

Tips for Leading Small Group Bible Study

Small groups work well for teens, young adults, and older adults alike. **Engaging God's Word** is a helpful series that groups can choose from to study various books of the Bible.

- The aim of small group Bible Study is to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Truth, deepen understanding of what it means to be a Christ follower, and draw closer to God through sharing what each one discovers through study of the Bible.
- The most effective Bible studies happen when each participant comes prepared, by doing each week's readings and being ready to share what the Holy Spirit has shown them.
- The first session focuses on introductions
 - ~ to one another,
 - ~ to the study, and
 - ~ how to get the most out of the study.
 - The booklet provides a summary introduction which you may read out
 - Each **Engaging God's Word** lesson includes 3 kinds of questions:
 - Observation (from specific Bible verses) → what do you see?
 - Interpretation (either a word or verse) → what does it mean?
 - Application (of the passage) → How is this lived-out in daily life?
 - Every week's home study is divided into 5-day sections which can be used to develop a habit of reading and studying a bit of the Bible daily.
 - Sometimes, one can't complete all the home study. That's ok, life happens.
 - The purpose of every small group session is to discover what God has revealed to each person through their home study and reflection.
- To be effective, the small group Bible study leader:
 - **Is the small group's host and guide - not their Bible teacher**
 - Welcomes every participant
 - Quietly yet intentionally gets to know each person
 - Is the Bible study facilitator, setting the pace, tone, and clarity so that each participant has an opportunity to share what they have responded to and learned. As each person shares, the group learns from one another
 - **Practice these important personal disciplines, as the leader:**
 - **Trust GOD** to reveal what each member needs to hear and learn through the Holy Spirit, as they study God's Word together
 - **Pray** for God's wisdom, and that you may know God's heart
 - **Pray** for each group member before each session
 - **Do not teach or give your personal opinion**
 - **Do not launch into a commentary/interpretation**
 - Remind yourself that the goal is for every participant (whether they're familiar or new to the Bible) to be
 - **Comfortable** (not embarrassed, made to feel less "spiritual", left out, overlooked, or always called upon)



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- **Cared for** (the leader's important job is to look at each group member constantly so that anyone who wishes to answer does, that dominate the discussion)
- Be built up in **Community**(everyone is welcome, each is uniquely growing in relationship to know Jesus through studying and sharing discoveries from the Bible together.)
- At the beginning of each session,
 - the leader **opens in a short prayer** and
 - **gently remind the group that** sharing is to be brief (they may read from their home study notes)
 - **gently remind the group to** give the Bible verse reference, indicating the word, phrase, or verse where they found their response, unless the question asks for a personal application/experience
- After each person shares, the leader:
 - **thanks each sharer by name**
 - **does not paraphrase** their answers (!)
 - **does not comment** with their own opinion or additional commentary (!)
 - **does not judge. Does not say “that’s right!” or “that’s not right!”** or “I don’t think that’s what that verse is about” ... these are put downs or in the opposite way suggest that someone’s answer is best or better than others.
 - **Invites others to share** (if you as the leader are asked for your answer/opinion, always invite others in the group to give what they discovered as the primary way ... you can re-affirm responses that are insightful)
- If an answer or question appears to be unusually challenging know that **it’s better to say “I’ll do deeper study on this and get back to you next week”** than to attempt to persuade the group with your personal view. **This gives important time to pray through, to consult with other leaders, etc.**
- At the end of each session,
 - **follow-up on previous prayer requests and ask for any new requests**
 - **Pray briefly for these requests (you can invite 1-3 people to pray)**
 - **Close the session in prayer**

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