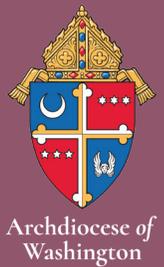


HOW TO HOST A SMALL GROUP ONLINE

Finding Christian community in-person or online



BEFORE THE SMALL GROUP



- 1. Personally Invite:** Invite people from your parish, friends, coworkers, or family members to the group (4-8 people total is ideal). Pray about who to invite and be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Ask one of the other members to be your co-leader to help keep time and take notes.
- 2. Select Content:** Small groups come in different shapes and forms, whether it is a book club or bible study. Check out the list of resources and ideas on the next page!
- 3. Choose When to Meet:** Based on what content you are using, commit to meet for a certain number of total sessions, either weekly or bi-weekly. Use a scheduling tool like Doodle, doodle.com, to schedule meeting times.
- 4. Pick an Video Conference Platform:** There are plenty of free ways to connect via video: Google Hangouts, Zoom, Roundee, GoTo Meeting, Skype, WhatsApp, etc.
- 5. Send Reminders:** Ask participants to review the content (e.g. reading, video, Scripture) ahead of time and come prepared to discuss.

AFTER THE SMALL GROUP



Continue the discussion with a group chat. You can also use Google Hangouts, WhatsApp, GroupMe or simply a text message group. Periodically (at least once between group meetings) ask how people are doing, especially if you took note of a sensitive prayer intention.

TIPS FOR GREAT SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION



1. After a person shares, thank the person for sharing, restate what they said, and offer others the chance to answer or comment.
2. Don't be afraid of silence. Give people, especially those who are introverts the time to answer. If they have a puzzled expression, restate your question (don't only answer it yourself).
3. Use humor! Meaningful discussion often follows laughter.

DURING THE SMALL GROUP



- 1. Welcome Everyone:** Make sure everyone is on the call, take care of technical issues, and ask people to share "one high point and one low point" from the past week.
- 2. Establish Ground Rules:** Encourage people to actively listen, share freely, and respect others without judgement. At the first session, ask everyone what they hope to get out of the group.
- 3. Begin with Prayer:** Find a prayer to pray together or use: "God, we thank you for the gift of community and the ability to gather in Your Name no matter where we are! Guide our discussion and fill our hearts with your love, hope and peace."
- 4. Discuss:** The program or content you choose may come with discussion questions. If not, consider opening with the simple question, "What stood out to you in this reading or talk?" Consider the "Tips for a Great Small Group Discussion" at right!
- 5. Share Prayer Intentions:** An important part of a small group is being able to share one another's joys and sorrows together. Give each person the chance to share prayer intentions, if they would like.
- 6. Closing Prayer:** Consider the "T.I.P.S. for Prayer" at right to end your small group session.

T.I.P.S. FOR PRAYER



Consider using these types of prayer during your small group:

- T: Thanksgiving:** Especially in difficult times, cultivating a sense of gratitude for our blessings can remind us of God's closeness.
- I: Intercession:** God wants us to participate in His work of salvation by bringing our needs and the needs of others to Him.
- P: Praise:** No matter what is happening in our lives, it is important to remember God is unchanging in His mercy and love for us.
- S: Silence:** Prayer reminds us that we are always in God's presence, resting in His presence quietly, and listening for His voice. Sometimes online silence feels uncomfortable. Be patient and allow time for quiet.

Example: Jesus, we thank You for this opportunity to gather in community. We pray that you may bless each of us this week in the challenges we face. We praise You for your goodness, Lord. Help us to become more aware of your blessings in our lives this week. We especially lift up in prayer all of the people on our hearts today. (Take a moment of silence) We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For more Small Group Resources visit adw.org/living-the-faith/evangelization/resources or contact Anthony Esser at essera@adw.org.

SMALL GROUP PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

When selecting content for your small group consider the following resources:

- Read and reflect on the Sunday readings at: uscgb.org/bible/readings.
- Pick a book and discuss a chapter or section during each small group session. For an easy and low time commitment option, read a small excerpt together right before your discussion so people do not have to order the book.

FREE PROGRAMS

The SOURCE

This six session small group video series focuses on the foundational questions of faith and life.
adw.org/living-the-faith/evangelization/resources

Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS)

This organization provides resources aimed at college students.
focusoncampus.org/find-a-study

Little Rock Scripture Study

Resources for Scripture study.
littlerockscripture.org/Resources/Index

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE OR SUBSCRIPTION

Formed

Free weekly Sunday Gospel reflection and hundreds of Catholic video programs, movies, audio and e-books. Formed is offering free access for the next 40 days. **Must cancel before day 40.*
Formed.org

Ascension Presents

A library of study programs on various topics and for various ages.
ascensionpress.com/pages/study-programs

Word on Fire Study Programs

Bishop Barron's video content has been paired with written materials to be used by parishes or other small groups for faith formation.
wordonfire.org/study-programs

Walking With Purpose

Walking with Purpose study materials apply Scripture to day-to-day living for women.
walkingwithpurpose.com

Endow

A variety of small group studies for women
www.endowgroups.org/studies

Exodus 90

A 90-day Catholic spiritual exercise for men.
exodus90.com



Archdiocese of
Washington