

Small Groups – Rules, Tips, & How-To's

- (#1) Hillside's primary goals are to "create Christ-centered community" and "make disciples." Have everyone learn names, maintain confidentiality, and seek to grow in their faith. They may need to bring bibles or notebooks.
- (#2) We have "safe sanctuary policies." Leaders shouldn't be alone with a student. This includes vehicle transportation. If you need to discipline, or disciple, please use a corner of a public room, a hallway, or a room with a window in the door.
- (#3) Don't let a single student consume all the share-time, or repeatedly interrupt the group. Only one person should speak at a time, everyone else respectfully listens.
- (#4) We know that you are not trained for every possible question, or contingency. Just try to love & serve like Jesus would. If there is a question you can not answer, find an adult, or tell them you will research the question & get back with them later. Some situations are too serious or dangerous to maintain confidentiality. If a student is threatening to hurt themselves or someone else, tell a pastor, and we'll pursue professional help.
- (#5) Prepare yourself in advance. Pray, read, and pre-study the material as best you can. Students can tell when you are not excited or prepared. Again ... PRAY.
- (#6) Two leaders should always be at a small group meeting. If you know in advance that one leader is unable to attend, find a substitute, or parent. The exception is if multiple small groups are meeting at the same time in the same place.
- (#7) TIP: Students want to experience Christ-centered community; not just be preached-to for an hour. Have them read the scripture, bring snacks, pray for each other, present what they learned during the week, and share examples/stories. Let them do more than half the talking. Silence & long pauses are okay.
- (#8) Make sure you have a way to contact each student (email, or text number). Facebook is nice, but not everyone uses it. Encourage them throughout the week.
- (#9) We are leaders first, and friends second. Everything we do should glorify God, and model Christian discipleship. Dress & act the way you want students to. Do not ignore a student, and pursue relationships with other leaders.
- (#10) Stretch & grow students. They might not be immediately comfortable praying out loud or answering personal questions; but keep trying. Encourage accountability.
- (#11) Don't frame your questions where they can answer a short "YES" or "NO." Ask "WHY" or "HOW." Your goal is conversation. Summarize key points.
- (#12) Thank you for loving students. You are eternally valuable to the body of Christ.