



Tips for Hosting a Great Group

1. **Plan communication to build relationships:**

This can happen in many ways

- Send an individual text or call as soon as someone signs up for your group to introduce yourself and give them information about your upcoming group meeting
- Text throughout the week (or every other week) to check in
- Set up a coffee/lunch date once during semester
- Text when they miss group saying you missed them
- Just call to chat once during semester

All this makes them feel loved and seen. This builds a friendship beyond the group!

2. **Prepare for the group:** Do homework, pray for your group members, and send out a "Can't wait to see you" text.

3. **Name tags:** For the first few weeks, have labels available and ask everyone to wear one to learn one another's names faster! This can eliminate unnecessary awkwardness.

4. **Food:** Jesus broke bread with His disciples, and it is a great way to connect with your group! It allows time for people to relax and helps them more easily open up in discussion time. Consider having a signup sheet for snacks/meals. If you are doing a main meal, then more than one person/couple can sign up together!

5. **Prayer time:** Allow time for people to be ministered to! Write down the prayer requests and continue praying over them throughout the week - then celebrate as the Lord works! Pray with the same gender and consider praying in groups of three or four.

6. **Group text:** Encourage one another with Scripture and prayer throughout the week. Send weekly reminders - who is leading that week, who is bringing food, and what's on the menu!
7. **Start and end on time:** Valuing people's time is a BIG deal. People live busy lives, and we need to honor them by sticking to the time allocated!
8. **Be above reproach:** Create a safe and holy environment for people to worship and be encouraged. During group time, we ask you to not consume alcohol or use profanity.
9. **Worship:** Before jumping into discussion or the curriculum, consider starting with a worship song. Choose something from YouTube where people can follow the lyrics on the screen!
10. **Privacy:** What is said in group, stays in group. Provide a space for your group members to share their story/prayer requests, and don't allow it to leave the room!
11. **Discussion:** As the group leader, you do not need to teach a lesson; you are there to facilitate conversation. Please don't allow one person to always overshare (including yourself); instead, allow time for everyone to contribute. Keep in mind the 70/30 rule. The participants talk 70% of the time, and the leaders 30%. Be comfortable with the pause.
A great idea is to say, "Let's go around the room and share one insight from this week," or "To allow time for everyone to share, try to keep your answer at 2 minutes or less." If someone does tend to bring lengthy answers, a good transition is to say, "Let's stop and pray for that," then move on.
12. **Discipleship:** Identify leadership in the members of your group, and call these seeds out in them. Distribute responsibilities like prayer, weekly text encouragement, meal schedule planning, and facilitating discussion in the group.
13. **Spoken blessing:** Consider finishing the group semester with the leaders giving a written/spoken blessing over each participant. A spoken blessing is an encouragement to your group member. It can include a Bible verse, something that you admire, or a prophecy to build them up. What a special way to finish, and something the participants will remember for a very long time!!