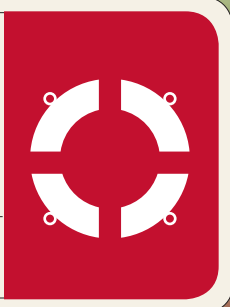




# Leader Survival Guide



PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY • AS YOU PROGRESS • KEEPING THE JOURNEY GOING

CUSTOMIZED EXCLUSIVELY FOR:



**TRAIL LIFE USA**



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# Preparing for the Journey

**Welcome to the Manhood Journey** - where Navigators and their male mentors connect for intentional growth into godly manhood. A Navigator's mentor can be his father, older sibling, the Trailmaster, a Trail Guide, or another adult male role model that is involved in the boy's life.

Whether you are thinking about leading a group, or you have already decided to embark on this journey with us, we are confident that many blessings and adventures await you. This Group Leader Survival Guide will be your handy companion in forming, leading and deepening your group.

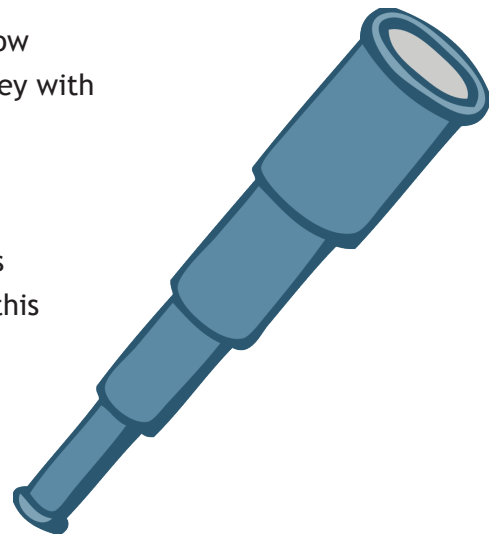
Each adult in the group must sign the Statement of Faith and have successfully completed Youth Protection Training.

Enjoy the Journey!

## The Vision

Manhood Journey's vision is to help young men and their mentors grow closer together and closer to God. After a couple years on this journey with his mentor, a young man should be able to:

- Articulate what it means to be a godly man in his own words
- See areas where he has grown and matured through the process
- Manhood Journey's vision is to help young men and their mentors grow closer together and closer to God. After a couple years on this journey with his mentor, a young man should be able to:
  - Engage in open dialogue with his mentor on important issues
  - Know where to look in the Bible when he has questions



## Module Builders

The guys who built this curriculum are probably a lot like you. We want to be intentional in raising our youth to honor The Lord. We don't believe it's the church's job to raise our young men. We want them to love God, know the word and serve others. We found a number of studies for older men and for younger men, but we didn't see a study that effectively joined the boys and their mentors together. So, we put our heads together and tried to create some guided studies that can help you form a group. We hope this serves its purpose!

# Before You Embark

## An Eye Toward Disciple-Making

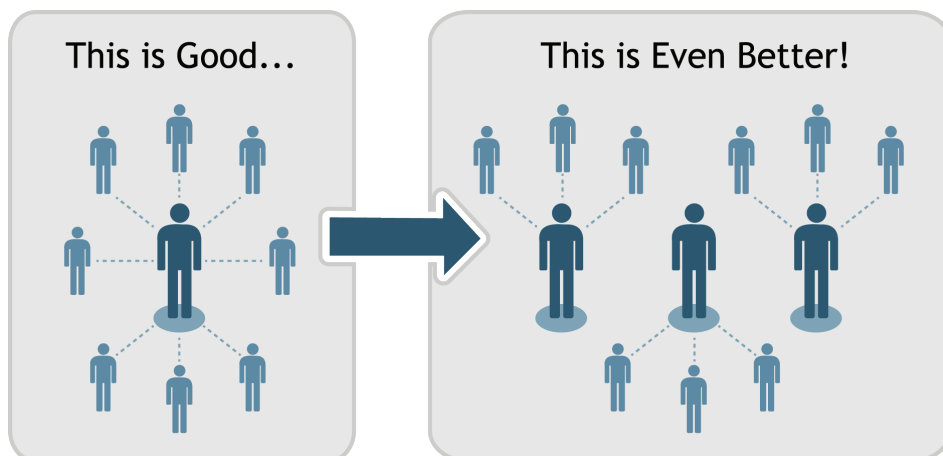
While there are no firm rules on the makeup of your group, we want to introduce a discipling component into these groups. Ideally, the group will have 2-3 guys who are mature in their walk and/or have some pre-existing relationships with other men. Those guys form the “core” of the group. They are the first building block.

