

# LIFE Groups

Making disciples of Jesus who Gather, Grow, Go



LIFE Group Leader's Manual





# King's

## Our big aim

### It all starts with God

Everything starts with our awesome triune God. He creates, calls, rescues, redeems, saves, and restores. This act of creation and on-going work of redeeming is motivated and centred around His glory. His desire is that He might be known and enjoyed for His nature and character; recognised as supremely valuable, worthy and splendid. This is His mission.

### Jesus commissions us to make disciples

For the church to fulfil the mission of God Jesus commissions us in Matthew 28:18-20:

*'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'*

These words should shape the purpose of any local church, and King's is no exception. If we are about anything then we must be about this. This simplifies everything for us as we don't need to keep reinventing the wheel but can instead focus all our efforts, in every area of life, around making disciples. At King's this looks like:

### Making disciples of Jesus who

- Gather** in friendship and family
- Grow** in character and gifting
- Go** in mission and service

In LIFE Groups then everything we do becomes about making disciples; seeing people start following Jesus and then helping them to mature into disciples who are baptised, and taught to obey everything Jesus commanded. The following pages will unpack how we make disciples in LIFE Groups through our LIFE Group Plumblines.



# LIFE Group

## Plumbline

### What is a plumbline?

A plumbline is a cord with a weight attached to one end. It looks pretty basic but carpenters rely on them when building anything that requires something to be exactly vertical. By allowing the cord to dangle freely they are able to let gravity do its work and determine an exact vertical angle. As everything is built according to this initial plumbline it is vital in construction.

### What are the benefits of having a LIFE Group Plumbline?

For us the Plumbline enables us to ensure that our groups are well balanced, not becoming lop-sided by focusing only on one aspect of making disciples. We are called to make disciples who Gather, Grow and Go but it could be tempting to only focus on one of these; probably the aspect we feel most comfortable or gifted in. For our groups to truly be LIFE Groups we need to be pro-active in developing all four elements of the Plumbline. If you are feeling under-equipped in any part then think about the people in your group. You will probably find that you have gifting there that you can encourage and nurture, helping your group to flourish in all four elements.

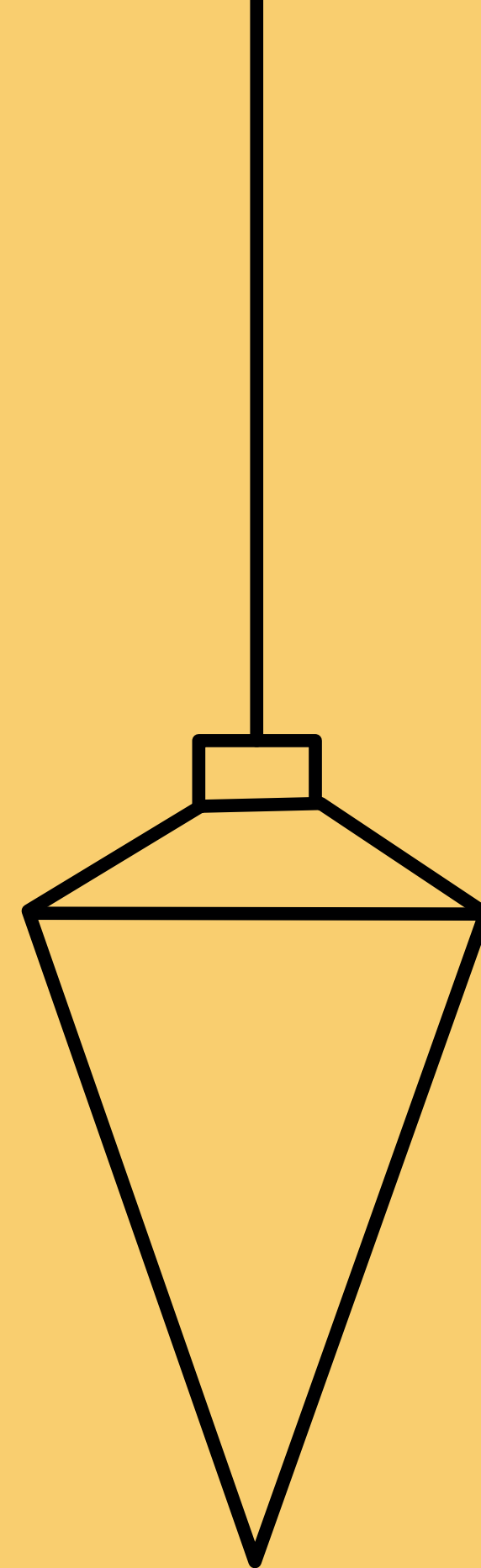
We also believe that the Plumbline provides a wonderful freedom for you and your Overseers as you make disciples of the people in your group. For example, the Plumbline doesn't include things like how often you will meet or the specifics of exactly what each gathering will entail. We encourage you to be creative in the way you disciple people; after all you know them best.

