

CROSSINGGROUPS

CARE IN TOUGH TIMES

ONE OF THE ROLES OF A CROSSING GROUP IS TO BE A CARING COMMUNITY THAT BEARS ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS. THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN WHEN THE LEADER IS ABLE TO NAVIGATE SUCH SITUATIONS WITH A CARING HEART.

SOME OF THE TIPS BELOW COME FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR CROSSING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER RESOURCES

AS A LEADER, ENCOURAGE YOUR GROUP TO SERVE EACH OTHER. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS;

- CARING THROUGH TIME AND ENERGY
 - Visiting a group member in the hospital
 - Helping group members with meals/groceries
 - Work parties
 - E-mail prayer chain
 - Helping group members dealing with loss.
- FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. In order to address a variety of situations with regard to financial assistance, the pastoral leadership has established the following guidelines:
 - Never make any promises, on behalf of yourself or the church, for financial assistance.
 - Consider how your group can assist before turning to the church's benevolence funds.
 - When benevolence funds are available, the church assists with rent and utilities.
 - To request financial assistance for someone in your group, invite them to call the church office at (702) 947-2080.
- THE POWER OF PRAYER. Any crisis that arises should be covered with prayer. James 5:15-16 tells us that *"the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."* Challenge your group to not only pray together during such situations, but to also pray throughout the week. Also, if the circumstance warrants, keep your group updated so they know how to pray.

***Ask God for discernment and leadership for wisdom when it comes to helping someone financially.
Be generous, but don't let someone take advantage of you or anyone in your group.***

GROUP MEMBERS

COPING WITH THE GROUP MEMBER WHO TALKS TOO MUCH

IF YOU LEAD A GROUP FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME, YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE THAT GROUP MEMBER WHO SIMPLY TALKS TOO MUCH. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE GROUP MEMBER PROBABLY DOES NOT REALIZE THAT HE OR SHE IS TALKING TOO MUCH.

SOME OF THE TIPS BELOW COME FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR CROSSING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- SET THE EXPECTATIONS, IF NECESSARY. Provide guidelines for your group members that their answers should be following the 3 B's Rule: Brief, Biblical, and Beneficial.
- BE ASSERTIVE DURING THE DISCUSSION. Be clear with the group during the discussion that it is important to hear from everyone, not just one or two individual group members.
- BE ASSERTIVE AFTER THE DISCUSSION. Pull this group member to the side after the group meeting, and, with love, ask him or her to allow more time for others to participate in the discussion.
- MANAGE YOUR EYE CONTACT WITH THE PERSON. If someone is simply talking too much, make continual eye contact with them. The group member should be able to pick up on your body language that they are talking too much.
- MANAGE THE GROUP SILENCE. One very practical way to manage the group is to implement rules that everyone must wait at least 10 seconds before answering the question. This allows everyone time to think about their answer and then gives everyone an opportunity to participate.

GROUPDISCUSSION

TIPS FOR FACILITATING DYNAMIC DISCUSSION

SOMETIMES PEOPLE JUST DON'T TALK. SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE SLOW TO OPEN UP. SOMETIMES THE DISCUSSION IS JUST A LITTLE SLOW. SOMETIMES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE DRAWING CONVERSATION OUT OF YOUR GROUP MEMBERS. WE WANT TO HELP YOU DEAL WITH THESE SITUATIONS.

SOME OF THE TIPS BELOW COME FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR CROSSING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- **BE PREPARED TO SHARE FIRST.** As the leader, you should be prepared to answer all questions that you ask during the discussion. Your openness will be contagious; your openness will encourage other to participate.
- **NEVER INTERRUPT ANYONE WHEN THEY ARE TALKING, UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.** There are times that you'll need to interrupt, but try your best to give all group members time to share their thoughts and ideas.
- **USE FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS.** A simple way to follow up a question is to simply ask, "Why?", "How?", and "When?"
- **DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE.** This is a skill that must be learned. Silence does not necessarily mean disengagement. Silence can mean that people are thinking about their answers. Allow time for the group to think through what has been said or viewed.
- **THANK PEOPLE FOR SHARING.** When you thank your group members for sharing, especially the quiet ones, it can mean a lot to them.
- **AVOID "YES" AND "NO" QUESTIONS.** Open-ended questions are always the ways to go for dynamic discussion.
- **AFFIRM RESPONSES FROM GROUP MEMBERS.** Lean forward in your seat to show engagement with their sharing. If needed, confirm their thoughts; use the following. "What I hear you saying is..."
- **BE FLEXIBLE.** Go with the flow of the discussion when issues come up that to be discussed even though they are not scheduled.
- **WATCH OUT FOR TANGENTS.** Do not be afraid to use topics like, "Let's refocus for just a minute and talk about this week's topic."
- **OPEN IT UP TO THE GROUP.** When a question is asked, open it up to the group and ask them: "What do you think?" Give the group a chance to answer.

BETTERPRAYER

TIPS FOR YOUR GROUPS PRAYER TIME

IF YOUR GROUP IS HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME COMING TOGETHER AS A GROUP, IMPROVING YOUR PRAYER TIME MAY BE THE ANSWER. KEEPING A FRESH AND REAL PRAYER TIME CAN BE SO IMPORTANT TO THE HEALTH OF ANY GROUP.

