

WEEK 7

EFFECTIVE  
SMALL GROUP HELPS

## How to Be an Effective Small Group Leader

1. Pray for group members and co-leaders prior to and during the small group experience.
2. Prepare for each section thoroughly and know your subject matter.
3. Create a safe and accepting environment where group members feel included, respected and important.
4. Be an encourager, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you so that significant connections are made between the word of God and peoples lives.  
(You're the facilitator who is serving God to help this happen.)
5. Consistently model friendliness warmth and respect throughout each meeting.
6. Answer questions the best you can and be honest when you don't know the answer.  
(Tell them you will get back with them.)
7. Pay attention to group members and any areas that may be confusing to them.
8. Pay attention to dynamics. Try to allow each participant to impact the group without monopolizing.
9. Let your group know that you are also working on learning and improving your skills.
10. If any group member cannot attend a specific session, arrange to help them catch up with what they've missed. Co-leaders may assist in this.
11. Keep the focus on the participants. Be careful not to dominate the group with your own stories.
12. Keep lecturing to a minimum and use lots of discussion and sharing of experiences.
13. Be informal and teach from a sitting position, unless you need to stand to write on the board or to demonstrate or role-play.
14. If you have a group member who is especially needy, encourage them to work on their issues outside of the group.
15. Use Biblical or real life illustrations to keep the group exciting, but make them brief, relevant to the topic.
16. Begin on time and stay on track. If issues come up that draw you off target, put them aside to be dealt with outside of the structured time.
17. Don't be afraid of silence. People need time to process thoughts and feelings.
18. Respect individuals' needs for confidentiality.
19. Keep your eyes open to identify potential leaders or co-leaders for future groups.
20. Enjoy yourself! Laughter and good humor are contagious.

## SMALL GROUPS

### How to Shepherd Small Groups

1. Love your small group consistently and unconditionally. I Peter 4:8
2. Express the subject in terms of the needs and interests of the individual.
3. Note constantly your students' attitudes, attention, and actions.
4. Rely on the Holy Spirit for teaching that is supernatural. Remember:

"To look is one thing. To see what you look at is another. To understand what you see is a third. To learn from what you understood is still something else. But to act on what you learn is all that really matters."

5. Finally, pray for the Holy Spirit to work in your time together.

### How to Pray for Your Small Group Time

Pray that the Holy Spirit:

1. would illuminate (give understanding) the content
2. convicts the members (change inside out)
3. anoints/guides the leaders (sensitive to His leading)
4. empowers the application (transformation)

# HOW TO LEAD

## I. UNDERSTAND SMALL GROUP DYNAMICS

### A. Three phases of a small group:

1. Personalization – getting to know each other; making the people in the group feel free to share things.
  - a. The first meeting of a small group should be spent getting to know each other. Examples of what one could do:
    - 1) Share testimonies
    - 2) Have each person share something unique about themselves
    - 3) Have each person share their most embarrassing moment
    - 4) Use a relational Bible exercise
      - a) Have each one read on their own during the small group
      - b) Have each one answer on their own sheet
      - c) Compare your answers and discuss. The purpose is to open up with each other
  - b. Personalization is enhanced in an informal situation. For ways to create an informal situation:
    - 1) Sit on the floor
    - 2) Serve refreshments (1/3 of what Jesus says in the Bible is said during a meal)
    - 3) Use first names
    - 4) Be a relaxed leader (a key to this is being prepared)
2. Polarization – creating tension which will arouse interest in the subject being discussed.
  - a. Ask a question that people in the group will have different views on (example: “Do you think it is difficult to live a Spirit filled life?”)
3. Realization – reaching a conclusion.
  - a. You can help them reach a conclusion if you summarize what has been discussed and zero in on the “Took” of the Hook, Book, Look, and Took Method discussed later on in this handout.

- B. A good discussion leader will try to get the group members to interact among themselves, not directing all comments to him. The flow of conversation should be such that comments from group members build upon previous comments.



This may be difficult at first, but it can be done by redirecting questions and comments to the group instead of the leader always answering them. After awhile, the group members will sense that their comments and answers are indeed as valuable as the leader's.

