Returning Leader
Application
2015
Life Group Leader Information

The information provided in this application is intended to provide a detailed description of the role, responsibility, and time commitment involved in leading a Life Group. All questions should be directed to Lee Wilson (lwilson@uu.edu)

Please read through this application carefully, making time to pray about how God might want to use you in Life Groups this year and being certain to check your calendar against the mandatory training dates.

About Life Groups

As the year 2015 begins, it's time to wish the ministry of Life Groups at Union University a happy 18th birthday! Interestingly enough, most of the young men and women who will participate in Life Groups also turn 18 in 2015.

For these students, fresh out of high school, the year ahead poses all sorts of uncertainties; it will be a time of significant transition and discovery. This is a vulnerable juncture for many of the students and most fear that they will have to walk through it alone. This is where Life Groups come in.

Year after year, new students thrive at Union because of the investment Life Group leaders make in their lives. In 2015, Life Groups will continue to meet new students where they are and help them take those first critical steps of their collegiate years.

Incoming students possess diverse backgrounds, individualized needs, and unique interests. As such, Life Group leaders must meet students where they are and become all things to all students. This requires Life Group Leaders to have the flexibility to take on a variety of roles and develop a broad range of interpersonal skills. They are community building strategists, caring friends, conversational evangelists, meddling mentors, and companions in crisis.

In all these roles Life Groups Leaders serve as the light of Christ to those in their care.

Application to serve in a leadership position with such a significant level of responsibility is not something to be approached haphazardly. Leading a diverse group of approximately 15 freshmen requires maturity, discipline, and dedication.

Thankfully, no Life Group Leader is ever expected to be perfect, nor are they ever alone in the process of leading a Life Group. Partners, Support Team members, Family Groups, and the Life Group Leader community as a whole are great sources of strength, encouragement, and wisdom for the work that lies ahead.

Job Description

Life Group Leaders help new students establish themselves at Union University by fostering meaningful community. Upperclassmen Life Group Leaders practice hospitality
and share personal insight with new students as they take the first steps of their college experience.

Life Group Leaders commit to cultivating healthy involvement in the life of the campus, the city, and a local church in the members of their Life Groups.

Life Groups Leaders collaborate with a partner of the opposite sex as they work to accomplish aforementioned goals in their Life Groups. Life Groups Leaders operate under the supervision of the Life Group Support Team (led by the Director of Discipleship) for the duration of their involvement in Life Groups.

**Requirements**

To qualify for the position of Life Group Leader, applicants must maintain a 2.5 GPA (per Union University policy), attend all mandatory training events (see calendar below), and have some experience in event planning, evangelism, and discipleship. Humility, teachability, and teamwork are considered essential attributes of a successful Life Group Leader.

**Life Group Leader Selection**

**The Process**

Once an applicant has completed their written application, two printed copies of the full application should be submitted in person to the front desk in the Office of University Ministries. All questions regarding application should be directed to Director of Discipleship Lee Wilson (lwilson@uu.edu).

Upon submission of application, Life Group Leader candidates will be able to sign up to be interviewed by the Director of Discipleship and two members of the Life Group Support Team. Interviews will begin on Monday, February 23rd and take place in the Bowld Commons television rooms.

Returning Leader interviews will conclude Monday, March 2nd and the Returning Life Group Leader Selection Process will conclude on Thursday, March 5th.

As a Returning Life Group Leader, your first responsibility is to exhaust every opportunity to make new leaders feel welcome and respected as equals in the Life Group Leader community.

**Life Group Leader Responsibilities**

**The Spring**

Once a student has submitted a written application, been interviewed by Life Group Support Team, and been selected to be a Life Group Leader, their primary responsibility during the spring is to invest in the Life Group Leader community.

The spring retreat is specifically designed to aid this process by providing time and space for friendships to form and crystalize around a shared vision for ministry to incoming students. The vision of Life Groups originates from University Ministry's desire to extend Christian hospitality and care for new students. Precisely how your Life Group
expresses that broader mission in the particular context of your partnership and your
group originates from you.

