
Setting Group Boundaries

Goal: Give your group clear expectations of what the group will be like and how it will be safe.

Guiding Principle: It is a good idea to communicate the direction of your group and how you want the group to feel. Here is a list of ways to communicate this to the group.

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7

1. Vision is Vital:

Use your first meeting to tell people what to expect at each meeting during the semester.

2. Commitment is Critical:

The first meeting is for getting acquainted with each other and asking them to make the group a commitment in their life for the semester. You may want to ask the group to make a small group covenant to attend. [See Small Group Covenant document.](#)

3. Confidentiality is Expected:

Remind people often that what is said in the group stays in the group. The only exception to this is when you need additional guidance from the pastoral staff to address difficult issues.

4. Engage:

Encourage each member to strive to build authentic relationships with those in this group by showing care, providing encouragement and praying for needs. Ask each to make an effort to challenge yourself to be open to new ideas and let the study resonate in you.

5. Manners Makes a Difference:

Treat each member with respect, avoid interrupting, encourage each person to contribute in their own way, and to be other-focused, not self-focused. Remember that there is a level of sharing that is appropriate to where you are in your journey as a group, so watch out for people who want to expose themselves or others at inappropriate times or in inappropriate ways.

6. Laughter is Attractive:

Be sure to plan activities that are just for fun. It could be an ice-breaker activity or a shared activity. Anything that will help your group smile and unwind.

7. Know your Limits as a Leader

Remember that you are not expected to be the Bible answer person, nor are you expected to be a personal counselor to the people in your group. You can be a friend and a guide, but if problems arise that are outside your experience, you can direct people to a counselor or pastor. [See Counselor Resources document.](#)