

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

Skills training for small group leaders.

COURSE CONTENTS

UNIT 1 FORMING THE GROUP

- Lesson 1.1 Course Introduction
- Lesson 1.2 Types of Groups
- Lesson 1.3 Goals for the Group
- Lesson 1.4 Roles & Responsibilities in the Group
- Lesson 1.5 Qualifications of a Small Group Leader (1-3)
- Lesson 1.6 Qualifications of a Small Group Leader (4-7)

UNIT 2 PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

- Lesson 2.1 Deciding a Bible Study Topic
- Lesson 2.2 Preparing to Teach
- Lesson 2.3 Bible Study Tools – The Bible
- Lesson 2.4 Bible Study Tools – Other Books and Tools
- Lesson 2.5 Final Preparations for Teaching
- Lesson 2.6 Avoiding Pitfalls

UNIT 3 LEADING THE MEETING

- Lesson 3.1 Clarity in Scheduling, Publicity, & Responsibilities
- Lesson 3.2 Meeting Schedule & Format
- Lesson 3.3 Ground Rules for the Group
- Lesson 3.4 Teaching the Lesson
- Lesson 3.5 Guidelines For Leading Discussion

UNIT 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Lesson 4.1 How to Ask Good Questions
- Lesson 4.2 Questions For Starting, Clarifying, Applying
- Lesson 4.3 How to Ask a Bad Question

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

UNIT 5 PRAYING IN A SMALL GROUP

- Lesson 5.1 Prayer: General Procedures
- Lesson 5.2 What Should We Pray For?
- Lesson 5.3 Worship & Praise
- Lesson 5.4 Correcting wrong ideas about prayer

UNIT 6 DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

- Lesson 6.1 How Do You Resolve Problems?
- Lesson 6.2 The Discussion Wanders Off Topic
- Lesson 6.3 One Person Dominates
- Lesson 6.4 Wrong Answers
- Lesson 6.5 Side Conversations
- Lesson 6.6 A Few People Never Participate
- Lesson 6.7 Frequent Conflict
- Lesson 6.8 Gossip & Complaining

UNIT 7 THE CARING GROUP

- Lesson 7.1 Serving Physical Needs
- Lesson 7.2 Serving Emotional Needs
- Lesson 7.3 Serving Spiritual Needs
- Lesson 7.4 Follow-Up
- Lesson 7.5 Mission Focus
- Lesson 7.6 Decisions in the Group

UNIT 8 FINAL THOUGHTS

- Lesson 8.1 Ice Breakers
- Lesson 8.2 Chose your apprentice
- Lesson 8.3 Train your apprentice
- Lesson 8.4 Have Fun Together
- Lesson 8.5 Evaluation
- Lesson 8.6 The Group Contract
- Lesson 8.7 The Leader

FINAL EXAM

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

UNIT #1: Forming the group 1.1 Course Introduction

How to Lead Small Groups is an online *DeafPah!* course that helps prepare church members to serve in their congregation's ministry. The instructor for this course is Rev. Ron Friedrich.

You may download the video lessons and this study guide for free from deafjesus.org.

The videos were originally prepared as VHS videotapes for the Deaf Institute of Theology. *(We apologize for the video editing errors. We hope to be able to record these lessons again soon.)*

Our goal for this course is not simply to put information in your head, but to give you skills that you will put into practice. This means that as you take this course, you should already be a small group leader, or an apprentice training to become a small group leader. If you are not yet involved with a small group Bible Study, work with your mentor to choose one that is appropriate for you.

While you watch the videos, take notes, especially when the teacher describes a list of topics. At the end of each video lesson, reinforce what you have learned by answering the questions in this student guide.

If you are studying this course with a mentor, share your answers with your mentor.

Now please watch Part 1 video.

LESSON 1 – QUESTIONS

Which describes you:

I attend a small Bible study or fellowship group.

Name or describe this group: _____

I am a small group leader.

I am not in a small group yet.

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1.2 Type of Groups

Your church has several different types of groups

Boards & committees

Fellowship groups

Service teams

Bible study groups

How many groups are active in your church? List them here, and describe:

- a. When, where, and how often do the groups meet?
- b. Who is the leader of each group?
- c. What is the purpose or focus of each group?
- d. You are involved with which of those groups?

