

Group Covenant & Group Norms

Hillside SGs

To help others move one step closer to Christ, we must develop an environment for change filled with authenticity, courage, and grace. One way to prepare people for this is by formulating a group covenant and group norms. Below are some ideas from various resources. Group cultures will be different, but all must be grounded in love and trust.

FROM "LIFE TOGETHER: STUDENT ADDITION"

OUR COVENANT

As a member of our small group, I acknowledge my need for meaningful relationships with other believers. I agree that this small group community exists to help me deepen my relationships with God, Christians, and other people in my life. I commit to the following:

Consistency: I will give my best effort to attend every time our small group meets. **Honesty:** I will take risks to share truthfully about the personal issues in my life. **Confidentiality:** I will support the foundation of trust in our small group by not participating in gossip. I will not reveal personal information shared by others during our meetings. **Respect:** I will help create a safe environment for our small group members by listening carefully and not making fun of others. **Prayer:** I will make a committed effort to pray regularly for the people in our small group. **Accountability:** I will allow the people in my small group to hold me accountable for growing spiritually and living a life that honors God.

This covenant, signed by all the members in this group, reflects our commitment to one another.

Signature

Date

FROM "THE WEB"

OUR COVENANT/VALUES

Relationships: While discussion of the curriculum, sharing, and prayer are key elements in a community group, a driving value for me in this group will be the building of relationships. **Authenticity:** A community group should encourage openness and transparency within the group. I will create an environment where everyone feels free to be themselves. **Scripture:** While everyone's thoughts and opinions are valuable and encouraged, I will ultimately rely on the truth of Scripture as my final authority. **Confidentiality:** For authenticity to occur I will commit and trust that issues discussed of a personal nature in the group are safe and will not be shared outside the group. **Respect:** I will refrain from saying anything that will embarrass or dishonor someone else in the group. **Availability:** A primary responsibility of a community is to prioritize the relationships in the group. I will make the group a priority and will make myself available to others' needs. **Conflict:** I will seek to reconcile differences, hurts, and offenses with others quickly, privately, directly, prayerfully, and lovingly. **Growing Community:** Healthy communities grow as they extend invitations to their friends. At the end of the trimester I will ask God if He wants me to continue with this group or start one of my own.

Signature

Date

GROUP COVENANT

Total & complete confidentiality: What you hear here, see here, and say here stays here. I will say nothing that may be traced back or that could be injurious or embarrassing to my group members. My group leader will refer me to a pastor if I am contemplating harming myself or doing harm to others. **Be as open as you can with your life:** I will be as open with my life at this time as I can. I will show myself to you, letting you know who I am as a person. **Unconditional love:** I will love you and affirm you no matter what you have said or done in the past. I will love you as you are and for what Christ wants to make of you. **Voluntary accountability:** I will ask the group to hold me accountable for specific areas of my life. With my permission you can ask me about the goals I set with God, my family, personal life and world. I expect you to lovingly not "let me off the hook." "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." –Proverbs 27:17. On the basis of this verse, I ask you to please share with me areas in my life that do not reflect Jesus because I want to grow in personal holiness. **Pray for one another:** I promise to pray for the members in my group on a regular basis, to lift up their needs to the Lord. **Sensitivity to where people are:** I understand every person in this group is at a different point in their walk with the Lord. I will accept you the way you are, but encourage you to move on in the Lord. **Come prepared each week:** I will have any homework completed and I will make every effort to be at group - it will have high priority in my schedule.

Signature

Date

FINAL NOTE

You can create a group covenant from scratch or bring your own to the group. Either way, the final covenant should be read through as a group. Discuss concerns and questions. You may modify the covenant as you go. Those who agree with the terms and are willing to commit themselves to the covenant as you've revised it should sign at the bottom.

DEFINITION:

A covenant is a binding agreement or contract. God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David, among others. Jesus is the fulfillment of a new covenant between God and His people.

If you take your commitment to the small group covenant seriously, you'll find that your group will go deep relationally. Without a covenant you may find yourselves meeting simply for the sake of meeting.

If your group decides to add some additional values (character traits such as be encouraging or be kind), add them. Your group may also want to create some small group norms (actions such as not interrupting when someone else is speaking or arriving on time).

Reviewing your group's covenant, values, and norms on a regular basis will become a significant part of your small group experience.