

Group STARTER GUIDE

01

START HERE

You don't need to be an expert.

Your role is simply to invite people and create space for connection.

YOUR FIRST GATHERING CAN BE THIS SIMPLE:

- Eat together
- Share a few conversation questions
- Discuss the sermon
- Pray for one another

That's it.

03

CONVERSATION STARTERS

FUN QUESTIONS

- What hobby would you love to learn?
- What was your first job?
- What is your dream vacation?
- What meal would you eat every day if you could?

FAITH QUESTIONS

- Who has influenced your faith the most?
- What Bible passage has been meaningful recently?
- When do you feel closest to God?
- What spiritual habit is hardest for you?

05

HOSTING TIPS

You Don't Have To Be Perfect

- Your house doesn't have to be spotless.
- You don't need to have all the answers.
- Awkward moments are normal.
- Start on time.
- End on time.
- Let everyone participate.
- Don't let one person dominate.
- It's okay if only a few people come at first.

02

FIRST GATHERING PLAN

Welcome & Food (20 minutes)

Just catch up and enjoy being together.

Getting to Know Each Other (20 minutes)

QUESTIONS:

- Tell us a little about yourself.
- How long have you been attending Woodland Hills?
- What are you hoping to gain from this group?
- What is something people may not know about you?

FAITH CONVERSATION (30 minutes)

- What has God been teaching you lately?
- What is one challenge you're currently facing?
- How can this group encourage you?

Prayer (15 minutes)

Ask: How can we pray for you this week?

04

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

A simple template that works every week:

- What stood out to you from Sunday's message?
- What challenged or encouraged you?
- How can you apply this this week?
- Is there an area where you need prayer or support?
- In addition, Sermon Discussion Questions are available each week and emailed to leaders on Sunday afternoon.

06

TIPS FOR A GREAT SMALL GROUP – BILL SEARCH

(You can find accompanying videos on Right Now Media)

CO-LEADERS ARE HELPFUL!

A set of eyes watching member non-verbals for understanding or questions while one leader is speaking

Share the load

BEFORE THE MEETING:

- Don't need to over-script
- Consider sharing a question before the meeting so quieter members can think before they arrive
- Have an icebreaker ready
- Share something fun or good from the past week
- Remind everyone that there are no wrong answers and that you're all learning and growing together

PREPARE:

- Review the questions or discussion guide before the group starts
- Ask open ended questions:
 - What do you feel/think about...
 - How...
 - Why...
 - What? So what? Now what?
 - Avoid "right answers" so that people participate
- Quiet – don't answer your own question.
- No judgment anyone's answer

LISTEN:

- Make eye contact with the speaker (ignore distractions)
- Resist interjecting humor or sharing a similar story – do not interrupt! Don't story - top!!
- Ask follow up questions, restate what the person said
- Encourage everyone to stay engaged in the conversation
- After someone shares, thank them especially if it is at a "soul level"

STUDY THE BIBLE

- God's word is the final word
- Context is king – read everything around the phrase/verse
- Know the author and intended audience
- Interpret the unclear with the clear
- Submit to Scripture – out of faith, I will submit to the clear teaching of God's word

PRAY TOGETHER – OPTIONS

- Sentence prayers – everyone adds a sentence to the prayer
- Pray in smaller groups – share prayer requests and pray over each other
- Write down prayer requests – email or written lets people know their prayer requests are valued
- Praises only
- Pray through Scripture
- Psalms (hymn book / prayer book) – preplan which you want to pray