1.3 The Goals for the Group

This lesson discusses PERSONAL goals, and GROUP goals.

If you attend a small group for fellowship or Bible study...

1. What are your personal goals for attending a small group for fellowship or Bible study? What personal benefits do you seek?

2. From you point of view, what is the main goals for the group?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

3. Ask the group leader and other members of the group these same two questions (#1 and #2 in this lesson) and report there answers here.

a. Personal goals of the group members and group leader.

b. Goals for the group.

1.4 The Roles and Responsibilities of the Group

Here is a list of various responsibilities that various people have in a Bible study group. Put a check mark in front of each job that people have in your group. Name the person responsible for that job.

___ 1. Bible study leader _____

___ 2. Prayer leader _____

___ 3. Facilities coordinator _____

___ 4. Host/Hostess (food) _____

___ 5. Publicity/Outreach coordinator _____

___ 6. Time-keeper _____

___ 7. Service coordinator _____

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1.5 The Qualifications of the Leader (1-3)

A Christian leader must:

- (1) be a committed Christian.*
- (2) have a growing relationship with Christ.*
- (3) understand spiritual and Biblical principles.*

1. When and how did you become a believer and follower of Jesus Christ?

2. Which church do you attend? How long have attended this church?

3. Describe your personal (private) Bible study and prayer life. When, where, and how do you have a personal time for prayer and devotion? Do you study the Bible or some other book? Do you write your questions, insights, and prayers in a private journal?

4. Which of the three qualifications listed at the beginning of this lesson is your strongest?

5. Which is your weakest and you want to improve?

6. What are you doing to improve and become stronger in all three qualifications?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

1.6 The Qualifications of the Leader (4-7)

A Christian leader must:

(4) be sensitive to the needs and feelings of other people.

(5) be comfortable in working under the authority of the pastor and the church.

(6) be willing and dedicated to give the time necessary to do the job properly.

(7) be able to share his/her personal faith in Christ and apply insights from God's Word to everyday problems of life.

1. Which of these four qualifications (#4-#7) is your strongest?
2. Which is your weakest and you want to improve?
3. What are you doing to improve and become stronger in that area?

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UNIT #2: Preparing for the meeting 2.1 Deciding a Bible Study Topic

This lesson listed four kinds of topics which you can use for a Bible study group:

- *Textual study (book of the Bible, or person or event in the Bible)*
- *Issues in current events with scriptural insight and application.*
- *Daily Christian living*
- *Doctrine*

1. Ask three people in your Bible study group to name a topic, book of the Bible, or verse in the Bible they struggle with or would like to study. Then identify which kind of Bible study (listed above) you would use to answer their questions:

	Students' Suggestions	Kind of Bible Study
a.		
b.		
c.		

2. Name three topics you would like to study and which kind of topics they are:

	Topics I want to study	Kind of Bible Study
a.		
b.		
c.		

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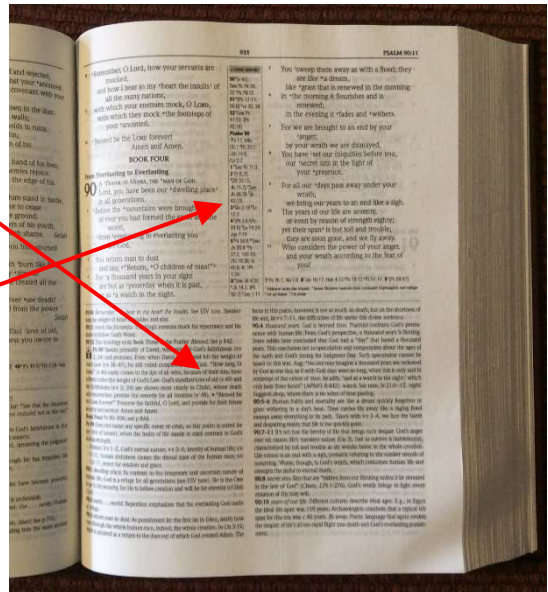
2.2 Preparing to Teach -- Pray & Study

1. Which days of the week, and what time in those days, can/do you prepare (pray & study) for your Bible Study class?
2. Read Philippians 4:4-9. How does this verse apply to you, both in your personal Christian life, and also as a Bible study leader?

