

one groups

First Meeting

New Quarter Guide



BRENTVIEW

Est. 1962

WELCOME TO YOUR FIRST ONE GROUP

Getting off to a great start

Groups at Brentview are designed to create a space where people seek to follow Jesus together and live out his mission to love God, others, and enemies. They exist as the relational expression of our church. In fact, Brentview programs our church's life together around three things that we see in the New Testament:

- **GATHERINGS** —> We worship God and seek to become Jesus-centred in all aspects of our lives. These are larger gatherings where we come together to be empowered to live more like Jesus, engage together in the sacraments, and create a welcoming space where anyone can explore faith in Jesus.
- **GROUPS** —> We were made to do life with others. In Christ, we become a new kind of family. Groups bring people together to practice the way of Jesus together. They eat, pray, reflect on the sermon, and do missional initiatives (FOR Calgary) together.
- **GIVE BACK** —> We are called by Jesus to live out self-giving love. All we have is from God so we give it back to God's mission in the world. We catalyze missional initiatives both through our Sunday worship and our Group life. We often use the language of "FOR Calgary" to describe this work.

FIRST MEETING: BASIC FLOW

Total Meeting Time: 1hr 45mins (*Times included below as an example*)

Time	Activity	Purpose
20 Mins 6pm - 6:20pm	Hang out, serve food, settle kids in	Enjoy time together!
5 Mins 6:20pm - 6:25pm	While still eating, gather together. Open with a brief welcome from the One Group Leader and spend time praying.	An important transition. Prayer and choosing an intentional posture to step into the “formal” part of the meeting is going to make the time meaningful.
20 Mins 6:25pm - 6:45pm	Leader(s) walk through the One Group “To Do” list below. Be sure to look at all the materials about the “what” and “how” of One Groups, including the “Shared Commitments” document which will be finalized by Week 3. (You don’t need to fill this in yet, but being aware of it will be helpful.)	This is to help us all get on the “same page” when it comes to the purpose and experience we hope to have as a group.
15 Mins 6:45pm - 7pm	Sermon-Based Conversation	This time will typically be longer, but during this first week we want to make plenty of space for introductions, etc.
15 Mins 7pm - 7:15pm	Discussion: Share something that has been either “life-giving” or “life-draining” in the past week. (Life-giving: I sense that God has been at work in my family....) (Life-draining: I have a friend at work who just lost her husband....) A solid response when real needs arise: “How can we help?”	This helps us set a tone for our group. We are stepping into brave spaces of authenticity together.
5 Mins (or 10 if you discern) 7:15pm - 7:20pm	Prayer: Invite one or two people to pray over what was named in the discussion, for the group as a whole, and for the broader Brentview family.	Prayer is a key element to what makes a One Group more than a socializing event.
25 Mins 7:20pm - 7:45pm	Hang out, eat left over food and/or dessert	Fun matters. Enjoy time together.

FIRST MEETING: TO DO LIST

During your first meeting, we highly suggest that you walk through some expectations and logistical information. Here's a basic flow to make this a smooth process.

One Group Leader and/or Host. Introduction to One Groups and hopes for the quarter.

- Need to Know: bathroom locations, “house rules,” trash can, shoes on/off, clean up afterwards, family pet dynamics, etc.
- Read through the Section: “What are One Groups all About?” & look at “Shared Commitments”
- Basic Expectations: showing up on time, ending on time, confidentiality, and letting you know if they are going to miss a group meeting. Make sure everyone has necessary contact info for the leader.
- Leader Shares: basic snapshot of their lives/connection to Brentview and hopes for the quarter ... leading to:

Introductions to Each Other. Have everyone introduce themselves and give a little snapshot of their lives (including their connection to Brentview) and share why they signed up for a One Group. Keep this brief! (60 seconds or less)

Food. Decide how you will do meals and/or snacks. Can someone coordinate the logistics, etc.?