Now, consider adding to that initial building block some other dads & sons that might need more connection or encouragement. This should be an ideal setting for guys with various levels of time in the faith or at the fatherhood helm to mix with and learn from each other. These might be guys who are on the sidelines and they just need someone to call them into the game.

## Picking Some Trail Guides

Each Group needs a singular leader so everyone knows who is in charge - someone who can call the group to order, decide when certain subjects need to be addressed or moved on from, etc. However, that leader should not try to fly solo entirely. Find one or two of the men who you trust and ask them to play key roles in the group’s formation and administration. You can call these guys “co-leaders” or “mentors” - but, make sure you know who these guys are and that they know who they are. They are critical to the group’s success.

*Find a trusted friend to join with you in launching the group. Flying solo is not recommended on this journey!*



These Trail Guides can help you shoulder the load and keep the discussion moving week to week. There are even some administrative things (name tags, emailing reminders, etc.) that you might want to delegate/share with these key guys. You probably aren't gifted equally in every area - so, enlist a guy who you trust who can bring his giftedness to bear on the group and be an encouragement and support to you.

## The Numbers Game

The goal is to have 5-7 men there every week, with at least one boy per adult. So, working backwards, here's how the numbers will likely work. You will invite 12-15. Of those, 8-12 will say "Yes". Of those, 2-3 will drop out once you pick a night of the week (they'll have soccer or piano or Monday Night Football, etc.). You'll be left with 6-8 who are solidly in, but each week, 1-2 of those will have something come up. So, don't be discouraged if you call or e-mail 3 guys who are "too busy." Keep plugging until you've invited about a dozen.

If you have worked through a dozen guys and they all said no, read the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Then, re-invite them with your newfound interpersonal savvy.

## Modules and Lessons

A Lesson = one hour's worth of discussion content. A Module = 6 lessons that fit together on a topic (work, leadership, etc.). The Module Map is the spectrum of various modules your group can tackle together.

## There's No Place Like Home

The most likely meeting place for your group will be at the charter organization before a troop meeting. If that doesn't always work for you, the next best location to meet is in the leader's home. However, you can meet anywhere your group agrees on. Ideally, the setting would be a place where the fathers and sons can:

- (a) be comfortable
- (b) hear each other well
- (c) not be distracted (i.e., NOT at Buffalo Wild Wings...)
- (d) have some degree of privacy/not be interrupted

Try to get wives, other kids and even pets out of the house or otherwise occupied so they are not a distraction. You might be completely comfortable while Rover scratches and whines at the back porch door all night, but most of us would have trouble focusing. Other locations that might work include a room at your church or a community center or coffee shop with an area that's set apart.

## Discussion & Dialogue vs. Teaching & Lecturing

These weekly meetings should not be like a lecture where you talk and teach and amaze the “audience” with your knowledge. They should be a discussion during which you engage the dads and sons in transparent, honest and interesting dialogue that has some spiritual context and a Biblical bias.

*Set the expectation early with your group - participation is required! Get everyone talking without embarrassing them (too much!).*

## Leading the Discussion

### DO'S

Consider Using “The Pre-Tee-Up” Technique by working with an adult or young man to have a prepared response to get things rolling

Try to Get All the Boys the Adults Talking (without embarrassing them) (too much)

Try to Get All the Adults Talking

Encourage Various Viewpoints without letting one person get you way off track



### DON'T S

Let One Guy Dominate



Use Ridicule or Sarcasm to Get People Talking - you might get an immediate response, but it will build up resentments over time and push people away

Argue or Criticize

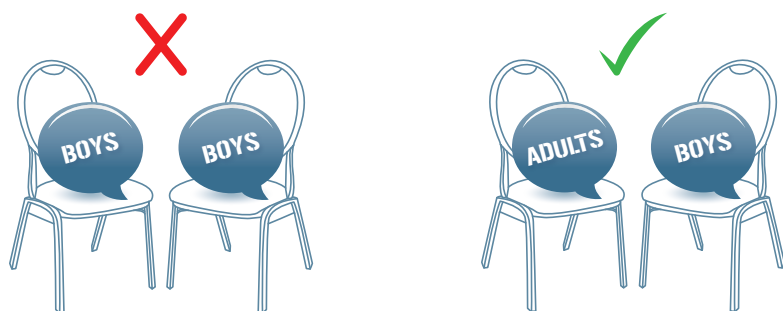


Become Dogmatic - avoid doctrinal debating, matters of opinion

## Watch the Time and Seating Arrangement

Meet for 60-90 minutes. Start and end on time. Pick a night of the week that you and most of your group can agree on.

