

>SM Small Group Guide

A simple MTSM guide for leading healthy, Christ-centered small groups using >SM journals, discussion questions, discipleship resources, and Bible reading plans.

The Goal of a Small Group

The goal of a healthy small group is not simply to complete a lesson or answer every question. Healthy groups help people love God, connect with others, serve others, and share the gospel. As a facilitator, your role is not to preach a sermon but to guide discussion, encourage participation, keep the group centered on Scripture, and help people take practical steps of obedience.

Remember: You are helping people follow Jesus together.

Before the Group Meets

- Pray for your group members by name.
- Read the assigned passages ahead of time.
- Review the discussion questions before the meeting.
- Choose the most helpful questions instead of trying to cover every question.
- Prepare a simple opening prayer and closing prayer.
- Create a welcoming and distraction-free environment.

Suggested Weekly Group Flow

Time	Suggested Focus
10 minutes	Connect and catch up with one another.
5 minutes	Open in prayer and invite God to use His Word.

20–30 minutes	Share insights from the weekly readings, PETS notes, journal reflections, and Scripture memory verses together if your group is practicing Scripture memory. Encourage members not only to quote the verse, but also to share how God used it throughout the week.
15–20 minutes	Discuss selected discussion questions together.
10–15 minutes	Use Heart Check questions for accountability, encouragement, and prayer.
5–10 minutes	Share prayer requests and close in prayer.

Leader Tips

- You do not need to answer every question.
- Focus on discussion, not teaching a sermon.
- Encourage quieter people to share without forcing them.
- Keep dominant voices from taking over the conversation.
- Redirect conversations that move too far off-topic.
- Focus on application, not just information.
- Leave enough time for prayer and personal care.

How to Ask Better Questions

Instead of asking questions that only require yes/no answers, ask open-ended questions that encourage reflection and discussion.

- What stood out to you most in the reading?
- What does this passage teach us about Jesus?
- What challenged or encouraged you?
- How does this apply to everyday life?
- What step of obedience might God be calling you to take?

Using Heart Check Questions

Heart Check questions help groups move from information to honest discipleship. These conversations should be marked by grace, humility, confidentiality, encouragement, and prayer — not shame or pressure.

Healthy accountability is honest, compassionate, and centered on helping one another follow Jesus.

What to Do When Conversation Gets Difficult

- If someone dominates the conversation, gently redirect to others.
- If silence happens, allow people time to think instead of rushing to fill the space.
- If someone shares a struggle, respond with grace and prayer.
- If disagreement arises, keep the focus on Scripture and humility.
- If you do not know an answer, it is okay to say, 'I'm not sure — let's study that further together.'

Final Encouragement

You do not need to be a professional teacher to lead a meaningful small group. God often uses ordinary believers who are willing to open His Word, love people well, and point others toward Jesus.

Healthy groups are not about perfection. They are about helping people take steady steps toward Jesus together.