2.3 Bible Study Tools--The Bible

Basic Bible study tools:

- (1) An accurate translation of the Bible
- (2) A "Study Bible" that has notes below the Bible text that explain history, culture, doctrine. (Examples: Concordia Self-Study Bible, The Lutheran Study Bible, Life Application Study Bible)*
- (3) Cross references in the margin of the Bible.
- (4) Maps in the back of the Bible
- (5) Electronic Bible, computer program, Internet Bible (Examples: biblegateway.com, biblehub.com, blueletterbible.org; these also have a free smart phone app.)



* If you don't have a Study Bible, ask your pastor to borrow one. You will need it for this assignment.

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

1. Which translation (version) of the Bible do you most like to use?
(Examples: *KJV, NKJV, NIV, NIRV, ESV.*)
2. Do you own a Study Bible? (See examples listed at the beginning of this lesson).
 No.
 Yes. Which one do you have? _____
3. Which of the following Bible study tools are in your Bible:
 Cross references
 Study notes at the bottom of each page
 Maps
4. In Matthew 12:39-40, Jesus compares Himself to Jonah. What cross-references can you find for these verses? List the verses here.
5. Read the Study Bible notes under Matthew 12:39-41. Which notes give you new or important ideas about this text? Write those notes here.

<h2>2.4 Bible Study Tools–Other Books & Tools</h2>
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Other books help in Bible research:

- (1) Concordance (some Bibles have a short concordance in the back by the maps)*
- (2) Bible Dictionary*
- (3) Chronology (Time chart)*
- (4) Commentary*

1. Which of these Bible study tools do you own?

2. If you don't own some of these tools, where can you find them? (If you don't know, ask your pastor.)

3. Do you use websites to help you in your Bible study?

No.

Yes. Which websites? (*Note: Wikipedia is NOT a Christian Bible study website!*)

3. Choose three of these tools to continue your research about Matthew 12:39-41.

(a) Which tools did you use?

(b) What did you learn? What will you want to teach your class?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

2.5 Final Preparations for Teaching

For your lesson about Matthew 12:38-41 add:

1. Four discussion questions to help involve the group members.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____

2. Two life-stories that will help members of your group see how Matthew 12:38-41 applies personally to them. Describe or summarize those stories here:

- (a) _____

- (b) _____

3. Two visual examples or handouts that you might be able to use in teaching this lesson. Show them to your mentor.

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2.6 Avoiding Pitfalls

While you prepare your lessons, remember to avoid some easy mistakes:

- (1) Confusing personal opinion for Biblical truth.*
- (2) Applying Bible verses out of context.*
- (3) Overemphasizing your favorite themes and topics.*
- (4) Using only one method of teaching.*
- (5) Focusing only on knowledge and information without life application.*
- (6) Neglecting full preparation (both leader and students).*

Now, pull together all of the material you have compiled about Matthew 12:38-41.

1. Write an outline of your lesson, describing your main points and the materials, videos, stories or class activities that teach those points.
2. Write a handout which will help guide students through the lesson and reinforce what they learn.

Share these with your mentor.

UNIT #3: Leading the group

3.1 Clarity in Scheduling, Publicity, and Responsibilities

Your exercise for this lesson is to begin planning to start a new Bible study group.

1. Develop a sample schedule of
 - (a) The place the group will meet _____
 - (b) The dates and time you will meet _____
 - (c) The first topic or focus of your study (see your answers to the questions in Lesson 2.1).

2. Use this information to develop a flyer to publicize the Bible study. (Show that to your mentor.)
3. Write the (or initials) of 2 or 3 people you can ask to join and help you in starting the group.

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

3.2 The Meeting Schedule & Format

As you watch the video for this lesson, write notes about the time schedule and meeting format.

If you regularly participate in a Bible study group, how does your group schedule and format compare with the points listed in the video?

1. How is your class is the same as the group described in the video?

2. How is your class different than the group described in the video?

3.3 The Ground Rules for the Group

Every Christian Bible study group needs to follow four basic rules for getting-along.

- 1. Respect.*
- 2. Everyone in the group can share their ideas. Every person is important.*
- 3. No gossip.*
- 4. The Bible is our true guide for Christian faith, for life, for conversation*

1. STORY: Mary gave her opinion about the Bible story. John said it was a stupid idea. Using the ground rules, the Bible, or other resources, what would you say or do? Give two examples.