Make sure boys sit next to their mentors. Don't let adults gather in one area and boys in another. This might feel a bit awkward the first week, but after only one or two weeks of reinforcement, you will have everyone trained.



## Homework

In the modules, you'll find something called "Homework." This indicates the work that can be done between meetings. It's like extra credit you can encourage the boys and their mentors to tackle. Make sure they know it's optional and intended to be helpful, not "one more thing" on their to-do list.

## Not a Checklist

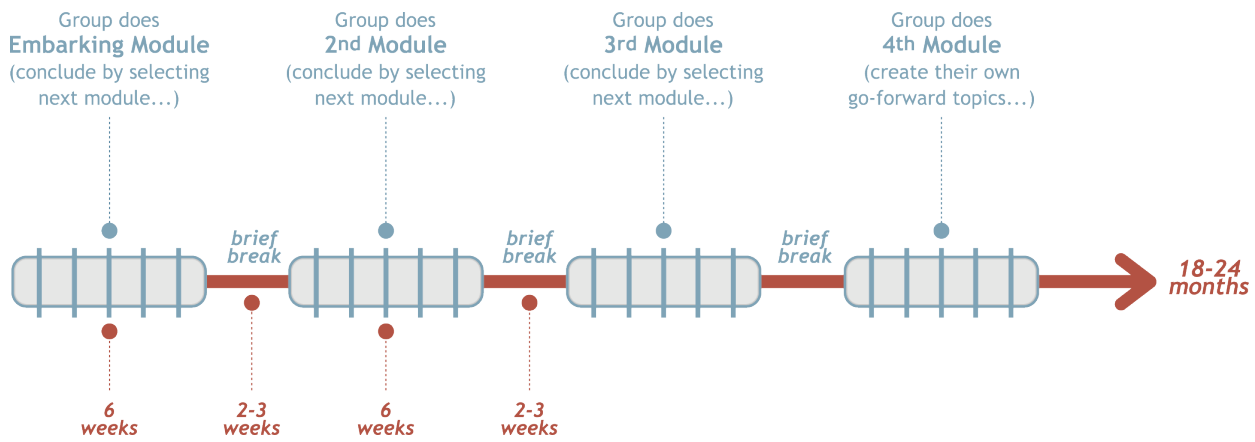
The modules are discussion guides that should enable good conversation and a deepening group experience. So, you can follow them fairly closely. However, if the discussion veers into rich territory and you sense that the group is connecting, resist the urge to try and get through all of the content. One of the goals of the Manhood Journey is to invigorate discussion and dialogue among the mentors and boys, so if that's happening, let it play out.



# Keeping the Journey Going

## The Main Point - Get Back Together

The goal of the Manhood Journey groups is for men to continue to meet over some span of time - perhaps as long as 2-3 years. So, consider some of the following techniques to ensure that your group gains and keeps momentum along the journey.



## Take Breaks!

If your group gels quickly and everyone has a positive experience, it may be tempting to keep meeting every week. Under some circumstances, that might make sense. However, in most cases, it will cause the group meeting to become a chore. Meet for the length of a module - 6 weeks - then take a 2-4 week break.

## Annual or Quarterly Outings

Look for opportunities to serve or play together a few times per year. This might be a holiday outing, going camping, seeing a game together or any occasional event that allows the group to connect without a major agenda. (Be sure to follow the policies of TL USA regarding outings.)

## Include Your Wives/Siblings

Try to find a way to work the moms and siblings into the mix, maybe once a year. This might take the form of a cookout before beginning on a new module, or could even be a night focused on having the men pray for their families!

## Charting Your Course

“Embarking” is the module that all groups start with, but after that, each group can chart their own path. We recommend that in the last week of each module, you get the group’s input on which module they would like to do next - invite them into this process and you’ll have stronger buy-in moving forward.

## On the Boat, Off the Boat

Ideally, you will have a “core” group of guys that are part of the group for the long haul. But, you can let guys float in/out of the group in between modules. Try to keep the group fixed during any given module, but use the breaks in between to invite new members.