

FACILITATING A SMALL GROUP

Jesus Christ launched his divine plan to redeem mankind by making disciples out of a small group. He used that small group to create momentum and keep it going. The question, of course, is why would He do that? Why a small group?

Most meaningful change takes place in the context of relationships—men sharpening men with truth, encouragement, and commitment.

THANK YOU for your willingness to be a part of this transformative time in the lives of your group members.

“Never doubt the power of a small group of people to change the world. That’s about the only way it has ever happened in the past.”

—Margaret Mead,
Anthropologist

YOUR ROLE AS FACILITATOR

In the case of these groups, your primary role is to facilitate the groups—*not teach*. Your leadership will be geared toward steering discussion and making men feel cared for and supported.

We ask that you **call your group members each week**. This can be a short call that simply expresses, “I’m glad you’re in the group and I’ll see you Thursday,” for example. Calling each man helps him feel like a valued member of the group and encourages him to prioritize the weekly meeting.

It is up to you to set the tone for the group: **be authentic, enthusiastic and affirming**. Remember—a small group is many things, including a hospital for men with broken wings; make yours a safe place for men. Don’t put pressure on them to conform to certain behavior. Instead, simply show men Christ. Make sure group members know that anything mentioned during meetings is **confidential** and is not to leave the group. Lead by example in this area.

It’s also important that you **honor the time** during your group meetings. Aim to start and end on time every week. If men are connecting with one another and want more time to hang out, plan a social outing outside of the regular group study.

Always thank group members for coming before they leave.

THE FIRST MEETING

At your first group meeting, start on time and open with prayer. Have each man introduce himself; you may want to have a fun icebreaker question or activity prepared to help guys open up.

Consider asking each man to take three to five minutes to share briefly where he is on his spiritual journey, and what he hopes to give and get out of the group study. Don't try to go too far too fast; be sensitive to men who might take longer to open up.

Continue with an open discussion of your group's current study, using the discussion questions provided in the resource or—if the questions aren't included—ones you've prepared ahead of time.

LEADING EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION

Your goal for discussion: **Air time for every man every week.** Draw out the quiet man without making him feel uncomfortable. Sense his pace. If you have a man who talks too much, ask him privately to help you draw out the quieter men during discussion.

Don't talk more than 25% of the time. If there is silence when you ask a question, don't try to fill the space. Many of the resources you'll use already have discussion questions in them. Use these to steer the direction of the group meeting.

Ask open-ended questions. For example, instead of asking, "Do any of you struggle with making good decisions?" ask "What kind of decisions do you find difficult, and why?" Encourage more than one person to answer a particular question with a statement such as, "Does anyone else have a thought about that?" **Affirm men's answers** and be authentic with your own answers.

Thank you for volunteering your time and investing in your group members! You are an invaluable part of where our church is going and what we hope to accomplish in the lives of the men.