

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

3. Jesus: Teacher, Deliverer, Healer (Mark 1:21-34)

WAY IN

What is it about Jesus that has amazed you?

KEY TEXT: Mark 1:15

The Kingdom of God is near...

READ: Mark 1: 21-34

KEY THOUGHTS

- Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God was near, now we see what that means in reality.
- People were amazed at what Jesus taught and what he did.
- People recognised that Jesus had authority, it is what marked him out as different.

DISCUSS

Teaching

- What expectations do you have that the teaching/speaking you hear will create a response within you?
- Share examples of where you have responded to the teaching/speaking that you have heard, what difference did it make to you?

Deliverer

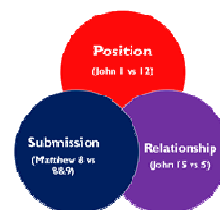
- How do you feel when the Bible speaks of what we may call the supernatural/spiritual?
- If we believe that God is real, Jesus is real and the Holy Spirit is real then why should we not believe that Angels are real, Satan is real and evil spirits are real?
- What has been your experience of the supernatural/spiritual?

Healing

- Mark does not mention Authority in this passage, but it is there none-the-less.

Authority

- The common thread in this passage is Authority and power, how have you experienced the Authority and power of Jesus in your life?
- Jesus gives his disciples authority and power and that means all of us who follow him. How much do you feel that you have that authority and power in your life?
- Our Authority and power come out of our position, submission and relationship.



Position – we are adopted sons and daughters of God’s family.

Submission – we are subjects of the Kingdom of God.

Relationship – we are branches of the vine.

WAY OUT

The topic in this passage raises all sorts of questions, what questions do you have?

How might you seek answers to those questions?

Is it okay to not understand everything?

How many times are people amazed by what we say and do in the name of Jesus?

PRAY

Commentary Notes:

For the whole passage

1 John 3 vs 8 “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work”.

For the section on deliverer

See Revelation 12 vs 3-9 and Luke 10 vs 18 for background.

For the section on Authority

Authority is the right and liberty to exercise power. **Power** is the might or ability inherent in the word “miracle”.

Genesis 17vs 1, God is El Shaddai – God Almighty. God hold all authority and power and chooses who to delegate it to.

See Luke 9 vs 1-2 and Mark 16 vs 15-18 where Jesus delegate authority and power to his disciples.

In case you can’t read the diagramme the verses are: John 1 vs 12, Mathew 8 vs 8&9 and John 15 vs 5

Footnote

Experience tends to show that we need to take care in matters of evil spirits and healing. The existence of evil spirits and the ability to deliver people from them, and the ability to heal the sick, is taught in the Bible but we need to be discerning and loving in our application of that teaching otherwise we may damage God’s people.

Finishing where we started

We started with the thought that Jesus said “The Kingdom of God is near” and that what he did next demonstrated that fact. We live in an age where things are a little more messy, yes the Kingdom of God is near through each one of us but it will not be here in full until Jesus returns.