Once you’ve taken ownership of the mission of Life Groups, the next step is to work in
conjunction with the Support Team to identify the right collaborative partner to carry out
that work. Life Groups rise or fall on the health of the relationship between a group’s
leaders.

Considering the importance of strong partnerships, a full week after the retreat is
dedicated to on-campus events to provide additional opportunity to spend time with other
Life Group Leaders. At the end of that week, each LGL submits a list of potential
partners to the Support Team for official partnering.

Once partnerships are announced on Sunday, April 26th, the primary objective of the last
few weeks of the semester will be the development of group profiles. While every group
shares the same overall objective of fostering community on campus, in our city, and in
our churches, each individual group will have a unique focus and personality.

Rather than waiting to ambush students when they arrive in the fall, we will make a
concerted effort this summer to inform new students about Life Groups and introduce
them to the Life Group Leaders. The group profiles will be invaluable and, if possible,
may even allow us to open up online registration for Life Groups during the summer.

**The Summer**

As leaders in ministry, LGLs are students who recognize the value of spiritual practice
and pursuit of Christ. Leading other students spiritually with any level of authenticity
means regular time in the Word of God and an active engagement in the spiritual
disciplines.

The summer is by no means the only time of the year when Life Group Leaders should
seek to grow spiritually, but it is the time of the year in Life Groups when we will focus
more intently on this aspect of leadership. Support Team will be leading the way in
resourcing and encouraging Life Group Leaders to arrive on campus in the fall spiritually
prepared to invest in their Life Groups.

It is essential during the summer to actively maintain a relationship with other Life
Groups Leaders, especially partners. Praying for each other, communicating with each
other, and hanging out together as friends are all vital aspects of preparation for the fall
semester of collaborative ministry. Summers can also be a great time to develop a
calendar of events, meetings, and conversations to have with your group.

**The Fall**

The Fall Training Retreat will be dedicated to preparing for the fall semester of Life
Groups. A leader’s primary focus during the fall is to help new students experience
healthy community at Union University, mindful that making a new home includes new
students establishing themselves on our campus, in the city of Jackson, and within a
local church.
During the first six weeks of the first semester, Life Group Leaders will take advantage of every possible opportunity to gather their Life Groups together. The key to hospitality and community building is a healthy combination of care and persistence.

The leader’s genuine love for the members of the Life Group demonstrates to each member his or her inherent value to this community. The leader’s dedication to regularly gathering the Life Group provides ample opportunity for even the busiest freshman to get involved. Consistency in both these areas gives courage to the lonely or shy to eventually connect with the Life Group.

Life Group Leaders shouldn't think of themselves as meeting planners. Rather, they should envision themselves as community builders engaged in the exciting work of carefully curating conversation and shared experience within the group. Life Group Leaders seek fun and excitement where it is to be found and capitalize on the crowded schedule of events on campus and in our city, taking advantage of countless opportunities to engage your group in community life.

Granted, not every incoming student will choose to make Life Groups their primary community, but Life Group Leaders are still dedicated to helping each individual take the steps that are best for them. Making time for each individual is an essential part of the ministry of Life Groups and the friendships and mentorships that can develop from these personal settings are, perhaps, the most rewarding part of leading a Life Group.

The first six weeks of the semester are heavily involved and time-intensive, but Life Group Leaders are not expected to maintain such a torrid pace for the entirety of the semester. After the sixth week of classes, Life Group Leaders and Life Group Support Teams will sit down for a Strategy Session to discuss your group dynamics and participation levels in order to develop a customized strategy for the remainder of the semester.

What happens after that meeting is a mystery of the choose-your-own-adventure variety. In the ministry of Life Groups there is not much that you can be absolutely certain of -- but with one exception, you will not be alone. Great pains will be taken throughout the fall to gather and strengthen the Life Group Leader community. There is strength in numbers, after all.

