



*"...that you and I may be mutually encouraged by one another's faith,
yours and mine" Romans 1 :12*

Hosting a Small Group

What is a Small Group?

A Small Group is a group of people, anywhere from 3 to 12, that commit to meeting weekly or bi-weekly, either in each other's homes or online using a platform such as Zoom, for the purpose of growing **together** in Christ. This is a difficult time and many people are feeling isolated and are searching spiritually. A Small Group community provides an opportunity to connect with others, share thoughts, engage in meaningful conversations, supporting & encouraging one another while growing together in faith.

New Small Groups will be encouraged to start with a 3-week program called 'Anima' or a 6-week program called 'The Search' followed by 'The Wild Goose'. We will provide you with the link (*many of our programs are found on FORMED*) or video DVD, the discussion questions and any other support you may need. These programs are great starter programs and will help you and your group ease into the rhythm of Small Group discussion and at the same time, help you dive into questions about life and faith. Once you have completed the 'First Step' series above, we have a big selection of recommended programs for you to choose from.

Roles of a Small Group Host

- The Small Group Host typically chooses the day, time & location his or her group will meet (*usually in the host's home, but this can also rotate between other members' homes*). At the moment, all groups are meeting online. You will find help on how to set up zoom below if needed and tech support is also available.
- The Small Group Leader is also responsible to communicate the meeting information to the participants.
- Lead the meeting using the 'Meeting Structure' guidelines below as a guide and facilitate the conversation during the discussion portion of the meeting. Please refer to 'Small Group Discussion Tips' for suggestions.
- You (*or the person's home you will be meeting at*) will need to have access to a smart TV or be capable of either mirroring or plugging in a laptop to a TV. Tech support is available if you have questions about this OR as a last resort, you can watch directly from a lap top or computer screen.

Meeting Structure

Groups typically meet every two weeks at the same day & time. The meetings should not last more than 90 minutes, it is important to honour people's commitment by beginning and ending on time, as much as possible.

Below is an example of a typical meeting, of course this is simply a guide which is especially handy for the first several meetings. In time, each group will naturally develop their own rhythm.

Initial Meeting. If people don't know each other, it may be nice to take this time to get to know one another. Ask questions such as, "Why did you join a small group?", ask them to share about themselves to get the group to know each other. Share with your group the Safe & Healthy Discussion Guidelines found on the '[Holy Family Online Small Group Guidelines](#)' infographic which can be downloaded here: [CLICK HERE](#)

After this is complete take time to explain about your small group, what series is being offered, time, day, how to join each week, and answer any questions they may have so everyone is comfortable for next week's session.

Following Meetings

Welcome (5 min). As people join the meeting be sure to welcome them, engage in small talk & put people at ease.

Opening Prayer (5 min). Lead the group in a simple opening prayer, from your heart is great, or many series offer an opening and closing prayer for each session, of course an Our Father is always an option.

Video/Recap (10-30 minutes). Watch the video as a group. If you are meeting online, your group can choose to watch the video individually before the group starts, or you can screen share and watch the video together (*see Zoom Tech below for more info*). If you watch before you can choose to do a quick recap of the video.

Small Group Discussion (30 minutes). Use the discussion/reflection questions provided by the series

Prayer (10 minutes). Ask if there are any special prayer requests from group members and include them in the ending prayer. You can close with all praying the Our Father or Hail Mary.

Small Group Discussion Tips

One of the primary reasons a person wants to engage in a small group discussion is to be heard...and that means meaningful conversation. So, try to be mindful of that. Here are some ways to help:

- Don't do all the talking...help facilitate the conversation rather than dominate it. Cast a vision for a conversation, don't kill it. Your role isn't to educate or furnish information. That is talking TO people. Strive to talk WITH them instead. Give them the space to be heard. Give conversation...time.
- Be comfortable with silence and uncertainty. Meaningful conversations require some level of silence: it's where thought often occurs and it's the space in which the thunder of God's still, small voice of hope is very often heard.
- Be a good listener. A good listener is quick to listen. A good listener is an active listener. A good listener listens with his or her eyes as well as ears.
- Encourage everyone to be involved in the conversation by listening well and involving others (but don't insist everyone must speak!). If your group is too big for everyone to be involved in the conversation, break it up into multiple groups. And let people wander between groups as their interests dictate.
- Don't rush! The point is not to get through any certain volume of material. The point is to take the time together to let God reveal the purpose of a conversation (which very often results in people finding their life's purpose in His plan).
- Pray before anyone arrives so you can welcome them well. Pray before anyone leaves so you leave in His presence. And pray between meetings for one another's intentions. Prayer is not the place to hold back.
- Remember—you don't need to have all the answers to host a Small Group. Hosting is about helping others have helpful conversations about faith. If that happens, it's a win!

Creating the Experience (when meeting in homes)

- Room Setup: Everything in your room communicates a tone and feeling. Try to arrange things so people feel comfortable, and are able to look at one another face to-face when talking. Food and something to drink are always welcome. The more you can make a room feel like home for someone else, the more comfortable your group will be and the more likely others will feel happy there.

Have a Communication Plan

Help people continue the experience by checking-in with the people in your group throughout the time between when you get together.

- Create a 'Group Chat': WhatsApp is a great tool for this. Send a message to everyone in your group. Let them know you're praying for them. Just because.
- Send a text message to anyone who couldn't make it. Let them know you missed them! And let them know you look forward to seeing them next time.
- Send a text to at least one person in your group and ask them what you can pray about for them.
- Email your group every week (*if you meet weekly*), with a reminder of when your small group is next meeting, and where, and any other information they may need e.g. "Who's bringing the snacks tonight?".

ZOOM Tech for Online Groups

- Download the Zoom.us App from your laptop or desktop. Follow the instruction to download your first meeting, your meeting will have a unique Meeting ID number which you will be able to copy and paste in an email to invite your group members.
- By signing up for a free account, Zoom users are allowed to host free video meetings up to 40 minutes. If it times out everyone can click the join meeting button again with the same code and it quickly restarts for another 40 minutes.
- The following links offer a great overview of how to use Zoom. They were designed to help people with an Alpha course, but are applicable to how Zoom would be used for online groups, as well.
Getting Started with Zoom - <https://vimeo.com/398319991>
Running your online Alpha with Zoom - <https://youtu.be/SPo-L4kNjk>
- As the host of the meeting you can mute and unmute everyone, or unmute specific participants. It is very helpful to be able to mute everyone at certain times of the meeting, including announcements, the content summary, and during prayer. Just invite people to unmute if they would like to speak.
- Zoom has two view settings. "Speaker view" makes whoever is speaking large in the centre of the screen. "Gallery view" allows you to see everyone who is on the call at the same time. To change views: On a Computer: upper right or left corner, hit gallery view or speaker view On a Phone: lower middle bar, hit more, then hit gallery view or speaker view
- Use the "chat" (middle bottom bar) for discussion questions, verses, outlines, private questions, etc.
- You have an option to message the entire group or people individually
- As people join in make sure they click on their camera button so they are seen and unmute themselves to say hello.
- Use the screen share feature to watch videos or share documents with the group.

Tech support is available!!

Please email Kim at holyfamily.kim@gmail.com
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love God love others make disciples