

# Helps for Small Group Leaders

The goal of here is to provide small group leaders with helpful tips for successful small groups.

- 1) Be prepared. With the benefit of a leader guide, you may have the impression that little preparation is required. However, as is always the case, we get as much out of something as we put into it. By giving yourself adequate lead time, you have every opportunity to be creative and seek God's leadership for the unique needs of your group.
- 2) Pray. The overarching theme of this ministry is that God blesses what we hear from Him and walk out in obedience. Be careful to pray, not just for the needs of your group, but to hear from Him what He wishes to accomplish in your group time. Above all, you are seeking His Presence in your midst. This is what feeds and encourages the people, and for this you must listen for His guidance in all you do.
- 3) Make the lesson your own. Do your best to master the content and let it become internalized in your own life. This will help you share the points out of your own experience. Be sure to answer the discussion questions yourself. Think through each one carefully, and let this be a significant part of your preparation for group time.
- 4) Be willing to address the needs of the moment. Yes, you need to cover the content as well as you can. However, particular needs may arise that require your attention. It's common for the needs of one person to become the focus of the group time. That's ok! The one who receives the support one week may be ready to provide the support someone else needs the next week.
- 5) Guard against allowing one person to dominate the discussion. It may sound like this point contradicts the previous one, but it doesn't. You need to discern when a person is in genuine need of extra attention and when someone is being insensitive to the needs of others to join in.
- 6) Be patient for responses when you ask questions. When you are awaiting a response to a question, even a few seconds may seem like a long time, and it may feel awkward to you. However, it is not necessarily awkward for the group. The people may be processing the question, which is good. This may lead to some of the most fruitful discussion.
- 7) Do your best to facilitate discussion. Generally speaking, most people feel like they got more out of the group time when they had something to contribute to the discussion.
- 8) Gain permission ahead of time before you ask someone to read a passage or to pray. You may be surprised at how many people struggle to read in public—or to read at all. Also, many have no experience praying in a group. Guard against asking people to participate in ways they are not ready for. It may be helpful to ask people individually, outside of group time, if they feel ready to read a passage, pray, etc.
- 9) Be aware of the fruitful time that can be spent outside of group time. Contact your group members individually as you are able. Ask if they have questions that are not answered. Ask if there are ways you can improve the group time. Ask how you can pray. You might be surprised at how this helps some open up more during the next group time.

- 10) It's ok if you don't know. Certain questions may come up that you have no answer for. Let the group know you will research the question to come up. It's important for you to lead in unison with the leadership of your church. If you are unclear how the leadership of your church would answer a question, have this conversation with them. Respect your church leaders as an example to your group.
- 11) Work as a team. If your role is to lead or facilitate the group, seek out others who can assist with other needs. This might include someone to provide the host home, bring food items, help with technical needs, and ministering to those in need (illness, financial struggles, family conflicts, etc.). Learn to operate as the Body of Christ, with each person having a vital role, and with everyone coming under the ultimate leadership of Christ.
- 12) Less can be more. Your role and example are critical, but guard against doing so much that it interferes with the participation of others. The living God is the ultimate Leader of your group. Listen to His guidance, so that, above all, you and your group draws near to Him.