**Support Team Involvement**

The official job description of the Life Group Support Team reads as follows:

"Members of the Support Team will support and advise the Director of Discipleship as he works to build a culture of discipleship at Union University through the ministry of Life Groups. This position will involve a sacrificial level of commitment to relational ministry, participation in leadership recruitment & training, and some event planning. The members of the Support Team will collaborate with the Director of Discipleship in leading the ministry of Life Groups. They will also work in partnerships to focus in on the needs of a small group of Life Group Leaders."
All members of the Support Team have been Life Group Leaders in the past and their purpose is to assist the Director of Discipleship in the ministry of Life Groups primarily through leadership and support of the Life Group Leaders.

When Life Group Leaders learn who their partners will be in late spring, they are also assigned to a Family Group led by two Support Team members. Each Family Group will be composed of approximately five Life Group Leader partnerships. Since every Family Group will have unique needs, each Support Team partnership will determine the specific details of Family Group gatherings. Life Group Leaders should expect clear communication of these plans.

Regardless of Family Group structure, all Support Team members are eager to help any Life Group Leader with any situations that may arise. Support Team is committed to encouraging and equipping the Life Group Leaders and, as such, all LGLs are encouraged to look to the Support Team for help of any kind.

**Calendar**

- **Tue, Feb. 3** - LGST applications due
- **Wed, Feb. 4** - LGST interviews begin
- **Thur, Feb. 5** - Student Leadership Joint Informational & LGL apps released
- **Mon, Feb. 9** - LGL informational in HH at 10am
- **Wed, Feb. 11** - LGST announced
- **Mon, Feb. 16** - LGL apps due
- **Sat, Feb. 21** - LGST interviewing training session
- **Mon, Feb. 23** - Returning LGL interviews begin
- **Mon, March 2** - New LGL interviews begin
- **Mon, Mar 23** - LGL selections finalized, pre-partnering begins
- **Thur, March 26** - LGL 2015 announced

**SPRING BREAK**

- **Fri, April 10** - Student Leadership Kickoff Rally
- **April 10-12** - **Mandatory** LRLG Retreat (location TBD)
- **April 13-20** - Partnering activities
- **Sun, April 26** - **Mandatory** Partner Reveal
- **May 1, 2** - New Student Orientation #1
- **Fri, May 8** - Group Profiles & Partner Photos Due
- **Sat, May 9** - LGL Picnic
- **Sat, May 16** - Graduation
- **June 8,9** - New Student Orientation #2

**SUMMER**

- **July 13,14** - New Student Orientation #3
- **Tues, August 11-13** - **Mandatory** Fall Retreat
- **August 14-17** - Welcome Week
- **Tues, Aug 18** - Class Begins
- **Aug 18-22** - First Meeting
- **Aug 18f** - Life Group Community Building Emphasis
- **Sat, Sept 26** - ALL LGL GATHERING & STRATEGY SESSION
Life Group Leader Application

All application materials are due to Lee Wilson by 4pm on Monday, February 16, 2015.

1) PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: ______________________________________________________________________
Campus Housing (Dorm/Number) ________________________________________________
Mailing Address_______________________________________________________________
City_______________________________ State___________________ Zip Code__________
Phone_____________________ E-mail____________________________________________
Age_______ Birthday____________ Hometown (city, state) ____________________________
Anticipated Graduation Date _____________ Course of Study __________________________
Home Church ________________________ Jackson Church __________________________

2) COVER LETTER

Write a single page cover letter to accompany your application. Be certain to mention why you desire to return to service as a Life Group Leader and describe your personal philosophy of Life Group ministry.

3) LIFE GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

PART ONE:
Complete the 2014 Life Group Leader Evaluation Form located at the following link:
http://goo.gl/GOQBWW

PART TWO:
Answer the following questions openly and honestly.
1. It is important to guard against uncritically "doing what has always been done" in ministry. With this in mind, what are some areas in the ministry that need some improvement?
2. Self-awareness is an important leadership skill. What would you say are some of your personal strengths and weaknesses? How have these manifested themselves in your time as a Life Group Leader? As you approach another year of Life Groups, how do you intend to build on your strengths and address your weaknesses?
3. In thinking about the Life Group community as a whole, what are some personal and community priorities that need to be emphasized? What is the best mechanism for encouragement and accountability in those priorities? Feel free to answer in terms of the 6 categories outlined in the covenant: personal spiritual life, church life, partnerships, group meetings, individual Life Groupers, and leadership community.

