

## Some Really Good Advice about Small Groups

- **Be enthusiastic.** Your members will take their cues from you. So, it's important for you to be enthusiastic about the possibilities that lie ahead for your group. They're more likely to get excited themselves.
- **Welcome people into your life.** Greet them individually when they arrive and thank them individually when they leave. Your simple friendliness communicates that you, and God, are glad they were born and are in your life.
- **Teach with your words and behavior.** Model however you want the members to act and live and how you want them to treat each other. The apostle Paul said, *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. Philippians 4:9*
- **Give group members an opportunity to hear each others' spiritual journey,** even if they are just exploring faith in Jesus. Set a time limit of 15 minutes if you want to.
- **Communicate how people should treat each other.** Sometime during the first 2-3 meetings, share how you would like people to treat each other. For example, what's said in the group, stays in the group; look at whoever is speaking; etc. Write them down. If you prefer, you can use the ["Small Group Guidelines"](#) Hand each person a copy and take turns reading the points. Then, ask group members these 3 questions:
  - Which one stood out to you? Let several people respond.
  - How do you think it will benefit our group? Let several people respond.
  - Is there something you'd like to add? Let several people respond.
- **Commit to confidentiality.** What's said in the group, stays in the group. If confidentiality is violated, immediately meet privately with the members involved to deal with the situation. Teach people when to keep information to themselves.
- **Pay attention.** Keep your ears open during your meetings. You may discover things about your members that give you a connecting point later. Even insignificant details may signal important issues in their lives. If you don't trust your memory, jot down some notes after the meeting. Then bring it up one-on-one with them later.
- **Go for measurable application.** Ask a question for a specific way they will apply the Scriptures. You can ask, "How could we specifically apply that in our own lives this week?" or "How have you personally experienced that principle, or verse?" or "What does that look like in your own life?" If someone gives a general answer such as, "I'll be more loving," ask him/her, "What do you want to do to show love—and to whom?"
- **Give people time to think.** Be OK with silence after a question. People often need time to think before they answer.
- **Raise up a new small group leader.** Look for someone in your group who is faithful, available, teachable, and cares about people's spiritual growth. Start giving him/her some responsibilities and help him/her grow in faithfully accomplishing them. See the next point.
- **Give ownership.** Ask group members to share group responsibilities. These are ways to create group ownership and raise up new leaders. Ideas:
  - Bring food
  - Host the group in their home/dorm.
  - Lead the prayer time
  - Ask the relationship builder question
  - Plan an activity to share Jesus
  - Facilitate group discussion—teach him/her how during your one-on-one

- **Stay on track *and* stay flexible.** Sometimes you may need to adjust your plan in order to address a member's immediate need during the group time. This shouldn't happen every week. You'll need to decide when an issue is sufficiently critical that you need to deal with it instead of your original plan. Listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance.
- **No personal attacks allowed.** Don't allow anyone to attack people in the group. See ["Practical Solutions to Common Small Group Dilemmas."](#)
- **Correct personal issues privately.** Make a general practice of giving any necessary correction privately.
- **Correct unbiblical comments in the group.** Never let an unbiblical comment go unchallenged. Do it with grace. But do it nonetheless.
- **Pray regularly for your group members.** Enough said.