## II. PREPARE FOR THE DISCUSSION

- A. Decide what subject should be discussed. In deciding this the leader should consider the needs of his or her group.
- B. Prepare specific objectives for the discussion.
  - 1. Objectives should focus on three areas: What do you want the members to know, to feel, and to do.
  - 2. Make measurable objectives. Your objectives should be such that you can tell if you achieved them or not. This means your objectives must be carefully thought through and stated in specific terms.
- C. Clearly assign ahead of time the discussion group member's preparation.
  - 1. Provide the member with questions concerning the reading so that he will read with a purpose and thus will be better prepared for the discussion.
- D. Organize your discussion session to change lives. The Hook, Book, Look, Took method enables the leader to organize his discussion in this way. Here are the four steps of this method in sequence:
  - 1. Hook. There are several qualities of a good hook:
    - a. It "hooks" attention. This could be accomplished through: question, leading into a discussion of a passage.  
See Example A.

An Agree-disagree Sheet – The agree-disagree sheet is a series of statements on a particular subject which are worded in such a way as to create a division of opinion. The purpose of the agree-disagree sheet is to stimulate people's thinking about a particular subject, as well as to stimulate discussion centered around discovering what God's Word says about the subject.  
See example B.

## III. CONDUCT THE DISCUSSION

- A. Getting the discussion started
  - 1. Use a "hook"
  - 2. Call on the most talkative students. After the discussion gets going, bring others into the discussion.
- B. Keeping the discussion going
  - 1. By watching the faces of the students you can tell who would like to participate in the discussion.
- C. Keep the discussion from getting off onto unprofitable tangents. Tactfully direct the discussion back to the major issue at hand.

- D. Guide the discussion by switching from one speaker to another and by putting in a word here and there on your own.
1. See that no one monopolizes the discussion.
  2. See that everyone is involved in the discussion.
    - a. Feel free to call on those who don't volunteer to become involved.
  3. The leader should enter the discussion as little as possible.
- E. Ask appropriate questions.
1. Questions should be brief and simple
  2. Provoke thought, not merely the memory, through questions.
  3. Questions should never suggest the answer.
  4. Avoid questions with only a "yes" or "no" answer.
  5. Questions should not offer the student a choice between two possible answers contained in the question, because that does not compel the member to think.
  6. Questions should fill an essential purpose.
  7. Questions should be asked in a conversational, spontaneous way, as if personally addressed to each of the group before one is selected to answer.
  8. Questions should keep in mind the end result of personal application.
  9. Questions should be distributed so that all have an opportunity to learn as nearly equally as possible.
    - a. This should not involve a purely mechanical distribution, e.g., alphabetically, seating order, etc.
    - b. Strike a balance between calling on volunteers and stimulating shy people.
  10. Questions should be logical and interrelated
    - a. The leader should systematize and integrate his questioning process to provide a unity and coherence which will lead the group through the material in an organized way.
    - b. The leader should write out in advance questions for discussion that would lead the members step-by-step from the material they have studied to the points he wants them to think through and accept (use the Hook Chart).
  11. Plan questions that will challenge the thinking of the members and cause them to think through issues they possibly have not thought through before.
  12. Be ready with general questions that will stimulate and guide thinking. The following are examples: Do the rest of you agree? What do you think this means? Can anyone else think of any more ideas along this line? What can we learn from this? How does this apply to your daily life? What is the relationship between these ideas?

- F. Reach conclusions.
  1. At appropriate points and near the end of the discussion, summarize the major conclusions that have been reached by the group. It is your responsibility to make sure everyone agrees on the conclusions that are reached. You may do this by saying: "Is everyone generally agreed that such and such is correct? If so, let's move on to such and such idea."
  2. Making application
    - a. Encourage members to make application at appropriate times during the discussion. Conclude the discussion time by having members share how they are going to apply what they have discussed. Begin subsequent discussion by having students share how they have made applications to their lives as a result of previous discussion.
- G. Draw out the timid.
- H. Tone down the vocal person.
- I. Stimulate the bored. Get them involved (no one is bored when they are talking).
- J. Protect the attacked. (If someone makes a statement like: "I don't know if Jesus is God." and everyone attacks that person, point out that that is an important point to consider.

#### IV. EVALUATE AND IMPROVE THE DISCUSSION GROUP

- A. Soon after the meeting, evaluate the discussion.
- B. Get suggestions periodically from group members.
- C. Think through what you should do differently in the future.

#### V. BUILD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

- A. One of the biggest keys to a successful discussion is building relationships with the members. Paul set an excellent example in this area.
  1. Phone them frequently to let them know they are on your mind and are important to you. Don't always call with a specific reason or request in mind. Phone just to say "hi!" This takes little time...much thoughtfulness.
  2. Facebook or text them throughout the week to encourage them and keep up on what's going on in their life.
  3. Write them notes, postcards, contemporary cards, emails—surprises that arrive in the mail. Remember their birthdays and take advantage of other holidays to send "greetings".
  4. Relax with them. Get together for dinner, spend an evening in the living room playing a game, watching a TV program, or discussing a current issue. Get in the kitchen and make popcorn or candy together. Fix a meal together.
  5. Go places together (take them with you and you go with them). Go sightseeing. See a play or take in a sporting event. Attend a Christian conference or meeting. Worship together at your church and/or theirs. Double and triple date.

