

SMALLGROUPS101

Leading a small group is so much more than just having guests over...

We are so excited that you have decided to lead small groups at Awaken Church! Opening up your home, your life, creates a place where people can find community, unlock their passions, and grow closer to God. That being said, leading a small group can be a little nerve-racking, especially the first time. That's totally normal! You are not alone on this journey, and we know you're going to do great. Small groups are at their best when discussion can be authentic, inspiring, and open. For that to happen, it's important for the leader (you) to find out what works best for YOUR small group! These four practices are not rules, but guides that can't steer you wrong while you're leading your small group.

1 Prepare beforehand.

Start by making sure that you have the time to read and pray as a personal devotional. Being in tune with God's heart and hearing His voice are the most important parts of leading a small group. Make it a priority that your environment is welcoming, clean, comfortable and ready to receive guests. Also make sure you have time to prepare the specific content for your small group's discussion— usually 15-30 minutes is enough to review for yourself. Mapping out the questions in your mind beforehand will go a long way! More than likely, your small group will go in a direction that you didn't plan for. That's ok!

2 Listen actively.

Listening casually is easy, but active listening takes work. An active-listening approach to leading a small group is the most effective way to lead. Don't feel pressured to prepare a sermon, or speak a lot just because you are the leader (although you can!) Remember this— most people don't attend a small group because they want to be talked at. They come because they want a place where they can have a voice!

3 Ask great questions.

Great questions are the catalyst for great conversation. Great questions aren't always easy-answer-questions, and might require a moment of silence for group members to collect their thoughts (especially the introverts!) If coming up with great questions isn't something you like to do on your own, you can get our weekly Sermon Discussion Guides, Chris Badejo prepares great questions for our current sermon study groups. Email: Chris@awakennampa.com

4 Invite God into the conversation.

Sincere, spiritual development and growth is never dependent on us. Articulate words, perfect communication, or a tidy home will never be what truly changes us. It's God's word to us that brings about life-change! Pray together at the beginning of each session, and invite God in. When the night is done, take time to pray for one another's needs. A small group that prays and seeks to know God is a life-changing place to be, guaranteed.