

School of Discipleship

- **Principles to follow when leading a small group**
- **Qualifications/Expectations**

1. We must stay true to the “*three keys*” to successful small groups, they are:

Fellowship Bible Prayer

When these three elements are observed in a small group, the group will be healthy, and will produce healthy, well-balanced Christ followers.

2. **Participation:** every good small group leader knows this is a must.
 - A. The goal of the leader is not to be the authority, or the teacher, but to be the guide.
 - B. Arrangement of people will make a difference in the way people participate. The best arrangement is a circle, with one empty chair.
 - C. Rule - Don't pressure anyone to read, speak, or pray.

The he Leader will help even the most timid person (without pressure) to see that they, too, have something to offer.

3. Do not allow one person to do all the talking.
If this situation persists, perhaps a statement is needed, such as, “Thank you for your comments. Now, let's hear what someone else has to say.” Or “Let's continue with the lesson.”

Points to Remember:

- Don't be afraid of silence
- Cave exploring
- Don't hog – Don't hide
- Sit in a circle. Same eye level.
- Don't go around the circle.

4. Pray in every group for the people to catch the vision to birth new groups. Our hope is that every year a group will reproduce itself.
5. Begin and end with prayer.

Bring the group immediately into the presence of God, turning everyone to what the Lord wants to do in the meeting.

In closing, respond to the truth, and help each person make application of it in his life.

6. Respond lovingly to a need expressed. Lead in love. Love, acceptance, and forgiveness are a way of life.
7. Pray **daily** for those in your care.
8. Encourage everyone in the group.

Each person must be made to feel that his/her ideas and questions are important.

Dialogue is what we're after. However, the group is not a therapy session, and the Leader is not a counselor. People with deep emotional problems must be referred to a competent counselor.

9. Don't allow doctrinal discussion that is divisive or argumentative. Sometimes people would rather discuss doctrinal differences than give attention to what really needs to happen in their own lives.

10. How long should a small group last? On the average your group should last no longer than 90 minutes.
11. How many people should be in a small group? 6 -12
12. Handle problem “**grace builders**” away from the group, on a one-to-one basis.

A disturbed person cannot be allowed to become the center of attention in the group. The leader must lead, making it clear that they are loved, but “no dumping is permitted.”

EGR (Extra Grace Required) people will kill the group, so you’ve got to have a system for handling them quickly. They require more skill than the small group leader can usually provide. This is where your district leaders and/or coach will be very helpful.

13. Don’t allow people to confess anyone else’s faults, but their own. If this happens, the Leader must lead, by reminding the group of this principle.
14. Be a spiritually fit leader.

The Holy Spirit will be hindered if the Leader is spiritually indifferent, or troubled with unconfessed sins. A person not free to the workings of the Holy Spirit in his own life can not be a channel for His working in the group. Be a Spirit-filled Christian.

We do not expect Leaders to know all the answers, but they do need to be learners. The best Leaders are good learners.

15. Hang loose and maintain a relaxed spirit in the group. Be flexible.

Have honesty and openness that is not afraid to discuss or consider other points of view. Trust the Holy Spirit to be the teacher.

It is a tremendous asset when a Leader accepts himself as a person of worth, and then can reach out to others and make them feel comfortable in who they are. “Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.” *Michael McGriff*

A good leader learns to be shock-proof; not judgmental or harsh or overly opinionated – not overly reactive when an individual says something that goes against the grain.

16. A good sense of humor is a valuable asset. Prov. 17:22

17. When you have a need in your own life, ask your small group for help.

We never outgrow our need for the help of other Christians. The best leaders are those who keep admitting they need the help of others.

18. When you have problems, or need help, quickly go to your leader or coach and ask for it.

We accept each other where we are, and work hard to help each other to be successful in life and ministry.

19. The **Bible** is our Authority and Guidebook.

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. 2 Tim. 3:16,17

PRAYING IN SMALL GROUPS

- Don't pressure anyone in the group to pray.
- Praying in a group makes many people feel nervous. (Be careful about praying around the circle).
- We are a TEAM, learning to pray together.

- Concentrate on saying what we really MEAN, and in our own WORDS
- When it's time for the prayer cards, keep the requests:
- Audible
 - Brief
 - Christ-centered
- Everything PRAYED in the group should STAY in the group.
- Topical - Several people pray briefly about one subject.
- Conversational - Look UP, Look IN, Look OUT.
- *Pray the lesson: **Thank God for the lesson.***
- Pray for application of the lesson.
- Write a letter to God.
- Adoration
- Confession
- Thanksgiving (for what God has done)
- Supplication
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- Silence
- Pray for the pastoral staff.
- Pray for our City, State, and Country.
- **Prayer Partners.**
- The Love Seat.