(a) _____

(b) _____

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

2. STORY: In the group, Mary said that Bill is telling stories about her (gossip) outside of the group. Give two examples of what you might say or do in this situation.

(a) _____

(b) _____

3.4 Teaching The Lesson

Look at the lesson on Matthew 12:38-41 which you prepared for Unit 2 (Lessons 2.3 – 2.6).

1. In addition to reading the Bible texts, what are some other activities which will help group members learn and apply Scripture verses? How can you incorporate those activities in your lesson?

2. Your lesson on Matthew 12:38-41 may include background information (history, geography, culture, etc.).

(a) Summarize background information do you want to teach in your lesson.

(b) How do you plan to present that background information as your teach your lesson?

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3.5 Guidelines for Leading Discussion

Think about small Bible study groups which you have attending in past years.

1. Describe ways the group members participated so that everyone in the group benefitted.

2. Describe ways the group process (teaching format, learning activities, group discussion) could be changed (improved) to make a better learning experience for everyone.

UNIT 4: Discussion Questions

4.1 How to ask good questions.

Good questions...

- *are clear.*
- *fit the topic.*
- *help people join discussion.*
- *discover truth from the Bible.*
- *make people stop, think, and change their mind.*
- *make people curious.*

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Suppose you are leading a Bible study about "The Lord's Prayer".
Write three good questions which will help the group start discussion.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4.2 Questions For Starting, Clarifying, Applying

Suppose you are leading a Bible study about the topic, "The Parable of the Sower"
(Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23)...

1. Write two questions to help people see information in the story.

- (a) _____

- (b) _____

2. Write two questions that examine what the parable means.

- (a) _____

- (b) _____

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

3. Write two questions that make the story apply to our lives.

(a) _____

(b) _____

4.3 How to Ask a Bad Question

Here are some bad examples of discussion questions about the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23).

1. "This parable teaches that if we don't believe God's Word with our whole heart, then we won't be able to do what?"

(a) Why is this a bad question? _____

(b) Make this a better question _____

3. "How are our response to the Word of God, represented by the seed in this parable, at various times and situations in our lives similar to the four different types of soil conditions which Jesus described?"

(a) Why is this a bad question? _____

(b) Make this a better question _____

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

2. "Did the seed that fell among the weeds grow much fruit?"

(a) Why is this a bad question? _____

(b) Make this a better question _____

4. "When do we become like the hard-packed soil of the pathway, how does that affect our relationship with God, and what are the consequences for our lives?"

(a) Why is this a bad question? _____

(b) Make this a better question _____

5. "Birds ate which seed?"

(a) Why is this a bad question? _____

(b) Make this a better question _____

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

4.4 Hints

For your Bible study about Matthew 12:38-41...

4. Write two discussion questions to help people see information in the story.

(a) _____

(b) _____

5. Write two discussion question that examine what the story means.

(a) _____

(b) _____

6. Write two discussion questions that make the story apply to our lives.

(a) _____

(b) _____

UNIT 5: Praying in a Small Group

5.1 Prayer: General Procedures

Small group Bible studies normally open and close with prayer. This lesson also describes various ways small groups manages prayer for members and familieis in the group.

1. What is the focus of the opening prayer?

2. What is the purpose of the closing prayer?

3. Does your Bible study group take time for prayers suggested by members of the group? If yes, who leads those prayers?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

4. What are the benefits of group members praying for each other?

5.2 What should your group pray for?

Write a prayer for each of these situations:

1. Think of someone who is struggling with a serious health issue, or someone who has suffered a great loss. Write a prayer on behalf of that person. (If you prefer, you may use their initials instead of their name.)
2. Think of a friend who does not know Jesus. Write a prayer on behalf of that person.
3. Write a prayer on behalf of your pastor.

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5.3 Worship and Praise

1. Review the P.R.A.Y. acrostic from the video lesson.

P = _____

R = _____

A = _____

Y = _____

2. Write an opening prayer for your Bible study group. Include all four parts of P.R.A.Y.

5.4 Correcting wrong ideas about prayer

These prayers have serious problems...

