



BIBLE360 

Small Group Facilitation Workshop Challenges and Solutions

29th June 2013 (Toowoomba)



TOP CHALLENGES/THEMES

Looking at the challenges identified across our various groups (Coordinators, Leaders, Potential Leaders, New Leaders), there were four consistent challenges. Some potential solutions are provided (from the day), however these are just starting points. We'll continue to look at these in our Small Group Network and in future seminars. I would also encourage you to read a book such as "Leading Better Bible Studies" (Morris & Morris).

- 1. Encouraging people to join a Small Group** (44 Votes)
- 2. Finding new leaders & starting new groups** (28 Votes)
- 3. Meeting diverse (cultural/spiritual) needs** (23 Votes)
- 4. Encouraging contributions from members** (15 Votes)

Small Group Coordinators

Challenge #1: Getting more people involved in a Small Groups (16 Votes). People can feel pressured to be involved in 'another thing'.

- Personal invitation/encouragement.

Challenge #2: Meeting the needs of the diversity within groups (9 Votes).

- Do a review within the exiting group, checking expectations.
- Profiling groups (so people know what is the focus of each group).

Challenge #3: Encouraging people to take on a leadership role (11 Votes).

- Using the 'review' process.
- Encouraging attendance of training workshops/seminars.
- Affirming 'giftedness' and providing mentoring.

Potential Small Group Leaders

Challenge #1: Resources (6 Votes).

- Study Bible.
- Lion handbook.
- Internet.
- “Christianity Explained”.

Challenge #2: Lack of Interest from Church Leaders (1 Vote).

- Wardens.
- Conversation with the priest (have some advocates).
- Diocesan Support Groups.
- Leader to have a mentor/buddy/spiritual director.

Challenge #3: Diversity in Culture and Spiritual Development (14 Votes). Especially relating to new or just starting out on a spiritual journey.

- More social activities.
- Select suitable material and studies of the Bible.
- More experienced people are allocated roles to support and help facilitate.

Existing Small Group Leaders

Challenge #1: How do we divide a strong and effective group without upset (10 Votes).

- Direction from above - set term/set group size.
- Maintain casual occasional contact.
- Train new leaders.

Challenge #2: How do we keep all on track, tactfully? (5 Votes).

- Have a time keeper.
- Always start/finish on time.
- Ensure flexibility - not strict structure (e.g., allow opportunity for special prayer, if needed).

Challenge #3: How do we retain members, after initial interest (4 Votes). Especially relating to a changing world, new technology.

- Develop comfortable environment by involving each on - get ownership of each study/activity/goals; be of one mind; maintain challenges.
- Build expectations involving prayer/leading/etc.

Challenge #4: Encouraging contributions from members (15 Votes).

- Establish trust.
- Ice Breaker.
- Preparation.
- Develop culture of contribution and respect.
- Inclusive atmosphere.
- Confidentiality.
- Relevant material.
- Group choose study from selection.

Challenge #5: Encouraging new people to come (17 Votes).

- Pray and bring name to group for prayer.
- Meal/Social gathering (e.g., bowling, bbq).
- Parish BBQ/Event.
- Personal invitation.
- Leaders encourage cell groups.
- Cell group enquiry night.
- Parish-wide study. Lent, advent.
- Offering to take someone.

Challenge #6: Starting new groups and identifying new leaders (17 Votes).

- Rotating leader role.
- Split group in two.
- Group meet in same place but discuss in two groups.
- Encourage social interaction.
- Plant a new group.
- End group and start new groups.
- Training in group leadership.
- Mentor a second in charge.

New Small Group Leaders

Challenge #1: Appropriate Material - Programme (16 Votes).

- Consult the Rector.
- Construct a course with participant input.
- Primary Focus.
- Course material - find or research.
- Training if necessary - content.

Challenge #2: Venue/Time (5 Votes).

- Neutral Venue: Private home, church building, public meeting hall, cafe/hotel.
- Research Time: morning, afternoon, evening, weekday, weekend.
- Frequency: Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly.

Challenge #3: Finding and Getting People Together (11 Votes).

- Pew bulletin.
- Internet.
- Personal invitation to a meal - discernment.
- Word of mouth.
- Transport - offers, assistance.
- Changeable signs.
- Flyers - information.



