



LEADING SMALL GROUPS ONLINE

8 TIPS FOR DIGITAL DISCIPLING

Exodus is committed to see an army of passionate followers present in the lives of young people.

Our preference is always to meet in person when that is safe and responsible, but online groups offer opportunities to connect from a distance, gather easily, utilise visual communication and see people in context. Each of these are real positives for disciple making.

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Think Small



PARTICIPATION MATTERS

Long online meetings in big groups can make it harder for people to concentrate and contribute. Smaller groups and shorter sessions help us engage and give individuals more opportunity and confidence to contribute.

HOW?

- Try to keep groups to 8 people max.
- Minimise Mute - Unless there is background noise for someone keep all participants unmuted.
- Aim to keep meetings to 90 minutes or less.

Build Connection



DISCIPLES ARE MADE UP CLOSE

Meeting online removes the opportunity to bump into one another in the car park, set up together or arrive at the same time. For this reason groups can quickly feel disconnected and leaders need to be intentional about fostering deep relationships.

HOW?

- Allocate time in every meeting to catch up and discover more about each other's lives.
- Use breakout rooms to replace 'turn to the person beside you' moments.
- Ask people to keep their cameras on.

Command the Space



DISCIPLESHIP NEEDS DIRECTION

Knowing where we are going helps us relax and open up. Online groups limit our non verbal communication and can make people feel less sure of the group dynamic and less willing to participate. Leaders have to compensate for this and offer greater direction and clarity.

HOW?

- Lead energetically - speak a little louder and even a little faster than normal.
- Keep things moving - don't allow one person to speak for too long.
- Direct most questions to specific individuals rather than the general audience.

Mix it Up



DISCIPLES ARE MADE THROUGH DISCOVERY AND DOING

Simply hearing isn't enough. Online gathering can gravitate to listening to what some is saying and so leaders need to be creative to help group members engage.

HOW?

- Prepare well - think of activities not just questions.
- Vary how people respond - the chat function, a word written on a page, an image or a video.
- Use hand signals such as thumbs up, higher/lower etc. to gauge reactions or opinions.
- Use their location e.g. Grab an item to sum up your day.

Make it Fun



FUN IS GOOD FOR DISCIPLE MAKING

Meeting online can cause us to be more serious, more quiet or more nervous of standing out. Leaders need to help people relax, enjoy one another's company and see more of each other's personalities.

HOW?

- Play a warm up game like charades or pictionary.
- Ask everyone to wear a hat or colour themed clothing.
- Show a funny video.

Use Paper Bibles



ENGAGING WITH GOD'S WORD IS ESSENTIAL

Meeting online doesn't mean everything should be screen based. Paper Bibles make it easier to see passages in context and reduce the opportunity for distraction. Leaders should encourage their use.

HOW?

- Ask everyone to bring a paper Bible.
- Refer to Bible passages and give time for people to look them up.
- Leaders should demonstrate this and lead by example.

Make Mission a Priority

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MATURITY & MISSION GO HAND IN HAND

Disciple Making should always have an overflow and point us toward others. Online groups can risk becoming insular or too safe and so leaders need to find ways to consistently help the group turn outwards.

HOW?

- Pray for others regularly.
- Pause the conversation and have everyone text a friend with an encouragement.
- Agree a ministry challenge for the next time.
- Share and celebrate ministry moments from the past week.

Push into Presence



DISCIPLES MUST “REMAIN IN THE VINE” (John 15:4)

Prayer and worship together are vital for healthy small groups. Online groups can seem like a less comfortable space for this but leaders should push through this, confident of God’s promise to be with us.

HOW?

- Assign prayer points to individuals and an order to pray.
- Use breakout rooms for prayer with a partner.
- Play a worship video or read a Psalm.
- Invite individuals to pray at points throughout the session rather than all at the end.
- Lead personal prayer by given a series of topics.



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