

9 Tips for Leading Small Groups

- Ask God to give you a genuine love for each person.
- Pray for them faithfully that they will make time for the study and that the Holy Spirit will enlighten their minds as they read and study the Word.
- Guide the conversation but don't monopolize it.
- Don't be threatened by silence. People often need time to formulate their response. If you jump in with the answers, quieter members will sit back and not interact.
- Sometimes one member is more vocal than the others, to a point of hi-jacking the conversation. In those instances, be kind but don't be afraid to take back the helm. Ways to do this include thanking the person for his or her input but then asking if anyone else has a thought or interjecting a short insight of your own. When asking the next question, suggest that someone who hasn't had a chance to share speak up.
- To draw out quieter members, you may want to make gentle eye contact to invite their involvement. After someone has answered a question, address the quiet person by name and ask what he or she thinks. Don't push or demand, but provide an opportunity for everyone to be heard.
- When an answer is given that doesn't quite fit the question or the scriptural context, thank the participant and then ask if someone else has an answer.
- Sometimes opinions or answers will be given that are unscriptural, and at other times conversations may devolve into gossip or gripe sessions. At moments like these, I silently pray for wisdom and then gently steer the conversation back on track. It isn't always necessary to correct the issue at that moment, but look for opportunities to bring truth to these situations—even if it is the following week.
- You can gently address a sidetracked topic in closing prayer or share a scripture. But above all, avoid arguing or making anyone look foolish. Present truth and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.