### What is the LIFE Group Plumbline?

Our Plumbline takes the core truths of making disciples who Gather, Grow, Go and focuses on four key ways that we can make these types of disciples. They are:

Learning  
Integration  
Friendship  
Everyone a Witness

The next section of this manual will unpack each of these elements in turn.





## An introduction to Learning

Jesus told us to go into all the world and make disciples, baptising them and teaching them to obey everything Jesus had commanded (Matt 29:19-20). Jesus gives us two elements for making disciples. The first one is to baptise them and the second one is to teach them. For teaching to make it into this short list, it must be really important. This is why we have 'Learning' in the Plumblin. If we are to be taught then we must be learners. Let's look at three key aspects of learning before moving onto some practical details:

### 1. Jesus is our teacher

The first thing to know is that ultimately Jesus is our teacher. He said; "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me" (Matthew 11:29). He is not only the one who knows all things and is able to teach every type of person but he does that in a way that is gentle and kind. He is the best teacher we could ever have hoped for.

### 2. We teach and learn in community

Jesus' disciples were a learning community; they were with Jesus, following him, learning from him, together. Our LIFE Groups are to be these types of learning communities. As we share life together and journey with one another we are to learn what it means to be Jesus' disciples. The disciples weren't simply learning information about him, but growing closer to him, becoming more like him and doing the things He did. We are to do the same as we teach and learn from one another.

### 3. It's a life long deal

Every person in a LIFE Group, including the leaders, are life long learners. There is no graduation ceremony in this life where a disciple puts learning behind them. We are encouraged to grow in humility acknowledging our need for Jesus and our inability to mature without Him.

## How to do this in your group

### 1. Learning begins with grace

The Gospel teaches us that we all need grace because we cannot be good enough no matter how hard we try. The point of grace, and of Jesus dying on the cross, is that no amount of good works or effort can ever save anyone. The Gospel shows us that no one can earn salvation, and yet it is available to all, because Jesus gives it to us.

### 2. Learning comes from the power of God

When we read or hear something and we know our lives don't match up, the temptation is to try and change our behaviour. We re-double our efforts, only to find we haven't got it in us to change. The Gospel tells us that God himself supplies the power needed to change our lives. The power of salvation and ongoing sanctification (becoming more like Jesus) must come from God.

### 3. Learning is motivated by love and grace

As we learn we find a God who is incredibly patient and kind with us. We are able to obey God, not out of fear, but out of love and thankfulness for what He has done. As we enjoy God motivating us in this way we are to teach and encourage others in the same way. Even though we may not agree with everything others believe we are able to extend love and kindness as we learn to be more like Jesus together.

## Following our Sunday series

One of our convictions is that it is best for all LIFE Groups to be following along with and applying what we are taught on Sundays. This brings a beautiful unity to the body and enables us to learn and grow together, as one. By doing this leaders are also able to release more people into facilitating a discussion on a preach everyone has heard compared to leading a Bible study. We see our Sunday gatherings as the place where doctrine is taught and LIFE Groups the place where we follow up on the truth taught and learn how to apply it in our lives.

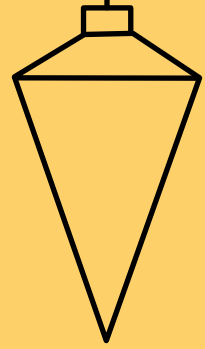
For every preach we produce an associated Worksheet. This is produced by the preacher and will provide an overview of what was taught along with material to enable your group to apply it. All of the Worksheets can be found at the link below:

 [kingsnorwich.com/onestop](https://kingsnorwich.com/onestop)

## Going deeper with our Sunday series

As well as weekly Worksheets for all our Sunday series we also recommend books that are related to the content being preached. If you would like to go deeper we would encourage you to read these books and also to let your group know that they are available. These books are not intended to replace the Worksheets but are purely supplementary.





