

Guidelines for Bible Study Discussion Groups

Encourage commitment to your group. Encourage meeting attendance and lesson completion. However, do not expect everyone to have their lessons completed. Sometimes, women just need to absorb.

Advise them, "If you have to come late, still come. We'll save you a seat. Or if you have to leave early, just try to leave as quietly as possible so as not to disturb the group."

Stress confidentiality within the group. What is said within each group must not go any further. Ask them to respect family members, husbands, children, etc. We do not want to hurt the feelings of our loved ones.

Ask for respect for each other and differing opinions. We might have to "agree to disagree." Remember: *"A person convinced against her will, is of the same opinion still."*

Ask them to refrain from discussing other churches and denominations! There should be no church bashing no matter how false the doctrines.

Go over the lesson format. Ask if there are any questions. Tell them, "If I am going too fast or speaking "Christianese," ask me to slow down or to explain the terminology. Ask them not to be shy to ask questions, more than likely someone in the group has the same question.

Explain the different "versions" of the Bible, such as NIV, King James, The Message, etc.) Most study guides will use the NIV version; however, whatever the women have and understand is most important.

Finally, no promotion of home businesses--Pampered Chef, Avon, etc.

Bible Study Guidelines for Bible Study Leaders

This is your study, not mine. I am just here to help facilitate.

1. Confidentiality within our group. What is said within our group must not go any further.
 2. Commitment to our group to be at meetings whenever possible with homework completed. If you don't get your homework done, please still come and participate. Don't get discouraged.
 3. Respect for each other and differing opinions. We might have to "agree to disagree." Different church backgrounds.
 4. Books. Checks made out to?????. Handout books.
 5. Childcare payments. \$???. 00 per child, if possible. Donations from all accepted.
 6. If I move too fast or am unclear on something, please let me know.
 7. If you come late, please just come in and join the group. We'll save you a seat. If you need to leave early, that's OK, too.
 8. Go over lesson format and group format.
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E.G.R. (Extra Grace Required)

There will be one difficult person in every class. (It seems to be a law!)

What do you do if someone monopolizes the discussion group time? How do you handle her?

What if someone continually challenges the answers to the questions or becomes dogmatic on a certain belief or issue? What do you say?

What if someone habitually wants to pray about the small and intimate details of her family life, taking most of the allotted prayer time? What do you do?

A group member starts to criticize (Your Church Name) and/or its leadership. What would you say to her?

Proverbs Woman, But Not the Proverbs 31 Woman!

Praying Priscilla: [Proverbs 10:8](#) The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

Dogmatic Donna: [Proverbs 10:12](#) Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.

Shy Sharon: [Proverbs 12:25](#) An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.

[Proverbs 15:23](#): A man finds joy in giving an apt reply--and how good is a timely word!

Wandering Wanda: [Proverbs 4:26-27](#) Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Late Lana: [Proverbs 6:9-11](#) How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

Crisis Christine: [Proverbs 14:1](#) The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.

Divisive Diane: [Proverbs 10:10](#) He who winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin.

[Proverbs 10:32](#) The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

Critical Katrina: [Proverbs 3:27](#) Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.

Talkative Tanya: [Proverbs 10:19](#) When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.

Holy Holly: [Proverbs 3:7](#) Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

Perfect Patricia: [Proverbs 11:2](#) When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Bossy Barbara: [Proverbs 13:10](#) Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Broken Brenda: [Proverbs 27:19](#) As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

[Proverbs 17:22](#) A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

A GREAT BIBLE STUDY FACILITATOR

[Proverbs 31:20](#) She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

[Proverbs 31:26](#) She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

Lesson Preparation for Class

Please set aside plenty of time to prepare your lesson. You might want to work a week in advance of the group in case you have a crazy week. *If you do work ahead, make sure you review the current week's lesson before you come to class.* Trust me on this one! You will get confused!

Pray for your group during the week! Ask Christ to give you His *agape* love for them. Give them a call or send a note occasionally. If someone quits the group, call and send a card. Two contacts are enough to know they are missed, but not too much pressure.

Fifteen members is a good-sized group. (However, the group may be larger than that!) Usually, you will have three to four absent members. You are the shepherd, they are the sheep. Care for them!

If you have someone with extreme needs, refer them to counseling with a pastor or a professional counselor.

Please allow a few minutes of quiet time for yourself before class. If not at home, even the restroom will do.

- Open in Prayer
- Do the study (Try to complete each week's lesson. It is important to some "Type A" people.) ☺
- Prayer request time
- Prayer time
- Closure (Next week's lesson)

Keep the discussion moving. Some questions by nature will take more discussion time; therefore, try to be aware of which questions might trigger long discussions in your group.

Watch for body language--fidgeting, folded arms, eyes averted, people reading ahead. Remember--you are the facilitator and people expect you to take charge if things get out of hand.

