



Small Group Guidelines

Be Open but Considerate

- You don't have to share, but your experience will add meaningful insights to others and you also grow from sharing about yourself, so it is encouraged.
- Listen while others are talking. Don't have side conversations.
- Feel free to share your experiences about yourself, but leave time for others by not taking too much time.
- Keep your answers on the topic and try to be concise. Give only necessary details to make your point.
- Use appropriate language for a Christian group.
- Try to be on time, attend regularly, and come prepared by doing your homework.
- Don't interrupt when another person is talking.
- Avoid cross-talk. *Cross-talk* is directing your comments to one person in the group rather than sharing your comments with the group as a whole.
- Avoid Christian "pat answers."

Accept Each Other

- There will be scenarios shared that may lead you to judge. Remember, you don't know the whole story. Don't judge; instead, offer compassion and support. You don't know what you would do in someone's situation, until you actually experience it.
- It is when each of us can share the truth about ourselves and be heard and accepted unconditionally that we are healed (James 5:16).
- When someone is in pain or crying, it often makes us uncomfortable and we feel we have to "do something." Just being there with them and allowing them to be real is therapeutic and healing.

Share Experiences, Not Advice

- We can learn from each other's experiences by listening. We may not know what's best for each other, so refrain from giving advice or trying to fix another's feelings, pain, or dilemmas. When someone shares something painful, you can offer compassion, understanding, and concern rather than a solution.

Confidentiality

- There is no requirement to share any personal information. Only share what you are comfortable sharing.
- Do not share with ANYONE outside the group any details from within the group.
- If certain types of behavior are shared (abuse of children or harm to oneself/others), confidentiality is not guaranteed, as the group leader may have an obligation to share the information with church leaders or social services, depending on the state and the church's legal obligations.

Not Attorneys or Counselors

- At no time should information shared by group members or facilitators be considered legal advice or professional counseling. If you need further assistance in these areas, please seek it or ask for a recommendation.