

10 Commandments for Small-group Success

This document offers 10 guidelines for the small-group discussion. The Small-group Leader should know them well, and hand them out at the first meeting.

The guidelines are as follows:

- 1. Be willing to share.** Participants should come to the meetings with a joyful readiness to share. The small-group experience depends on sharing. You never know how much something you share may help another. Sometimes you may not want to share, and that's okay.
- 2. Let others share.** Everyone needs to be given an opportunity to share. Give others the chance to talk. Do not fear silence. Try to give "equal time" to everyone. No one person should dominate the small group's time with lengthy sharing, even if unintentional. It is the Small-group Leader's role to ask people to observe this rule should someone get "carried away."
- 3. Do your homework.** Participants are expected to do their best to do the daily prayer, reading, and writing at home. This provides the basis for the small-group time. If you haven't done your homework, give others a chance to speak first.
- 4. Stay focused.** The small-group sessions are to be focused on reading and questions, not on personal problems, theological opinions, gossip, or promotion of a cause — even a worthy one.
- 5. Don't give advice.** It is not appropriate to give advice to someone during the small-group sessions. If a person seeks advice from you, speak to one another at the end of the meeting.
- 6. Don't lecture.** This is not a time for teaching or lecturing, unless the Small-group Leader is explaining something related to the subject matter at hand.
- 7. Be respectful.** Everyone's experience with the reading and questions is valid. If you disagree with something, do so respectfully and charitably. Never ridicule or cut down another person. When someone else is speaking, we should be listening.
- 8. Keep confidentiality.** A promise of confidentiality is asked and expected of each group member, giving one another freedom to share sensitive feelings or personal information relevant to the reading and questions, if desired. However, this is not the time for confession or counseling.
- 9. Follow the Leader.** It is important to give support and cooperation to the Small-group Leader who is charged with the responsibility of seeing that these group guidelines are followed.
- 10. Enjoy yourself!**

