

Leading a Small Group Discussion

1. Prepare

Work through the materials and think yourself into your group meeting.

2. Pray

Pray before your group meeting.

3. Don't talk too much

Your job is to get people thinking and talking and keep the discussion moving from member to member rather than talking to the members.

4. Be A Good Listener

So simple yet so hard to do. Don't just listen to what people are saying – actively listen. The best leaders listen with their eyes and ears.

4. Don't Answer Your Own Questions

The whole purpose of asking the question is to create an environment where group members feel safe to share. It's not about getting the right answer. When people are silent with some of these questions, embrace the silence: this might be where the introverts are thinking and the Holy Spirit is speaking!

5. Encourage Responses

If no one really speaks you could say something like, "Paul, you look like you were going to say something..."

6. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions help group members to say more than a simple yes or no. Use 'what?' or 'how?' questions to get people to open up.

7. Try To Involve Everyone

Your group might be too big if everyone isn't able to speak their thoughts. Groups of over eight members will have difficulty doing this. In those cases, it might be best to divide the group into smaller groups for some of the time.

8. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing!

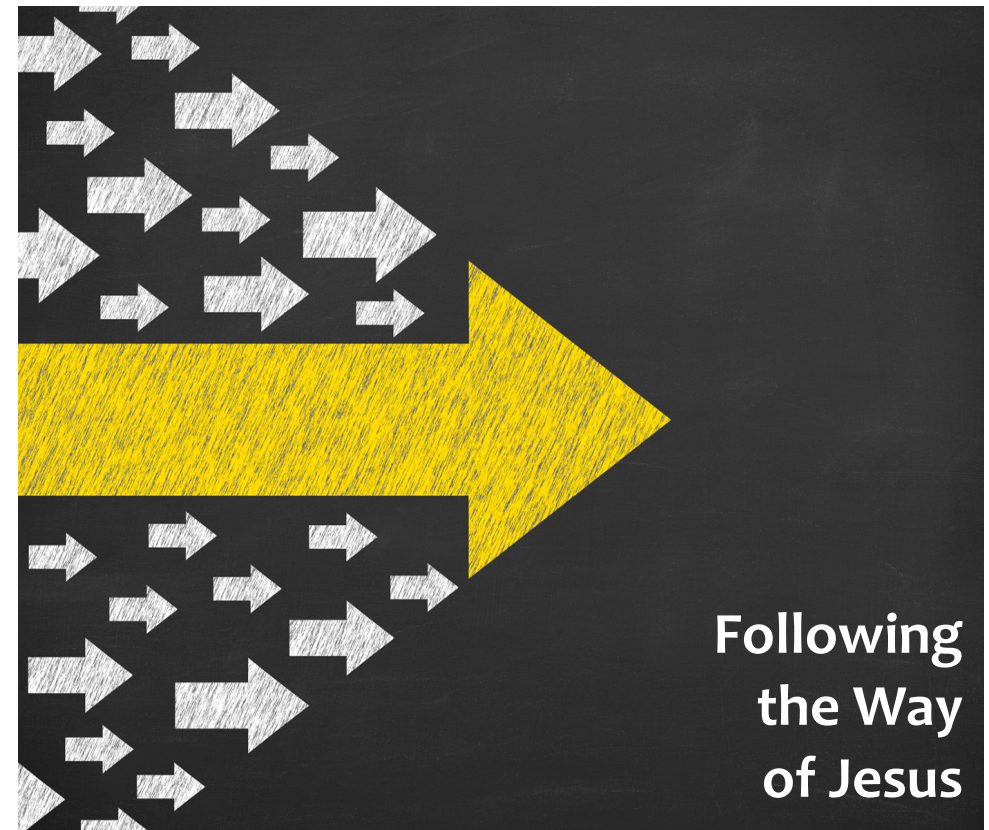
Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

9. Manage the Time

Keep an eye on the clock. Don't let things get bogged down in interesting but irrelevant discussion. Bring things back on track and take the initiative to move things on when it feels right.

10. Leave time for application.

Make sure people have time to think about the difference that this discussion will have in their daily 'frontline' lives.



Discussion Guides for Small Groups

2. Following the Way of Jesus: Repentance

Key Text:

29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 30 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?' 31 Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'

(Luke 5:29-32).

WAY IN

1. Can you think of a time when you have had to give up something you enjoy, because you know it's not good for you? What did that feel like? How did you manage to do it?

DISCUSS

1. Repentance is about turning away from something, and moving towards something else. Read Matthew 13:44,45. What did the man 'turn away from', and why did

he do so? What do these verses teach us about what it means to repent, and what the motivation might be?

2. Why is repentance the key to growing as a disciple? Is there an answer in Matthew 6:24?
3. Repentance is not just 'saying sorry' for past mistakes. What do we learn about repentance from John the Baptist in Luke 3:8a, 10-14?
4. Imagine that you had been in the crowd listening to John the Baptist. You hear him address tax-collectors and soldiers. What might he have said to people who do *your* work, to help them understand the practicalities of repentance?
5. Repentance is turning away from our own selfish life-goals and aligning ourselves with the life-goals of God. What might those ideals for a God-shaped life look like? Does Luke 10:25-27 point to an answer? (and see verses 28-37 too).

6. How would you help a new disciple understand the importance and reality of repentance?

WAY OUT

1. Is there anyone facing an issue of repentance at this moment?

After a time of sharing, pray for one another.

CONTEXT (for leaders) Luke 5:31,32

The image Jesus uses is fundamental in pointing out the issues. Jesus notes that a healthy person does not seek a physician; the sick do. So Jesus' mission is not to call the healthy but the sick "to repentance." The picture of a doctor is a well-known ancient metaphor (2 Chron. 16:12; Isa. 3:7; Jer. 8:22;). The image is strong. When I go to the doctor, I know several things: I am sick, I need help, and I cannot help myself. In other words, Jesus' call goes out to those who realize they need help. To seek out sinners is to go to people who recognize they are not all they can be. But Jesus does not go to offer placebos. Rather, he calls them to repent. As we see in Luke 3:7–14, repentance means a change of direction, a turning that manifests itself in a difference. So Jesus calls on those who are not well to get better by coming into the grace God offers them. If they desire to know God, the Lord will not reject them, but will begin the process that will make them well. Jesus reaches out to sinners because he sees the potential for their being renewed through God's grace. His mission is to regain the lost by going to them, as he does here with Levi.

Bock, Darrell L.. Luke: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text to Contemporary Life (p. 160). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.