Discern Child Involvement (if relevant). What will One Group life look like for the kiddos? Assuming they are part of Brentview’s Kids and/or Student Ministries, they will have their own opportunities in other spaces for discipleship. At the same time, it’s great to make them feel included, even if not during the core of the discussion.

Calendar. During the quarter, is there a week where many people will be out of town? A holiday to consider? The goal is to meet about 10 times each quarter. Consistency makes or breaks a One Group experience.

Location. Will the group meet at multiple rotating locations or at one place? What is practical for the whole of the group?

KIDS PRO TIP: So what do you do if you have kids? Each One Group will be different and will publicly indicate if childcare is available. If a One Group does provide childcare, here are several typical avenues:

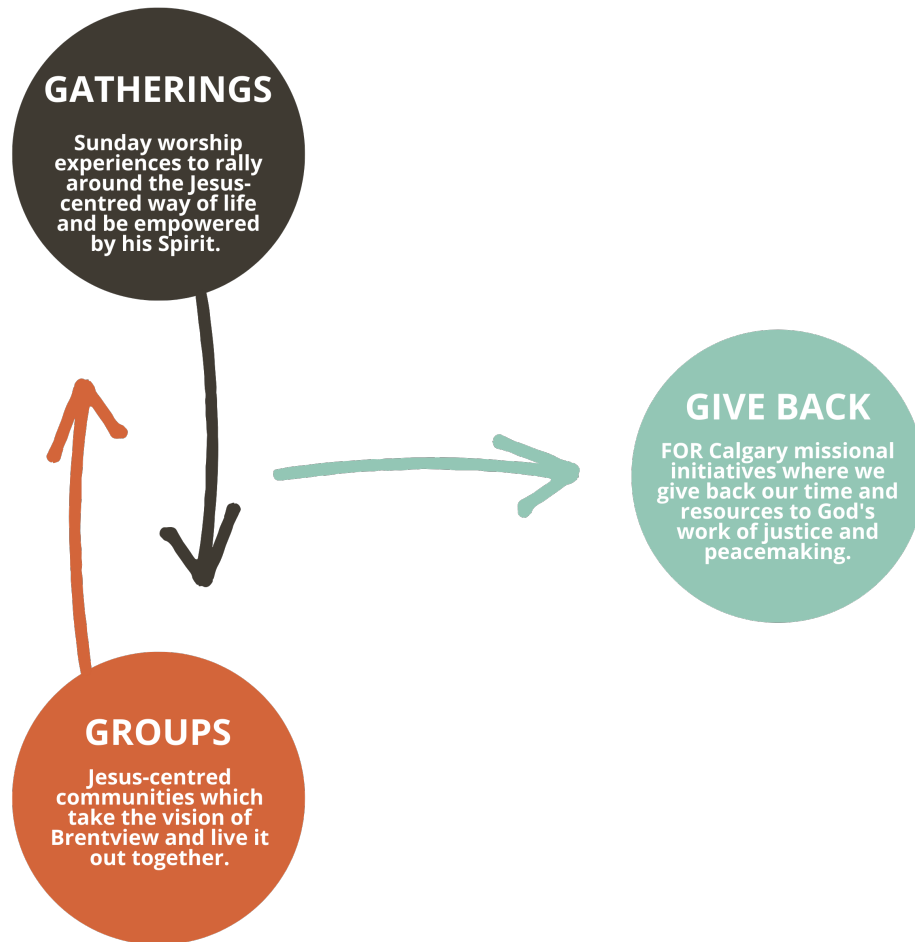
- ➔ *Parents collectively contribute to hiring a Nanny(s) that comes to the hosting house.*
- ➔ *A Nanny(s) will be hired and watch children at another member’s house. Parents will drop off children and then go to the hosting house for the One Group.*
- ➔ *If a group has older children and they are willing, older children will care for smaller children.*
- ➔ *Some groups make the conscious decision to be family friendly in which parents meet and study together with children in the same room. This has benefits but can often become distracting. Although we are open to this option, it may end up deterring the formation of adults in the room.*

One Groups with families need to be flexible and are also encouraged to intentionally include children during aspects of a gathering – a shared meal or snacks, prayer, or holiday events.

