



Principles for Smaller Scale Ministry | Practicalities of Smaller Groups

To make the most of small groups in our ministry, planning and preparation are essential. Given the variety of groups in parish life – support groups, Bible study, Alpha, youth ministry groups, small groups in catechetical programs, parent groups – the Purpose and Participants will affect the planning for Practicalities. This session identifies 7 areas for consideration in preparing for small groups. See Additional Resources of this webpage for more tools to assist you in these 7 areas.

1. Group Size
 - Often 5-8 members
 - Shaped by purpose and type of participants
2. Group Membership
 - Consider how to select or assign – personal invitation, random, intentional mix, like-to-like
3. Setting
 - Participants need to see and hear one another
 - In-person gathering – set furniture
 - Virtual / Video-conferencing – instruct participants
4. Roles and Responsibilities
 - Coordinator or committee – planning, preparation, communication
 - Facilitator – for each group
 - Host – Welcome, setting, hospitality
 - Participants – Contribute to fruitful experience for each other
5. Ground Rules - Participant Guidelines
 - Simple expectations – participation, listening, respect, confidentiality
 - Articulated in beginning, agree to as a group, reinforce throughout, offer in writing
6. Resources
 - Examples: leader's manual, participant discussion questions, Bibles, video
 - Input – resource may provide content for reflection, discussion, prayer
 - Structure – resource may provide the process, steps or method for group
7. Safety
 - Personal – feels safe to share
 - Health – personal space, cleanliness, or virtual
 - Safe Environment for Minors