# LIFE

## Integration

### An introduction to Integration

LIFE Groups are vital for integrating people into church family. Before moving onto some practical advice let's look at a few things by way of introduction:

#### 1. Jesus integrated people

Jesus gathered men and women to Himself, to be with Him and each other. The fascinating thing is not so much that He did it but more the type of people that He gathered and integrated. In the Gospels we notice a couple of things:

The first thing we notice is that many of the people He gathered were nothing like Him. He was accused of being a drunkard and a glutton, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Luke 7:34). There's truth in the second half of that sentence. He was friends with people who were different to him, people who had made a real mess of life and needed help.

The second thing we notice is that they were also people right on the fringes of society. They weren't part of the in-crowd, successful academically or economically. They were physical and social lepers, sexually promiscuous and outcasts of society. At King's we use the phrase 'Foster the fringe' to communicate our desire to love and integrate people in.

#### 2. We have a deep yearning for integration

God is a community - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He has made us relational beings which means it is good and right to desire deep and meaningful relationships with those around us. Unfortunately the way we do housing, education, work and social leads to largely segregated lives with a lack of connection with those around us. The deep yearning doesn't go away though.

#### 3. LIFE Groups are perfect for integrating people on the fringe

Our groups are the primary place people at King's can be integrated into church family. As you are regularly in and out of each other's homes there is always an opportunity in the next week or two where you can invite someone on the fringe along.

### How to do this in your group

#### 1. Encourage a culture of invitation

It's important to make inviting people to your group a very normal thing. You can do this firstly by modelling it. When you meet people on Sunday make it a habit of asking them if they're in a LIFE Group. If they're not then invite them to yours! Your desire will be to see people integrated into meaningful community so there's nothing wrong with being direct about it. As you model it also be encouraging those in your group to do the same. This not only transforms the culture in your group but will also transform the culture at King's.

#### 2. Make new people feel at home

When you have new people join your group be pro-active in making them feel right at home. Welcome them at the door, introduce them to others in your group and make sure you avoid any in-jokes or conversation that only the existing members will be able to engage with. As you go through your time together make sure you also explain clearly what you're doing and why you're doing it. Finally, don't be afraid to scrap the agenda for your time together if you feel it would be better just to get to know the new people attending.

#### 3. Helping people find their place at King's

As well as helping new people feel at home in your group also try to help them settle in at King's more widely. If they commit to the LIFE Group then they'll probably feel connected relationally but also encourage them to explore membership and serve on a team. You can either do this yourself or encourage someone in your group to.

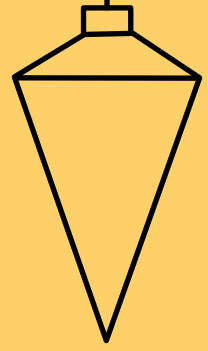
### Integrate with Hospitality

One of the best ways to integrate new people is by being hospitable. Before you count yourself out let's be clear that hospitality is not entertainment. It's not about making sure a person's experience of your home is better than the restaurant they ate in last week. It's not about having the perfect home or the best music on when people arrive. Entertainment is about impressing people and keeping them at arm's length.

Hospitality is about opening up your heart and your home, just as you are. It's about meeting someone on the fringe and welcoming that person into your life. It's about someone becoming a neighbour who was once only a stranger. The more we realise that we've been saved only by the grace of God the more we see how broken we are. This is a good place to live our lives from! By seeing our brokenness and resting in God's incredible grace we will naturally open our lives up to those around us. We won't be trying to hide our imperfections or present a perfect picture but will instead let others into our brokenness. This is hospitality.

Opening up your home and having people around your table will be a key part of this. Eating together breaks down barriers and shows true acceptance. Even if it's just beans on toast be encouraged to open up not only your heart but also your home.





