

Life Hacks for Small Group Leaders

Here is a list of everything Matt and Jay shared, plus a few additional items. Thanks to the Adult Team and some of our group leaders for their contributions.



Additional bonus hacks are listed below.

Prayer

- **QUICK PRAYER TIME**
To save time and to encourage participation for people who aren't comfortable speaking up in group, have everyone submit requests on the GroupMe App or on a shared Google Doc.
- **DAY TO PRAY**
Select a day to pray for group members (text them on occasion)
- **QUARTERLY PRAYER**
Once a quarter, devote the entire group time to prayer.
- **PRAY THE SCRIPTURE**
Teach to pray the Scriptures (take focus passage for week, 1-2 sentences)
- **PRAYER TRIADS**
Divide the group into groups of three for prayer time so that everyone contributes and everyone participates in prayer. This can also be done for discussion. A more common approach is to separate men and women.
- **ENCOURAGE STRUGGLING MEMBER**
When you notice that a group member is uniquely struggling, cancel some discussion questions and gather around. Let a few different people pray—put hands on their shoulders.

Discussion

- **GET EVERYONE TALKING**
Some people just don't participate in a crowd. That limits the possibilities for connecting with others. Solution: Use an ice-breaker or weekly check-in that requires everyone to participate. Weekly "Check-in". Tell us all something that happened this week.
- **ELDER INVITATION**
Invite your elder and his wife to attend something (build that relationship)
- **MANAGE YOUR OVER-TALKATIVE MEMBERS**
Meet with him or her individually. Express your gratitude for the conversation. Explain that...
 1. We learn by verbalizing our thoughts.
 2. Some people need a minute to process.
 3. Therefore, we'd like all to participate.

- **GOOD QUESTIONS**

Ask questions that prioritize discipleship, which fall under the faith and love category.

Faith looks upward.

Love moves outward. Faith questions help people see Jesus as Lord, Savior, Treasure.

Love questions help people see our call to minister to those around us.

Review your notes and ensure you have thoughtful questions.

Teaching

- **TEACHING LENSES**

Teaching for a change calls for a set of lenses: Facts (the story, the argument, the characters, the original audience), Faith (what's the truth to believe), Acts (how can I Put this in my daily life), Hopes (where are my desires aligned with the truth or not?)

- **TEACHING GOAL CLARITY**

When preparing, ask yourself this one question after some initial study: "What one thing do I want my group members to know, do, or be after we study this passage?"

Reminder: Don't Teach Everything You Study

Reverse engineer your Bible study and what you say and do based on the answer to that question.

- **STRUCTURE YOUR TEACHING**

When teaching a passage, structure can be helpful. Consider: Point, proof, picture, practice

- **SHOW A FUN OR INFORMATIVE VIDEO**

Show a YouTube in a creative way (Thessalonicki): How to spend a day in Thessaloniki on 10 Euros. From the video, they see the geography, some history, and that it's a real place. Another effective use of video is to show a Bible Project video when introducing a book of the Bible.

- **SMALL GROUP GUIDE**

Utilize the SG leader guides – they're awesome. It enables our church members to build on the momentum of what God is teaching us on Sunday mornings.

- **GREEK / HEBREW WORD STUDY**

Use Bible Hub or the Blue Letter Bible to study the meaning and other usage of Greek and Hebrew words. That's often important

- **SHARE MAPS OR GRAPHS ON GROUPME**

Send a pic before the meeting and reference it later. Star: supernatural or natural phenomena. Path of wise men, proximity of star.

- **SET GOALS FOR A SEMESTER**

Like studying the ways God speaks, the geography of the biblical text, and so on.

See the entire list at brookhills.org/lifehacks or scan the QR Code:



Care/Relationships

- **GROUP MEMBER TESTIMONIES**

Consider asking a member of SG (with advance notice) to read/share their spiritual story.

- **BREAKOUT GROUPS**

Have people get in groups of 3-4. Get to know each other. Come back and report something new, something they learned about someone else in the group.

- **FIRST FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP**

Plan a set monthly time to get together. On-campus groups feel this need more.

- **PHONE VOICE REMINDERS**

Follow up on something with a reminder to check on them later.

- **VISUALIZE ATTENDANCE**

Track attendance on a spreadsheet or Google Sheet to see where extra care is needed.

- **QUICK HOSPITALITY**

Take guests out for coffee or lunch quickly.

- **SURPRISE ENCOURAGEMENT**

Add category to your weekly to-do list: Who Can I Surprise?

Extras!