BIBLE360

Small Group Facilitation Workshop Challenges and Solutions

11th May 2013 (Brisbane)



TOP CHALLENGES/THEMES

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- 1. Growing Facilitators (Numbers and Skills)** (37 Votes)
- 2. Growing Commitment/Regular Attendance** (28 Votes)
- 3. Creating/Shifting Culture in Parish** (21 Votes)
- 4. Multiplying Groups** (20 Votes)

Small Group Coordinators

Challenge #1: Growing Facilitators (20 Votes). Finding, training, and empowering. Succession Planning and putting in a training process which grows new leaders within groups.

- Adopting an 'apprentice' model.
- Be prepared to start small.
- Be able to communicate a clear vision for Small Groups.

Challenge #2: Culture Shift (13 Votes). Moving the parish from a clergy-centred model to a lay-empowering model.

- Incremental change.
- Intentional transitioning.
- Deep and prayerful consultation across the parish to facilitate genuine change.

Challenge #3: Groups Resistant to Multiplication (13 Votes).

- Mentoring of assistant leaders.
- Companionship 'the fringe'.
- Mission and group process as topics of study.

Potential Small Group Leaders

Challenge #1: What Kind of Group (3 Votes).

- Negotiate an agreed type of group.

Challenge #2: How to Begin (3 Votes).

- Get the approval of leaders.
- Gather *potential* members.
- Find out the interests and needs.

Challenge #3: What Abilities/Skills Needed (17 Votes).

- Training - seminars, study (reading).
- Practice - on-the-job learning and being mentored.
- Reflection.
- Belonging to a good Small Group.
- Research
- Understand your gifts/abilities.
- Develop a plan.

Challenge #4: Risks of Starting a Group (3 Votes).

- Clear discussion.
- Preparation.
- Support/other group leaders.

Challenge #5: Setting up a Group (0 Votes). Practical aspects.

- Venue.
- Experimentation, try out.

Existing Small Group Leaders

Challenge #1: Dynamics of the Group (7 Votes). Talkers vs non talkers. Using Silence.

- Re-address concerns of previous study prior to current study.
- Use questions to redirect discussion.
- Question to redirect to rest of group, e.g., how do you feel... what do you think...

Challenge #2: Managing Time (3 Votes).

- Let members know start and finish.
- It's a responsibility to come on time.
- Don't make time the focus... flexibility.
- Can leave things unfinished... anticipation for next meeting.
- Have a clear agenda.

Challenge #3: Getting People to Come Along/Regularly (16 Votes). Men and husbands, courage to ask, how to invite (non-churched, different cultures, young people).

- Have a BBQ.
- Build relationships.
- Follow up during week.
- Ensure that meetings keep to time.
- Ensure that meetings are a valuable experience.
- Get new people involved as much as possible as soon as possible.
- Men - ask through men's fellowship.
- Non-church people: Involve in activities outside of church worship.
- Different cultures: Children (fun, invite parents), sharing faith customs, themed morning teas.
- Baptism followup.

Challenge #4: Variety in Approach (0 Votes).

Challenge #5: Challenging Behaviour (3 Votes). Negativity, repetitive stories.

Challenge #5: How to Divide/Multiply (3.5 Votes).

Challenge #6: Moving to Cohesion (1 Vote). Through the storming phase.

- Consider size of group.
- Use ice breaker.
- Guide more than lead.

Challenge #7: Choosing Bible Study Subject (3 Votes).

New Small Group Leaders

Challenge #1: Suitable Time Slot (2 Votes).

- Provide/research time options, around facilitator availability. Day, evening, after worship.
- Church space vs home.
- Group decides.

Challenge #2: Gathering and Commitment (12 Votes).

- Information sessions/promotion.
- Personal invitation.
- Initiated in hospitality.
- Gathering - identifying small group leadership - faith formation umbrella.

Challenge #3: Instigating Cross-Ecumenical Groups (4 Votes).

- Strategy - relational, approval framework, purposes.
- Accepting time.
- Multi-Faith: opportunities for connection.

Challenge #4: Lack of Confidence (8 Votes). How do I start?

- Identify opportunities through prayer.
- Gathering like-minded people.
- Strategy.

Challenge #5: Instigating in Parish Culture (9 Votes).

- Get into parish vision with spiritual case for building the Body of Christ.
- Individual and corporate life.