**TIPS FOR LEADERS**

Modified from “30 Discipleship Exercises”

1. The purpose of each lesson is to discover what God’s Word says, to understand what it means, and to apply it to life.
2. A leader talks less than 20% of the time. Guide by skillfully using questions. Remember, this is not a lecture.
3. Maintain good eye contact by looking around the group and not focusing too much on one person.
4. Be aware of the time you have available for your discussion and the time it will take you to get through each part of your study. Pace yourself appropriately and leave time for prayer as a group.
5. A good leader will launch the discussion with a good question or provocative story/illustration. The following questions may be used to guide the conversation along the way after it has started:
* “What do others think about that?”
* “Okay, what else?”
* If the group seems confused, ask:
 “Does everyone understand the question?”
 “Could someone reread the Scripture we are talking about.”
* Definition: “To clarify the meaning of a term or concept for the group…”

 “What do we mean by \_\_\_\_\_\_?”

 “Could someone offer a synonym for \_\_\_\_\_\_?”

* Illustration: “To relate concrete life situations…”
 “How does this work out in life?”

 “Has anyone observed this? Tell us about it.”

 “For example?”

* Personalization: “To apply truth to your own life…”

 “How have you experienced this?”

 “How might we put this into practice in our everyday life?”

* Concentration: “To focus attention on the Word of God as the authority for our
 discussion and decisions…”

 “What other Scriptures help us here?”

 “What Scripture supports this idea?”

 “Turn to \_\_\_\_\_\_. How does this Scripture help with our discussion?”

1. Good questions …
* are rarely answered with a simple “Yes” or “No”
* have several potential answers
* are simple and easily understood
* are short and to the point
1. Before moving on to a different section of your study, consider asking someone to summarize what you have discussed so far: “How would you summarize, in one sentence, what we have learned so far about \_\_\_\_\_\_?”
2. Don’t be afraid of silence when you ask a question. Most people need several seconds to consider their answer before speaking.

**Remember:**

* Plan your time. Be aware – time goes quickly! You will have 1.5 hours to lead this study.
* Pray for each person in your group by name. Don’t forget this important step!
* Involve others by asking questions (see “Group Problems and Potential Solutions,” p. 8).
* Be excited! Excitement is contagious. Lead by example!
* Try to create an environment in which your participants can engage, think, and feel free to discover and share thought.
* Don’t let these resources go to waste! Utilize them for your benefit, as well as the benefit of your group.
* Be creative! You are a unique individual with a unique leadership style. Don’t use these resources as a stiff formula – rather, use them as an aid in thinking, planning, and creating your own small-group study in your own way.
* Always surround everything in prayer!

**GROUP PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

**Too Talkative**

* Ask: “What does someone else think?”
* Talk to the person privately and make them aware that quieter people often need a longer silent pause before they will join in the conversation to offer their input.
* Encourage them to listen and ask follow-up questions to draw out the thoughts of others in the group.
* Assign them the task of listening to the group and summarizing the discussion before moving on to the next point.

**Wrong Answers Given**

* Ask for the group’s input on a questionable assertion.
* Ask: “What Scripture did you derive that belief from?”
* Ask: “What other Scriptures help us here?”
* Say: “Let’s turn to \_\_\_\_\_\_ (reference) and see how the Scripture speaks to our discussion viewpoint.”

**Non-involved**

* Ask: “Anyone want to add something here?”
* Say: “Just those who haven’t spoken before on this question.”
* Take time to personally encourage the involvement of a reluctant participant.

**Sidetracks**

* Say: “That topic would make an interesting study sometime, but right now the question is \_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* Face the fact that you’re off track and say, “I think we’ve wandered away from our original topic.” Restate the topic or question and relaunch the discussion.