Hacks You Didn't Hear at the Leader Gathering

- **CONNECT GUESTS STRATEGICALLY**

When someone visits your group, introduce them to someone in the group with the same profession or hobbies, or someone who lives in the same area of town.

- **USA A SHARPIE (NAME TAGS)**

Pull out the name tags when you have a guest. And use a Sharpie! Name tags are useless with a pen. Using name tags is a courtesy to the guests.

- **DINNER CLUBS**

Set up some dinner groups of 2-3 couples or 4-5 people with the goal of meeting together sometime during the month. Pair newer people with anchor members of your group.

- **DROP A HINT**

Midway between meetings, drop a hint about the focus of next week's lesson. People might just say, "I need that," so it's a way to promote attendance.

- **FAMILY FELLOWSHIP**

Have a family fellowship so everyone in the group can meet each other's families. Often, non-churches spouses or other family members show up for this.

- **TRAVEL TOGETHER**

Go on a fun trip together, like the beach, the mountains, the river, a sporting event, or a festival. Spending time together is incredibly important, as you'll create lasting memories and spark future conversations. Drive further just for the conversation. Catfish Cabin in Guntersville. AL.com lists 10 Alabama Restaurants.

- **PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION!**

Prioritize life transformation in all you do. Jay's idea to change this: "Teach like a coach. Your goal is to partner with God in life transformation, not just knowing more about God, but knowing Him more fully and living for Him."

- **KEEP NOTES ON MEMBERS**

Take notes on group members (life events, things shared, spiritual progress, discussions, etc.)

- **EMBRACE AI FOR PART OF YOUR PREP**

For basic facts like a list of the kings of Israel or a list with references of all the instances of baptisms in the book of Acts, or even "remind me where the ancient city of Jericho is", AI can get it for you faster than you can grab a book. GUIDE: Don't start with AI. Allow for the Holy Spirit to lead.

- **ASK GROUP MEMBERS FOR APPLICATION**

Allow group members to answer this question: "What is God leading you to do to be obedient to this passage?"

- **PLAN THE DISCUSSIONS**

After you have prepared the content, review it to ensure you have included plenty of open-ended discussion questions. Mark them in red to easily identify them.

Bonus: When you ask questions, don't fill the silence. Let people think. Awkward? "Okay, that wasn't a rhetorical question."

- **HOOK THEM EARLY**

Start your lesson with a hook - a common-interest example that relates to the lesson and draws their interest and focus.

- **USE A TEACHING SCHEDULE**

Pick one group meeting a month to have someone else lead. It not only gives you a break, but helps raise up new leaders and by having a date, you give them plenty of time to prepare.

- **EVANGELISM IF ONLY**

Ask the group, "If God answered your prayers for one person to come to Christ in the next year, who would it be?" Write names and pray for those people.

- **POST YOUR TEACHING NOTES OR OUTLINE**

Share your teaching notes or the highlights on a Google Doc or on Discord.

- **GROUP BIBLE READING PLAN**

Challenge the group to join you on a Bible reading plan. Set aside 1-2 minutes of group time to share a highlight. **IMPORTANCE**

- **EQUIPPING, NOT JUST TEACHING**

Once a month, spend 5-10 minutes in evangelism equipping, reminding people of key points and verses associated with the Gospel, how to start conversations, etc.

- **SCRIPTURE MEMORY**

Select a monthly Bible verse to memorize.

- **ADOPT A LOCAL PARTNER**

Adopting a local ministry partner, school, or fire station allows for ongoing support and longer-term relationships. In my group, Jonathan Mack works at King's Home, so that's a good place for us to stay in touch and continually invest. Although I did really hate it, Bus Stop Bible Study.

- **BUILD QUESTIONS FOR ANY PASSAGE**

Build a list of discussion questions that work with any passage. Examples: What comfort do I get from this passage? What is difficult to understand here? How does this passage challenge me? What does this teach about God? about man? What is God calling me to do? How will I obey this passage?

- **END OF YEAR EVALUATION**

Use a form to enlist feedback through a group survey at the end of the year: What was helpful? What would you change? What would you like to study? How could we support you?

- **CHANGE IT UP**

Change the order you do things, such as saving prayer for the end, and use a variety of teaching methods, as people's learning styles differ. Lecture and discussion are the most common, but can you incorporate visuals or hands-on learning by using an object described in the lesson?

- **CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS**

Either in group or on the GroupMe app. Post a picture of the person having a birthday. This will help new people learn names.

- **GROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Meet quarterly to evaluate, plan, and share responsibilities

- **GREEK / HEBREW WORD STUDY**

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