Community Group Training and Orientation

SOUTH NORFOLK
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Exalting Christ Together

Session 3: Preparing Community Group Discussions

Class Schedule

Session 1 – What's a Community Group and Why are We Doing Them?

Session 2 – The Job of a Community Group Shepherd

Session 3 – Preparing Community Group Discussions

Community Group Leadership Training Seminar Assignments

1) **Pray for 1 hour about your role as a shepherd.**
    - Take an hour and get away to pray about what it means to shepherd and lead God's people.
    - Allow the weight of the responsibility to force you to your knees in dependence; likewise allow the joy of shepherding to overwhelm your heart with thankfulness for what God is allowing you to do.
    - Journal some thoughts about what God is teaching you.
    - To be completed after session two.

2) **Philosophy of Your Small Group**
    - Write a 1–2 page paper explaining a biblical philosophy of small groups.
    - The goal of this assignment is to help you process the material in your mind and give you a reference guide to refer back to when leading a small group.
    - To be completed at the end of the seminar.

3) **Study Notes and Teaching Outline**
    - Prepare a small group discussion/lesson.
    - Turn in your study notes and lesson plan.
    - This assignment will help give you a sense of what it takes to prepare a small group discussion.
    - To be completed after session three.

Preparing a Small Group Discussion

One of the most difficult parts of leading a small group is leading a discussion. It is one thing to understand the truth in your own mind and heart, but it is much more difficult to clearly communicate that truth to others in a discussion format. You can be a great student of the Word and have incredible notes, but if you cannot communicate the ideas to those in your group then it is hard to effectively shepherd them.

I) Developing a Lesson Plan:

Developing a lesson plan is just a formal way of saying know what you are going to say before you get to group. Different people will do this in different ways, and ultimately you will need to find what works best for you. Some people need to write everything out, and early in the process this is encouraged. Others just need some brief notes. Neither is better nor worse. It simply depends on what you need to do in order to be an effective teacher and facilitator of God's Word. Forming a lesson plan will take time, but the reward of being able to lead a good discussion and watching people learn and wrestle with the truth of God is worth the effort, and even more important, it is honoring to the Lord.

Before you Begin…

- _____
- _____

A) What to Teach/Discuss

1. Teach _____ Truth

We have no authority or truth in any of our own ideas therefore we need to allow the Word to speak. What we focus on should be founded upon the truth of the Bible.

- _____ _____
- _____ of the _____.
- _____ Studies
- _____ books

Note: _____ must come before _____! We must _____ what the Bible says before we can apply it.

2. Develop a _____ _____.

a. What is a _____ _____?

Your _____ _____ should take you from the starting line to the finish line of your small group. It should include everything from how you will cover the topic, what you will emphasize, and what questions you are going to ask to facilitate discussion.

b. Why write a _____ _____?

c. The Danger of a _____ _____.

Remember…you are ministering to people in a small group, not giving a lecture or seminar!

B) **Writing a _____ _____**

1. _____

a. Get them _____.

b. Review _____ from the previous meeting.

c. Ask, how does this _____ build on the _____ from the previous meeting?

Remember, you are not preaching a sermon, so your introduction does not need to be an elaborate or fancy illustration. The goal of your introduction is to help focus them on biblical truth and why it is important that their hearts and minds become engaged in what you are covering.

<u>When Using a Bible Passage</u>

- _____ the passage

- Make _____ and ask _____.

- Review _____.

- Consider how it _____ into the context of the book?

2. Establish the _____ _____ you will cover

a. Books of the Bible
—What is the _____ _____ of the passage?

b. Topical Studies
—What is the _____ you are covering?

c. Christian Books
—What is the _____ or _____ of the book about?

3. How are you going to _____ _____ your _____?

a. Decide how you are going to approach your discussion.
- If using a passage of Scripture, are you going to…
  -Go verse by verse?
  -Take a general overview?
  -Deal with the main points?
  -Hit some key issues?

- If teaching topically…
  -What Scripture are you going to use?
  -How are you going to build your argument?

- If you're using a Christian book…
  -What are you going to emphasize?
  -What Scripture will you talk about or read?

Remember: You _____ _____ _____!

b. Decide when to _____ and when to _____ _____.

c. Develop _____ to _____.
-Questions need to be thought through ahead of time.
-Look for specific answers.

Note: It is significant to plan this out beforehand for two reasons:
1) Know what you are going to say.
2) Listen to what others say.

d. Think through your _____ points.
-How are you going to work from one idea to the next?

e. What specific _____ are you going to give?
-Word Definitions
-History
-Cross References
-Context
-Cross References

f. When will you _____ in _____?
-The end of your time
-Throughout the Bible study

g. Consider _____, _____, and _____.
-Use selectively and when appropriate
-Know your audience

4. _____

a) Focus on _____ to _____ _____ _____. Don't overwhelm them.

b) Be _____ to issues that come up in the course of your discussion.

c) Be _____ to share what you have learned.