4) RECOMMENDATIONS

Each applicant must submit 2 recommendations. Recommendation forms can be completed by a former Life Group Partner, member of Support Team, or Life Grouper.
Life Group Leader Recommendation

Name of Applicant ____________________________________________________________  
Name of Recommender ________________________________________________________  
Relationship to Applicant _______________________________________________________

To the recommender:  
The applicant is requesting to serve as a Life Group Leader and he/she must have a high recommendation from you in order to be offered a position. Please note that being a Life Group Leader carries a high level of responsibility and influence. As such, this recommendation must not be taken lightly. Please submit to Lee Wilson upon completion.

To be completed by the recommender:

How long have you known the applicant? ____________________________________  
How long have you observed their ministry? __________________________________  
How well do you know the applicant?  
(  ) Casually, a few personal contacts  
(  ) Fairly well, a number of personal contacts  
(  ) A very close personal relationship

To the best of your knowledge, is the applicant a devoted follower of Christ? __________

Comments:_____________________________________________________________  
_______________________________________________________________________  
_______________________________________________________________________

To what extent is the applicant engaged in discipleship ministry?  
(  ) Casually, has held leadership role(s) but is somewhat erratic & undependable  
(  ) Is consistent, reliable, and shows up when asked  
(  ) Enthusiastically engages people, takes initiative, & leads others to do likewise

In what forms of church & campus ministry has the applicant been regularly active?  
_______________________________________________________________________  
_______________________________________________________________________  
_______________________________________________________________________

How would you describe the applicant in the following areas?  
Leadership _____________________________________________________________  
Responsibility ___________________________________________________________  
Church ________________________________________________________________  
Loyalty ________________________________________________________________  
Commitment____________________________________________________________  
Humility/Teachability_____________________________________________________
In your opinion, does the applicant possess any outstanding qualities?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

In your estimation, this applicant’s spiritual influence on others will be:
( ) Strengthening ( ) Neutral ( ) Injurious ( ) Don’t know

Has the applicant’s entire record been such that you would place full confidence in his/her integrity? ____

Comments: ____________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Are there personality traits that would hinder this applicant in her/his relationship with others?
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Would you, without hesitation, recommend this person to participate as a leader in the ministry of Life Groups? __________________

Additional Comments:
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Date __________________________
Name (please print) ____________________________
Phone ________________________________
Signature __________________________________________
Life Group Leader Recommendation

Name of Applicant ____________________________________________________________
Name of Recommender ________________________________________________________
Relationship to Applicant _______________________________________________________

To the recommender:
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To be completed by the recommender:

How long have you known the applicant? _________________________________________
How long have you observed their ministry? _________________________________________
How well do you know the applicant?
   ( ) Casually, a few personal contacts
   ( ) Fairly well, a number of personal contacts
   ( ) A very close personal relationship

To the best of your knowledge, is the applicant a devoted follower of Christ? ________

Comments:_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

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_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

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Leadership ________________________________________________________________
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Loyalty ________________________________________________________________
Commitment ______________________________________________________________
Humility/Teachability _________________________________________________________
In your opinion, does the applicant possess any outstanding qualities?

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

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Has the applicant’s entire record been such that you would place full confidence in his/her integrity? _____

Comments: ________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Are there personality traits that would hinder this applicant in her/his relationship with others?

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Would you, without hesitation, recommend this person to participate as a leader in the ministry of Life Groups? __________________

Additional Comments:
______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

. . . . .

Date ________________
Name (please print) _____________________________
Phone ________________________________________

Signature _________________________________