# LIFE

## Friendship

### An introduction to Friendship

LIFE Groups are the primary place that people at King's can develop strong and lasting friendships. Before seeing how we can shape our LIFE Groups to enable friendships to flourish let's first look at a few introductory points:

#### 1. Jesus disciples are his friends

Jesus called his disciples his friends (John 15:15). To Him they were not servants, or just as a necessary part of advancing the Kingdom. Instead they were his friends. He loved them, provided for them, cared for them and was present with them. By being adopted into His family we are not just His brothers and sisters but we become His friends. This is an incredible privilege and when we think about it gives us a huge amount of security.

#### 2. Friendship is at the heart of all we do

We talk a lot at King's about gathering in friendship and family. It is our strong and growing friendships that hold us together. As we encounter difficult challenges and labour in His mission we need friends alongside us who are there for us, encouraging us and spurring us on. Jesus said that our love for one another would be one of the defining features of being disciples (John 13:35) and we want to walk in the good of that. We will keep centering everything we do around our friendships, encouraging those on the edge to be purposeful in making friends and for more established friendships to be nurtured and invested in.

#### 3. LIFE Groups

We want LIFE Groups to be a place where people find this kind of friendship, where healthy friendships can grow and where we can express our love for each other in practical ways. As we give of our lives to one another, investing in friendships over many years we find people that know us and are for us through every season of life.

### How to do this in your group

#### 1. Do the whole of life together

LIFE Groups are not primarily about a weekly gathering although gathering regularly will really help to foster good friendships. The best way to build strong and lasting friendships is to do the whole of life together. In our culture it can be all too easy to compartmentalise everything resulting in LIFE Group becoming just something we do at one point in the week. Be intentional about shaping your group in a way that shares daily life together. Our desire for deep and meaningful friendships will only be satisfied if we open all of our lives to a small group of people that we trust.

More practically this looks like spending time in each other's homes, doing the normal things of life together, regularly texting and calling each other to catch up and being mindful of what people in your group are going through. It's good to be purposeful in celebrating the good times together like when someone in your group has a baby, or gets a new job, or tells a work colleague about Jesus. It's also important to mourn together when that's appropriate. At times when jobs are lost, relationships become fractured and people around us pass away make sure you mourn that together. It is through being together in the good times and the hard times that deep friendships will grow.

#### 2. Take a real interest in people's lives.

This is something to model and to encourage others in. Paul encourages us to not only be interested in our own life but also in the life of others (Phil 2:4). This means being interested in the details of people's lives. Ask people how they're doing and listen to their answer! Remember what they've said and ask them about it next time you see them or drop them a text to let them know you're thinking of them. This will help people feel valued and cared for.

As you do this be encouraged by James who tells us to "be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19). There are times where we need to give advice or bring a challenge but first of all we need to be good listeners. As we spend time listening to people we will understand their hearts better and be better placed to know what it looks like to love them.

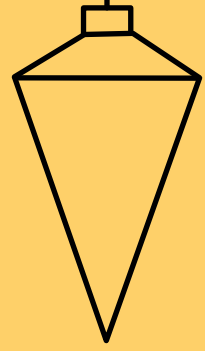
#### 3. Encourage other friendships

Cultivating friendships is not only on you; it is a responsibility of the whole group. Encourage your group to be cultivating friendships outside your weekly gathering. Sometimes we need to give people encouragement and a nudge to invest in friendships. As we do that it is wonderful to see friendships begin and flourish.

### Are you a new group?

If you're starting a new group the most important thing to do in the first few weeks and months is to foster the friendships in the group. This will help people feel at ease with one another and it'll build trust for people to be able to open up their lives with the group. Take time to have fun together, eat together and get to know each other better.





# LIFE

## Everyone a Witness

### An introduction to Everyone a Witness

Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to empower all of us to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). He commissioned us to share the truth of the gospel throughout the world, starting with where we are right now.

We want everyone at King's to be living every day with an expectation that God can and will use us to be part of someone else coming to follow Jesus. While we are not all evangelists we are all to be witnesses. A witness is someone who simply tells others what they know about Jesus and what He has done for them.

