

# Sharpening Your Small Group Leadership Skills

## Remember Our First Love

### Fall Back in Love

Likely, you became a small group leader because you love Jesus. But sometimes we drift. We want you to fall back in love with Jesus and remember why you are leading a small group.

### Loving to Lead

Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Do you love Jesus – more than being a leader, more than your organization, and more than the things he does for you? Your life with God matters more than anything else as a small group leader. Do whatever it takes to get and stay in close communion with him.

#### REFLECT

How has leadership impacted your spiritual rhythms? Which spiritual practices seem less useful to you in this season? Which spiritual practices might you consider experimenting with in the season ahead? Who can you talk with regularly about your life with God?

## Start with Why

### Why Before How

After having been in small groups and having taken steps into leadership, you can lose your awareness of why your small group matters and why you’re even leading in the small group. Take a moment to pause and ask yourself, “Why am I leading a small group?”

| Unhealthy Reasons to Lead                 | Healthy Reasons to Lead                  |
|---|--|
| ✗ I want people to like me.               | ✓ I want people to love Jesus.           |
| ✗ I want people to see how smart I am.    | ✓ Jesus has given me something to share. |
| ✗ I want people to want to date me.       | ✓ I love Jesus.                          |
| ✗ I want to earn brownie points with God. | ✓ I serve because I am already loved.    |
| ✗ Someone asked me.                       | ✓ The Jesus who loves me invited me.     |
| ✗ My ministry desperately needs me.       | ✓ My campus desperately needs Jesus.     |

### Talking About Your Why

As an example of why your why matters, we’ll look at how to invite people to your small group.

Invitation Example:

*I see a lot of busyness, exhaustion, and anxiety on campus. I even see some in me. So do some of my friends. But we believe that Jesus loves us and can help us, that he cares enough to help. That’s why we meet up in the Radish at 8pm every Wednesday. We’re all at different stages of figuring out what we believe and need each other’s help. I’d love for you to come and check out our group. Would you be interested in coming with me this week to see if it’s helpful for you?*

In this invitation, you not only give them details but also include reasons to check out your small group. Try it out! Using your answers about why you’re leading small group, write a 3-4 sentence short story about why someone should check out your small group, and ask a friend for feedback.

## Steward Your Relationships

### Who is My Neighbor?

Instead of asking “Who must I love?” Jesus challenges us to ask, “How can I be a good neighbor?” God has given you relationships on campus to depend on and work together with. Using network maps, you’ll ask God to help you determine the target audience for your small group.

## Network Maps as Prayer Guides

Create a network map and pray over those people and use these questions to help guide you.

1. Lord, what do you want us to see here?
2. Why have you placed these people in our lives?
3. Is there a group or place you want to send us to?
4. What do you want to see happen among these people?
5. What message do we need to share with them?
6. How do we need to prepare, learn, grow, and/or repent?
7. Who could help advocate for the ministry in their own networks?

## Power Tools for Building Witnessing Communities

### Building Community Through Tradition and Experimentation

Tradition and experimentation can both be good for your small group. Consider the following questions.

Tradition:

- What weekly traditions have you seen in small groups? What monthly / semesterly / annual traditions have you seen in small groups?
- Which of these traditions do you most value?
- What traditions do you think you would like to introduce to your group in the next season?

Experimentation:

- What unique experiences could you offer your small group to help them grow in their faith?
- What are some creative and fun ways your small group could get to know each other better?
- How can you change things up in terms of the location, duration, makeup, and meeting time of your group?
- How might your group connect more broadly with the campus?

### Building Community Through Bible Study

4 Powerful Guidelines to Help You Better Choose What to Study:

1. The Bible is better than a random Christian book
2. Passages are better than single verses.
3. Single passages are better than multiple verses out of context.
4. Moving through a section of the Bible is better than bouncing around week-to-week.

### 7 Discussion Roadblocks and How to Address Them

1. **Too much silence** – Rephrase the question. Have people share in pairs first. Call on someone you know to answer first.
2. **Participant who dominates the conversation** – Direct questions to others in the group. Ask the person privately to be mindful of making space for others.
3. **Conversations get off on tangents** – Agree as a group to humorously flag each other to stay on topic. Gently re-gather attention and restate the question.
4. **Theological questions that go beyond the passage** – “That’s an important question, but this passage doesn’t really get at it directly. Let’s set it aside for now and maybe go there another time when we can look closely at passages that are focused on that question.”
5. **Answers don’t have a biblical basis** – Ask where they see it in the text or others what they think.
6. **Visitors** – Have everyone introduce themselves. Re-explain the style of Bible study as you go. Explain any inside jokes. Consider the level of sharing you are asking of someone who is new.
7. **Your group expects you to be the expert** – Don’t fill all the silences. Remind people that it’s helpful for everyone to contribute. Summarize other’s answers.

## Related Resources

- [Spiritual Practices Handout](#)
- [Inviting God into Shared Networks](#)

## Recommended Courses

- [Inviting Well](#)
- [Growing My Networks](#)
- [Building Your Own Bible Study](#)

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