Stop and pray for the crisis, (one minute) then move right on to the next question.

Move the discussion from political, critical, or way off topic discussions. Avoid negative discussion. (Example: Abortion--there will probably be at *least* one woman in your group who has had one.) Although we feel strongly about these issues, the church needs to become a place of healing, not further wounding.

Highlight important sections.

Highlight important questions. Rephrase the question to make it applicable to the women.

Write in your own answers, but do not feel compelled to share each of your answers.

Use personal illustrations--show by example.

Bible Study Housekeeping Requests

- Leaders and assistants are asked to bring treats for the first session.
 - Within the first three weeks, make a list of the names and phone numbers of the ladies in your group.
 - Remind the ladies to remove their name tags and return them to the basket.
 - Be an example of a servant leader to your women. Help clean-up and restore all of the rooms for others to use.
 - Leaders are responsible for set-up and teardown of their own group room. This includes chairs on the racks and vacuuming.
 - Be sure to return chairs to appropriate room.
 - If tables are used, return them to original room.
 - If air conditioning or heat are adjusted, turn back up or down before leaving
 - Turn lights off before leaving.
 - Leave room neat and ready for the next group to use.
 - If group meets at night, please check ALL doors to make sure they are locked before leaving.
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Ice Breaker Questions

Begin the first two weeks with one or two icebreaker questions. You may continue this as long as week four or five, depending on how the group is bonding together. (Be prepared to interrupt and move to the next person. *This time should be very short and fun!*)

1. Name? How long have you lived in???
2. Describe yourself in one word. (Name game--use an adjective with the same letter that begins your name.)
3. What is your favorite restaurant?
4. What is your favorite movie? Why?
5. My favorite way to waste time is _____.
6. Using a fruit or a vegetable as a metaphor, how would you describe your life this week? (Dried fig, ripe cantaloupe, smashed banana, etc.).
7. If you were to describe yourself as a flavor, what would your flavor be?
8. What do you think people like about you the most?
9. What is one privilege that your parents gave you that you abused the most?

More in-depth questions:

10. What is your greatest fear? (Save this for week 3)
 11. What's the biggest lie you ever told? (Save for week 3)
 12. What day in your life would you like to live over? (Save for week 3)
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Prayer Requests!

Bonding of the group occurs during prayer request time. However, it is the most difficult area of a group study to keep under control. Here are a few ideas and suggestions to help you maneuver through prayer time.

1. First, ask God to give *you* wisdom for your group prayer time. I believe He places each individual in each group. He knows what you should do!
 2. Save prayer requests until the end of discussion time. People have already had a chance to talk and they are ready to leave.
 3. You must keep track of the time. If your discussion runs too long, cut the prayer requests. Close with a general, closing prayer.
 4. Sweetly, ask them to keep their prayer requests to immediate family needs. Explain the time factor and remind them to be considerate of the childcare workers.
 5. Have pretty colored paper for them to write the prayer requests, and then you read them aloud.
 6. Prayer partners put names and phone numbers on a piece of paper, let them draw a name each week to call and pray for the needs. (Wait until week 4 to begin this.)
 7. If you know the discussion will be long because of the lesson material, pray at the very beginning of the lesson for the known needs. Many times women will speak their need to you before class begins. Do not ask for additional prayer requests.
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Thoughts for Assistant Leaders

Be prepared to facilitate the group if the group facilitator is absent. The assistant facilitator should lead the group at least once during an eleven-week session.

Help with treat sheets, prayer sheets, etc.

Help with the list of the names and phone numbers of the ladies in your group.

Help remind the ladies to remove their name tags and place in the basket.

Track the recent prayer requests. Ask follow-up questions and be sure to tell the group if there is a praise for a prayer request.

Call the women who might have missed. If they are gone for more than three weeks, do not call again.

Be attentive to the answers in the group.

If so led, be creative. Bring special things to the group--bookmarks, Scripture cards, candy, etc.

If the leader happens to be in a quandary or bogged down with someone's answer, rescue her. Jump in, interrupt, do whatever it takes. 😊

Help with set-up and teardown.

All leaders and co-leaders are asked to bring treats for first session of each study.



Shepherding Your Sheep

Life Exposure Questions (Also known as "ice-breakers")

Examples:

What is your favorite restaurant?

How long have you lived in your area?

What is a favorite movie you have seen recently?

What is your favorite way to spend a weekend?

If you had one life to waste, to absolutely blow on something totally outrageous, what would it be?

Jump ball questions

Example: Is Christianity hard or easy?

Suggestions for Discussion Time

1. Give everyone a chance to talk
 2. Humor
 3. Tears
 4. Prayer in the classroom. Decide how much time you want to spend on prayer, appoint a timekeeper, ask that person to warn five minutes before it's time to pray. Pray last! Prayer sheets are very helpful.
 5. Encourage, encourage, and encourage
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