



Why Me?

- Perhaps you're not a teacher (James 3:1) So lead, don't teach.
- Perhaps you don't know enough (John 16:13; 1 John 2:27). Discover and grow together...using Joy of Living materials

Why Have a Bible Study or Small Group

- **Unique** group of people you can reach
- **Less intimidating** than a Church Service or Large Group
- **Informal – Creates an atmosphere** where people feel loved and accepted
 - So many believers lack basic knowledge (2 Peter 3:18)
 - Stimulates honest talk about personal discoveries, questions, problems, and needs
 - Open to the Gospel – opportunity for each non-believer come to personal knowledge of Jesus Christ
 - Share prayer requests
- **Helps believers** mature and become functioning members of their church
 - builds the confidence of group members and allows them the freedom to talk about the Bible without fear of embarrassment or criticism.
 - equips growing Christians with a method for helping others grow spiritually
- **Encourages development** of deep friendships
 - Helps eliminate loneliness
 - Bear one another's burdens
 - Accountability
 - Exhort and encourage one another



Small Groups: Different Make-up - Different Methods

- **Discussion Groups** from Larger Interdenominational or Church Group (Details for development and administration in **Joy of Living's Leadership Training Guide**)
- **Church Cell Groups – Home Groups** (Make up usually determined by church staff, might be by location, marital status, age, etc – everyone is assigned group and often meets on same day – entire congregation encouraged to participate)
- **Groupings of “like” people** such as Men's, Women,s, Couples', Singles', etc. Differs from the cell groups, this would be totally elective. Might meet at the church or at a home or other facility. (Ideas for promoting all of previous ones in Joy of Living's Promo Pack)
- **Neighborhood outreach**
- **Work/Lunchtime** (could be just within company or could be hosted by a church or group in a commercial area)
- **Ministries** (prison, homeless)
- **Independent Group** such as a group of friends – might attend different churches or some might not even be believers



Common Needs for All Bible Study Groups:

- **Prayer, Prayer** and more Prayer
 - that God would establish your thoughts as you plan and prepare for your Bible Study group
 - for the Salvation of each person
 - draw those to the study that God wants & also to keep away those that would be the planting of the enemy to cause confusion, etc.
 - If part of a large group pray for the leaders, children's workers, etc.
 - If part of a larger group pray for the right mix for the individual groups (you might have to adjust them some after you begin)
 - list goes on....(Always remember this is God's work, "without Him we can do nothing" and "with Him – nothing is impossible!")
- **Personal Contact.** If possible make personal contact with those who have shown interest.
 - Call or visit them
 - drop them a note or an email

...let them know you really want them to attend.

Your contact might be the deciding factor whether or not they attend.



Decisions for Your Group

- **Day and time**
 - consider who you are attempting to reach
 - consider your own schedule
- **Location.** Where will you meet? (home, church, other facility?)
 - look at the pros and cons of each possible meeting facility
 - consider distance & availability
- Will **food/snacks** be served?
 - Who will provide (you, covered dish, rotate, offering, order out?)
 - Disposable plates and utensils?
 - Who will clean up
 - Will it be a meal or just snacks or just drinks
 - When will it be served – before or after meeting
- **What will you study?**
 - Consider the spiritual make-up of your group
 - Consider the cost and how it will be paid for
- **Determine HOW** the Bible is going to be studied.
 - Will you have homework?
 - Will you only work in class?
 - Will you have a lecture or just discussion?



Your First Meeting

• **Get Acquainted**

- Ask them to complete **information card** if not obtained on phone or at registration (sample in this handout)
- **Address them by name** (use name tags if necessary)

• **Use “Ice Breakers”** even if people know each other (makes more relaxed)

- a. Sample Game: Easily known Bible person or famous person taped on back of each person. (Can ask 3 “yes or no” questions per person to try to guess)

- b. Sample Ice Breaker: On 3”x5” Card write:

Name:

Hometown:

Occupation of you and/or your spouse:

Name:

Hometown:

Occupation of you or your spouse:

What do you like best to do on a rainy day?

Then add a different question or category to each card. Use unusual and unimportant questions/categories. Add some humor to help everyone relax. Here are some ideas:

1. *Hobbies:*
2. *Favorite book as a child:*
3. *Who was your favorite/worst teacher? Tell us something about him/her:*
4. *What is your favorite snack food?*
5. *What do you like best to do on a rainy day at home?*
6. *What made you want to come to Bible Study?*

Give one card to **each person** or put them in a container and let them draw a card. Ask them to **fill it** out and be ready to **share** the information with the others in the group.

As a leader you should go first in sharing.



