

FaithTalk Groups

Lesson 5: Group Meeting Process

In this lesson we will review some of the purposes for FaithTalk groups and survey some general guidelines for organizing and preparing for meetings. The materials covered in this lesson are referred to as “guidelines” because we want you to feel free to modify your group process to fit your unique context.

1. Healthy small groups serve the following purposes

- To affirm, console, encourage, gain wisdom from one another. Celebrate life accomplishments
- Make needs known and work together to meet those needs
- You share your stories and look for God’s healing in those stories, past and present.
- Biblical principles can be discussed, unveiled and understood.
- Plan ministry opportunities the group will carry out together.
- For non-Christians to see Christians living in communion with the Triune God and one another.
- Worship together.
- Pray for one another.
- Discover and utilize the spiritual gifts of group members to participate in Jesus’ mission to make disciples and bring people into communion with the Triune God.
- Allow the group’s apprentice to practice his/her skills

2. Remember, whenever you meet ...

- There are a variety of personalities in the room.
- There are multiple and wide-ranging complex life situations people are dealing with.
- There are varying attitudes, unrevealed feelings, and unresolved inner conflicts that affect the way individuals respond to experiences that take place during the meeting.
- There are unresolved issues caused by past experiences that trigger emotional responses to the subject you’re discussing.
- Jesus wants to transcend all of these things and do something to work transformation for every person in the group.

3. General considerations

- Include no less than 4 but no more than 15 people.
- Meet bi-weekly, if possible. But some groups may meet more or less often.
- Plan to meet for 3-9 months. Allow time for people to have a break.
- Develop small groups in communities. Avoid starting commuter small groups.

4. Before the meeting

- Prepare yourself
 - Abide in Christ. Make time for your personal spiritual development and relationship with Jesus. We are only fruitful in abiding in him (John 15:1-5).
 - Praying for wisdom.
 - Pray for each group member by name.
 - Pray for the group meeting with the group apprentice prior to the group meeting.

- **Integrate the upcoming lesson into your own life experience. Discover Christian principles and application in the lesson.**
- **Plan the meeting in advance.**
 - Plan how to break the ice
 - Plan how you will lead the discussion – prepare good questions
 - How will you connect the lesson to life?
 - Share responsibilities with your apprentice.
 - Make arrangements with the host.
 - Prepare for a welcoming, safe environment.
- **Plan a workable schedule within a 90 minute timeframe including**
 - Greeting attendees and mingling
 - Ice-breakers (There is another lesson that describes how to prepare icebreakers)
 - Discussion
 - Application
 - Prayer
 - Fellowship
- **Meeting agendas (suggested meeting formats are listed below)**

Segment	Approximate Time
WELCOME	20 Minutes
WORSHIP	15 Minutes
WORD	40 Minutes
WITNESS	15 Minutes

Segment	Focus	Flow
WELCOME	Icebreaking	“You to me”
WORSHIP	Jesus	“Us to God”
WORD	Discussion	“God to us”
WITNESS	Non-Christians	“God through us”

Alternate Format

Segment	Approximate Time
WELCOME	15 Minutes
ICEBREAKER	30 Minutes
DISCUSSION	30 Minutes
WRAPUP & FELLOWSHIP	15 Minutes

- **Prepare good questions in advance (another lesson focuses on how to develop good questions)**
- **Consider each group member's present situation.**
 - What's life like at work?
 - What's life like at home?
 - How are the key relationships this group member is involved with?
 - What desire is not coming to fruition?
 - What tough questions is God forcing this person to wrestle with?
 - What failure has entered this person's world this week?
 - What calling has God given this person and how can they respond?
- **Consider the group as a whole.**
 - How does Jesus want you to serve the group?
 - How is the Holy Spirit ministering to people (tonight)?
 - Where is God leading the group?
 - How can you participate in Jesus' work to make new disciples, equip group members for ministry, develop new leaders and prepare to multiply your group?

5. During the meeting

- Be an Active Listener.
- Don't talk too much.
- Ask good questions.
- Model transparency.
- Discuss opportunities for community service (outreach).
- Discuss opportunities for inviting new people to participate in your group.

Facilitation Checklist

1. *Don't answer your own questions.*
2. *Become comfortable with silence.*
3. *Encourage more than a "yes" or "no" answer.*
4. *Give affirmation.*
5. *Involve everyone as much as possible (but don't force involvement or put people on the spot).*
6. *Don't focus on getting through the material – focus on people.*
7. *Learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.*
8. *Begin and end on time.*

6. After the meeting

- Is there someone to pray for?
- Is there someone needing encouragement?
- Is there someone to hold accountable?
- Is there something to celebrate with someone?
- Is there something to learn?
- Is there a need to be met?
- Is there a leadership decision to make?
- Is there a conflict to be resolved?
- Is there a new person to contact and invite?

7. Between meetings

- Connect with group members.
- Get group members together just for fun.
- Help group members meet each other's needs.
- Mentor the group apprentice.
- Pray for and with group members.
- Celebrate life accomplishments and growth.
- Encourage group members to interact with one another between meetings.

Recommended Reading

- ▶ *How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting* by Joel Comiskey, Chapter 2.
- ▶ *303 Icebreakers*, Introduction.
- ▶ **Watch any additional videos that may be provided for this lesson.**