

Small Group Leading 101

The purpose of small groups is to join together in community with others while we discuss God's word, participate in a Bible study, enjoy a common hobby and serve together. The goal of these groups is to build relationships while we grow in our faith.

Your Role as a Small Group Leader

Leading a small group does not have to be difficult. Keep it simple! Let the people and purpose of your group guide the how, what, when and where. All you have to do is help foster an environment of grace & compassion which will make everyone feel welcome!

A small group leader:

- Considers Casas Church their home church and attends Sunday morning services as regularly as possible.
- Enjoys engaging with and meeting new people and leading conversations. Is able to occasionally handle difficult situations with grace and compassion.
- Feels comfortable regularly facilitating prayer time within the group and has a willingness to follow-up as needed with individuals who requested prayer.
- Provides the best possible care to group members by referring them to resources if a need arises. (Prayer Ministry, Coordinator, Pastor, Etc...)
- Commits to help the leadership team disperse information within the group as needed.
- Is willing to be led by the leadership as they offer insight, encouragement and suggestions to help you succeed as a small group leader.
- Maintains good communication with their group members and leadership about upcoming meetings, group activities, etc...

Small Group Leader Guidelines

Things to remember as you step into leading your own small group.

- **Be yourself** - You are who God made you to be and you are perfect for this role just the way you are. Leading does not require you to become completely transparent and share every detail with your group. All we ask is that you are loving and authentic. You will be stretched a little, but that's how we grow! Use other leaders as resources when you need to, no one is alone, we are in this together.
- **No pressure!** - Your role is to help guide the discussion and the time spent together. Don't feel responsible for every moment of conversation or action. The Holy Spirit will guide you during your group's time together - He is the one leading all of us so let Him carry the weight!
- **It's not for a grade** - If you are leading a Bible or book-based study group, remember some people will come having done all their homework and others may have not had time that week or will have chosen not to use the workbook. Instead of asking "What did you write for this question?" or "who was able to complete this week's work?", ask questions like "What do you think about this statement?" or "What comes to mind when the author says this?"

- **Trust your group** - Encourage group members to share meaningful moments from their reflection on the study material and let their thoughts and/or questions help lead the conversation. Help guide this along by asking open ended questions based on those ideas.
- **Embrace different stages** - Explore what people are learning, not what they already know. When we discuss what we already know, it becomes obvious who's been a believer for a long time or grown up in church all their life and who hasn't or is brand new to their faith or simply here to learn more about who we are! Focusing on what everyone is learning levels the playing field and builds an environment for growth.
- **It's okay to be awkward!** - Some silence is okay as people process and think. Each group will have it's own dynamic and it can take time to "settle in". Don't feel like you have to be best friends with or please everyone in your group. We naturally click well with some and not others, let friendships develop naturally and accept the differences that are present between people. You don't all have to agree to be in community and learn from each other.

Small Group Guidelines

Here are some helpful hints for you as leaders to incorporate into your group as we create environments of grace & compassion where everyone feels welcome and belongs. Please share these during the first week with your group members.

- **Take turns** - It is important that no one in your small group dominates conversation. The goal is for everyone to have the opportunity to share their thoughts. Don't be afraid to share, but do so in a way that will invite more people to enter the conversation. You don't have to relate to everyone personally, but sometimes sharing something in common will create common ground that God can use.
- **What happens in small groups stays in small groups** - Confidentiality is key. Some things that will be shared may include personal information about people's lives, feelings and personal journey with God. Protect each other by not allowing information to be shared beyond the group.
- **Remember why we are meeting** - The purpose of small groups is to join together in community with others while we discuss God's word, participate in a Bible study, enjoy a common hobby and serve together. In order to create a comfortable environment that focuses on God and the purposes of your small group, political and/or other potentially divisive conversations should not happen during small group time. We have a value of acceptance over agreement; our own personal experiences shape our opinions, which might not always be the same.
- **Don't take disagreements personally** - Small group discussions often involve lively debate. This is usually caused by differing opinions or schools of thought. Group members should be prepared to disagree in a polite and constructive way that allows the group to learn about different interpretations of God's Word and understand one another's perspective better. A beautiful growth opportunity exists when we can see something from another's vantage point.