

How to put on a LUG (Living under Grace)

Multiplication ministry is the basket that we at Grace Fellowship Church have put our collective “eggs” into. This is something that we will rise or fall with, and we believe that Jesus Christ gave us a model of discipleship that we should emulate in our lives as well as in our ministry.

LUG which stands for Living Under Grace is Grace Fellowship’s middle school ministry on Wednesday nights. Its sole purpose is to join in the ministry of multiplication that Jesus is already working in this world. We are incredibly humble and joyful to be given this opportunity as people who get to wake up each morning have this as our “job” to work with our Lord in this endeavor.

The Model Works at Any Size Church

There are many parts that go into producing a LUG, and many aspects that you might say “**There is no way that my church, with my budget or with my volunteers, could ever put on**”. At the bottom level, LUG is based off of a model, and the great thing is, that while your middle school ministry might not have the number of people that others do, this model can be applied to any situation. All it really takes is a willing personality to fit this model to each situation.

Lug really starts an hour before we ever have a planned segment of the actual meeting. Starting around 5pm we have “Grace Café”. Here we serve pizza, sandwiches, chips and drinks. This gives a place where the families can come and eat together and socialize. It is a great atmosphere where people can just fellowship over a simple bag of Doritos.

3 Distinct Segments

Looking at LUG, you would quickly see that the actual event can be broken down into 3 distinct segments. We model each segment off the life of Christ. Very succinctly in the ministry of Christ *He met the needs of people, He trained them with the word and He calls them to worship God.* We use these 3 aspects of Christ’s life to pattern our meeting time.

In this first segment, the opening 30-40 minutes, we try to create a lot of energy and fun. Basically we try and create a “Party atmosphere”. **The second segment**, 40-50 minutes, is when the students go into their “LUG groups”, which are small groups. **The third segment**, 40 minutes, is when we come back together to worship and hear the word.

Now onto a further description of what goes on in a LUG and how you can apply these in your church.

The first part of LUG can appropriately be described as the “best party for middle schoolers of the week”. In fact for the first 30 minutes of LUG, that is our goal; that the students that show up would walk away and talk about what happened at LUG instead of talking about what happened at a party that went on over weekend. In it we have videos, skits, fast, loud and engaging worship music, prizes, basketball, foosball, and the occasional student performances. That may seem like a lot for only 30 minutes, and you might be thinking, “Wow I bet this is complete chaos”, especially if I told you that we have 400-500 middle school students that show up. But remember, the goal is to create energy, and we actually do have an order that we go off of.

A sample order is this.

5:45-6:02 Basketball/foosball, etc”. We have loud Christian music videos playing on our projector and two emcee’s on microphones. Basketball goals are set up for the students to play on. As the students start showing up, they can eat at the Café and simply start hanging around. This is also the time we pass out tickets for our drawing later on.

6:02-6:05 - We start the meeting by having a 3-minute countdown. This is a video running on the screen that simply counts down the last 15 seconds. The two emcee’s, who are on microphones have the students count with them.

6:05-6:07 - We have video, that was shot the previous week, of the students. This is set to fast music, and it has the students acting silly.

6:07-6:17 - While the video is playing the band comes up on the stage. When the video is over, immediately the worship leader takes over and leads the crowd in two fast songs.

6:17-6:21 - After worship, the crowd sits down and we have quick announcements and then usually a prize drawing. We pass out tickets (beforehand) to the first 250 students that show up and then we draw 1-3 tickets for sweatshirts and prizes like that. This semester the last ticket that is drawn has the option to shoot a half-court shot or let a High schooler shoot it for them for \$50. It’s now week 6 of LUG, and only 1 middle schooler has wanted the High schooler to shoot for them. No one has made it yet.

6:21-6:24 - We have a running video piece that we film every week. This semester it is called “What Were You Thinking”. It has people in situations that start thinking of other things. I know this might not sound funny, but it’s hilarious, and it’s meant to be something that the middle school students would find funny, but *not* glorifying debauchery.

6:24-6:30 - This is our running skit called “LUG IDOL”. It is exactly what you think it is. We have students from the middle school perform for judge. We have our very own Randy, Paula and Simon. Also we try to pre-schedule one staged bad act, so that Simon can be mean and the kids can boo Simon. We do not make fun of the students.

6:30-6:35 - We have a re-cap time of what last week's lesson was and what this week's lesson will be. This is meant to transition our students to go into their LUG groups"

6:35 - Dismiss to LUG groups

Adapt the Model to Any Size Group

Remember this is just what we do for our first Segment; the goal is to create an atmosphere that meets the needs of middle school students. You don't need to have 400 people to do this. You can do this with a youth group of 40. Simply play a fun game with them, and sing some songs. Engage them and meet their needs by providing a fun atmosphere. The model is Christ meeting needs; the application will be different for each church regardless of size.

LUG Groups

After this segment of LUG, we move onto small group time or what we call "LUG groups" A LUG group consist of around 4-9 students with a LUG head and a LUG adult. **Lug Heads are high school students that have shown themselves to be capable of leading.** LUG heads are given a study guide a week in advance. This gives them a week to study the lesson and Bible references before teaching the lesson during group time. (LUG heads are also in a church designated discipleship group (high school D group) lead by an adult.) Each group also has a **LUG adult** to assist the LUG head and monitor the group. These are adults of good character who enjoy working with students.

Worship and Word

The third segment of LUG is when we all come back together for **worship and the word**. During this time we have worshipful songs played by the band and usually a 10-15 minute teaching time by the youth pastor. We really want to convey biblical truths and worship our Lord alongside our students. We highly encourage our LUG head and LUG adults to stay with their students at this time.

Commitment not Numbers

This is a basic run down of how to run a LUG. Remember, reproducing this means only a commitment to a discipleship style ministry, not having large numbers. What is necessary is a person willing to give their life for the sake of leading others towards Christ.

May the Lord bless His name on the earth and may we see revival break out in our Land!

For His Glory,
Michael Robertson,

Assistant Middle School Minister of Grace Fellowship Church