SMALL GROUP ALL-STAR

Carl Massa

SHEPHERDING MEETING • MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

10 Helpful Hints for Leading a Good Small Group Discussion

Do these

1. Pre-plan questions to guide the discussion in a purposeful direction.
2. Lead to discussion, not assumed, short, obvious answers.
3. Seek to explore meaning beyond facts.
4. Promote understanding by encouraging thoughtful responses.
5. Point to biblical truths, not just personal opinions.
6. Direct questions toward specific individuals to draw everyone into the conversation.
7. Don’t be afraid of silence. Be patient.
8. Be transparent about your own spiritual walk and struggles.
9. Encourage personal and specific application throughout the discussion - don’t just wait until the end.
10. Remember, Covenant Small Groups are about people being transformed by God’s Spirit through God’s Word. It’s not about what people have learned, but who people are becoming.

Ten Ways to Tank Your Small Group Discussion

Avoid these

1. Lecture your group instead of facilitating a discussion with your group.
2. Follow your notes like a script - ask every question on your list.
3. Don’t prepare for your small group hoping “What were your thought on Chapter 6?” will suffice.
4. Ask only “yes” or “no” or “one word answer” questions.
5. The-run-on-sentence-that-is-really-more-of-a-statement-than-a-question-therefore-no-one-knows-how-to-respond-to-your-rambling-unfocused-pseudo-question.
6. Answer your own question.
7. Expect everyone to answer every question.
8. Focus only on the meaning of the passage or statement by an author and never get to personal application throughout the discussion.
9. Allow someone to dominate the discussion or hi-jack the direction.
10. Lose track of time and go on and on.

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Mark Barineau

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Small Group Best Practices

WHAT HAS BEEN TRIED AND WORKED?

Format

- Meet on Friday nights (weekly) at 7:00 pm
  (least competition with work and church events)
- 30 minutes of fellowship time with light snacks.
- 45-minute verse-by-verse Bible study (alternate topical studies)
- 10 to15 minute praise and prayer time.
- Target to dismiss by 8:30 pm.

Shepherding- **Intentional Communications**

- Donna and I actively seek out group members between church services, at Wednesday night dinners, after classes or events. Do this at every opportunity and make it a point to cover the entire group every 2-3 weeks (We also seek out our Lay Sheep this way)
- Use these touchpoints and in-group updates to keep up with individual needs and challenges. If in doubt, make phone calls to inquire.

- Coordinate needs-based help: prayer, meals, rides, **GO>** ***Hospital visits, hospice, funerals, weddings, etc.*** ***STAY IN TOUCH!***

- I send a **weekly email** reminder on Wednesdays with announcements, study enrichment aids, and if necessary, interim prayer requests.

Practices To Aid Learning & Spiritual Growth

- **Concentrate on the Bible. (Optional topics for variety) O.T. vs N.T.**
- **Provide Historical context, relevance to life + applications- Requires prep!**
- **Visual/contextual aids – maps, pictures, short videos, chart, background articles.**
- **Questions, Questions, Questions: *What do you think this means? Think with me….leading comments. Picture this…. All to draw out dialogue***
- **Occasionally share articles, videos, surveys, songs, news, etc. that would be of interest or encouragement…especially around *holidays or in summer* when we do not meet. "Tabletalk Magazine"/Ligonier Min., Desiring God, Gospel Coalition, The Bible Project, Seminary or PCA literature.**

Fun & **Service** -Variety & Availability Matter

- **Our group likes to share:** unique snacks, pizza nights, formal Group DINNERS-end of the year and Holidays, BIRTHDAYS OR ANNIVERSARIES. (Tomatoes & Produce)

- **Group fun nights**: games, mini-golf, fireworks, sporting events, concerts, plays, movies, cruises. Meals after church. *Does not have to be everybody*. Learn group preferences…

- **We usually pause for CCN events**: Women's events, concerts, speakers, seminars, etc.

- **Gender-specific fun nights**—if one group is busy, the others gather for fun. (Men BBQ)

- **We serve as a group & individually**: Easter & Christmas overflow, Fall Fest, New Members Class table hosts, **provide meals**, repairs or rides, illness visitation, community service…

Creatively Lead by Example
Pray for & with the people
Communicate Regularly
Maintain Variety & Fun
Shepherd & Encourage

WITH INTENTIONALITY, REGULARITY AND COMPASSION-***SEEK TO IMPROVE***

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Josh Custer

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