WHAT ARE ONE GROUPS ALL ABOUT?

Or: What Did I Just Get Myself into?

At Brentview, we have 3 core things we seek to do together: Gatherings, Groups, and Give Back (FOR Calgary). Our Sunday Gatherings and our Groups contribute to each other and the outflow of this synergy is that we Give Back—because everything we have belongs to God’s mission to reconcile the cosmos!



We long for the day when we can say, with full integrity, that if Brentview closed its doors that the city would truly miss us. Not because we long to bring glory to ourselves, but rather that we would be the kind of church that truly reflects the love that God has for our world. God is inviting us to truly be “a Jesus-centred church FOR Calgary!”

HOW OFTEN TO DO GROUPS MEET? (2022—2023 MINISTRY CYCLE)

FALL QUARTER

Sept—early Dec
(Sept 21—Dec 7)

WINTER QUARTER

Jan—early Apr
(Jan 18—Apr 5)

SPRING QUARTER

Apr—June
(Apr 12—June 28)

- Summer Quarter: this is a season of rest for our groups.
- At the start of each quarter, we all gather at the church for a Groups Launch Party!
- Each quarter is about 10-12 weeks long
- Each Group meets once per week. While Wednesday is a great choice for a weekly Group, we know that some will choose to meet on other days.

WHAT HAPPENS WEEK-BY-WEEK (BIG PICTURE)?

- **WEEK 1:** Church-wide Groups Launch Party! (Wednesday night, 7pm)
- **WEEK 2:** First meeting as a group, likely in a home (but not limited to this). Review shared commitments which will be finalized in week 3. This includes, but isn't limited to, your group's involvement in the current FOR Calgary initiative.
- **WEEK 3:** Finalize Shared Commitments. (See Attached)
- **WEEKS 4-10:** Do life together! Meet weekly, utilizing the materials provided—for One Groups, this is sermon-based discussion, etc.
- **WEEK 11:** Reflect on the last 10 weeks. Engage in sermon-based conversation. Fill out One Group reflection sheets. Put the following Quarter on the calendar!
- **BETWEEN QUARTERS:** At Brentview, we highly value margin in the calendar. We create clear and predictable rhythms for our Groups so that they are highly accessible and deeply intentional. Also, more margin means that your group can “organically” create times for having fun together. How will you all continue to be in relationship during the gaps in Quarters? Meals, parties, outings, movies, kids play-dates, etc. are some ideas to start with! The December break, for instance, creates a great opportunity for Christmas parties, walking with a hot drink to look at lights, etc.

WHAT DO GROUPS DO TOGETHER?

KEY ELEMENTS. Some key elements of One Groups include: food, fun, sermon-based discussion, a formation practice, and prayer.

EXTENDED FAMILY. One Groups are places to be deeply known. Authenticity is a core value in these spaces. One Groups seek to create a space where participants become like an extended family. When a need comes up, the group seeks to collaboratively meet it or empower their fellow member to step into the situation with wisdom and courage.

SIZE? As capacity in a meeting place allows, One Groups typically range from **12-18 adults**. A One Group isn't the same as what many people think of as a "small group," which might focus on intimacy and accountability. One Groups focus on "life together," spiritual formation, and missional engagement with our city and world. They are designed to be fun, authentic, challenging, and centred on Jesus. In a larger One Group, during key discussion times, it might make sense to break into smaller discussion groups for a few minutes. In a smaller One Group, this might not be needed. That is up to the discernment of the leaders in each group.

