



Suggestions for developing a small group study

PREPARE

- Decide on what book/study you will work through. Provide the book/study at the first meeting or have them bring it with them. Be sure in your advertisement of the small group that you tell them where to get the book/study. Try to stay within 12 to 13 week long book/study or less.
- Decide whether you are going to lead or facilitate.
- Encourage others to help lead or take turns. Remember we are here to disciple. Have a co-leader who isn't as experienced as you to help lead. This will help to develop their leadership skills. Also, they will be there to provide a back up for you in the event you have to be absent.
- Decide on the demographics of your group: all male, female, single again, always single, younger, older etc...
- Find a good place to have the study. A place that has a regulated temperature, the least amount of noise and distractions. A place that is comfortable, safe, has bathrooms and has easily accessible. Light candles, play music.
- Plan ahead of time to provide or not provide childcare. Be sure that you have the necessary insurance, facility and staff training to accommodate.
- Plan ahead of time the day, length, and hour of your small group. Plan to stay on schedule. Stopping some of the discussion that goes overtime as needed.
- Promote your small group throughout the community and within the church. Email PSAs to local radio and TV stations. Be sure to have a way for them to contact you to RSVP by a certain date.

DURING

- Decide on the guidelines for the group. For example, lateness, absenteeism, bringing children, not doing the necessary reading/assignment, sharing what is discussed outside the group, etc...
- Keep the group under 10 people or expect discussion to be broken down into smaller groups of 3 or 4.
- Have them fill out a survey that might include how they found about the study, their church name, single status, hobbies, email, etc...this way you have contact them during the study and afterwards.
- Have them sit in a circle to enhance communication between each person.
- Start with an icebreaker or other way of getting to know each person.
- Keep things upbeat and positive even in the midst of more serious topics of discussion.
- Open with prayer
- Encourage people to bring their bibles and take notes each week. Encourage them to use a bible dictionary or concordance if needed.
- Provide refreshments, extra paper, pens, etc...
- As a leader, prepare your lesson early, allowing the Holy Spirit to give you ideas on how to teach it. Be creative, use objects, jokes, music, videos...whatever it might take to add to the lesson.
- Remember, it's important to go over the main points. Ask lots of questions. Some studies will come with a leader's addition that will give you insights on how to lead the class.
- Encourage them to share their answers and/or questions. Call on individuals who do not normally share. Try to involve all the attendees. In private ask those who talk the most to allow others to talk more.
Note: Some people believe you should tell people they do not have to talk or pray if they don't feel comfortable. That is fine, however I believe it should be the goal to help them through this. As they feel comfortable and accepted I believe they will feel like sharing.

CLOSE/FOLLOW-UP

- Close briefly discussing the week ahead. Make assignments or tell of your expectations for the week.
- Do a large group prayer or break people into prayer partners for the next 6 weeks and have them pray. Encourage them to get each other's phone number so that they can pray for each other in the group.
- At the end of the small group study you might have a special dinner or party to celebrate.
- Ask if they would like to continue into another study or take a break. Do a follow-up survey on the study and your leadership performance.