

SESSION # 2 The Small Group Agenda

By Kurt Johnson

Small Group Agenda—4 Vital Ingredients (based on Acts 2:42-47)

- # 1 Building Friendships (sharing)
- # 2 Getting to Know God (Bible Study)
- # 3 Talking to God About Life (prayer)
- # 4 Ministry naturally happens...meet needs of members (Rallying Cry! Mission)

Review Acts 2: 42-47

Early church did seven key activities:

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____

KEY: *Fellowship/friendship* = social activity; *ministering to each other within the group* = met needs = congregational care; *outreach to the community* = people added daily.

A healthy small group is a microcosm of Church Life (Body of Christ)

Sample Agenda

Sharing	20 minutes
Bible Study	55 minutes
Prayer Time	15 minutes
Total Time	90 minutes

The Agenda

1: Building Friendships (sharing) this develops friendships between group members.

A. Benefits of sharing questions

1. Increases group _____.
2. _____ friendships/relationships.

3. _____ of the uniqueness of others.

B. Sample sharing questions:

- *Sticking Together Question:* What happened this past week since we last met?
- *Get Acquainted Question:* What is your favorite hobby/recreation? Where did you live when you were growing up?

C. Depending upon your group, you may add the following.

- Bible Study sharing question during the Bible study time.
- Discuss ministry planning if a task/ministry group.

D. Guidelines for Sharing Questions:

- The leader asks the question and asks for a volunteer to begin. It might be necessary for the leader to model the question first for the group.
- Allow people the opportunity to not speak if they choose not to share.
- Choose questions that will not be threatening to the members of your group.
- Ask questions that don't have a "yes" or "no" answer.

Some Additional Guidelines for Sharing Questions

- Do not ask questions that some cannot answer such as "When did you accept Jesus as your Savior?" Some may not have accepted Jesus and it can be embarrassing for them.
- Do not ask questions that call for an opinion on controversial issues.
- Do not ask questions that permit individuals to be negative about themselves. If a person decides to speak to the group about themselves, it should be a voluntary decision.
- Ask questions which can be answered briefly. If a group has eight members and each speaks for three minutes, then twenty-four minutes will be needed.
- The questions should assist group members in knowing one another better as friends.
- The questions should be easy to understand and answer.
- Do not ask follow-up questions to the individual who is speaking unless you have a lot of time.

Your Turn! Form into groups of three.

Choose a leader!

- One of the groups is Kurt's demonstration group.
- Kurt will demonstrate and Introduction for the first meeting night.
- What is your favorite hobby/recreation?

2: Getting to know God (Bible study) which is the inductive or discovery method.

1. Materials to use
 - Bible lessons: Two options—(a) prepared, (b) prepare yourself.
 - Supplemental Material.

2. Inductive Bible Study--3 Parts

What does it say? _____.

What does it mean in context and today? _____.

What difference does it make to me? _____.

Your Turn! Form into groups of three.

Use attached LifeLine Study Guide (pg.8, handout)
Page 42, Part One—God’s Plan (page number at top of page)

3: Talking to God about Life (prayer) which is conversational.

A. Purpose of Prayer

1. To build _____.
2. To strengthen group relationships.
3. To assist members in developing a personal _____ life.
4. To minister to each other.
5. To meet needs outside of the group.
6. To learn the _____ of prayer.

B. Group Prayer Ideas

1. Provide written prayers to read together (General Prayers; Lord’s Prayer).
2. The leader provides Scriptures to members. During prayer time the member reads the texts.
3. The leader suggests one sentence prayers which the group member completes. Such as: Lord, thank you for _____." “Help me to/with _____.”
4. The leader hands out paper and pencil and each member writes out a sentence prayer and reads it.
5. Conversational prayer:
 - a. Thank/Praise God; needs outside of group; needs of group members.
 - b. Praise; Thanksgiving; Confession; Others; Personal.
6. Silent Prayer
7. Prayer Partners

Your Turn! Form into groups of three.

One person volunteers to pray for your group of three. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead in the small group ministry of your church family.