It is a good model for them to see the Word transform your life. At the same time, don't make it a "mini me" show sharing everything you have learned. Share what is appropriate and helpful.

d) Be _____.

e) _____ the _____ *and* _____.

f) Get _____.
-Daily life implementation
-Specific applications
-Set realistic goals

g) _____ the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

5. _____
-Wrap up main points, review application, and introduce next week.
-Give assignment (if applicable).

Sometimes in the providence of the Lord He changes everything. Other issues come up, questions need to be dealt with, and crises happen in people's lives. Remember, small group is a place to minister to people, which means it can get messy. Be flexible with your small group and your lesson plan. Your lesson plan is meant to help you minister to people more effectively, not bind you onto a strict tract.

II) Leading A Bible Study Discussion: Teaching and Facilitating

Teaching vs. Facilitating

- Teaching: _____ —_____ answers

- Facilitating: _____ —_____ answers

A) **Teaching and Facilitating**

Both teaching and facilitating are necessary in leading a small group discussion. The hard part is determining when to teach and when to facilitate discussion. Plan this out ahead of time, and yet at the same time, be flexible to the interaction of the group.

1. Don't think of yourself as _____ a teacher or _____ a facilitator.

2. Get people _____ as much as possible.

3. Allow them to _____ their own _____.

4. Make them come up with _____ from the _____.

5. Help them take _____ of truth in their hearts and minds.

B) **Questions Asking**

1. Think through your _____ ahead of time.

2. Make sure your questions are _____ and _____.

3. Build _____ off of other _____.

4. Don't make your questions too _____.

5. Avoid asking more than one question at a time.

6. Look for _____ _____ to some question, yet be open to learn.

7. Don't be afraid of asking _____ questions.

C) **Types of Questions**

1. "Yes" and "No" Questions

2. Open and Close Ended Questions

3. Rhetorical Question

4. Thinking Questions

5. Factual Answer Questions

6. Building Block Questions

7. General to Specific/ Specific to General Questions

8. Synthesis Questions

9. Application Questions

D) **Answers**

1. Wrong Answers

2. Right Answers

3. Semi-right answers

4. No answer at all

Small groups are a <u>chosen application</u> to obey biblical commands that cannot be easily accomplished in the larger context of the local church. They provide an extension of pastoral care, deeper accountability, more intimate fellowship and give opportunity for believers to utilize their gifts to serve the Body of Christ.

May God bless our efforts to see Him glorified as the saints are built up in Him!

Small Group Dynamics

We may not have time to cover the following, but I left it in the handout to consider some of these categories in case it is helpful. For a fuller treatment of small group dynamics, visit: https://www.gracejax.org/content.cfm?id=213&download_id=3283 (note: Session 5 "Preparing a Bible Study Discussion" is mislabeled. That is the session that covers the notes below)

A) Shepherding Issues within Small Groups

1. Crisis with a group member

2. Conviction of sin (individual)

3. Tiredness (group)

4. Tiredness (individual)

5. Lack of intimacy with God/ Apathy (group)

6. Parents

7. The Bad Nights!

8. Questions that you don't know the answer to

9. Debates/Disagreements between you and a group member.
    - Wrong answers (when a person does not want to be wrong)
    - Doctrinal Issues
    - Interpretation Issues
    - Application

10. Debates between members of the group.

11. Tangents

12. The dominant group member or “talker”

13. The “Silent One” who does not participate

14. Distractions
    - Within the group
    - Outside the group

15. Someone sharing too much with group (inappropriate for group)

16. No one sharing

17. Teach something wrong

18. If a group member does not like you or respect you

19. Dealing with different maturity issues in your group

20. Confidentiality in small groups

B) Helpful Hints for Small Groups

- Meet in a comfortable environment.
- Make sure you can see all the people in the group.
- Sit in a way in which people can see each other.
- Deal with hard questions after group (if possible and if appropriate to wait).
- Be prepared!!!

C) Different Ways to Lead a Small Group

1. Break into smaller groups (if you have a large “small group”)
2. Observations and questions
3. Have students lead or teach
4. Assignments
5. Teach and apply—group activities to apply what you’re learning
6. Serving as a Group
7. Pre–written questions (handouts)
8. Individuals or small group within group teach a section of the text
9. Pray through the text
10. Study through it together (teach them to study)
11. Activities, skits, actions to illustrate point (with youth)