

Suggestions for Facilitators of Groups' Studying Books

1. Have the physical facilities set up so that the group members are seated in a circle or U-shape so that each can make eye contact with nearly everyone else in the group.
2. Provide copies of the questions/topics for the book to all group members in advance or at least at the first session. Have extra copies on hand for each session.
3. If the group has not been together before, the first session should be devoted to getting to know each other, agreeing on some ground rules for the group sessions, reviewing the schedule of meetings, and the chapter reflection questions.
 - a. Group members should share responses to these four questions.
 - i. What is your name?
 - ii. What experiences or background do you bring to the group?
 - iii. What is your purpose in being here?
 - iv. How do you feel about being here?
 - b. Ground rules could address issues such as:
 - i. Starting and ending on time.
 - ii. Commitment to read the text and reflect on the questions proffered.
 - iii. Ensuring that all group members are encouraged and enabled to contribute during each session.
 - iv. Refreshments: Have them or not? Take turns? Have a "kitty"?
 - v. Set up and clean up.
4. Start and end sessions on time.
5. Allow a few minutes for conversation and relationship building before calling the session to order.
6. Call the group to focus for the work session with a prayer or song.
7. Seek group agreement to the questions and/or topics scheduled for the session.
8. Ask the group to help pace the session so as to address all the questions or topics.
9. Before beginning the discussions, provide a moment or two of quiet to allow group members to recall/review the chapter and their responses to the discussion questions.
10. End the discussions with a moment to reflect and make personal commitments. Consider inviting each participant to share his/her commitment aloud.
11. Remind participants of the questions/topics for the next session. Have extra hard copies on hand.
12. Close with a prayer or short reflection by a member of the group.

