



Hosting a Small Group in a Box

An “ingredient” and “recipe” kit to host a small group in your home.

This resource offers a simple way to connect with others and grow in faith together. Just like a meal kit subscription skips the menu planning and grocery shopping and delivers a meal in a box, this resource offers a pre-planned strategy to help you get started quickly and easily!

Small groups provide a safe place for a personal encounter with Jesus, the development of authentic friendships, and honest sharing. Small groups allow members to pray and share life together and encourage each other to uphold Gospel values. Conversations with peers tap into shared challenges and experiences in life. As members of small groups grow closer to Jesus and to each other, they tend to support and minister to one another through life’s ups and downs. Participants in small groups testify to the many blessings that come from walking the journey of faith with their peers.

Ingredients

- 6 - 8 adults who have an interest in sharing faith and growing in a life of discipleship
- 1 place to meet or a digital platform that all participants can utilize
- 1 link to the [Small Group Leader Guide](#)
- 1 pre-packaged series to use for small group content
- 1 [Participant Handout](#) to share with all participants
- 1 follow-up discussion to assess outcomes and determine next steps

Directions

1. Pray about who to invite to your small group.
2. Invite the people who God put on your heart to join you weekly (or every other week) for some time of faith sharing and socializing. Limit your group to 8 people.
3. Select the meeting place or which digital platform your small group will use.
4. Choose which content will be used for your small group. Order any materials that are needed.
5. Set a start date and a schedule that works for all the participants for the duration of the series. Fill out [this form](#) with your small group information.
6. Distribute the [Participant Handout](#) to all the participants.
7. Host one Orientation Session (see [Small Group Leader Guide](#) for details).
8. Start your session on the scheduled day and have fun!
9. Once the series is complete, get your group together to share thoughts about how the sessions went and decide on whether to continue with another study. Questions to consider could include: What was most meaningful to you from this series? What worked best in this environment? What could be improved? What are some other topics you would like to explore in a small group?

Small Group Session Outline

Suggested Meeting Frequency: Once per week or twice per month

Suggested Meeting Duration: 90 minutes (longer if you want to include a shared meal)

Meeting Location: Check out the [Where to Meet](#) section on Page 2 to determine where your small group should meet

Sample Timeline of a Session (90 minutes):

10 minutes—Gather, Socialize, Introductory Questions

5 minutes—Opening Prayer (may be included in resource used for small group content)

60 minutes—Content from resource and discussion

10 minutes—Closing Prayer with intentions

5 minutes—Announcements, socialize, good-byes

* If your group would like to share a meal together, consider adding 30 minutes to your socializing time at the beginning of your session. *

Where to Meet

Small groups can meet in-person anywhere that the group can comfortably sit, see one another, and hear all the members speaking. Some meet in a public location like a local coffee shop, a space at a local park, or at their parish. Just consider noise and other distractions at these spots. Others meet at a home of one of the small group members and even sometimes rotate to a different home each week. Consider what the host needs to do to prepare, if they have pets or other things group members could be allergic to, the space available to meet in, and if your small group is also sharing a meal as part of the gathering.

Some small groups, due to travel, childcare needs, or other reasons, may choose to meet as a small group digitally. Many platforms exist to connect people digitally. As a group, pick which platform works best for everyone. Here are some possible ones to consider:

- ZOOM – Meet for 40 minutes for free or upgrade to a paid plan for unlimited time video conferencing on a mobile device or a desktop computer. Find out more by visiting zoom.us
- GOOGLE HANGOUTS - Each Hangout allows for an unlimited amount of time via the web browser or Google Hangout app. Please note: all participants would need to have a Google account. Visit hangouts.google.com for more information.
- FACEBOOK MESSENGER – Using the Messenger mobile app or a web browser, this free option from Facebook permits groups to video chat. More details can be found at messenger.com
- FACETIME – Using an iPad, iPhone, or Mac desktop app, Apple users can connect for free with multiple participants on one call. Explore apps.apple.com to find out more.
- SKYPE – Connect with others via the desktop app, mobile app, or the website using this free video chat option. Additional details can be found at skype.com

Small Group Makeup

Consider the following when thinking about the composition of your small group:

- Gender-specific groups—Some small groups are all female or all male. Gender-specific groups give participants the opportunity to speak more freely about issues they might be facing as a man or a woman in the world today. These groups may consider exploring [Theology of the Body](#) or faith studies such as [Be a Man](#) or those available through [Blessed Is She](#).
- Mixed-group—This group can be a mix of men and women in different age groups and different stages of life (single, married, etc.). In this case, group makeup is not as dependent on the stage of life, but where group members are in their faith journey. Groups who are comprised of those who are coming to faith have different goals and different types of conversation than those who are committed disciples, for example.

Small Group Session Content (Pick One)

Select one from this list or choose one of your own:

- [Evangelical Catholic Studies](#) (6 Sessions)
- FOCUS Bible Study [Free Printed Resources](#)
- Faith Studies on [Formed.org](#) (Check with your local parish to see if they have access for you to utilize this site for free)
 - *Happiness* (7 episodes) on [Formed.org](#)

Lectionary-based Discussions:

- [Our Sunday Visitor Lifelong Catechesis Sunday Readings and Questions of the Week](#)

Introductory Questions

Each week as groups gather digitally, you may consider using a different discussion question to help you get to know one another better. Pick one question and have everyone answer. Some possible questions could be:

- What is the farthest place you have ever traveled? Why?
- How many cousins do you have? Where do you fall in the order?
- Are you an early bird or a night owl?
- If a movie was made about your life, what actors would you want to be in it?
- What is your favorite dessert? Why?
- What is your hidden talent?