We need regular encouragement to keep witnessing to those around us and that is one of the reasons why LIFE Group is so important. Here are a few things to keep in mind at the outset:

#### 1. We are all to be witnesses

Telling people about who Jesus is and the difference He has made is a Biblical expectation for all of us not just for a few evangelists in the church. Evangelists are a gift given by Jesus to the church (Ephesians 4:11); they encourage us to be faithful in reaching out to those who don't yet follow Jesus but they are not the only people called to reach the lost.

#### 2. A witness says what they've seen and experienced

When a blind man was healed by Jesus and was questioned by others, his 'witness' was simply to say, "I was blind, but now I see and Jesus did it" (John 9:25). That's pretty simple right! As Jesus works in our lives and the world around us we have the privilege of telling people who Jesus is and what He has done. He is good news really worth sharing.

#### 3. Witnesses are not experts

We can be gripped by the fear of not having all the answers when our friends have questions especially if they seem more 'educated' than us. The reality is that legal witnesses are not experts but are expected to just say what they've seen and heard. It's the same for us. Degrees in theology are not required but a living relationship with Jesus is.

### How to do this in your group

#### 1. Pray for one another

We all need boldness and courage to be witnesses. We are promised that this power comes from being empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) so let's regularly pray for one another.

#### 2. Encourage one another with stories

One of the best way to make disciples who are regularly witnessing is to make room regularly for the sharing of stories. We are all encouraged when we hear how people have stepped out and it's either gone really well or been a bit of a train wreck. I know of some groups that share stories over dinner each week while others have a specific slot in the evening to share.

#### 3. Witness together

Don't feel like you're in this on your own. If people in your group live in the same area, or you have mutual friends then you can witness together. You can also be purposeful about introducing people in your group to your friends, maybe at a BBQ, games night or over dinner.

### Your toolbox

#### 1. Words

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the disciples of the early church trusted Jesus for the right words to say as they shared their faith (Luke 12:11-12). Words are so important - as well as giving reasons for our faith, words can speak the truth of the Bible into the hearts of those around us. Most importantly, we can use words to introduce someone to Jesus.

#### 2. Works

Jesus loved us by laying down His life for us (Ephesians 5:2). We are also to love others by laying down our lives. This looks like everyday acts of kindness and caring for our neighbours and family in times of need. We believe that this should start wherever we are, being filled with the Holy Spirit to show kindness to those we encounter throughout our daily lives.

#### 3. Wonders

As we rely on the Holy Spirit we want to step out more in praying for healing and salvation, expecting in faith to receive words of knowledge, and to have the courage and obedience to follow when God speaks. We want to be people who encourage and challenge one another to share the every day stories of stepping out and these wonders among people (Acts 6:8).

### Your story

A key part of being a witness is knowing your story. Whether you've been in church all your life or were saved out of utter rebellion the reality is that we all needed saving. Jesus doesn't save in an abstract way but focuses His redemption upon specific things in our lives. This results in us being changed in ways that those around us notice. It is the story of Jesus' saving work that we should be able to articulate. So why not take time to learn how to tell your story in different lengths (1, 2, 5 and 10 minutes) and start praying for opportunities to share it?





## LIFE Group Leaders

### *Making disciples of Jesus*

We are all commissioned by Jesus to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). As a LIFE Group Leader one of the primary places you will do this will be with the people in your group. For us at King's this looks like helping people Gather in friendship and family, Grow in character and gifting, and Go in mission and service. As you commit to working out the LIFE Group Plumblines you'll be making these types of disciples. For more information about how to do that please refer to the 'Plumblines' section of this manual.

## Your role as a LIFE Group Leader

With the help of the other leaders in your group and the support of your overseers your primary responsibility is to make disciples. By focusing on loving the people in your group and outworking the four elements of the Plumblines you will see the people around you mature. Your role also fits into the wider community as we gather together on Sundays, and serving in teams. You are not alone in the privilege of making disciples.

### Love people

As you make disciples remember that the best way to do that is to love people (1 John 4:7). As you grow in your love for God and for people you will see those around you becoming more like Jesus. They will feel loved, cared for and encouraged. They will be drawn into a family that loves them, feel safe to grow in their gifting and will be spurred on to be a witness to those around them. If you forget everything else, just remember to love the people in front of you!