INCLUSIVE. A One Group should be a safe space for followers of Jesus and for people who are curious but not yet convinced. Typically, new people are invited to join at the beginning of each Quarter. At other points in the Quarter, One Groups are "closed" outside of relational invitations that organically happen from the committed core of a group. As members of a One Group cultivate relationships with neighbours, coworkers, etc., if an opening for someone to connect relationally presents itself, a group member should check-in with others and discern when/if to make the invitation. "Relational evangelism" is built in to the DNA of a One Group.

SHAME-FREE ON-RAMPS and OFF-RAMPS. One Groups are designed to last for one "school year." However, each new Quarter allows for onboarding at the beginning and parting ways at the end. Let everyone know that if they decide this isn't the right One Group for them, they can opt out within the first 3 weeks. The first 2 at-home group meetings are a "test drive."

COMMITMENT: One Groups stay together for all 3 quarter cycles. If someone is unable to stay in a group, we have natural "off ramps" at the end of each quarter (but the hope is that these groups form a long-term identity so that this isn't a casual commitment).

FOR CALGARY. FOR Calgary missional initiatives is one way Brentview Gives Back. Each Quarter, our whole church will focus on one main cause or missional partnership. Throughout the Quarter, groups will take part in the current missional initiative. ***NOTE: If cancelling a regular One Group meeting frees up enough margin to engage in our FOR Calgary initiative, we highly encourage that course of action.

GENERATIONAL CONNECTION. Once per Quarter, Brentview's team works with One Group leaders to facilitate a "mixer" event where two or more One Groups do something social together. We intentionally try to connect groups that—on the whole—are in a different life-stage.

A MANTRA FOR ONE GROUPS: HOW CAN WE HELP?

One core way to amplify Jesus's heart for loving one another is to consistently ask one core question: ***How can we help?***

- If someone's car breaks down. Pray. Yes. But also make it a habit to ask: ***How can we help?*** Maybe you get creative and offer up an extra vehicle or set up a carpool to help out for a short season.
- If someone is burnt out. Pray. Yes. But also ask: ***How we help you find renewal during this challenging season?*** Perhaps there's a burden / task / etc. that you all can take on to free up their schedule. Perhaps you pool some resources together and get them a hotel in Banff or Canmore for a night.
- Or, imagine a co-worker loses her husband to an accident. Pray. Yes. But also ask: ***How can we help or bless her in this season?*** Even if no one else knows her, imagine the kingdom impact one act of kindness could bring her from a One Group, representing Brentview—and ultimately Jesus. And if she is not yet a follower of Jesus, imagine how this act of generosity would impact her openness to God!

So, ***How can we help?*** is such a simple yet powerful way to build community and expand it with the love of Jesus. If you want your group to have the potential to become something bigger than a Bible Study, then this might be one of the key components to creating an atmosphere of hospitality, authenticity, and love.

ONE GROUP: QUARTER SHARED COMMITMENTS

[TO BE SIGNED ON WEEK 3]

DATES and TIME

We'll meet on _____ (day) at _____ (time) for this 10-11 week Quarter. We'll arrive between _____ and _____ and begin our "formal" conversation at _____. We will end our "formal" meeting at _____.

STUDY and FORMATION

We'll spend about 60 minutes of our time on: sermon-based conversation, formation/spiritual practices, and prayer. Each week will focus our time in study based on the content of the previous week's sermon. We will use the One Group guide provided.

CHILDREN

Parents will coordinate childcare for regular One Group meetings. Nanny shares or individual baby sitters seem to work best. We have decided on the following plan regarding children:

(fill in the space below, if relevant)

PRAYER

Our One Group commits itself to making prayer more than an afterthought, but as a regular part of our daily lives. This is the first line of support we can offer each other. Prayer changes reality! We commit to praying for each other and Brentview each week.

PREPARATION

Granted that the recording is available, we commit to listening to the sermon each week in person (the ideal!) or on the podcast (vacation, sick, etc.) so that we can engage in meaningful conversations in our One Group meetings.