1. "Lord, I claim your promise for perfect health. I trust you to completely heal me."

(a) What is wrong with this prayer? _____

(b) What could this person pray instead? _____

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2. "Lord, I am deep in debt and now I am in serious trouble. Please guide me in selecting the winning numbers in the lottery."

(a) What is wrong with this prayer? _____

(b) What could this person pray instead? _____

3. "Lord, my friend recently died. Please, in Your mercy, take her to heaven."

(a) What is wrong with this prayer? _____

(b) What could this person pray instead? _____

4. "Lord, I thought that person was my friend, but he stabbed me in the back. Please let him suffer for what he did to me."

(a) What is wrong with this prayer? _____

(b) What could this person pray instead? _____

5. "Lord, please don't let me get caught for what just did."

(a) What is wrong with this prayer? _____

(b) What could this person pray instead? _____

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

UNIT # 6: Dealing with problems **6.1 How do you resolve Problems?**

In Matthew 18:15-18 Jesus describes four specific steps we should follow to correct a problem in our church or fellowship group. List those steps here.

1. (v.15) _____

2. (v.16) _____

3. (v.17a) _____

4. (v.17b) _____

6.2 Problem--The Discussion Wanders Off The topic

In your small group, describe a situation when the group wandered off topic. Was the off-topic discussion important enough for the group leader to allow it to continue? Or did the leader guide the discussion back to the study topic? ...and how?

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6.5 Problem--Side conversations

Often side conversations interrupt small group activity. How do the groups in which you participate usually manage that problem?

6.6 Problem: A few people never participate.

1. Suppose you are a leader of small group Bible study. One person in the group always sits quietly and never joins the discussion. How might you encourage that person to become more actively involved in discussion?

2. Suppose you are member (not the leader) of a small group Bible study. You notice that one member in the group always sits quietly and never joins the discussion. How might you respond?

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6.7 Problem—Frequent Conflict

1. Sadly, conflict in a small group can destroy the group. Has that ever happened in a group which you attended? Describe what happened.
2. Suppose you are a leader of small group Bible study. Two members of the group have a long history of tension between them. Their conflict blows up during the group meeting. How could you manage that problem?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

6.8 Problem—Gossip & Complaining

1. Suppose you are a leader of small group Bible study. Members of the group start sharing negative stories about about someone who is not present in group. How could you manage that problem?
2. Suppose you are member (not the leader) of a small group Bible study. Members of the group start sharing negative stories about about someone who is not present in group. How might you respond?

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UNIT 7: The Caring Group **7.1 Serving Physical Needs**

1. Small group fellowship gives us the perfect opportunity to respond to each others' physical needs. Has that happened in any small group which you have attended? Describe the person's need and how other members of the group responded.

2. Read Romans 12:9-13 and James 2:14-17. What do these verses tell us about what Christ wants to do through us in our Christian fellowship?

7.2. Serving Emotional Needs

1. Read Romans 12:15 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. What do these verses tell us about what Christ wants to do through us in our Christian fellowship?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

2. Describe a time when you received emotional support from fellow Christians. How did their concern make you feel?

7.3 Serving Spiritual Needs

As we teach God's Word and as we pray for the things that are important to God, we join an invisible battle against Satan and his forces.

1. Read Galatians 6:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. What do these verses tell us about what Christ wants to do through us in our Christian fellowship?

2. A person in your Bible study group admits that she has difficulty praying and trusting God. Major disappointments in her life lead her to wonder if God is really good or if He really cares. How do you respond?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

7.4 Follow up

1. Describe various ways a small group Bible study leader can stay in touch with group members outside the group meeting time.

2. What should be the message or focus of those contacts?

7.5 Mission Focus

1. The opening question in the video is: “ We are here for for?” Using the information presented in the video lesson, answer this question in one sentence.
2. Think of five people you know who do not attend church, and my not know Christ. Write their names or initials on a separate piece of paper. Put that paper in a place where you will see it often and commit to praying for those people. Also ask God for wisdom and the right words to invite them to your Bible study group.

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

7.6 Decisions in the Group

1. Review the D.E.A.F. acrostic from the video lesson.

D = _____

E = _____

A = _____

F = _____

2. Who in your group makes decisions about the group's meeting place, schedule, and Bible study topics? The leader? The whole group? Someone else outside the group?

