITH in emerging leaders. Below are descriptions of FAITH and ideas for how to grow people in FAITH:

Faithful

The emerging leaders have exhibited consistent faithfulness and responsibility in all areas of current leadership and stewardship. This faithfulness has been recognized by others and has been appropriately tested.

Development Ideas:

- Start small & add responsibility as you go:
 - Challenge the emerging leader to help and/or equip an individual regularly
 - Give the emerging leader a chance to periodically teach during the large or core group times
 - Assign the emerging leader a task (plan a retreat, throw a party, etc.)
 - Give the emerging leader ongoing responsibility for 1 of the 4 LIFE functions
- Always give feedback and provide constructive criticism along the way

Able

The emerging leaders have exhibited ability to influence others towards the things of God. At some level, people tend to respect them and be willing to follow them. They also have a good grasp of the skills needed to guide a LIFE group.

Development Ideas:

- Walk through your preparation times together
 - For individual helping and equipping relationships
 - For group teaching times
 - For special event planning
- Assist the emerging leader in his/her preparation times
- Watch the emerging leader do the work
- Point the emerging leader toward books, people, and classes that will help him/her grow in areas of weakness while also maximizing their strengths

Innovative

The emerging leaders are willing to appropriately "think outside of the box" in their desire to extend the kingdom of God. They are function, not form, driven Christ-

followers. They are also able to unleash the giftedness and creativity of others.

Development Ideas:

- Include the emerging leader in your planning and leadership processes in order to help him/her know **why** you do what you do...why must come before what or how
- Give them a task or ongoing responsibility and help them understand its goals
 - Allow time for brainstorming
 - Help them think through ideas and implications of their plan
- Evaluate the emerging leader's ability to innovate in the process of leading out in the task or responsibility:
 - Did he/she appropriately involve others?
 - Did others feel the freedom to give ideas or suggestions?
 - Did the event or process achieve its goals? If not, what prevented it from doing so?

Truth-filled

The emerging leaders are people of the Word. Their lives and leadership are saturated with the truth of God.

Development Ideas:

- Help the emerging leader see the biblical basis for the things you do
- Continually share what you are wrestling with and learning from the Word
- Keep your conversations centered around God's Word and perspective...don't just focus on what sound like a good idea
- Make sure the emerging leader is personally feasting on God's Word before you free him/her to consistently teach it to others

Hospitable

The emerging leaders appropriately open up their lives to others. They are vulnerable, authentic, and teachable in their pursuit of Jesus and people.

Development Ideas:

- Model authenticity and vulnerability in relationships
- Help them understand biblical hospitality:
 - Centering your life around people
 - Centering your home around people
- Model biblical hospitality
 - Welcome the emerging leader into your life & home
 - Continually share how you are including others in your life

The above ideas fall into a developmental pattern that can be understood by the acronym **MAWL**:

Model

- Exhibit the characteristics yourself

- Let them see you do it first
- Explain the biblical priority of the characteristic

Assist

- Help them grow in the given characteristic or area of knowledge
- Work through initial preparations together

Watch

- Observe them as they lead others
- Always give appropriate constructive feedback

Leave

- Let them do it on their own
- Encourage and equip from more of consultant mentality

For further study on identifying & developing emerging leaders:

1 Timothy 3:8-13; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; Exodus 18:21-22

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman

The Leadership Challenge by Kouzes & Posner

Leading Life-Changing Small Groups by Bill Donahue (Part 3)