

First Meeting Tips and Suggestions

1. Build community

Regardless if you are an existing group or a new one, be sure to develop community when starting each new study. The first meeting is crucial for setting the framework for solid group relationships and for reviewing the curriculum.

- ✓ Create a warm, caring atmosphere – greet people as they enter
- ✓ Start with a friendly introduction of yourself, spouse and host (if applicable)
- ✓ Give a quick explanation of what you're going to cover and the order it will be presented. A handout is useful.
- ✓ Pray
- ✓ Have everyone introduce him or herself. Nametags are useful. Following is suggested information they could offer:
 - Have each person provide brief get-to-know-you information
 - What are you hoping to accomplish in this small group?

2. Vision, Purpose and Covenant Agreement

Eliminate potential predicaments right from the start. It is extremely important to use a small group covenant agreement for group clarity, vision and purpose. Review a covenant agreement every time you start a new study. Important small group issues verified are:

- ✓ Group structure and purpose (use small group meeting planner and calendar)
- ✓ Group courtesies (call if absent or late, etc.). Underscore the word covenant with Scripture.
- ✓ Group environment - Loving, confidential with an emphasis on prayer (prayer form)
- ✓ Group accountability (with family, each other and God. Consider introducing "next step" concept (God has a next step for you)
- ✓ Group events, outreach and service (use small group volunteer list)
- ✓ Other characteristics specific to your group (type, gender, etc). This is an excellent time to confirm that all teachings and discussion honor your churches teaching statement (very important - refer to RHCC teaching statement).
- ✓ Acknowledge start and end date (important)

3. Review Curriculum

It's always best to review current curriculum. Walk through the book starting with the table of contents and explain the basic use of each study guide.

- ✓ Why was the curriculum chosen?
- ✓ How will they benefit?
- ✓ How will the curriculum be supported?
- ✓ Speak from the heart concerning diligence to the Bible and group study

4. Present your vision

What is your vision? Do you hope for spiritual growth, a loving community in Christ and unity with God's church and service to His bride? Tell them so. Let them know how much you care about God and the importance of sharing His compassion and love.

- ✓ Consider using a favorite Scripture
- ✓ Consider telling a relatable story or perhaps even your own testimony
- ✓ Explain the advantages of being coordinated and involved both individually and as a group with the church functions and events
- ✓ Start planting seeds for group events and group multiplication

5. Close

- ✓ Sincerely thank everyone and let them know you look forward to fruitful weeks ahead
- ✓ Open for prayer needs. Pray either corporately or close with a singular prayer
- ✓ Consider closing with a social time and refreshments

Additional Notes: Adding humor and personal stories work well in helping others feel comfortable and assured. We also have additional support material on our small group library: www.rollinghillscovenant.com/library

- ✓ Small group forms
- ✓ Tips for shepherding your group
- ✓ Lesson support material