FOR CALGARY

We commit to joining with Brentview in the the following FOR Calgary missional initiative during this Quarter:

(fill in the space below)

CONSISTENCY IN PRESENCE

We need consistency so that the whole group is healthy! We ask that each person commit to being present, engaged, and prepared. Regular attendance is assumed, while noting that sickness (please avoid spreading illness to others in the group), unforeseen work conflicts, vacation, and other special events may come up. Before signing on to these **shared commitments**, ask: Will I make my presence in this group a priority in my calendar?

If we are going to miss a meeting, we will _____.

FOOD EXPECTATIONS

We plan to have the following arrangement for food and/or snacks on regular weeks:

(fill in the space below)

FUN

We will commit to making space for fun and connection during and beyond our regular meeting times!

GENERATIONAL CONNECTION

We commit to connecting with one other One Group with differing life-stages than our own.

RESPECT

We may not all agree. We may not all be in a similar life-stage or faith-stage. However, we all commit to respect each other no matter what. We feel free to challenge and raise questions, but always in the context of “gentleness and respect.” If a member has a tendency to be a “long talker,” we ask that member to be mindful of others who aren’t as quick to speak up. Capitalizing on time, if it is a pattern, is not a healthy dynamic of any One Group.

GRACE

We commit to an atmosphere of grace when things don’t work out as planned. This document is a way of having shared expectations, not a tool for shaming or legalism.

We commit to uphold each other and Christ in these shared commitments for the duration of this Quarter. We understand that all be revisited during the first weeks of the next Quarter, when new people may join us while others may take a break from our group.

(Once agreed upon, this is signed by each One Group participant, in the space below)



SERMON-BASED CONVERSATION & FORMATION

Brief Review:

Main Idea: Use your words like Jesus.

Sub-Points: Words of Peace, Not Fear /// Words of Peace, not Coercion (manipulation)

Application: Get Sober about the Impact of your Words.

Read the Scriptures Together (5 minutes)

Take a moment to read the first post-resurrection appearance stories from John's gospel. Read it as a group, out loud, two times (a different reader each time).

As you take in the story, notice a word or phrase that makes an impact on you.

19 It was still the first day of the week. That evening, while the disciples were behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you."

20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy.

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."

22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you don't forgive them, they aren't forgiven."

(John 20:11-23, Common English Bible)

Conversation (10 Minutes)

Take a few minutes to share what word, phrase, or idea made an impact on you? What might God be inviting you to notice about your own life, in light of this?

On Sunday, Pastor Kurt highlighted how Jesus used his words to counter the disciples' deep fear and trauma with peace (shalom — wholeness, harmony in relationships with God, others, creation, and self).

Where/when is it hardest for you to use your words like Jesus?

How might you get sober about the impact of your words on others?

(especially in those high stress situations in daily life or when coming alongside someone who is struggling with fear, trauma, or another form of stress)

(Return to the schedule on page 3 for the next prompts about "life-giving" etc. —)

TAKE-HOME FORMATION EXERCISE

Reflect on the following words of Jesus to the disciples. Read them. Repeat them. Do this as a prayer that allows you to almost memorize these words. After several minutes of centring on Jesus and his presence with you, move on to the prompts below.

**“Peace be with you.
As the Father sent me,
so I am sending you.”**

...

**[Jesus] breathed on them and said,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.”**

(From John 20, CEB)

In a posture of prayer and contemplation, imagine Jesus saying “Peace be with you.” What impact do those words have on your current situation?

Jesus offered the disciples peace (shalom) to send them into missional lives of faithfulness to God and love for their neighbours. In your daily life, how might Jesus be “sending you”?

As followers of Jesus, we have the presence of Christ in us—the Holy Spirit. At times in our journey with God, we can find fresh renewal by opening ourselves up to being filled afresh with the Spirit. Imagine Jesus breathing in your direction and saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Can you receive God’s presence in a fresh way today?