



# Small Group Workshop

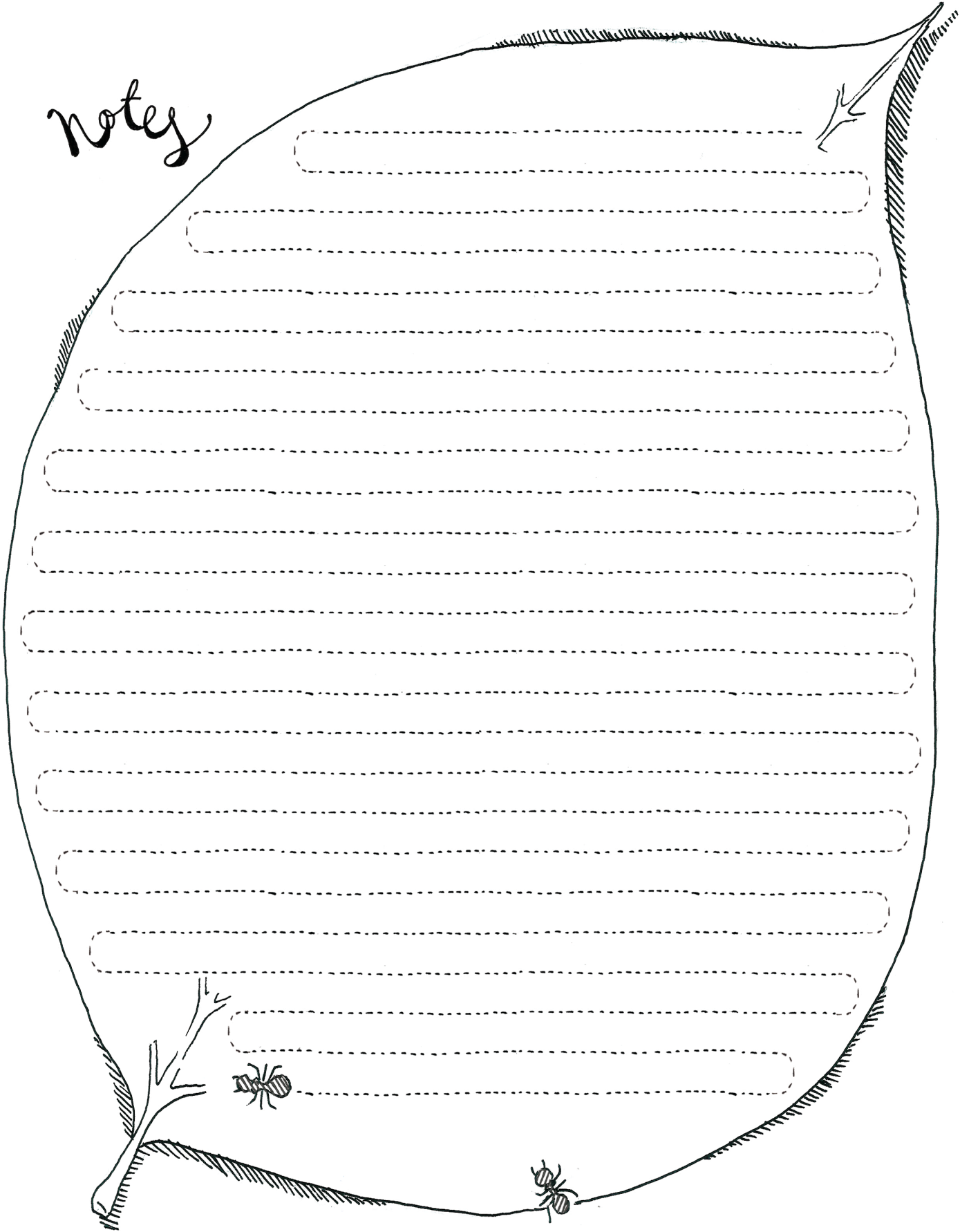
*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

*Heb 10:24-25*

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notes



## Icebreakers

**What was the happiest moment of your life?**

**The greatest compliment I ever received?**

**Let me tell you about my best earthly friend...**

**What room in your house do you like best?**

**What is the one thing you want to accomplish next week?**

**If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?**

**When was the last time you did something for the first time?**

**Who is your favorite relative? Why?**

**If you could change places with a Bible character, who would you choose? Why?**

**If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go? What is your favorite movie or TV show?**

**What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?**

**What is your favorite time of day?**

## Good Group Dynamic Tips

Few simple things we can do to help ensure great discussions.

### **Don't be the first one to answer.**

I always make it a rule—and even tell the group ahead of time—that I'm going to try to be the last person to answer the question. Be okay with awkward silences if they don't have anything to say at first. This encourages group members to answer and not wait for me to give them the answer.

### **Ask open-ended questions.**

It's hard to get any discussion when questions require only a yes/no, agree/disagree, or true/false answer. If you're stuck with those kinds of questions, a great follow-up question that always works is "Why? What makes you answer that way?"

### **Ask follow-up questions.**

Get in the habit of always asking follow-up questions, especially when people try to give a really short answer. There are all sorts of great follow-up questions you can use, like "Does that come easy or hard to you? Why?" and "When have you seen this truth play out in your own life?" and "What do you think is the biggest barrier to living that out?"

### **Ask a provocative question**

Don't be satisfied with pat answers. Always ask why. Counter a squeaky-clean answer with a provocative question from the other side of the issue.

### **Watch for Reactions Instead of Responses**

It is a good thing when a person responds to another person's opinion. However, be cautious when they react to what the other person with advice or to admonish. Sometimes it is good to offer a safe space for people to share their feelings/opinions by setting the guidelines that as a group you will not comment on each other's responses.

