



J • GROUPS

Leading Your J-Group

J-Group Leader Timeline

3-4 Weeks Before Semester Starts:

- Ask God for direction about what J-Group you should lead and who to invite to join your group.
 - Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time to meet.
- Register your group in Groups Vitals (yourjourney.groupvitals.com/leaderform) so people can find it and contact you to attend.
- Invite people you know or meet to sign up for your group.
- Pray for God to move powerfully through your J-Group.

1-2 Weeks Before Semester Starts:

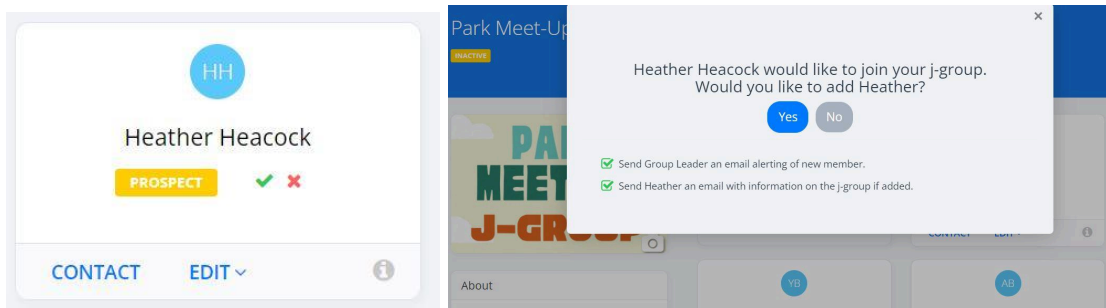
Filling Your J-Group

- Start with your friends at church:
 - Who do you connect with? Ask the people you gather or serve with.
- Look at your neighborhood:
 - Your J-Group doesn't have to consist solely of people from our church. Are there people around you who need healthy relationships?
- Connect extra-curricular activities:
 - Invite the parents of your kids' friends from sports and other activities. If you are involved in any activities, invite them, too!
- Don't forget social media:
 - Advertise your group on your social media platforms.

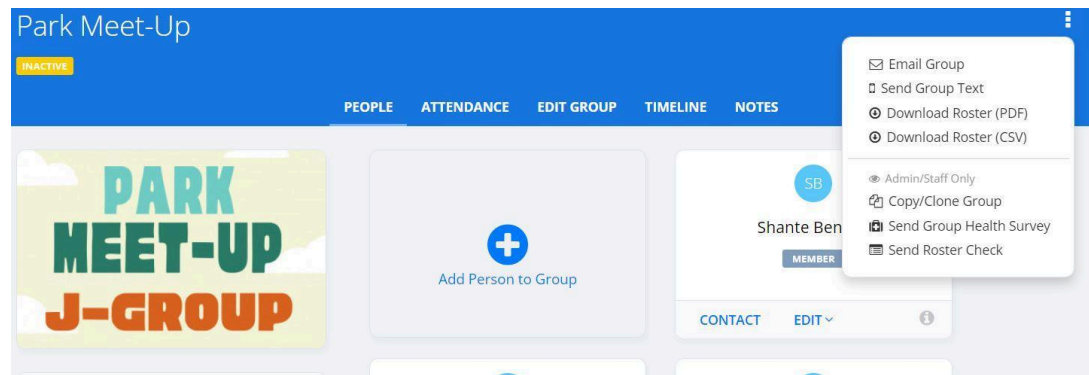
1 Week Before Semester Starts:

Preparing for your group meetings

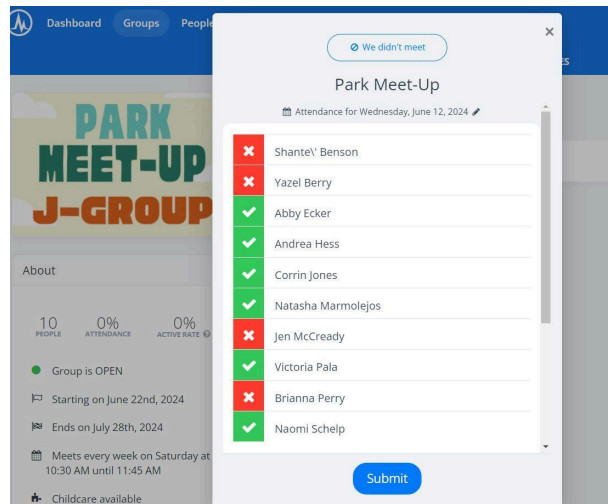
- Group Vitals
 - Create your Account: You will get an email to create your account once you register your group.
 - Accept prospects as new members.



- Send a message to group members reminding them about the first meeting. Provide specific details such as location, parking, and time expectations. Be clear about arrival times and ending times.
 - To send a message to your group members, click on your profile (top right corner).
 - This will open up a page where you can select “group leader,” and any groups that you lead will populate here.
 - Select the group you want to send member emails to and click on the 3 dots (top right corner) where you can select “email group.” (See screenshot below)
 - Please keep in mind that Group Vitals emails may go to members' spam folders.
 - Additionally, texting group members is a suggested and effective way to communicate.



