

MAKE YOUR FIRST NIGHT GREAT

Goals of the First Meeting

- Rekindle relationships and meet new members
- Clarify your group's direction, expectations, and commitments —using the commitment forms
- Briefly discuss the sermon topic (if there is time)
- Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group

Items Needed for the First Meeting

- Dessert or Dinner plans decided
- Small Group Commitment Forms—Small ones to hand out and a large one for everyone to sign
- Nametags (host should write them out ahead of time)

Contact Your Group in Advance (example emails provided on following page)

- Contact all members who sign up after each registration weekend (The Small Groups department will get you the names and contact info). Send a welcome email (or a phone call) a week or so before the first meeting to welcome them to the group and inform them of the location and time of your group, as well as any food or drinks they need to bring that week.

3 ESSENTIAL PARTS OF YOUR EVENING AGENDA

#1 Welcome, mingle, and talk while you eat

—> **Leadership tip**—Studies show that the first 7 seconds a person spends in a room can make or break the remainder of their experience in that room.

- People greeted when they arrive
- Drinks available when people arrive
- Upbeat music playing
- House cleaned, phone off if possible

#2 Think through the uniqueness of your first group — *Going over the Commitment form is crucial*

- Let people know your meeting is going to start in about 5 minutes
- Why is it unique—getting to know each other and setting expectations

A) Sharing

- Take time to do a few Icebreakers or some of the “Getting Started” questions in the discussion guide
- Explain the purpose of the Sharing time and the icebreaker questions—getting to know one another casually (in new groups) or reacquainting with each other (continuing groups)
- Note to returning leaders—feel free to adapt the sharing time based on the number of new members. All groups are encouraged to do some Icebreakers or “Getting to Know Me” questions

B) Worship (optional)

C) The Commitment Form—*Set the expectations and vision*

- Everything rises and falls on how this is communicated
- Distribute the Commitment Forms
- Go over the Commitment Forms (See Leader's Guide)
- Make plans for your group social

D) Prayer

- Communicate that no one needs to feel pressure to pray out loud, but that this is a safe environment for those who may not feel comfortable at first
- Encourage members to keep prayers short and simple
- Ask your host to close in prayer

For continuing Groups...

- You are encouraged to do something (prayer booklet or sheet) that will help people record their prayer requests and answers to prayer during the quarter

#3 Know that your dessert conversations are just as important as your meeting discussion

—> **Leadership tip**—Never underestimate the significance of the time after the meeting. It is key to connect with people and find out more about people on a personal level