6. Take special time together. Go camping on weekends. Organize a slumber party. Participate in one another's family events, as appropriate. Be at the places and activities that are important to the other person.
7. Do "necessities" together. Go shopping. Do the laundry. Run errands. Do chores (i.e., wash/wax the car, mow the lawn, etc.
8. Develop spiritually together. Study the Word. Pray about each other's needs and concerns. Memorize Scripture. Go together to share your faith. Work together in church responsibilities.
9. Study together. Drill on mutual class assignments. Work together on projects where possible.
10. Exercise together. Compete in sports; play together on a local school, church or intramural team.
11. Show special kindnesses. Visit him when he's sick, under pressure, studying, or working hard. Drop by with some cookies or a soft drink. Don't stay long. Just let him know you care.

Note: Be careful about getting so involved with the building of personal relationships that other vital aspects of the ministry are neglected.



## Example A

1. Hook. It sees a goal, creates a need. It answers the questions “Why should we discuss this topic?” You can draw on the conclusions they come up with during one of the openers listed above to point to the importance of your topic.
  - c. The hook should lead naturally into the main body of your discussion.
  - d. A good Hook is one of the “secret weapons” of an effective group leader.
2. Book.
  - a. The purpose of this part of the discussion is to observe or discover biblical information and help the members understand it.
    - See ultimate reality
    - Who God is
    - Only then
      - Who man is
      - Examples from the Bible
      - Our lives
3. Look.

Begin to crystallize the observations from the “book” stage into principles that relate to you and the members. Ask: “What principles can we draw from that?”

The goal of this stage is to lay the right foundation of principles for the final application stage. Keep in mind your objectives – further analysis of who we are

4. Took.

Like a vaccination, the Word is of no effect until we can say it “took”, until there is evidence of a “worthy walk” and of “bearing fruit”. Unfortunately, this response rarely happens spontaneously. Your skill as a questioner is vital here. You must get beyond vague generalizations about being a better Christian this week. Help each member think through what specific action he is going to take, and when he is going to take that action.

**Example A**

**Hook Chart – filled in example**

	<b>ME</b>	<b>THEM</b>
<b>HOOK</b>	<p>Ask: What do you desire to accomplish or see happen?</p> <p>State Goal: To see how they can have the desires of their heart.</p>	<p>Write down the desires of their heart. Share what they have written down with the group.</p>
<b>BOOK</b>	<p>Have them read Ps. 37: 1-6 Read Ps. 37: 4,5 Ask: What does it mean to delight in the Lord? Ask: What is the result? Ask: If one wanted God to do something, what needs to happen first? Ask: What does it mean to commit one's way to the Lord?</p>	<p>Read Ps. 37: 1-6 to themselves. One person read Ps. 37: 4,5 One's joy, pleasure, satisfaction comes from fellowship with God. One will be given the desire of his heart. Commit ones way to God and trust Him. To yield ones entire life to God. (Romans 12: 1,2)</p>
<b>LOOK</b>	<p>Ask: What principles can be drawn from these 2 verses that would help a Christian achieve the desires of his heart?</p>	<p>Before God can give one the desires of his heart, he must delight in Him. Before God will do something, one needs to yield his entire life to Him and trust in Him.</p>
<b>TOOK</b>	<p>Ask: What do you need to do to delight in the Lord? Ask them to surrender areas of their lives they need to. Write down one thing you would like to commit to God and trust Him for. Memorize Ps. 37: 4,5. Next meeting: Ask to share how application is going?</p>	<p>Pray about attitudes. Make time with God top priority. Talk with God about it. Write down and share with group. Memorize Ps. 37: 4,5 for next week. Share how application is going.</p>

**Topic:** Psalm 37:4,5

**Possible Objectives:** (1) To Know: that before God can give us the desire of our heart we must delight in Him.

(2) To Feel:

(3) To Do: Delight in the Lord

Commit one thing to the Lord and trust Him for it.

