



“ . . . Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

1 Corinthians 9:26-27

*Willowdale*  
CHAPEL

Loving God, Loving Others

# Start Strong, Stay Strong

By Marc Lucenius



“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. . . .”

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

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# Start Strong, Stay Strong!

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## Start Strong, Stay Strong!

### Introduction

If only small groups were like cutting grass. When we cut our grass, we can look behind us and see that we had made a difference. What once was long, shaggy, unkempt grass is now neatly cut in alternating rows. That is impact! How do we know that our groups are making an impact? Sometimes we get “group envy.” We come to meet with other leaders and find out that their group hangs out on the weekends, vacations together, and names their children after one another. Or, another group has adopted a small village in Africa and is currently feeding and educating 12 families. We look at their groups and then we consider how we made 19 phone calls to 1/3 of the group for a Christmas dinner. The challenge for us is this. How do we know whether our group is making a difference without comparing it to a group that is distinctly different than ours?

Maybe one way of looking at your group is the same way you may look at another person. If somebody is going to become who God has created them to be, they need to be healthy and they need to know who they are. Then they need to take action! The same is true for groups. The goal of this is to help you as a leader and your group work together to answer these questions.

This little workbook should help you do three things

1. Identify how God has worked in and through your group
2. Discern what might be the strengths of your group
3. Assess the health of your group
4. Help you put together an action plan for the next year that will invest in the health of your group and build on the strengths of your group.

## Start Strong, Stay Strong!

### Taking Action!!!

What are the top actions that you can take that would make a difference for your group?	By When?	Who should take point on this?



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What have you seen God do in and through your group this past year?

If you are just starting out, list what God has done in your lives to lead each of you to pursue involvement in a group?

## Start Strong, Stay Strong!

### Grow

What areas of growth did your discussions focus their attention this past year?

Were there any specific major or minor breakthroughs in your lives this past year?

Are there common themes or challenges that any of you are facing during this season?

What topics or practices do you think would be helpful for your group this coming year?

Who could share more responsibility in your group in order to prepare to take leadership of a group in the future?

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# SERVE

How have you seen your group serve one another this past year?	
How have you seen your group serve others outside your group together this past year?	
Does your group have a bigger dream beyond itself to pursue? If not, what could they get excited about?	
What are some things that the people in your group are interested in?	
Where do you see the strengths of your group intersect with their interests?	
How might these intersections between strength and interest be leveraged for a ministry/serving opportunity?	

## Start Strong, Stay Strong!

### What are the strengths of your group?

Strength	How can you invest in this strength over the next ministry year?

## Start Strong, Stay Strong!

### How healthy is your group?

Belong

Serve

Grow

Engage

So how do you assess the health of your group? Just like each human body has systems of health like respiratory, circulatory, muscular and skeletal. So each body of Christians has health systems. Acts 2:42-47 describes the foundation of Christian community in all its aspects. At Willowdale, we measure our health by looking at four key systems of community:

**Belong:** Are we a group of people who are reaching out to include those not yet connected and are we investing ourselves in the relationships we have with one another?

**Serve:** Are we a group of people who are extending ourselves to meet the needs of those inside and outside our community.

**Grow:** Are we collectively and individually forming ourselves to become more and more like Christ?

**Engage:** Are we living and risking in such a way that communicates the love of God to others who do not yet understand it?

These are the four systems that help us to evaluate our own spiritual health, the health of our church and the health of our groups. In the pages that follow, you can take a good look at how healthy your group is and what steps it can take as it moves forward.

## Start Strong, Stay Strong!

### Belong

How did the makeup of the group change this past year	
How did the change in group makeup effect the relational dynamic in the group?	
Who in your group is good at making people feel included?	
Does you group have a plan for growth?	
What is the region and/or affinity that your group targets?	
Does your group have a covenant that outlines when and how it might birth?	
What can you do to add people to your group this next year?	