CHAPTER 8: FINAL THOUGHTS

8.1 Ice Breakers

An "ice breaker" is an activity to help people become comfortable with each other in a group. When the group is new, ice breaker questions can help people to know each other a little better. In groups where everyone already knows each other, a simple question like "What's new?" helps them share what is happening in their lives.

Make a list of five ice breaker activities. You can find ice breakers on the internet, in books in the library, or pull ideas from your past experiences doing ice breakers.

1. _____

2. _____

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

8.2 Choose your apprentice

While you are a Bible study leader, you want to train someone in the group to become a leader. Your apprentice should...

- *be a committed Christian: He must know he is a sinner and Jesus died on the cross to forgive him.*
- *has a growing relationship with Christ: Praying and studying God's Word*
- *understands spiritual/Biblical principles*
- *is sensitive to people, both Christians and the lost.*
- *is comfortable in working under the authority of the church/pastor*
- *is dedicated give the time necessary to do the job properly.*
- *is able to share his/her personal faith in Christ, and apply insights from God's Word to everyday problems of life.*

1. Who is the apprentice in your group?

2. Who else in your group could become future Bible study leader?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

8.3 Train your apprentice

1. This lesson describes steps for preparing an apprentice to become a small group Bible study leader. Take notes as you watch the video. Then list the steps for gradually giving the apprentice more experience as a servant-leader in your group.
2. This lesson describes three different ways the apprentice can take full leadership of a group. Which one of those ways might be best for the group that you are in now?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

8.4 Have Fun Together

1. What kind of things does your Bible study group do for fun, either during the Bible study time, or doing things together outside the class?

2. This lesson offers a few ideas for fun activities. Think of some things new which your group can do together, which you haven't tried yet. List your ideas here (and later suggest them to your group).

8.5 Evaluation

What we have is never perfect; we always can improve. The lesson describes ways the group can evaluate its schedule, facilities, activities, publicity, and even the group leaders. Evaluation can be difficult, even a little painful, but the results are beneficial.

Develop and write out a sample evaluation that you can use for your group.

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

8.6 The Group Contract

This lesson describes ideas (and reasons) for a group contract – things that every member of the group agrees to do. Please take notes while you watch the video.

1. Does your Bible study group have a group contract? If yes, share that with your mentor.
2. If your Bible study group does not yet have a group contract, what are the things that you learned in this lesson that might be appropriate for your group? Write a sample contract that your group could use. Share that with your mentor (and your group leader.)

8.7 The Leader

1. Read Matthew 20:20-28. How did Jesus describe the attitude and role of a Godly leader?
2. Apply Matthew 20:20-28 to your role as a Bible study leader. What does this say about the way you prepare for the meetings, lead the meetings, and relate to other group members?

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

FINAL EXAM!

Your final exam will incorporate many areas of this course.

1. Write and teach a Bible Study with six lessons.
2. For each of the six lessons, answer the following questions:
 - (a) What Bible Study research tools (Bibles, Concordances, Commentaries, etc.) did you use to prepare that lesson?
 - (b) What did you learn from your research?
 - (c) What discussion questions did you prepare for that lesson?
 - (d) What icebreaker question(s) did you use at the Bible Study meeting?
 - (e) How did the people respond to the lesson?
3. Look at the list of problems in Unit 6 of this course. Which of those problems occurred in the Bible Study meeting? How did you deal with those problems?
4. How many people attend the Bible Study?
 - (a) How many people were members of your church?
 - (b) How many people were non-Christian?
 - (c) How many people were members of another church?
5. How many other people helped serve the group for the Bible study meeting for the following tasks:
 - (a) Prayer leader
 - (b) Facilities coordinator
 - (c) Host/Hostess (food coordinator)
 - (d) Publicity/Outreach coordinator
 - (e) Time-keeper

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

6. Turn in a copy of the group contract, describing
 - (a) group goals
 - (b) group rules
 - (c) meeting schedule
 - (d) who may attend the group

7. Was the Bible Study group a newly formed group for this project? Or did you lead an already existing group?

8. Do you think you are skilled enough to serve the church as a small group Bible Study leader?

9. How has this course helped you become more confident as a leader?