4 Rallying Cry (mission/ministry) which is our purpose for existing.

Identifying Characteristics of a Small Group

The small group Bible study approach has some differences from a classroom style of study. Some of these differences are:

1. The meeting is usually in a home rather than the church or public building.
2. The seating arrangement is with chairs in a circle rather than in a row.
3. Group meetings are usually one night per week (daytime ok too), about 1.5 hours long.
4. Rather than a prepared lecture by a teacher, there is a leader-guided Bible study and discussion.
5. The focus of the lesson is interpersonal relationships, biblical understanding and application of biblical principles.
6. Care is taken to not give “heavy doctrinal material” before the group members are ready. Follow-up groups and classes are usually needed to present all doctrines and instruction, unless it is a doctrinal study group.
7. Decisions are called for throughout the lessons but not to the point of pressure that causes some to stop attending.
8. The maximum number of participants in a small group should be approximately twelve, whereas a class lecture style approach can accommodate any number.

Friendship is Key to Decisions

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 3:1-2 stated, “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it.”

“You need not feel that all the truth is to be spoken to unbelievers on any and every occasion. You should plan carefully what to say and what to leave unsaid. This is not practicing deception; it is to work as Paul worked.” *Evangelism* 125.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them “Follow Me.”” *Ministry of Healing* 143

Lifeline
Bible
Study
Guides

Kurt Johnson

FOR
SMALL
GROUPS OR
PERSONAL
STUDY

BOOK ONE

7

Set Free!

GROUP LIFE

Growing Together—Conversational Prayer

In conversational prayer, members of the group participate with short sentence prayers. Someone in the group begins, the leader closes the prayer time, and in between, members pray brief prayers, with members praying more than once, if they desire. This type of prayer avoids embarrassing anyone who may not wish to participate in the prayer circle on a given occasion.

Sometimes conversational prayer can follow the plan of praying in three areas—praise and thanksgiving to God, the needs of people outside the group, and for those within the group. The leader begins praying for the concerns of the first area, then pauses for sentence prayers. When everyone has prayed who wants to do so, the leader moves on to the second and then the third area.

At the end of the prayer, the entire group can read or recite the Lord's Prayer together. If someone does not feel comfortable praying but wants to participate, he or she can write out a prayer and read it during the prayer time. Remember that praying during the prayer time is voluntary.

Sharing Life

Jesus loved children. In the middle of a particularly busy day of preaching, healing, and talking to people, a number of mothers brought their children to Jesus so He could hold them and pray for them. The

disciples of Jesus thought He was too busy for the children. But Jesus stopped what He was doing and took time for these little ones. When you were a child, what was your favorite game?

SCRIPTURE AND LIFE

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT LIVING FOREVER

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16

As you study, be thinking about the LifeQuest questions:

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make in my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

On a hot, humid day, a young law student named Martin Luther trudged along a country road leading to the German village of Stotterheim. Suddenly, without warning, the sky became overcast, and a torrential rain poured down upon him. As thunder rocked the countryside and lightning zig-zagged across the heavens, a lone bolt of lightning sent the student reeling to the ground. In terror, Martin Luther called out for God to help him. He vowed that if he got out of this experience alive, he would serve God.

Martin Luther kept his promise. In the monastery as a new monk, he zealously tried to rid himself of sin and save his soul by his own good works. In frustration and anguish, he discovered that the harder he tried to overcome sin, the worse he felt. Finally, in desperation for peace in his life, Martin Luther discovered the message of this study guide.

Sin, in simple terms, is a separation between God and you and me. However, Jesus came to this earth to restore the God/man relationship. This is called the plan of salvation.

- Before we study this plan, consider two questions for personal reflection. (These questions are not meant for discussion.)
- ◆ Have you come to the place in your life that you have

the assurance of eternal life? ___ yes ___ no ___ not sure

- ◆ How, in your opinion, does a person receive eternal life?
What must one do to live eternally? _____

- To understand God's plan of salvation, let's consider it in four parts: _____

Part One—God's Plan

- God loves you so much that He has a special purpose or plan for your life. Read the following texts and discuss what you believe to be God's desire for you. Romans 5:1; John 3:16, 17; John 10:10. _____

- What does this say to you about God's attitude toward the people of the world? _____

Part Two—the Problem

- God gave men and women a will and freedom of choice. When one chooses not to have a relationship with God, it creates a problem. Read the following texts, then write down and discuss the problems sin creates. Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; 6:23. _____

- Through the years, many people have made attempts to bridge the gap sin creates between man and God, but without success. Read the following scriptures about man's attempts to bridge the gap. Proverbs 14:12; Ephesians. 2:8, 9. _____

Which of the following do you think include man's attempts?

