

The First Small Group Meeting

FITP Church Small Group Ministry

In the beginning stage of a small group, it is important for people to feel welcomed and accepted. During the first couple of meetings, invest time in getting to know each other. This guide offers a suggested outline for your first small group meeting, which tentatively lasts two hours.

Greet & Eat (15 minutes)

Provide snacks at the first meeting in order to ease uncomfortable feelings and to create an environment of openness and safety. Consider providing nametags for the first couple of times you meet. Have everyone write down their contact information (name, phone number, email, and birthday), get something to eat, and begin meeting others. Encourage people to continue eating as you transition into the next portion of your time together.

Share the Core Values and Commitments (10-15 minutes)

See attached page

Tell Your Story (1 hour)

To help the group get to know each other, have each person introduce themselves and briefly share their story with the group. Consider asking everyone to identify 1-2 key people who have played a significant role in their lives and to share how those people have influenced them. Or have them share 2-3 events that help tell their story. Express to the group that they are free to share as little or as much as they want (with a limit of about 5 minutes). We do not need to know everything about a person this week. We will strive to know each other better over time. As the leader, you set the tone, so plan to share your story first.

Introduce Your Curriculum (10 minutes)

Explain to everyone that the main teaching for our small group will be based on Sunday Morning Sermons.

- Each week we will gather to review, discuss, and apply the message from the morning. The emphasis will be on encouraging each other to apply the truths.
- The sermon series will be on the New Testament theme of discipleship. We will focus in on three parts of: Following Jesus, in Christ-centered community, on mission with Him.
- It will be important to attend the worship service on Sunday mornings to hear the sermon. If a group member cannot come to church we hope to have the audio version of the sermon posted by 1:00 pm each Sunday.
- Everyone should come with thoughts, questions, and ways to apply the Sunday morning sermon.

Prayer Time (15 minutes)

End the group time with prayer. Ask those in the group to share some things that they are currently praying for. Record these needs, and encourage the group to partner with each other in praying for what was shared. After the group meeting, email the prayer list to the group as a reminder to pray.

Official Dismissal

Although some people may linger, it is important to give everyone who needs to leave the opportunity to do so. Try to keep the official group meeting time between 1 and 2 hours. Please encourage parents to go pick up their kids from childcare and invite them to come back and visit as a family.

Follow-Up

Within 48 hours of the first meeting, contact everyone new in the group (i.e., call, write a letter, email, etc.) to express how glad you are that they came, to ask if they have any questions, and to set up a time to get to know them one-on-one.