

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE FOR "9 RULES" GROUP #1

This document has three sections -

A GENERIC PLANNING GUIDE

A SERMON SUMMARY AND A COMPLETED SERMON NOTES PAGE FROM THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

A SET OF POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

PLANNING GUIDE

Since this sermon series is our church's own creation, there is no small group leader's guide per se. But the following strategy will help you create a meaningful study for your group:

1. Listen to the sermon at church or on-line.
As you do, think about possible questions for your group
2. Review the completed Bulletin Back Page below. This will be information your group is already familiar with if they went to church, and so they may feel the most competent in discussing this content. Which of the points or questions there would you want to include in your small group discussion ?
3. Review the additional Small Group questions below.
Do any of them resonate with you ? Pick some that would work well with your group.
4. If you want additional bible verses to consider, see the table on the website for this session.
5. From the four resources above narrow down to the best questions and points you want to cover. Remember a few good questions that engage the group are much better than working through a ton of material

Here are four goals to help you choose your questions:

1. Ask a question that will help people get to know each other better – a safe/fun question that allows people to share a little bit about their life to the degree that they are comfortable
2. Ask a question that gets people to wrestle with a particular scripture, and when possible, the Lordship of Jesus
3. Ask a question that gets people to take an honest look at themselves
4. Ask a question helps people think about how they might apply some lesson to their life

Here is a possible structure for the order of your group:

0. Snacks and catch up /introductions before you gather all together for the formal discussion

1. Start off with a safe / fun question

This could be a random crowd breaker, or a question about life here and now. The goal is to establish a warm, safe, enjoyable environment where people are getting to know each other. Usually the first Small Group question on the last page below will be of this sort.

2. Ask question that gets people to interact with the sermon or scripture content and its meaning.

3. Ask a question that gets people to share a little deeper about their own lives or how the content might be applied to their own lives

4. Ask a question that gets people to think about a next step they might take – it could be an action, or it could be embracing a biblical truth

5. Close in prayer. Ideally this would involve both sharing of needs/concerns, but also prayers for actually living out the biblical truths that were discussed. If praying out loud is new to your group, you could start the first sessions with just the leader praying, then as weeks go by, ask others to pray, and so model to shyer folks how it is done.

SERMON SUMMARY:

In a world of suffering, Every person should stand tall and take responsibility for their future because

- 1 Otherwise everything will actually get worse
- 2 Taking responsibility for your life now can actually make things better later

Every Person should turn to Jesus because:

1. His teachings lead to truth and spiritual health
2. His Spirit has the power to change lives
3. He gives us a reason to stand tall - We are his workmanship, a royal priesthood

RULE #1 "Be the lobster: Stand up straight, with your shoulders back..."

Unless we admit that life includes SUFFERING and that we are TWISTED people with a thread of EVIL within us, we will be blinded to the way the world as it actually is and so unable to improve our lot or experience true hope.

But reality is painful to admit. "*For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.*" – Ecclesiastes 1:18

You are not a weirdo, we all have to bear the BURDEN of being. Suffering and unfairness are UNAVOIDABLE in life. However, the only reward for responding with bitterness, cynicism, despair, and passivity is that life will get WORSE. To have a chance, you have to TAKE A chance.

"If you present yourself as defeated, then people will react to you as if you are losing. If you start to straighten up, then people will look at and treat you differently. To stand up straight with your shoulders back is to accept the terrible responsibility of life, with eyes wide open... It means willingly undertaking the sacrifices necessary to generate a productive and meaningful reality (it means acting to please God, in the ancient language)... it means withstanding the ensuing uncertainty... Walk tall and gaze forthrightly ahead. Dare to be dangerous... People, including yourself, will start to assume you are competent and able... Doing so will not only genuinely increase the probability that good things will happen to you - it will also make those good things feel better when they do happen." – Jordan Peterson

Am I refusing to take responsibility for a problem in my life ? What is one thing I could change today that would make life somewhat better down the road ?

"Once you were not a People, but now you are The People of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" – 1 Peter 2:10 / So "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" – 1 Timothy 6:12 / "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" – Ephesians 2:10 / Jesus said "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls..." – Matthew 11:29

What effort can I make to learn more about God and Jesus ?

ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Tell us about your summer, what was your favorite part if any ?
2. If you had to name one area of your life right now that feels like way too much chaos, what would it be ?
3. When our life feels stuck, we are often tempted to blame other people and outside forces for our situation. What do we gain and what do we lose when we use this coping strategy?
4. Share a time when you were bullied, or saw someone bullied, or realize now you were the bully.
5. If you can reconcile the idea of standing up for yourself and your rights with the idea of being a gentle Christ -follower, explain how you put those two things together.
6. Pastor Palmer claimed that while Jordan Peterson quoted the Buddahist statement "Life is Suffering", a Christian stance would be "Life contains Suffering." What are the differences between these two views, and how would they change the way you see the world ?
7. In John 16:33 Jesus said Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take courage, because I have overcome the world." What do you think he meant, and what kind of hope can this give us ?