

Faith Study Small Groups – Facilitation Tips



Before the Gathering

1. Meet with your co-leader.
2. Select questions:
 - a. Most faith studies offer more questions than you need; don't try to answer them all.
 - b. Read the questions ahead of time and select the questions best for your group – consider the depth of the group, the interests or demographics of the members, etc.
 - c. Select 2-3 questions for each section (if there are multiple sections) or 5-7 questions if there is only one section of questions.
 - d. You can also open with general questions like “what jumped out at you...” or “what spoke to you today...”
 - e. Try to identify the themes in the questions (ahead of time); as the group shares, watch for those themes and move through the questions naturally as they relate to the theme (optional).
3. Create a timeline and write (tentative) times in the margins.
4. Decide who will lead each portion of the faith study.

During the Gathering & Facilitating

1. Create a sense of hospitality with a warm, welcoming setting:
 - a. Arrange for nametags and beverages.
 - b. Consider asking someone to help greet people as they arrive.
 - c. Take the lead in getting the group started.
 - d. Tell the group that connecting is one of the purposes and how it adds to the faith study.
2. Start with an opening question and prayer (if not included in the faith study). Take the lead in offering prayers; most people are not comfortable at the beginning.
3. Ask for volunteers to read (avoid asking someone directly); tell them where to start/end. Watch for difficult words/names and be the reader for those sections.
4. Be patient during silent stretches; some people need time to think (try counting to 10).
5. Remember that you don't need to be an “expert”. Your role is to facilitate a conversation.
6. Invite members to take home any handouts and continue to use in their personal devotions.

Typical Format for a Faith-Study Group

1. Opening question & opening prayer
2. Bible reading
3. Written reflection
4. Discussion questions
5. Ways to integrate faith and life
6. Logistics
7. Closing prayer

Wrap-Up & Between Gatherings

1. Post-it-notes can be a handy way for members to walk away with prayer requests or reminders.
2. Stay connected between gatherings by sending e-mails with a key quote from the last gathering or the theme for the next gathering.
3. Members are counting on you to organize and structure the group – remind them of the plans for the next gathering; ask someone to bring treats, etc.
4. Ask for support from other small group leaders or staff with any questions.