SOME OF THE TIPS BELOW COME FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR CROSSING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- **MODEL IT.** Keep the prayer time honest, authentic, simple, direct, and Spirit-led.
- **KEEP IT SAFE.** As a leader, you must respect the intimacy level of the group. Clearly identify the opening of the prayer time, and the closing of the prayer time.
- **GUIDE IT.** As the leader, set the tone for the prayer time. Encourage your group members to share; be prepared to share yourself. Give guidelines for the prayer time if necessary.
- **MAKE IT CREATIVE.** Here are some examples of creative prayer times: pray a Psalms out loud over your group, have each person “pray for the person on their left,” or use index cards to list out prayers and then exchange cards with other group members.
- **PRAY SCRIPTURE.** Do a little homework for your prayer time. Find some scriptures to pray over your group based on the discussion topic. If the topic is focused on forgiveness, find some related scriptures that can be prayed over the group related to forgiveness.
- **PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING.** Invite everyone to say a one-sentence prayer that begins with the word-
ing, “Father God, thank you for _____.”
- **LAY HANDS ON GROUP MEMBERS WHEN FEELING LED.** As the leader, you set the tone. When a group member is going through a difficult time, put them in the middle of the group, and lay hands on them and pray for their specific needs.
- **DOCUMENT IT.** Keep a record of the prayer requests submitted by your group members. By keeping a record, it will be easier for you to follow up on the requests by your group members.
- **P.R.A.Y.** Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield

LISTENING SKILLS

IN ORDER TO BE A SUCCESSFUL GROUP LEADER, YOU MUST BE A GOOD LISTENER. YOU MUST BE WILLING AND ABLE TO LISTEN TO YOUR GROUP MEMBERS. THESE SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL TO YOUR LEADERSHIP.

SOME OF THE TIPS BELOW COME FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR CROSSING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- **CONFIRM WHAT YOU HEARD.** As the leader, if you are struggling with understanding what your group member is saying, try summarizing their thoughts in your own words. Try, “What I hear you saying is...”
- **DON’T INTERRUPT.** When you interrupt someone, or a group member interrupts another, they will be less likely to contribute to the group’s discussion.
- **EYE CONTACT AND BODY LANGUAGE.** Be sure, as the leader, you are sitting up straight and you are keeping eye contact with those who are talking.
- **LISTEN ACTIVELY.** While a group member is talking, do not think about your response or what you are going to say. Instead, listen while they are talking. Encourage your group members to do the same.
- **USE FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS.** When your group member responds to a question, follow it up with a second question such as, “How does this relate back to the scripture text?” or “How can you apply this to your specific situation?”
- **STOP TALKING.** No matter how hard you try, you cannot both talk and listen at the same time.
- **BE ALERT.** Pay special attention to the body language of your group members, especially as they are talking. Be on the watch for non-verbal cues from your group members.

GROUP CONFLICT

DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN THE GROUP SETTING

CONFLICT WILL ARISE WHEN YOU BRING BROKEN PEOPLE INTO A GROUP SETTING. AS THE LEADER, HOW YOU DEAL WITH CONFLICT CAN EITHER BRING A GROUP TO A DEEPER LEVEL., OR IT CAN DRIVE THE GROUP APART.

SOME OF THE TIPS BELOW COME FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR CROSSING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- **ADDRESS THE ISSUE QUICKLY.** As the leader, you cannot delay in dealing with conflict within your group. You cannot put it off and think it will dissolve by itself.
- **LISTEN CLOSELY FOR UNDERLYING MESSAGES.** As the leader, remember that it is not always what someone says, but rather how they say it and the meaning behind what they said.
- **ALWAYS DEAL WITH CONFLICT IN PERSON.** Try to avoid using phone or email to deal with conflict.
- **"I GET UPSET WHEN..."** As the leader, encourage your group members to use statements that start with "I..." Encourage your group members to avoid using language such as "you make me so mad!"
- **FIND THE SOURCE OF THE CONFLICT.** As the leader, get past the surface level of the conflict. Try to find the source of the conflict and deal with the core issues.
- **DETERMINE WHO IS INVOLVED AND ITS IMPACT ON THE GROUP.** If the conflict is only tied to a couple of the members, do not bring the other members into the conflict. Keep the needs of the group in mind, as well as the needs of those involved in the conflict.
- **BRING SCRIPTURE INTO THE DISCUSSION.** Use the Bible as the foundation for answers to the conflict.

CHILDCARE

REIMBURSEMENT

1. We reimburse parents at a set rate for the cost of an individual babysitter while attending a Crossing Group.
2. A separate Crossing Group childcare reimbursement form is to be submitted for each group meeting attended.
3. Please allow 2-3 weeks for processing.
4. For accounting purposes, each form must be submitted within 30 days of the event.
5. Crossing Group Childcare Reimbursement is not intended to cover ALL of the childcare expenses...just help out with some of the childcare expenses that you might incur while attending your group.
6. If you are requesting reimbursement for more than 5 children, please email Amy (amyt@thecrossinglv.com) for the approved reimbursement rate.
7. Rates: 1 child-\$7/hr | 2 children-\$8/hr | 3 children-\$9/hr | 4 children-\$10/hr | 5+ children – pre-approved rate maximum 2 hours

Go to www.thecrossinglv.com/childcare to fill out the Childcare Reimbursement form