



LEADING A SMALL GROUP • PREPARING THE LESSON

There are two important phases to preparing a lesson. First, you must prayerfully and thoughtfully work through the lesson yourself. You can't lead a good discussion and point a group toward life-changing application if you haven't studied and applied the material.

Note: We will use lesson to refer to the biblical content portion of the small group meeting. Session refers to the entire group time, including the lesson, prayer, fellowship time, etc.

Study the lesson, asking God to teach you from His Word. Consider how He might want you to apply what you're learning. If you skip this step your ability to effectively lead this lesson will diminish greatly. Learn and apply the lesson well, and you'll teach it well.

If you're personally involved with the material, you'll find it much easier to provide personal illustrations.

After you've worked through the lesson, the second phase is preparing to lead it. Go back through the lesson and think about how to help the group discover and apply the truths of the lesson.

Four steps that'll help prepare you to lead the lesson.

1. Pray. No matter how confident you feel in your ability to lead a group, continually ask God to guide you in your planning and implementation. You can plant a seed and water it, but God must cause the growth. You can prepare a brilliant lesson, but God must change lives. Spend time asking God to change you and the people in your group. Ask Him for wisdom and direction as you prepare. It's possible to spend hours preparing for your group time, but bottom line, it's God who uses His Word and Spirit to work in and through you.
2. Summarize the lesson. In your own words, state the central truth of the lesson so you can grasp the key issues. "I think the central truth of this lesson is _____."
3. Determine objectives for the lesson. Write out some basic objectives in light of the central truth of the lesson. A simple way to do this is answer these questions: "At the end of this group, I'd like my group members to know _____ and to feel _____ and to do _____." This will help you focus your lesson.

Write down your answers to 2 and 3 at the start of the lesson. This will help you focus your questions and allocate your time around the key objectives.

4. Go through the lesson and choose good questions and learning activities that'll help group members discover and apply the truths of the lesson.

Think of specific examples you can share from your own life. Focus the lesson on the objectives you determined in step 3. Keep in mind that you want to help them discover and apply the truth themselves.

After you get a good grasp on the lesson, you can choose the various elements which make up your meeting, such as icebreakers and prayer.