



Outline for Small Group Gatherings

A small group gathering is essentially a meeting of friends-yet-to-be, people who will discover during conversation that they are joined together in wonderful ways to accomplish similar purposes. Although “conversation” is the basic content of each of the small group gatherings in MAKE IT SIMPLE, you may want to know the answer to the question, “Conversation about what?” Perhaps you can find value in the following short description of a typical small group gathering. Adapt this generic outline to fit the themes of each of the gatherings.

Before Participants Arrive *(15 minutes)*

- Greet and thank the host for the gathering.
- Double-check any arrangements necessary for showing one or more of the videos.
- Make sure you understand the emphases or the theme(s) for the gathering, and have some idea about the conversation starters you will use.

As Participants Arrive *(10 minutes)*

- With the host, greet participants, preferably by name.
- Direct them to the area where you will be meeting together, or to the refreshments.

Introduction *(15 minutes)*

- Thank participants for coming to the gathering, and ask them to introduce themselves to each other by name and their answer to the question, “What’s the simplest thing you did today, and why was it simple?”
- Briefly characterize the direction, purpose, focus, or activities of the gathering.

First Conversation: Viewing a Video Segment *(10-15 minutes)*

- Show one of the video segments that you have chosen earlier as a story-based conversation starter. Use any of the questions that accompany the video to begin participants' conversation.
- As you talk together, guide the subject of the conversation from the subject(s) of the video toward participants' own lives.

Second Conversation: Bible Basis *(15-20 minutes)*

- Spend time with one of the Bible-based activities that accompany this resource. You can use the Bible Conversation or the Bible Study that fits the theme.
- Ask people to listen to the key words or ideas they hear from the Bible.
- Remember to make this a conversational time, not a lecture-and-response or a discussion of abstract ideas. The intent of these groups is deeper and more personal sharing.

Break *(10 minutes)*

Third Conversation: Personal Sharing *(20-25 minutes)*

- In this conversation, encourage participants to bring what they have experienced closer to home, to their most important life experiences.
- Use questions that get to the matters of the day, places and examples of the ideals of the theme as true, difficult, or necessary. Think together about how participants' lives might also exemplify the theme(s) for this gathering.
- One important question that always helps draw people together: When do you find these ideas or ideals difficult to make true in your own life? What strengthens you?
- If possible, talk together about the changes to which group participants have committed themselves. Agree on some simple ways in which the group's members could encourage each other in those commitments.

Closing Prayer *(5 minutes)*

Offer a brief prayer of thanks for this group of people, for the Spirit's presence and for the wisdom and encouragement that has been shared. In subsequent gatherings, you might ask participants to join the time of prayer with their own petitions or thoughts