Your First Meeting (continued)

- After the initial time of talking, call to order and always begin with **prayer**.
 - For the first day – keep it short – you want the focus on the study.
 - We'll discuss how to handle weekly prayer later.
- **Explain HOW** the Bible is going to be studied.
 - Will you have homework?
 - Will you only work in class?
 - Explain and agree upon what is to be expected, if anything, of them.
- **Get Them Started** doing Bible study.
 - If you are doing a study with questions have them **work individually** on small portion. Then ask them to **share answers** with group.
 - If you will be doing the study together aloud in class. **Get started**. It is easy to get held up discussing personal problems, world problems, etc. Just say something like, "okay let's get started on the Bible study, we can (say whatever they are doing) after we finish."
- **End** the study with a short **prayer**.
- **Dismiss** at the designated time. If in the middle of a conversation, stop and dismiss those that need to go, allow those who want to continue the discussion to continue.



Follow-up

- **Personal contact** is **SO** important!
 - Use cards/sheets/database to remember (see following page for sample)
 - Phone call, note or email
 - when absent
 - birthday/anniversary/sympathy
 - just because
- **Assign others**
 - Ask others in class call those who are absent
 - Assign someone to keep track of birthdays and write birthday cards

Handling Prayer Requests

- Determine: is this a prayer meeting and Bible study? If both write out “general requests” and **assign** to those who are comfortable praying aloud.
- Allow individuals to **share vs. write** individual requests
 - Have pens and 3” x 5” cards available, ask everyone to write requests as they come in and have a designated place to put them (i.e. basket, bowl)
 - Pass requests out in class and pray before starting class. You might suggest they take the request home and pray for person through the week/month, etc.
 - You might suggest they contact the person they are praying for
- Find out who is comfortable **praying out loud**. (Don’t put people on the spot. They may not come back.)
- To **encourage** shy individuals to pray aloud you might go around the group and have everyone in the group to voice a “Thank you to God” for something specific. (But not at the first meeting!)
- Reassure individuals that they can **just “talk” to God**.

Follow-up Sheet



Improving Your Leadership (Teacher/Discussion Leader)

- Make certain **you** are in **fellowship with the Lord**.
- Make certain **you** are **on time**.
- **Dress appropriately** (formal vs. casual, always modest).
- **Know your material** well.
 - teaching a lesson vs. leading a discussion
 - use visuals (graphs, diagrams, maps, etc.)
 - make certain you've done your homework (even if group is doing in class)
 - don't be afraid to say "I don't know."
 - at the end of class sum up what you've covered and what conclusions you've come to.
- Be **enthusiastic**.
- Use your sense of **humor**.
- Be **excited** about the discoveries made by others.
- **Know your group** – pace your lesson according to them.
 - If an individual seems slow to grasp the information contact them privately. Ask them if they have any questions you could help them with.
 - If someone seems to grasp the material more quickly than the others contact them privately. Ask them if they would like additional resources or materials for their personal study.



Improving Your Leadership (Inter-personal Relationships)

- Create an atmosphere of **love and acceptance**
 - be sensitive to the needs of those in the class
 - pray for the needy person
 - care for the person in need (as the Lord leads)
- Always keep personal information **confidential**
- **Never** talk about someone negatively
- **Make time** in your class to get to know one another
 - share prayer requests, praise reports
 - time to talk with each other, possibly over food
- If possible and appropriate plan **other activities** with the group
 - outings
 - evening get together (play games, etc.)
 - luncheon
 - special project (missionary collection, nursing home visitation, etc.)
- Teach your class to **establish and maintain relationships**
 - Use prayer request idea mentioned earlier
 - Suggest privately that they might be able to meet the need of someone in the class (e.g. ride, home visit, etc.)
 - work on project together



Troubleshooting in Small Groups

Because we are all human-beings with a fallen nature don't be surprised if problems show up in your group. Here are some common problems and suggestions on resolving the problem.

Problem	Possible Solution(s)
Members arrive late	Begin promptly at the designated time. If only one person is consistently late talk to the person privately. If multiple individuals are late discuss changing the time, or see what are the difficulties or time conflicts and address those.
Agreed-on preparation not completed	Check to see if group understands and agrees to preparation. If necessary you may need to change your expectations.
One person dominating discussion	Talk to privately. Let them know that they may be quicker to grasp the answer than others. Ask if they would help you draw others out. Ask them to hold off answering immediately to give others an opportunity or possibly after answering suggest that they ask what the others think.
Quiet Member	Allow time for thought after the question. Don't be afraid of silence. The questions may be too hard. You can try directing "non-threatening" question to the quiet person or have everyone share on a personal application question.
Issue causing disagreement	Try to stick to the passage or subject being discussed. Suggest they talk to you after the class, leave it up to them to bring up the subject when class is over. You could mention Deuteronomy 29:29 and explain that some things won't be completely understood until we are with the Lord. (1 Corinthians 13:12) (agree to disagree)
Pace is too fast or too slow	Use good study material with questions that allow for simple "head knowledge" and questions needing more thought the require "heart application." If necessary, adjust your pace.
Members with ongoing problems	Don't allow the individual to dominate the group. Tell them you will talk to them and pray with them after class – that you need to cover the study material now. Privately suggest resources for help such as counseling. Continue to pray for and support the person.