

Engage 2023:

Small Group Leaders Guide

Thanks for being a small group leader! Small group leaders are an important part of the Engage experience and the ministry that Jesus Christ wants to do in the hearts of college students this weekend. Below are a few suggestions to help you prepare for your small group times. As you pray for your small group this week, also pray that God will use you as an ambassador for His Kingdom!

What makes the group work?

- **Be honest.** Invite everyone to share as honestly as they want to, but don't force anyone to share. As the weekend goes on, continue to invite your group members to share in deeper and more honest ways (during your small group time, informal times like lunch, or in personal conversations).
- **Create a safe space.** One of the ways you can do this is by being vulnerable. A wise person once said, "vulnerability breeds vulnerability" and it really is true. So be the first person to share vulnerably in the small group discussion. Another way you can do this is by reminding the group that when someone shares something hard this information should stay within the group. If you didn't share it then it's not your information to share. This can be hard to do but help hold each other accountable.
 - ****If someone shares something that is heavy that you don't know how to deal with please share with them one on one that *"That was really brave of you to share. Thank you for trusting me with that. I am going to need some help processing what you shared so that we can best care for you."***
- **Listen and respect.** Practice and encourage attentive listening! Making sure that each member of your group feels respected when they are speaking will make your group's time together more meaningful and powerful.

What does a small group leader do?

The goal of small groups is to give people time to process what they have heard, and to think and discuss how it applies to their lives. As the leader, your job isn't to give a message (Buck has that covered), your job is to help your group members process what they heard, facilitate discussion, and set the tone by modeling honesty and vulnerability.

You can also:

- **Pray for your small group.** Pray for your group before you arrive and throughout the weekend. At the end of this guide, there are some ways that you can pray for your group.
- **Be the first to share.** Being the first person to share is awkward, especially if you don't really know the people in your group. Take away that pressure by going first. This gives your group a chance to get comfortable and lets them see an example of how to share.
- **Practice curiosity.** Be interested in what your group members are sharing. Ask follow-up questions. Invite others into the conversation (where appropriate).
- **Be flexible.** If something just isn't working, scrap it. If you see that the members of your group are connecting with a particular question or that they are still processing, ask more questions

instead of moving on. Be sensitive to what God is doing in your group and don't be confined to your schedule or plan.

- **Do your best to look out for your group.** If someone in your group doesn't know many people, help them. Introduce them to people or invite them to eat a meal with you.

Small Group #1: Late Friday Night

Message Theme: **God Who Saves**

1) Introduction (10 minutes)

- a. Share your name, major, where you live on campus and year in school.

2) Finish the sentence (10 minutes)

(choose 1 or 2 questions or create your own, and remember to go first)

- a. In my life right now, I'm really excited about...
- b. One thing you probably don't know about me is...
- c. I came to Engage because...
- d. This weekend I'm looking forward to...
- e. My favorite college experience thus far is...
- f. A moment in my life that I will never forget is...

3) Tonight's Message (25 minutes)

- a. How would you summarize the message from tonight for someone else?
- b. What stood out to from this message? What didn't?
- c. What similarities do you think there are between the Exodus passage and today?
- d. What questions did tonight prompt for you? Or questions you have that are unanswered?
- e. What do you think God is saying to you tonight from this story in Exodus?

4) Prayer (5 minutes)

- a. This may be you or your co-leader praying, or you could open it up to volunteers from the group. Do whatever seems most appropriate for where your group is at.

Small Group #2: Saturday Supper with host families.

Purpose: To give the host families and college students an opportunity to share their lives and their faith.

Reminder: Before you can leave, you must have your entire group with you. If you cannot find a member of your group, call your campus staff and find/contact Timothy Reddekopp (816) 728-6667

1. Students share with the host family:

During the meal, the **small group leader begins by thanking the host family** for the meal and fellowship. The leader introduces themselves to the host family by sharing their name, college year and major, their hometown and a little about themselves and facilitates the rest of the group doing

the same. After each student has shared, the small group leader can ask people to share some of their highlights from the conference (i.e. workshops, speaker, etc.).

2. **Host family sharing:**

After the meal, **small group leaders** invite the host to share their faith story and how Christ makes a difference in their lives (i.e. in their family, workplace, neighborhood, etc.).

Here are a few other examples of questions that you could ask the family to generate discussion:

Tell us about how you met.

If you could go back and do one thing differently during your college years, what would it be?

Who is one person that has significantly influenced you?

What does it look like for you to walk with Jesus at work, where you play, in your neighborhood, etc?

How have you seen the faithfulness of God in your lives?

What are you most excited about in life right now?

What is a challenge you are facing right now?

Do you have a favorite verse or passage of Scripture?

How has God used it in your life?

How can we pray for you? (Pray before you leave.)

Note: It is very important that you, the student small group leader, take the initiative in the sharing times. It is difficult for many of the families to start sharing, so please ask them questions.

3. **Picture:**

Before you leave, ask your hosts if your group can take a picture with them to remember your host dinner experience. Then have someone in your group with an Instagram account post it tagging @centralplainsnavs and/or #NavsEngage21. You can also text the photo to Timothy Reddekopp (816)728-6667

Thank You Card & Host Dinner survey

It is the small group leader's responsibility to make sure the thank you card in your packet is written, signed, addressed and returned to Timothy Reddekopp at the info table. Please complete your thank you and your host dinner survey before entering the large group session Saturday night. You can access the host dinner survey using this QR code:



Small Group #3: Late Saturday Night

Message Theme: **God in Our Suffering**

1) Finish the sentence

(use those best suited to your group or skip this section if you feel it is best)

- a. The best thing for me about Engage has been...
- b. One thing that I learned at a workshop earlier today was...
- c. One thing I think God wants me to do is...

2) **Tonight's message**

- a. How would you summarize the message from tonight for someone else?
- b. What stood out to from this message? What didn't?
- c. What similarities do you think there are between the Exodus passage and today?
- d. What questions did tonight prompt for you? Or questions you have that are unanswered?
- e. What do you think God is saying to you tonight from this story in Exodus?

3) **Prayer**

Take time to pray for each person—especially for the specific things that they shared. You might have an open prayer time or you could choose to pray for one person at a time (have a few people pray and then move on to the next person). Do what is most comfortable for your group. There's no rush so take your time and be open to God's Spirit and the needs of your group.

Prayer Direction -

Here are some verses that can guide you as you pray for your group before and during the weekend. It might be helpful to find other small group leaders from your campus to pray with once or twice the week before Engage. You could also use these verses during the small group prayer time on Saturday night if they are helpful.

Isaiah 55:1-3 & 10-11—Pray that those who don't know Jesus would “come to the water” and that God's word would accomplish its purpose in the life of each person in your small group.

Isaiah 61:1-4—Pray that God would use all of the different speakers at the conference (and you as a small group leader) to bind up the broken hearted, free the captives and release prisoners. Pray also that this weekend would be used by God to lay foundations in the lives of “oaks of righteousness.”

Ezekiel 37:5-6—Pray that God would breathe life into dry bones and that people would come to know Him as Lord.

Matthew 13:23—Pray that the seed (the gospel) would fall on good soil, take root, and produce fruit.

Ephesians 3:16-19—Pray that your small group would experience how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is.

Philippians 2:12-13—Pray that God would use this conference to help those who already know Christ to continue to work out their salvation and see God willing and active in their lives.

James 1:22-25—Pray that the people in your small group would be convicted to be doers of the word.