



Tips and Tricks

Leading a great Bible study discussion starts with YOU. Preparation is the key to ensuring that the group time is meaningful and worthwhile.

As host, it is your duty to provide the context (scriptures) that your group will be studying. Your prayerful selection should be something that the group will benefit from. The next step in preparing for a great discussion (after personal preparation) is to develop a discussion plan.

1. Relationship Building

Relationship building time should be a part of every study. Dedicate at least 15 to 20 minutes of your group time to this. This communicates a couple of things—that the relationships in the group matter and should be developed often, and it reminds the group that this is more than a Bible study—it's a group that exists to study the Bible and to share life experiences together.

2. Prayer

Before any True Study of God's Word (even Personal Bible Study), we must seek His Guidance, His Blessing and His Spirit to guide the group. Lead the group in prayer or ask one of the members who you know is comfortable with public prayer to lead.

3. Topic

After prayer, begin the study. If possible, have copies of the selected scriptures available for every member of the group. Read the selection, or choose someone to read them to the group.

4. Discussion

Dedicate 45 to 60 minutes for a great time of discussion and learning. This allows plenty of time for everyone to be a part of the discussion. And be prepared to ask questions of the group, such as:

What truth(s) stand out to you in this passage?

What personal application or idea has God given you for this study?

What “I never thought of that before” insight did you gain?

What part of this study convicts you? Why?

What unresolved questions on this subject still bother you?

Did any aspect of this lesson bring a role model to mind? Who? Why?

How can this study aid you in sharing with or witnessing to others?



5. Closing Prayer

After the study time, it's time to transition to prayer. This time should include both prayer requests and praying together. It's through this prayer time that your group will grow in intimacy and you will communicate that God is the only solution to the needs of your day.

If you consistently get to the end of your time together and don't have time to pray, that's a problem. But it doesn't have to be. Rather than pressing through the content and skipping prayer time, stick with your planned timeline and transition to prayer based on your schedule instead of where you are with the content.

Handling Group Issues

With your group plan in hand, your goal as a leader will be to engage everyone in the Bible study. Some people in the group will need you to draw them out; others will need you to remind them that others in the group have things to say, too. What can you do to balance each of these extremes? Give the person who doesn't talk time. Odds are they are figuring out if they can trust the group before they engage in the conversation. You may want to talk to them outside of group time and ask them how you can help them join the conversation safely. Get their permission to ask them direct questions during your group time. With these boundaries established, odds are even the shyest person will engage in the discussion.

Then there is the person who talks too much. Don't be afraid to directly confront this in the group by gently cutting them off saying something like, "Thanks for sharing Mike. Does someone else have something to share?" Don't wait for them to stop. It will kill the group. No one wants to be a part of a group where one person dominates the conversation. If the pattern continues, you will need to talk to them one-on-one. Let them know that they are dominating the group time and that you need their help to engage the rest of the group.

Sometimes you will need to redirect the whole group not just one member. This happens when the group begins to chase rabbits that pull you away from the focus of the discussion. Be sensitive to this, because God may be redesigning the time before your eyes. A good rule of thumb? Allow them to chase rabbits that lead you to a place where people are talking about God's activity in their lives or places where people feel challenged by God to take new steps of faith. If your rabbit trails lead you to places other than this, you need to call the group back to the focus of the study.

Between Meetings

As a leader, your responsibilities don't end when the group meeting is over. Connect with others during the week and encourage them to interact with each other. Worksheets, trivia questions, or even online videos that clarify or expound on the prior week's lesson are some examples.