

10 Guiding Principles of LRSS Small Group Discussion

- 1 Create a welcoming environment.** Make every effort to warmly welcome each participant, especially those who may be new to the group. Have nametags on hand, introduce yourselves, and spend some time getting to know one another at your first session.
- 2 Prepare in advance.** Encourage group members to prepare each lesson in advance so your weekly group discussion will be focused on God's Word, what each person is learning, and how it applies to your lives.
- 3 Share freely.** Rather than having each member of the group answer each question in a particular order, simply invite members to share their responses if they wish. Some questions are straightforward and will require only a few responses. Some questions will allow for more discussion.
- 4 Stay focused.** Strive to remain focused on the content of the weekly lesson. If conversation strays off-topic, gently invite the group back to the question at hand and encourage the continuation of the other topic after the group meeting.
- 5 Be good listeners.** Agree as a group to listen when another person is talking. Try to maintain a balance in your group so no one is dominating the conversation. Allow periods of silence that may provide opportunity for quieter members to contribute.
- 6 Learn from one another.** Part of the beauty of studying Scripture in a group is being exposed to a variety of perspectives on God's Word. Be open to new ideas and allow yourself to learn from others in your group.
- 7 If you disagree, do so respectfully.** Every small group that gathers is a microcosm of our church in all of its dazzling variety. Accept that there will be differences of opinion. Remember that it is possible to disagree without being disagreeable in one's attitude or tone of voice.
- 8 Respect confidentiality.** Honor each member's sharing by agreeing to maintain confidentiality. No one should have to worry that something personal they share within the group will later be repeated outside of the group.
- 9 Help one another.** If there are any members who are struggling with a lesson, take time to encourage one another. Consider asking a more experienced member to help someone who may need assistance in the coming week.
- 10 Pray together.** Pray with one another as you begin and end each session, using the prayer forms in the book or prayers of your own choosing. Strengthen your bond in Christ by praying for each other throughout the week.

