

How To Win as A Group Leader

Best Practices for Small Groups

The Day Before Your Group:

- **Communicate with your group members.**
 - A simple reminder text or email with the group time and location is highly encouraged.
 - If there is food involved, remind your member of who's bringing which food or snack that day.
- **Prepare to lead and facilitate discussion.**
 - Review the material & questions
 - Think through the flow. Have a clear idea of how to transition from check-in's to discussion, to prayer.
- **Pray.**
 - Pray for yourself, for wisdom, discernment, and the right posture towards everyone in the group.
 - Pray for your group members.
 - Pray for the material that you're discussing.

Set-Up: (At your earliest convenience)

- **Arrive at your gathering location.**
 - Make sure the space is ready to receive people! Try to make your space comfortable and inviting!
 - *Examples of set up:* Round tables & chairs, One Circle of Chairs, Long tables formed into Rectangle. You want to create a space where people can easily communicate with one another and the leader.
 - If the room is not set up the way you'd like, please take a photo and let a Groups Staff member know.
 - If the room is warm or the A/C is not running, please take a photo of the thermostat and let a Groups Staff member know.
- **Element of Hospitality.**
 - Always try to have some kind of snack/food/drink available.
 - On Sunday Mornings, this may mean directing new members to the coffee/donut area in the atrium.
 - Always have pens, paper or extra study material available.
- **Play background music. (optional)**
 - Background music creates energy and helps awkward moments feel less awkward, especially as people are getting to know each other.

Welcoming New Guests/Members:

- **Have a group leader or designated person welcome people at the door. (Be in place 10-15 mins before)**
 - This person is responsible for:
 - Introducing themselves.
 - Letting the guest know what to expect during group time.
 - Introducing them to other members of the group.
 - Directing them to a seat and communicating where bathrooms are located.

Group Time:

- **Check-In/Icebreaker**
 - Always start your group time by checking in with each person. If you have a larger group, have your group members check-in around their tables.
 - After a few minutes, take time to ask a few members to share what they discussed. (if comfortable).
 - Check In/Icebreaker Questions can be serious and personal OR fun and easy.
 - We never want to dive into content, without gaging how the person is doing in real time. Sometimes even fun questions can help start good conversation and see how the person is doing! The goal is to create safety and connection before diving deeper!

- **Discussion Time.**
 - **Content.** Each week, there will be content available on our Groups Website based on the Sunday Sermon. We highly encourage groups to start with this content if they are unsure what to use. Group Leaders will also have access to RightNow Media, and certain Lifeway content. If Group leaders choose to study something different aside from what's mentioned above or the Bible, please let our Groups team know.
 - **Facilitation.** Your job is never to teach the group, preach another sermon, or talk the whole time. The goal is to have fruitful conversations and participation from group members that would ultimately help them grow closer to God and each other.
 - **Don't "should" on people.** It's very common in groups for someone to share something, and others with good intent say, "Well you SHOULD just do this" or "This is what you SHOULD do." Try to refrain from doing this and encourage others not to as well. We want people to feel heard, and not like people are trying to fix them or their problems. If somebody asks for advice, that's very different.
- **Prayer and Accountability.**
 - Spend time sharing prayer requests and then praying over those prayer requests.
 - The leader does not have to be the one to pray, but it's helpful for new groups for the leader to model praying in the beginning.

When Your Group Finishes (or the day after):

- **Follow-up Conversations:**
 - If you need to have a conversation with someone based off something they said during the group, speak to them directly.
 - If you need to collect a new person's information, make sure to have them write it down before they leave. (Maybe get this at the beginning of class). Make sure to add them to the email list or group chat if applicable.
- Leave the room how you found it - move any furniture back to where it was and clean up any trash.
- Complete attendance in the LEAD App, or via the email you received for that date.
- Send any prayer requests shared to the group email or other form of communication. (WhatsApp, text, etc.)
- If there's a situation that came up in group that the Groups Staff needs to be aware of, please email or text them.

Cultivate one-on-one relationships:

- **Strive to build relationships with each person in your group.**
 - As a group leader, think through the giftings and talents of your members. We encourage you to designate members in to help meet other needs for your group such as: Taking a attendance, planning group events, or teaching a class.
 - PLEASE encourage your group members to get to know one another. (Suggest things like grabbing coffee or getting together for lunch.)
 - If you want your group to be successful, it is wise to have everyone be responsible for connecting with each other.