### Encourage one-anothering

Every person in your group has a responsibility of one anothering to help others mature as disciples. This is why the 59 one-anothers in the New Testament are so important. These commands include loving, encouraging and forgiving one another. As you train and release every person in your group to be applying these one-anothers you will see disciples being made but also wonderfully healthy relationships being formed.

### Healthy groups plant new groups!

This is when a small number of people (typically 4 to 6) within a group are ready and full of faith to start a new group themselves. The existing group remains largely untouched with many of the good friendships fostered over previous years able to carry on as normal.

We understand that there is often an emotional cost to doing this but it is by far the most effective way of making more disciples. It also keeps those in your group focused on making more disciples and on their friends who don't yet follow Jesus. We encourage you to go deep with your friendships while also being proactive in raising up new leaders and planning for the future. As you give people increasing responsibility it will become clear if they are a leader. As well as making sure people are baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit also look out for our key leadership requirements; people who are Faithful, Accountable and Teachable.







## LIFE Group Overseers

*Discipling you on the journey*

One of the beautiful things about leading a LIFE Group is that you are not in it on your own. We really value doing everything at King's in team. This means that you'll have other leaders in your group who you lead with and together you are able to carry the responsibility of leading. Alongside that we love to provide another layer of support and discipleship in the form of overseers. These are people who are there to disciple and support you, bringing encouragement and wisdom through every element of you leading and discipling the people in your group. Take every opportunity to really get to know your overseers well.

### The role of your LIFE Group Overseer

The first thing an overseer does is to disciple and support you as you lead your group. Whether you've just started and don't know what you're doing or you've been leading for decades your overseer is there to help you flourish in your role. Overseers are experienced in leading groups and will be integral in discipling you.

Another key part of an overseer's role is to help keep you focused on planting new groups. They will help you lead with an expectation of integrating new people, seeing people saved and added, and at some point then starting new groups. Your overseer will disciple you in how to be intentional at identifying and appointing new leaders.

And finally, your overseer keeps the elders, the pastoral teams across locations and the LIFE Group Core Team in the loop as appropriate. All of this oversight helps us pastor people well as a church ensuring that disciples of Jesus are being made who Gather, Grow, and Go.

### Feeling out of your depth?

There may be times in the life of your group when you feel out of your depth, need extra support or that have wider implications in the life of the church. Leading people is a joy and a privilege but we should not be surprised when there are challenges in our groups (1 Pet 4:12).

Some examples of these may be divisiveness, deliberate undermining of others, sexual immorality, lack of repentance, dubious theology, etc. As those in your group open up to you remember never to promise confidentiality. There may be some situations where you need to make others aware. One example would be for safeguarding purposes.

We encourage you to keep your overseer completely in the loop and up to date. They will be able to get alongside you as you disciple people through these challenges but they'll also be more informed and able to get you or the people involved extra pastoral support if required.

### LIFE Group Overseers Team

Responsibility for LIFE Groups sits with the LIFE Group Overseers Team. They meet together regularly and are responsible to the elders for the direction and equipping of leaders and groups. They are also in regular contact with the LIFE Group leaders they look out for to support and encourage them.'



Your group



Leaders



Overseers



Overseers Team



# LIFE Group

## One Stop

*All the resources you need in one place*

This is a one stop shop for all the resources that you need to lead your LIFE Group. The resources are centred around our plumblines and provide you with a breadth of materials that will free you up to focus on discipling, loving and leading the people in your groups. They include:

- Word sheets
- Prayer sheets
- Worship sheets
- Worship playlists (Spotify and YouTube)
- Ideas
- Stories
- One dish recipes

### Check out your One Stop

 [kingsnorwich.com/onestop](https://kingsnorwich.com/onestop)

# LIFE Group

## Church Suite

*Keeping your group information up to date*

Please use 'My Church Suite' to keep all your LIFE Group information up-to-date. You can add new people, remove existing people and email out to your group. It is your responsibility to make sure the information on Church Suite accurately reflects who is in your group.

### Login to your account

 [kingsnorwich.com/churchsuite](https://kingsnorwich.com/churchsuite)







## Making disciples of Jesus who

**Gather** in friendship and family

**Grow** in character and gifting

**Go** in mission and service

## Connect with us

 [kingsnorwich.com](http://kingsnorwich.com)