- Consider buying name tags (or ask your Team Leader) to have available to help everyone learn names of those in your group for the first few weeks.
- Choose a location that is comfortable and has enough space for the size of your group.
- If you are meeting online, establish which platform you will use and ensure you are comfortable with its operation. Be prepared to guide anyone in your group who is using that platform for the first time.
 - **Please ensure you know how to take attendance before the J-Group semester starts.** If you have difficulty, connect with your Team Leader for help.



1st Meeting of the Semester:

Create a welcoming environment

- Arrive early to set up a welcoming environment.
- If you are meeting in a public space, wear a Journey shirt to identify yourself and help your members feel comfortable.
- If you are meeting in a house, remember to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment and greet each person as they walk in the door.
 - Your home doesn't have to be spotless—this is a real church for real people! But make an effort to help your members feel welcomed and comfortable.
 - Think through the 5 senses: what does it smell like, sound like, look like, and feel like?
 - If you have pets, please communicate that to your potential members, and remember that some people may be afraid of/or allergic to specific animals.
 - Be prepared to keep your pets contained during the duration of your group as a courtesy.

Conversation Starters

- Here are a couple of conversation starters to help get people talking as your group gets to know each other:
 - How did you learn about our group?
 - What are your hobbies?
 - What are you looking forward to this year?
 - What brought you here?
 - What are you hoping to get out of this J-Group?

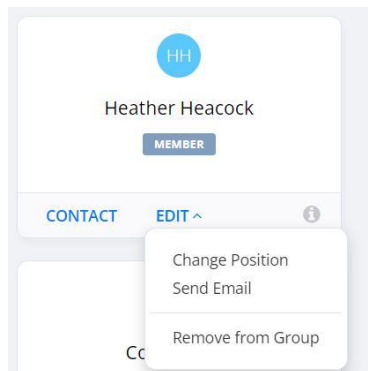
First 1-3 Weeks of Semester:

- Utilize [this doc for tips on creating healthy group dynamics](#)
- Serve at the Connect Area throughout the semester!
 - We have the opportunity to help connect people to J-Groups or another spiritual next step. Not only will you get to help answer questions and invest in people spiritually, but you can also use the opportunity to invite people to your J-Group.
 - Serve before and after the gathering you regularly attend.

- Get to know your group members. Be sure to solidify connections early in the semester. For example:
 - Create a group text and send out morning prayer/greetings (Ex: GroupMe, Group Chat, Marco Polo).
 - Send a short, encouraging mid-week email or a question or quick activity to maintain engagement.
 - Ask questions! Ask about your members' spouses/significant others, kids, schools, jobs, etc. Start building that connection.
- Take attendance weekly in Group Vitals.
 - Follow up with absent members and let them know they are missed. Remind them of the significance of their contributions.
 - Tell them you are continuing to pray for them.
- Keep an eye out for weekly leadership emails from the J-Groups team with helpful tips and necessary information.
- Check in with your Team Leader.

Halfway through the Semester:

- **Attendance:** Remove members from your roster in Group Vitals if they have not responded or shown up to your group.
 - Find Group Member → Edit → Remove From Group



- **Serving:** Decide on a serving opportunity (or opportunities) for Compassion Weekend to share with your group members.
 - Check out and sign up for serving opportunities through the SERVE app.
- **Communion:** Plan your communion experience with your group members.
 - Communion should be shared with your group members during one of your last two group meetings.
 - Use the [Leading Communion Visual](#) & [Leading Communion Guide](#) resources to guide you through each step of the process.
 - Reach out to your Team Leader if you have specific questions.
 - Remember, you do not need to be perfect. This is part of creating community and celebrating our faith together.
- **Empowerment:** What are some of the next steps your members can take?
 - Start having individual conversations with group members about how they can grow and what their next steps might be.

- Encourage members to attend Plugged In.
- Have conversations about baptism for members who have put their faith in Jesus but haven't taken this step yet.

End of the Semester:

- **Baptism Weekend:** Encourage group members to sign up to be baptized. Share the [Baptism FAQ's](#) with any member considering taking this next step.
- **End-of-Semester Survey:** Complete the end-of-semester survey sent out by your Team Leader and the J-Groups team.
- **Empowerment:** Continue helping members take next steps. Follow up and help them take action for the next step that you have previously discussed.
- **Next Step:** You and Members
 - Encourage members with leadership potential to lead a group in the upcoming semester. Share the [FAQ resources](#) on the J-Groups page.
 - Plan for the group you want to lead in the next semester.
 - Let us know in the end-of-semester survey if you intend to lead the same group, and we can register your group for you.
 - Talk to your Team Leader about leadership opportunities on the J-Groups team.
- **Group Vitals:**
 - If you have not already done so, export a list of your members' names and contacts before the semester ends (once the semester ends, this information will be archived!) so that you can easily reach out to them between semesters.
 - "Download Roster PDF" will create a list of all group members and their information on one page.
 - "Download Roster CSV" lists all group members and their information in a neatly organized spreadsheet.