___ job ___ Christianity ___ children
___ family ___ sports ___ position
___ money ___ new house ___ other _____

Part Three—the Solution

- Read the following texts and discuss the solution to the sin problem. 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 5:8; Luke 23:33, 46; Luke 24:2, 3, 7, 50-53; 1 Peter 3:18. _____

Part Four—Our Part

- These are the steps to receiving Jesus into your life. Read these texts and discuss the significance and meaning of the key words in each passage. _____

1 John 1:9; Acts 3:19 ADMIT your sins; be willing to change
Ephesians 2:8, 9 BELIEVE that Jesus died for you on the cross, rose from the grave, ascended to heaven, and won the victory for you.
Revelation 3:20 COME to Jesus in prayer, invite Him into your life, and ask Him to control your life through the Holy Spirit.

- You can receive Jesus any time through prayer. Prayer is simply talking with God as to a friend. Here is a suggested prayer.

*Dear God,
I know that I am a sinner and need You. I am sorry for my sins and ask You to forgive me. I believe You died for my sins. I give You my life and receive You as Saviour and Lord. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Thank You for hearing me and helping me to follow Jesus. I ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, pray this prayer, and Jesus will come into your life as He has promised.

- God's Assurance
- *Are your sins forgiven?*
You asked . . . He promised. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins . . ." 1 John 1:9.
- *Is Jesus in your life right now?*
You asked . . . He promised. "I will come in . . ." Revelation 3:20.
- *Are you a child of God?*
He promised. "Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God." John 1:12
- *Do you have eternal life?*
"He who has the son has life; . . . These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know you have eternal life." 1 John 5:12, 13.

LIFEQUEST—Thoughtfully review these questions:

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make in my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

Note: If you accept Jesus as your Saviour, then daily Bible study and prayer is an essential part of Christian growth. Ask your group leader for assistance on how to develop a daily study/prayer time with God.

APPLICATION TO LIFE

Real Life

Joan sat with a surprised look on her face. She had just finished listening to a television program talking about how a person can become a Christian. It seemed too easy to her. The speaker had read a passage from the Bible in Ephesians that said salvation was a free gift from God and was dependent upon Jesus.

Several nights later, after some discussion in a Bible study group, Joan was able to understand and accept that salvation was indeed a free gift from God and that her part was to reach out in faith and accept what Jesus had done for her. Joan also understood that "good works" or obedience, as it is sometimes called, occurred in the Christian life not in order to earn salvation but as a response of love to God.

Your Turn

Maybe you have always believed that a person must fulfill a checklist of items in order to have salvation. Possibly you have attempted to be a Christian but struggled with trying to meet the demands of the list that, to you, was impossible to fulfill.

Is obedience to God's Word part of the Christian life? Yes. But one must remember that obedience is not the first step. The first step is accepting the free gift of Jesus, which is forgiveness, cleansing, and His acceptance. Then He gives you power to follow Him.

Check the statements that most closely reflect your current feelings. (These are for personal reflection, not group discussion.)

- ___ I accept Jesus as my personal Saviour.
- ___ I am not sure if I want to accept Jesus right now. Please pray for me.
- ___ I do not fully understand the plan of salvation. I have some personal questions I need answered before I am ready to accept Jesus as my Saviour.
- ___ I once accepted Jesus as my Saviour, but later severed my relationship with Him. I now accept Him again as my personal Saviour.
- ___ I have already accepted Jesus into my life and want to recommit my life to Him.
- ___ Other _____

Alone With God

Through acceptance of Jesus, you will find peace and power as your life is filled with the Holy Spirit. Only as your life is filled with the Spirit will obedience become a positive and satisfying part of your Christian experience. Thank God each day this week for His free gift to you.