**How to do this study as a small group/**

**Sunday school structure.**

**So how do you lead a Bible study? Here are a few ideas on how to begin, prepare and lead.**

***Before leading a study, pray about your overall goals:***

* Who are you trying to reach, and why?
* Do you want to teach it or facilitate it?
* What do you hope to achieve? Is it to reach the lost or draw them closer to God and each other? Is it to help them in a particular area of need, such as dating, finance, trust, etc.?
* How many weeks do you want to lead the study? What day and time of the week?
* Where will the study be located?
* Do you want both males and females in your study, young and old?
* Will you have a co-leader?
* What about childcare?
* What are you expecting from those attending: for example, do they need to attend each week? Will there be homework? Are you expecting them to eat ahead of time, or are you providing snacks? What about things discussed in class, talked about outside of class?
* Have you contacted your pastor/church/leader as to your specific needs of your study, such as funds to offset any expenses, scholarship people, provide snacks, marketing, TV to show a video, security if you have it at night, childcare, etc.
* Do you have a plan on how to market the study?
* Will folks need to buy the study ahead of time or purchase it once they are there?

Note: Keep in communication with your Pastor or other leaders at your church as to your needs. If you have attendees that are of concern, let them know so they can help you.

**Before the Study:**

1. Find a good place to have the study if you are using this as a small group. A place with regulated temperature, good lighting, and the least amount of noise and distraction is best. It should also be a comfortable, safe place, has access to bathrooms, and provides childcare if needed. Using your church will be favored by most due to its accessibility and resources; however, it might not be the best choice for the lost or spiritually weaker Christians.
2. Provide the Bible study at the first meeting, or have participants bring their copies. You could spend the first meeting getting to know everyone and the last one as a celebration.
3. If you plan on having childcare, ensure you have the necessary insurance, facilities, and staff training. Understand that allowing children to wander in and out of the study causes a distraction; be sensitive to others who don’t have children. Also, note that if you plan on having a study off-campus and not under a church, you will become liable if something happens to that child.
4. Plan to start and end on time to respect people’s time and commitment to the study. Be sure to communicate this each week. If you want to have some mingle time, advertise folks can come early or stay late but do not allow the mingle time to infringe on the teaching time.
5. Decide ahead of time on the format of your study. How much time to teach, how much time to show a video or have an icebreaker, and how much time for discussion, whether in a large or smaller group?
6. If you don’t know your attendees well, have them complete a survey (email ahead of time) that might include how they found out about the study, their church name, marital status, hobbies, email, etc. This provides a way to contact them during the study and, afterward, for future events.
7. If your study has more than seven people, pray about breaking into groups of 4 for better and more personal discussion and prayer. Then come back at the end for final comments.
8. Ask folks ahead of time to turn off or silent their phones, use the restroom, and get a snack so that you are not interrupted during the study. Note: I think it’s best to eat afterward, so you are not distracted.
9. Be creative when teaching. Use objects, video clips, music, videos, etc., whatever might add value to the lesson.
10. Always welcome, and open and close with prayer. (As time passes, you can ask others to open and/or close in prayer.) If you have smaller groups, they can close out in prayer within those groups.
11. Provide nametags, extra pens, and Bibles as needed.
12. Have folks sit in a circle or at tables to enhance communication.  Start with an icebreaker, a warm-up exercise, or another way of getting to know each person. You can purchase a huge list of icebreakers for $5 at [www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org).
13. Continue to market your study if it’s open, meaning there is no start or end date. If it’s a closed study, communicate this and do not allow anyone to join after week 1.

**During the Study**

1. Email or text folks each week to encourage and stay connected. Remind them of any homework and any expectations for the next time you meet. If you have small group leaders, encourage them to be the person who contacts their group. You can still send out an overall email.
2. Make yourself available to your attendees for questions and prayer needs throughout the week.
3. Allow everyone to share; balance your talkers with non-talkers; if you have a talker taking up too much time, simply say, that was a great thought or comment, let’s move so we can end on time, or let’s hear what Susie has to say. If we have time, we will come back to that. Ask quiet people ahead of time to read questions or scripture and anyone to share a testimony.
4. Always be thinking of training the next teacher(s) by training small group leaders to lead discussions; also allow them to facilitate from time to time. Remember, we are just not leading a study but building the next leader. Also, this person(s) could be your backup if you are absent.
5. Close by briefly discussing the week ahead.  Make assignments or tell of your expectations for the next week. When they return the following week, review their assignment and/or share about their week.

Note: As the study gets closer, pray about the next study. Ask folks if they are interested in another one. Do some research, order some studies and let folks thumb through them to help make the decision. If your group is large, think about multiplying into two groups, offered at different times or days of the week.

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[www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

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