

**I. Bible Study**

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26

What did the apostles think about having a “vacancy”?

Why do you think they needed to add Matthias to the leaders?

Romans 12:3-8

Do we all have the same gifts?

How are we expected to use those gifts?

1 Timothy 1:12-14, 18-20; 2:1-8

What is the purpose of Paul’s letter to Timothy?

What type of instruction does Paul give?

**II. Training****A. Preparation**

Leading a TLC Group focuses on the people, not the content. Make sure the meeting place is conducive to a small group. Help the members feel more like a family and less like a small group. Show up first. Greet people as they arrive. Pay special attention to the first-time guests or visitors. Be prepared. Make sure you have covered the basics, like Bibles, Study Guides, Name Tags or any other supplies.

Prayer is often overlooked. Pray for the members, that they may depart fulfilled. Pray for the empty chair, that God may fill it. Pray for the other TLC groups, that they may be successful. Pray for an appropriate time to birth. These are just some of the types of petitions you can pray for.

Depending on the type of study being done, and who is leading it, familiarize yourself with the upcoming lesson. If there are questions, jot down the answers you have come up with. If there is a Teacher’s guide, read over the answers to the questions so that you can lead the discussion accordingly.

**B. Holding a Meeting**

There is no right or wrong way to hold a TLC meeting. A typical meeting should accomplish the three goals for the members, a time for study, a time for sharing and prayer, and a time for fellowship. The sequence of these depends entirely on the group.

The TLC Leader should be the first to arrive at the meeting, arriving a few minutes before the scheduled time to assist the host in any last-minute preparations required. The TLC leader should greet the guests, allowing the host to handle hosting duties, and tending to the management of the meeting.

The meeting should begin with prayer. A short prayer for the members' hearts to be opened for instruction and blessings on the meeting is sufficient. Then follow your agenda.

### **Study Time**

The person appointed to lead the Bible study should be prepared. Depending on the resource being used, involve as many people as possible. If a book of the bible is being studied, go around the room and have the members read the passages. If a study guide is being used, it may be advantageous to read all or part of the chapter.

The study leader should control the conversation. Don't let it drift too far off base, and don't let one individual dominate the conversation. The leader should not be an expert, but should be a guide as the group collectively learns the subject material. Most likely, the members will have differing perspectives for all passages, and we can learn from each of those perspectives. There aren't usually right and wrong answers, just varying interpretations.

The leader should have an idea of the material to cover, however, that may not be God's plan. God is the real leader of these groups. It is quite all right to end the study early if the material has been covered. It is also proper to digress to an issue of universal concern and not cover all the material. The study leader must, however, be aware of the timing of the flow of conversation, and not be afraid to (politely) cut short conversational threads that are not of direct importance.

At times, when studying scripture and applying it to present day situations, it is easy to become judgmental of others' faults. The purpose of the TLC group is to build up, not to judge. If someone shares how their own life is affected by the lesson, take the time to comfort, console, and proclaim God's forgiveness. The needs of the soul are foremost in the group's priorities. However, don't minister in such a way as to be judgmental, and always follow up with professional pastoral attention.

### **Sharing Time**

In order for the group to connect, it is essential to get to know each other. During the meeting, make time to share things about yourself, your family, what has happened in your life since you last met. Make sure everyone has a chance to share, and everyone respects the amount of time they are using.

## **C. Conducting Prayer**

The first task is to go around the room and share prayer concerns. This can be done either individually or as a part of a general sharing session. The leader

should have a pad of paper and write down all those for whom prayer requests have been offered. This list can then be shared following the meeting, or used solely for the meeting, depending on the decision of the group.

Praying in groups makes many people uncomfortable. Not everyone will share in prayer, nor will everyone always feel comfortable. The leader's task is to hold the prayers in an orderly manner, so that all the prayer requests are fulfilled.

### **ABC's of Prayer**

Prayer should be *Audible*.

Prayer should be *Brief*.

Prayer should be *Christ Centered*.

One method of prayer is called a circle prayer. A circle prayer is where everyone rises and joins hands. Prayer begins with the person next to the leader and proceeds around the circle until the leader finishes with a summary prayer. The Lord's Prayer is then said in unison. If someone does not wish to participate in the prayer, they can just "pass" when it is their turn, and the next one in the circle can just begin.

Another method of prayer includes "Popcorn" prayer where the leader starts and people chime in as often or as little as they wish. If no one else is comfortable in praying aloud, a designee may do all the praying for the group.

### **D. Sample Meeting Agenda**

A meeting agenda can easily be codified in a covenant, or may be adapted based on the study or the season.

Arrival and Greetings

Opening Prayer

Sharing (20 minutes)

Bible Study (60 minutes)

Circle Prayer (10 minutes)

Fellowship (30 minutes)

### **E. Common Issues**

Virtually all of the common issues can be addressed in the group covenant.

#### **What to do about people coming late?**

Being late is a fact of life. Most adults expect to start on time and end on time. The leader's task is to ensure that the meetings do not become too long

or disorderly. I would suggest not holding up the meeting more than 5 minutes for latecomers, since there is a lot to cover, and people will respect that.

If you know you will be late, contact the administrator, leader or host. If you come late, respect the other members and quietly join the meeting. Don't ignore those who come late, but take a break, greet them, and resume where you left off.

### **What about absences?**

Most people are busy, and will have schedule conflicts. This is understandable. If so many people will be absent, it is proper to postpone or reschedule a meeting. If absenteeism persists for a particular member, it may be a sign of events in a person's life needing attention. The Leader and members should contact the missing person, express their concern about the absences, and offer any assistance they may need to solve the problem preventing them from attending.

### **What to do about people who share too often?**

Be gentle, but try to return the topic at hand. Use canned responses such as:

- "Thanks for sharing that. We now turn to ...."
- Summarize the point, and ask someone else for his or her opinion.
- Acknowledge that we could spend much more time discussing that point, but that is not the point of today's lesson.

If there is a persistent problem with an individual, the leader should contact that person outside of the meeting and express concern. The member may not recognize what they are doing, and may just need a sign or code phrase to bring them back on track.

### **What about people who do not share at all?**

Be patient. Take an opportunity during the discussion to specifically ask them about their opinion. They may not be a very talkative person, so read the body language, and if you detect interest in a topic, ask them a simple question. Remember, all of us desire to avoid being embarrassed.

To ensure that they feel part of the group, make sure that they are engaged in the fellowship aspects. They may feel inadequate when studying God's word. Don't let those feelings prevent them from enjoying the fellowship of the group and withdrawing. Remember, the goal is to involve all people but not to pressure anyone.

**III. Preparing to Birth**

At this point in the training, we need to begin discussing birthing into multiple groups. At the next meeting, we will identify how many daughter groups we wish to form, and identify the leaders for those groups.

What you will need to do between now and the next meeting is to pray about the following questions:

- What role do I play in a TLC group? Am I willing to lead a group or be a supportive Leader-in-Training or administrator.
- How many TLC Groups should we split up into?
- Which topic would I be interested in?
- How should we select who should join which daughter group?
- Who should I invite to join in the daughter TLC group?

At the next meeting, we would like to identify the daughter groups, their leaders, and their initial topics of study.

**IV. Sharing****V. Prayer****VI. Fellowship**