Qualifications/Expectations

"I do believe that those who answer the call of public service must accept that we are accountable to a higher standard of public virtue than those who do not. Our failures affect more than ourselves, our families, or our friends. They debilitate public patriotism and affect the destiny of the nation." Senator John McCain

Small group leaders are not asked to minister on their own. LeaveAMark provides a structure in which leaders can care for others and be cared for. We call this structure a "district." Each district is led by a district leader whose responsibilities include providing care and support to the group leaders in his district.

You, as a leader, have a strategic and vital role in this structure. Your shepherding of those in your small group is of the utmost importance to our small group ministry efforts at LeaveAMark.

Qualifications of a leader

Born Again
Dedicated
Enthusiastic
Integrity
Great Attitude
Complete School of Discipleship
Approved and Appointed



"AS ARROWS ARE IN THE
HAND OF A MIGHTY MAN..."
PSALMS 127:4

1. Be committed to a daily walk with Christ.

2. Servant leadership

John 13 *"Real leaders ask for towels not titles"*

3. Be a good example. (model Christ)

It is a privilege of a small group leader to set the example for the church. Too often those of us who hold this trust have failed to set the necessary example.

4. We don't serve alcohol at our Small Groups. We don't invite our groups for drinks at the bar after Small Groups.

5. Manage your time wisely.

Make good use of your time. Make good decisions. Learn not to procrastinate. Set goals. Know your mission and get it done!

"Complacency is our greatest adversary."

6. Know the dreams of the individuals in your group and help fulfill them. Celebrate them as champions. Philippians 1:6, John 10:10

7. Give them hope.

Offer solutions-not problems. Help people smile.

“Leaders are dealers of hope.” Napoleon

8. Be willing to spend outside time with the group. Doing so is a tangible way of saying, “I care about you.” Make home visits or calls for all members and prospects.

9. Be a world-class Encourager. Commit yourself to consistently communicate love and appreciation to the group as a whole and each member individually. Doing so will earn you a place of affection and respect with them forever. The leader must avoid entertaining negative comments. How do people feel when they leave your group? 85% of leadership is relationship.

10. Eye contact.

Maintaining positive eye contact and good non-verbal communication with everyone in the room. Look them in the eyes and tell them “God absolutely loves you and so do I” and mean it. Speak from the heart.

11. Manage Gossip. Set an example as the leader. Discourage gossip in or outside of the group.

12. Model good listening skills.

Many times, people say one thing but mean something totally different. Good listening not only hears what is said verbally but, listens to “why” something was said or “what” was truly meant by the spoken words.

13. Be transparent.

This can be a fearful thing for any leader, but the payoff is well worth it. As one veteran of small groups put it, “What I lost in impressiveness, I gained double in approachability.” With permission from your mate before the meeting, share your appropriate failures and struggles. The bottom line is, don’t hesitate to use your own stories. People get far more from a story than they do from content. The best is when you use a story to convey content.

14. Maintain a solid family life.

15. Keep the group on schedule.

There's a real art to this because every group gets off track some time. There's nothing wrong with that. If you control things too rigidly, your group can become frustrated. They're not being allowed to express themselves. Start on time; finish on time.

16. Attend huddles.

17. Be dependable and accountable to those placed in positions of leadership over you.

18. Be a participating member @LeaveAMark Be loyal and committed to the vision and attendance to the church.

19. Be Generous. Be a Consistent giver to LeaveAMark.
Where your heart is...

20. Build your group.

The leader is responsible to recruit and motivate the people in your group to do the same. Be determined to build the best small group.

21. Birth your group.

All healthy small groups reproduce themselves. As a small group leader this must be a *high* value.

22. Regard the Bible as the authoritative guide to my faith and life.
2 Tim. 3:16-17

23. Know the people in your group by name.

Sometimes you want to go
where everybody knows your name,
and they're always glad you came.

24. Create a community of:

Love, joy, passion, energy, fun, growth, encouragement, and holiness.

No one ever said it would be easy, don't give up. Don't be afraid to fail, don't be surprised when you do, just get back up. No one ever talks about Babe Ruth's many strikeouts, but fans sure love to talk about his over 700 home runs. Small group leaders are ordinary people who take extraordinary risk. Quoting Sir Ernest Shackleton, "He had the privilege of witnessing a thousand acts of unselfish courage, and he understood the greater glory that it achieved. 'In memories we were rich, we had pierced the veneer of outside things.'" Note Josh. 1:6,7,9,18; 7:10