

## **Five Keys to Effectively Lead Your Small Group**

by Samantha Krieger

You've been given the awesome privilege and responsibility, as a small group leader, to lead your group into quality discussion. However, sometimes it's difficult to know how to craft your time together. Take a deep breath because you're not alone! Consider these five practical keys when leading your group:

*Make Prayer a Priority.* A wise man once said that nothing of eternal significance is accomplished apart from prayer. Since the purpose of your small group time is to invest in eternal things, (your relationship with Christ and with others) then prayer must become a priority and discipline.

During the time you meet, spend some time sharing prayer requests, and then pray with your group. In doing this, you acknowledge your dependence on Christ. Outside group time, pray for your group on a consistent basis. Pray about their requests, spiritual growth, and that they'd be kept from sin and temptation. The beautiful truth about prayer isn't so much that it changes things, but that it changes us.

*Facilitate an Open Environment for Sharing.* Your leadership is the "launching pad" for creating solid discussion so it's your job to facilitate an environment that's conducive for sharing. Your role isn't to lecture but to engage your group in the discussion by asking open-ended questions. Remember not to rely solely on your discussion guide or curriculum but be prepared to ask your own questions.

*Reveal a Heart of Authenticity.* As a facilitator, it can be tempting to act like we have it all together or to simply hide our struggles. The truth is, if you aren't real about your sin issues and struggles, your group will never sense the freedom to expose their weaknesses. Therefore, your group will never know each other beyond what's on the surface and it's guaranteed that spiritual growth will be stunted.

*Be Sensitive to Time.* Even though time is precious, sometimes we still take advantage of it. When you're time sensitive, you prove that you're

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responsible and care about the outside lives of your group. Setting up time boundaries from the get go is crucial but if this hasn't been done, it's never too late to start. Implement answers to questions like: What time will I start and finish each group? Will I start if someone isn't there or wait for everyone to arrive?

Be sensitive to the Spirit's leading in your discussion. Ending right on the clock may not always be best in the moment. A few members may need to stay longer so welcome that, but allow for others to leave if they need to. Either way, consider that God is never limited to our little box of time.

*Lead with Patience.* Practice patience when you ask the group a question. If an awkward silence pervades the air, don't be quick to answer your own question. Give group members time to think through the question. You'll be blown away by the discussion that can come from an articulate, well thought through answer!

It's such a joy to lead others knowing that genuine life-change best happens within the intimate context of a small group. Allow these practical keys to shape how you choose to spend your time together. Rest in the fact that no perfect small group or small group leader exists! Your strength comes from Christ and what He can do in and through you as you facilitate your group into great discussion.