

High School Discipleship Group Guidelines

You may have read in my book, *Financial Faithfulness*, about the high school discipleship groups that I have led for a number of years. There are so many blessings that come from discipling high school boys, but too few actually lead these types of groups. When I ask men why they don't lead a discipleship group, I usually get the same two answers. "I don't know what to teach," and/or "I don't have the time." I hope that what I have provided in this section of my website will help to overcome both of those concerns, and that men all over the country will begin leading these types of groups. All of the studies are free and ready to be used!

A discipleship group is different from a Bible study in the following ways. First, a discipleship group has a higher level of commitment from those who participate. I like for the boys to make a four-year pledge to the group that runs from their freshman year through their senior year. Second, it is for a smaller group of 8-10, which is important to facilitate sharing. Third, the leader should have a desire to invest into the lives of the participants, which is more than just teaching. Lastly, the goal of this curriculum is to encourage young men to become Devoted Followers of Christ, not just to impart biblical knowledge.

Discipleship groups are based on the example of how Jesus invested in His disciples and the model of the early church. I have chosen to use Acts 2:42 as the structure for our groups, which says, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Choose your group carefully. Pray about this and include your son in the choosing process. You cannot include everyone, because too large of a group will not foster sharing. The members of the group don't all have to be best friends, but it helps if they like each other.

Because I have three boys and no girls, my discipleship groups have been catered to boys. But, I am confident that you can take many of the studies in their current form, and adjust the others to make them work for girls.

I have learned that there are some ingredients to discipleship groups that foster community and a high level of commitment and participation. We try to meet every other Saturday night during the school year, but we are flexible to work around conflicts and sometimes move our meetings to Sunday night. We typically get in 12 to 14 studies in a school year.

I have found it important to meet for 2-3 hours. We always eat a meal together. It was true in the book of Acts, and it is true now. There is power in breaking bread together. We rotate houses for each meeting, which helps to lessen the burden of any one family having to feed a bunch of hungry boys every other week. After dinner, we have the study. We then have dessert and hang out for a while by watching television or playing games.

While I will never water down the truth of the Word, I am willing to go to great lengths to make our studies entertaining and memorable. This is accomplished through games, challenges, and movie clips that all apply to the topic we are studying from the Bible. I want them to have a strong desire to come

to each study, and I have found being creative helps increase their level of commitment. If someone misses a group meeting, it is not a bad thing if the other members tell him that it was really good.

I use PowerPoint slides for all of my lessons. I have purchased a large screen (about \$150) and a projector (about \$500) so that the PowerPoint slides show up big, bold, and clear. It is a production taking all of this from house to house, but it keeps the boys' attention. It also shows them that I am serious about teaching God's Word, and I will go to a lot of effort to communicate the message of the Bible. I did find it important to buy speakers to hook up to my computer. Boys like their sound loud, and when I play my video clips, they come out loud and clear through my Bose speakers (about \$90).

It can work to just hook your computer up to a TV through HDMI. To get sound to come out of the TV when laptop is hooked up with HDMI, right click on speaker icon on bottom right of computer screen and select playback devices. Set the TV as the default and the sound should come through the TV. To get the sound to come out of a Mac hooked up with HDMI, click system preferences > sound > output > HDMI. If you are counting on a TV to show your slides, it can be frustrating trying to make this work at different homes. Some TVs are HDMI compatible and some are not. And, every TV seems to have a different configuration necessary to show the computer screen on the TV.

All of the video clips are embedded in the PowerPoint slides and are designed to start automatically when you arrive at them in the Slide Show. As long as you download the PowerPoint files to your computer, you will not need the Internet for any of the studies. I found out the hard way that you never want to rely on the Internet, especially when rotating houses for the studies.

I have written leader's notes below many of the PowerPoint slides. These can be printed by choosing File>Print and then choosing "Notes" for what to print in the PowerPoint presentation. You will be able to see the notes below the slides when viewing the presentation, but the notes will not show up on the screen when you play the presentation. Use the notes as a guide, but interject your own stories and experiences to make the lessons more meaningful. Feel free to make changes to the slides as you see fit. Ask a lot of questions and get the boys to talk. Don't be afraid to call of them to answer questions or to ask them to read certain slides on the screen. And, call on each of them at various times to open or close in prayer. At first, this will make them uncomfortable. But, in the long run, making the guys participate will keep them engaged and your group will be much more vibrant.

The PowerPoint files should work on both PCs and Macs. However, if your Mac does not have Microsoft Office, the files may not perfectly convert to Keynote. Regardless of whether you are using a Mac or a PC, always go through the presentation before your meeting to make sure that everything is working the way that you want it to.

Make sure to begin and end each of your meetings in prayer and always bring your Bible to each study. Many of the verses are spelled out on the PowerPoint slides, but some passages are too long for the slides and need to be read out of the Bible.

Be creative and change up the meetings from time to time. One Christmas, we took a field trip and visited the Billy Graham Library instead of having a study. Another time we all met for dinner at a local restaurant and then went and watched the movie *Courageous* together.

Try to get invested in the lives of the guys in your group. Every now and then take each of them out to lunch. Go to some of their sporting events or performances. Send them a note or email when they accomplish something significant. Give them Christmas gifts and/or graduation gifts. Examples of gifts that I have given include Bible sticks from *Faith Comes By Hearing* that contained the drama version of the New Testament and Ken Boa's book, *Handbook to Prayer: Praying Scripture Back to God*. It is incredibly powerful to have another adult besides their parents to be invested in their life.

After spending four years and some 50 studies with these guys, you will want to keep in touch with them in college. Once they are in college, send the group a monthly email with a verse and a short application from the verse. Encourage them to contact you if they have questions or ever need help. I have received some late night emails from my guys when they had some difficult spiritual questions or needed help or did not feel comfortable talking to their parents. College is a tough time, and it makes a difference for these young men to have another adult who cares about them.

Several of the studies included in this curriculum are based on information from the following sources:

Essential Truth: Inviting Christ Into My Reality by Serendipity House published by Lifeway Press in Nashville, TN

The teachings of Andy Stanley from North Point Community Church

Terms and Conditions

Finfaith.com and the authors provide this discipleship curriculum as a free service that is for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal or professional advice on any subject matter. While we believe this information can be very helpful, you must be aware that any reliance upon the material found on this site will be at your own risk. This curriculum is being provided at no charge, and no type of agreement or contract is created between the owners and users of this site.

In no event will Finfaith.com or the authors be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, special or exemplary damages resulting from any use or misuse of this data. This includes the suggestions for games and challenges.

Under no circumstances may any of this curriculum be sold, either by itself or as part of a larger collection.