### **Confidentiality**

The leader should clearly communicate that whatever is shared within the confines of the group is confidential. This is absolutely necessary to a healthy small group. This discipline assumes that anything shared in the group will not be mentioned outside, even to close friends or spouses. Breaking confidentiality destroys trust.

## Tips for Hospitality

Adapted from article by Jennifer Leigh Ryan

Hospitality can make or break your small group's evangelism.

It has been my experience that understanding the importance of hospitality is paramount because souls of people are at stake. Further, knowing how to show hospitality to others is imperative if we want our small groups to thrive.

### What is Hospitality?

Hospitality is about welcoming guests in a friendly manner and showing genuine care for their comfort. As Arnold H. Glasow put it, "Some folks make you feel at home. Others make you wish you were."

Being hospitable is the act of making others feel as though they were in their own homes—only better. It's the little things that count, and it all stems from the heart.

### Why Be Hospitable?

As small group facilitators, it is crucial that we cultivate a warm environment for our guests in order to show them the love of Christ (John 13:34).

Hospitality is the outflow of love and unity among our brothers and sisters in Christ in the midst of a cold and cruel world. It is saying to our guests, "You are safe here. Relax! We love you and we are not here to judge you".

**Prayer.** Pray for the right mindset before you minister to God's people. There are times when we cannot be hospitable in our own strength. It is then that we must humble ourselves and ask for God's strength to take over. (Cor. 12:9 NIV)

**Plan ahead.** Discuss scriptures you will cover in advance. Try to make arrangements for refreshments to be ready in advance so that the group can be the entire focus for the meeting.

**Give good instructions.** Keep a good line of communication with your members to remind them of upcoming meetings. Provide good directions to the meeting place, along with details such as starting and ending times.

**Keep group size small.** (8- 12 is best)

**Greet people when they arrive.** Let the love of God shine through you when your guests arrive. Greet your guests with warm hugs and handshakes. If possible, open the door before they knock. Tell them you are glad they came.

**Remembering the individuals.** Keep notes on your guests. Record their names, needs, and prayer requests. Recalling facts about their lives in conversation shows you care about them, and this will help them to trust you so that you can minister to them.

**Show a servant's heart.** Ask your leaders and apprentices to help in getting visitors acclimated to the group. Get regulars to pitch in to assure everyone has full drinks and is comfortable.

**Direct the meeting.** Obviously the small group leader should bring up the topic of discussion and should keep the conversation flowing. It is also good to gently steer the conversation away from those who are overly talkative. If someone is quiet, ask for that person's opinion from time to time.

**Avoid favoritism.** Make each guest valued, loved and appreciated, and do not have favorites. (Gal. 2:6) If you see someone being left out, introduce that person to others in the group as a courtesy.

**Bring the evening to an end.** Close your meeting on a strong note, offering your guests the option of staying a little longer for fellowship or leaving. Say good-bye to everyone personally. Invite them to come back again.

## Evaluation

Small-group health gets evaluated from very different perspectives, depending on your role in ministry. Because of these different perspectives, there is a need to do a broad diagnosis of small-group health. Take this assessment mark well-done, average, not-yet. Consider what you need to build on or possibly change.

### Assess **The Group Leader's Heart**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I actively model a Christ-centered devotional lifestyle in my relationships to God, my spouse, and my family and community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I pray daily for those in my sphere of influence.

### **The Life and Ministry of the Group**

- \_\_\_\_\_ We make intentional relational connections with people in need of Jesus and invite them and their families into Christian community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We facilitate group members to become involved in accountable discipleship relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We select a balance of study topics that address the specific growth needs of the group, rather than choosing similar studies repeatedly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We identify and mentor apprentice leaders.

### **Relating to the Church as a Whole**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Within the life of the church, our group is finding a good balance between learning, service, outreach, worship, fun, fellowship, and rest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We are finding healthy balances between life stories and Bible truth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We are finding a healthy balance between care and discipleship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We are finding a healthy balance between kindness and confrontation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is a larger purpose and mission in our group gatherings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The logistics of group gatherings are being worked out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The group is preparing for multiplication.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Group members are embracing congregation-wide service and vision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The leader or administrative person in the group is keeping attendance and membership records for updates to the church, reports, and directories.

### **Group-Leader Shepherding**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I make contact with my group members outside of our meeting times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I welcome new people and facilitate follow-up as they enter our group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I care for the emotional and physical needs of group members.



## 4 IDEAS FOR SMALL GROUPS AND LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

**Small groups offer the support, encouragement and accountability to help people reach the goals they set.**

There are all kinds of small groups you can offer in your church. Some follow a defined, structured system. All the small groups meet around a particular theme – often sermon based, formatted and lead in a specific way.

Others have a relaxed structure for what qualifies as a small group and who leads the groups. Both groups have found a way to be successful when they reflect the culture and the direction of the church.

1.



### DINNER PARTY

Eat, chat, laugh and pray. Invite visitors!

**Leadership Qualities:** Influencers who drive accountability, and mentors dedicated to the success of each person.

4.



### BOOK CLUB

With a desire to learn together, groups can be formed over sermon series discussions, books, devotionals, or interactive Bible studies.

**Leadership Qualities:** Conversationalist who can lead with good questions, listen intently, and value time to process.

2.



### PAINTING PARTY

Share in an artistic endeavor or common interest as well as spiritual connections through prayer shawl, music, journal and writing groups.

**Leadership Qualities:** Flexible and creative, allowing time to focus on activity and faith building.

3.



### FUNDRAISER

Drive the causes your church is passionate about by forming mission-minded, advocacy groups.

**Leadership Qualities:** Passionate and motivated, valuing social transformation.



### CHALLENGE

What new small group might enliven your church this year?

For the more relaxed structure – add more intentional groups.

For the more defined structure – consider adding more flexible groups.

notes