## EXAMPLE B

Procedures for using the agree-disagree sheet are as follows:

- a. Duplicate a copy of the agree-disagree sheet for each member of the group.
- b. Distribute the sheets. Ask each member to read the statements and check the appropriate plank indicating whether he agrees or disagrees with the statement.
- c. Allow sufficient time for members to complete the sheet. Then read each statement one at a time and ask the members to indicate by raising their hand whether they agree or disagree with the statement.
- d. After all have indicated their agreement or disagreement, go back to the first statement or begin with the statement that is the most controversial (one where about half agreed and half disagreed). Read through the statements one at a time and ask for discussion on each one. Let those who agree with the statement tell why they agree, and those who disagree, why they disagree. Then use a statement to transition into your discussion such as: "Now that we have had an opportunity to share our opinions, what does the Bible have to say about this?"
- e. If the key passage you wanted them to focus on is not brought up, you can introduce it by saying, "How does Romans 7:14-21 (for example) relate to the discussion?"
- f. The agree-disagree sheet is excellent for stimulating discussion. However, be careful that the discussion does not end focusing on minor, peripheral issues, but rather is used to clarify major issues on which the members may have been confused.
- g. For newer Christians, your questions should be of a more basic nature.
- h. Remember that the goal of this approach is not necessarily to formulate the last word on these issues, but to help the members think them through.

EXAMPLE B

EXAMPLE OF AGREE-DISAGREE SHEET

What do YOU think?

Agree      Disagree

- |       |       |                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | 1. A Christian can be sinning and be Spirit-filled.                                                                                             |
| _____ | _____ | 2. A Spirit-filled Christian is sinlessly perfect.                                                                                              |
| _____ | _____ | 3. It is possible to be carnal and spiritual several times in one day.                                                                          |
| _____ | _____ | 4. One of the qualifications to be filled with the Spirit is to be sorry for your sin.                                                          |
| _____ | _____ | 5. If a Christian is to walk in the Spirit, he is responsible to change his attitude towards sin, but is not responsible to change his actions. |
| _____ | _____ | 6. The Spirit-filled Christian will always be blessed by God.                                                                                   |
| _____ | _____ | 7. If I'm abiding in Christ (controlled by the Spirit), I'm responsible to the Lord to bear fruit.                                              |
| _____ | _____ | 8. I show I'm a true follower of Christ by producing fruit.                                                                                     |
| _____ | _____ | 9. A Christian who is sharing Christ on a regular basis has a joyful and radiant life.                                                          |
| _____ | _____ | 10. I can expect God to draw to Himself everyone for whom I pray while I am walking in the control and poser of the Spirit.                     |

## HEALTHY HABITS

1. Learn people's names.
2. Get to know people
3. Be sensitive
4. Always be honest
5. Be a good listener
6. Be an encourager
7. Laugh with people
8. Cry with people

## BUILDING A TEAM

### Why a Team?

Our culture idolizes rugged individualism, but the Bible teaches corporateness - Christians acting as a body. David didn't drive out the Philistines alone; he depended heavily on the "mighty men" who fought at his side (I Chronicles 11:10). Paul never took a missionary trip alone; the one time he had to function without his team (Athens, Acts 17) was his least successful effort. And the only time the Bible says explicitly that Jesus spent a whole night praying was when He was selecting His team.

God didn't give any of us all the gifts or time necessary to do evangelism: building relationships, guiding people through the Bible, hospitality, coordinating, make contacts with non-Christians, praying, serving personal needs. He designed us to function as a body (Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12:7-26). Instead of trying to do evangelism alone, try working together.

A team not only helps with the work, it also multiplies the witness. The Apostle John writes that unbelievers are convinced that Christ is who He says He is by seeing Christians acting in love and unity with each other (John 13:35, 17:23). Alone you could be considered a mutant, but unbelievers seeing two or more caring, thinking, Bible-oriented people together will think it more than coincidence. Yet, even if you are only jogging along with an unbeliever, the spiritual support of others praying for your jogging companion multiplies the Holy Spirit's access.

### How to Build a Team

What makes a team an effective commando unit rather than just a milling crowd?

1. *Common Purpose* (Philippians 1:27, 2:2). This is the cornerstone of effective teamwork.
2. *Appropriate division of labor*. When a team breaks down a task and matches its component parts to the gifts and skills of the team members, it produces synergy; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
3. *Accepted leadership*. Leadership provides the structure for cooperation. So, even though you are friends and equals, you should definitely appoint one of your members as servant-leader.
4. *Solid relationships*. Interpersonal conflicts on the team are like friction in a machine. Solid relationships are the lubricant between team members. Members don't have to be best friends; the differences that enable synergism may preclude that. But the relationships should reflect trust, respect for each member's unique contributions, acceptance of each other's differences, and courtesy.
5. *Good communication*. Good communication is clear, open and honest. It is the glue that holds the team together.