

“Life Cycle of a Group”

A small group is a living organism. It is not a list of people on a piece of paper. It is not an activity on Sunday nights. It is a fun-loving, people-hugging, brownie-consuming, Bible-digging, get-on-your-knees-praying, roll-up-your-sleeves-serving, living, breathing organism.

It has a start.

It has an end.

It changes.

But it does not just change; it develops over time. It develops in stages.

Why is it important to understand this?

Stage I Forming (Birthing)

Participants: Anxiety, excitement, anticipation

Do I fit in with these people? Do my children?

What is going to be expected of me?

Leader: Be accepting, define goals, be prepared, take high control

Stage II Norming (Childhood)

Participants: Comfortable, relaxed, sense of belonging

Discovering the norms

Sizing up strengths and weaknesses of other members

Not in primary group interaction

Leader: Model correct norms and behaviors

Generate trust

Facilitate relationships

Form a group covenant

Stage III Conforming (Teenagers)

Participants: Conform or rebel? Potential conflict
Tense, impatient, frustration

Leader: Make adjustments
Re-evaluate goals and covenant
Conflict resolution
Be flexible
Provide self-disclosure

Stage IV Performing (Maturity)

Participants: Group functioning well – strong group dynamics
Primary interaction (open and vulnerable)
Care and support given and received

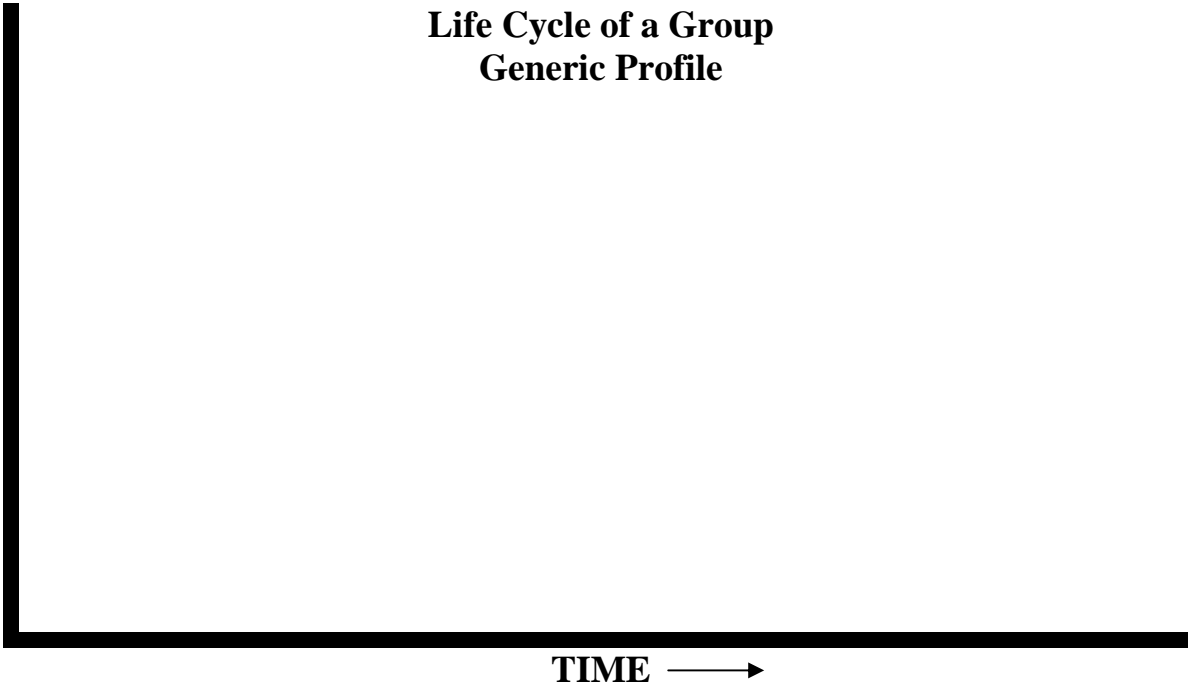
Leader: Facilitate (less control)
Celebrate results
Challenge and encourage
Outward focus (service, unconnected)
Avoid ruts

Stage V Reforming (Termination)

Participants: Enthusiasm, celebration, accomplishment
Fear, grief, selfishness
Accept reality
Discuss changes
Pray

Leader: Cast vision
Pray
Listen actively
Communicate openly, often and one-on-one
Leadership intensive (Don't go it alone!)
Pain
Facilitate closure

**Life Cycle of a Group
Generic Profile**



**Life Cycle of a Group
Your Group's Status**

