

GETTING OFF TO A GREAT START

Goals of the First Meeting

- Rekindle relationships and meet new members
- Clarify your group's direction / expectations / commitments using the Agreement
- Briefly discuss the Message topic (if there is time)
- Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group

Items Needed for the First Meeting

- Dinner / dessert plans decided
- Impact Group Agreements – small ones (A5) to handout and a large one for everyone to sign
- Nametags (host should write them out ahead of time)

Contact Your Group in Advance

- Contact all members one week before the first meeting to welcome them to the group and inform them of the location and time of your group, as well as any entrees to bring for dinner

3 ESSENTIAL PARTS OF YOUR AGENDA

#1 Welcome, mingle and talk while you eat

- ⇒ **Leadership tip** – Studies show that the first 7 seconds a person spends in a room can make or break the remainder of their experience in that room.
- People greeted when they arrive
 - Drinks available when people arrive
 - Upbeat music playing
 - House cleaned, phone off if possible

#2 Think through the uniqueness of your first group discussion

GOING OVER THE AGREEMENT IS CRUCIAL

- Let people know your meeting is going to start in about 5 minutes
- Why it is unique – getting to know each other, setting expectations

a) Sharing

- Refer to homework – Take time to do a few of the getting to know you questions
- Sharing guidelines – Explain the purpose of sharing exercises: Getting to know one another casually in (new groups) or
- Re-acquainting with each other (continuing groups)
- Note to returning Leader Hosts – feel free to adapt the sharing exercises based on the number of new members. All groups are encouraged to do some of the getting to know me questions

b) Worship (optional)

c) THE AGREEMENT - SET THE EXPECTATIONS AND VISION

- Everything rises and falls on how this is communicated
- Distribute the Agreement
- Go over the Covenant (see Leader's Guide)
- MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR SOCIAL

d) Prayer

For New groups... Introduce the idea of topical prayer

- Everyone participates
- Brief, one topic at a time
- Pray as many times as you want
- Ask your Assistant Host to close in a brief prayer dedicating the next 12 weeks to God

For Continuing groups...

- You are encouraged to do something (prayer booklet or sheet) that will help people record their prayer requests and answers to prayer during the 12 weeks

#3 Know that your dessert conversations are just as important as your meeting discussions

- ⇒ **Leadership tip** – Never underestimate the significance of the time after the meeting. It is key to connect with people and find out more what people are all about.