

Crosspoint Small Group Leader Guide

Congratulations! You are heading up a small group. You have the opportunity to play a critical role ministering to others and helping them become more like Jesus. This is an important role, and it may be a bit intimidating. The good news though is that we serve a God who is powerful and who is able to do great things through our weakness. In this guide, we want to give you a some direction on what a Crosswalk Community should look like. In our groups, we have two core things that we want to accomplish...

Crosswalk Communities foster an environment for people to do life together. Discipleship happens best in the context of relationships. God made us to interact and to learn together. There is a large part of the Bible that talks about how we live in the context of community. It could be said that it is within relationships that we live out our faith. As a result, relationships matter. This means several things for your group:

- There should be extensive time during your gathering for relationships to develop. Don't rush straight into the Bible study, but take time to share about your lives.
- Laughter is allowed. Enjoy each other's company. Enjoy a meal together. If not a meal, then have someone bring snacks. It is ok to enjoy a game together.
- Not every night has to have a study. It is healthy to routinely plan evenings in which the group does something fun together, such as a cookout, bowling, or a service project.
- Remember that everyone is valued. Listen to what they have to say and treat everyone with respect.
- Protect confidentiality. Community is messy and your group should be a safe place for people to share difficult things. People should know that what is shared within the group will stay within the group. That being said, if there is something shared that could be a danger to that person or to someone else, use proper discretion on whether to share with church leadership.

Crosswalk Communities provide an environment for people to grow together. God has given us his Word and small groups provide a great environment for people to dig deeper and discuss how it applies to their lives.

- Pray together as a group. As the leader, pray for your group members.
- Regardless of the study, remember that the goal of a small group study is not increased knowledge, but transformation. In any study, the discussion should be aimed at how this impacts day to day lives.
- Remember that your group is likely made up of people at different places in their spiritual journey. Some may be Bible experts while others may be new to the Bible. Value everyone regardless of where they are at.
- Most groups will have a specific study that they are going through. Be aware that the only study that is inspired by God is the Bible. Even the Bible is not meant to be an end to itself but a resource to draw us into deeper intimacy with God. Listen to the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is taking the group in a different direction then the study on a given night, then let the Holy Spirit dictate the direction instead of the planned study.
- There may be a time when you are leading the study, and someone in the group has something a tangent that they want to go on that does not pertain to the rest of the group. Use proper discretion as to when a tangent is good for the group or a distraction. When this happens, it is appropriate to say, "(Whoever it may be), that is a good question. How about if you and I get together later to talk about it."
- Celebrate stories of things that God is doing in people's lives. If God does something special in your group, feel free to share it with the pastor and elders. They would love to hear about it also!

Further notes for leaders

- Look for other people in your group who have gifts. If someone has the gift of hospitality, then ask them to host the group. If someone has the gift of encouragement, then ask if maybe they could routinely send encouragement notes to people in the group. Perhaps someone is good at planning events...have them plan a fun gathering for your group.
- If someone has a teaching gift, then allow them to lead the discussion on different nights. Allowing other people to teach may provide an opportunity for you to send them out at some point to plant a new group.
- Continue to grow as a leader. We will be routinely placing training resources on our small group hub on the church website. These may be training articles or different study resources recommended by the church leadership.