

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

MINISTRY

Matthew 28:18-20

John 17

MINDSET

2 COR. 3:5-6

1 THESS. 1:5

1 THESS. 2:8

1 THESS. 4:1-2

MECHANICS

Develop good discussion questions

Launching Questions

Understanding Questions

Application Questions

Facilitate discussion

Avoid questions with yes or no answers

Plan ahead have your questions written

 have in mind the key aspects of the passage to emphasize

Avoid letting one or two dominate the discussion

Have in mind the amount of time to spend on each part of the discussion

DEVELOPING GOOD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

LAUNCHING QUESTIONS---these get the discussion going

They should be general with several possible answers

They should help the group discover the key aspects of the passage

- Example What are some important issues the author is addressing?
 Someone describe the events of this passage--what's going on?
 What stands out to you in this passage?

UNDERSTANDING QUESTIONS---these focus on meaning and clarify issues

Their purpose is to draw principles out of the passage

Their answers need to have some basis from the text rather than opinion

- Example What is the context of this verse?
 What does this word mean?
 How does this relate to what was said earlier?
 What is the central idea of this verse?
 What are some implications of this statement?
 How does this fit with rest of the passage?
 What insight into the character of God do we learn here?
 What is the underlying principle here?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS---these encourage one to act upon what has been taught

- Example What do I learn about God in this passage?
 How does God want to change me in this?
 What, by God's grace, will I do about it this week?

FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Come prepared having clearly in mind the points you feel need to be emphasized.

Avoid lecturing or preaching, rather allow your questions to guide the group into discovering for themselves the important truths of the passage.

Silence is acceptable; don't be threatened by it.

Avoid flatly contradicting anyone, but this can be handled by asking "That is an interesting point-where do you see that in the text?"

If someone is dominating the discussion you can handle this by asking "What do others think?"

Encourage application by having your own application and sharing it with the group.

What truth or principle has impressed me most from this study?

Where do I fall short in the Lord's will in this?

What, by God's grace, will I do about it this week?

It is important to understand the four levels of sharing in relating to others.

Level one---non-personal, general information-these are facts without any personal risk such as "I heard so and so won the election"

Level two---non-personal related information such as "I stood in line two hours to vote"

Level three---personal factual information I feel comfortable sharing such as "I voted for so and so"

Level four---personal intimate information such as present or past attitudes or experiences that are private and confidential and have a high degree of risk in sharing

Groups that progress to level four usually have been together a relatively long time and there are mature, healthy interpersonal relationships between the members of the group with an understanding of the importance of confidentiality with regard to what is shared in the group.

PRAYER is an important part of a small group Bible study with growing Christians, but some young believers are uncomfortable praying in a group---some ideas:

As the leader it is important that you are praying regularly for the folks in your study.

Set aside the last few minutes to pray conversationally—those who want to pray are encourage to pray about specific issues, or about specific prayer requests that have been shared by those in the group. As everybody becomes more comfortable with praying in a group you can have people pray for the prayer request of the person on their left or on their right and go around the group praying in this format.

Sometimes you might want to bring letters from missionaries that you have and share from one or two of those and have people pick what they want to pray about from the letters. An encouraging follow-up is to bring later letters to demonstrate God's faithfulness in answering prayer.

LEARN BY DOING and do not feel you have to have all the answers before beginning.

Realize that the best way to learn to lead a small group Bible study is "OJT", on-the-job training.

If you do not know the answer to a question from the group make a note to try to get the answer. Being in a fellowship with more mature believers gives you resources for this kind of help and takes the pressure off of you.

A brief summary should be made in the last two or three minutes of the discussion time to bring it all together

"Fill in the blank" Bible studies such as the Studies in Christian Living or Design for Discipleship are excellent because they explore the major doctrinal truths in a topical format, and you may be able to get a "Leaders Manual" that can help on discussion questions

Allow some time at the beginning, before getting into the discussion, to visit and catch up on what has been going on, having in mind questions relating to what has been happening in their lives.

Make a mental or written note of comments and give the person an opportunity later to expand on what he or she meant. Be affirming and accepting in response to people's comments.

Don't feel compelled to correct "far out" comments or responses. Emphasize what the Bible says about the issue not that the person is wrong in their thinking.