



How to Effectively Lead your NBS

Leading an effective Neighborhood Bible Study (NBS) depends on three primary factors: the leader, the group, and the study materials. By understanding how each of these functions best, you can be confident in leading a lively, life-changing NBS.

As the leader, the success of the NBS starts with you. Effective leaders do not serve as teachers or lecturers. Instead, they should see themselves as facilitators who lead their group into good discussions and encourage people to interact with each other. Knowing this should be good news to many leaders. Not all of us are gifted as teachers, but most anyone can facilitate effective discussion by following these guidelines:

1. *Prepare your heart before the study:*

Pray for God to help you understand the study material and apply its teachings to your own heart and life. When the study material has challenged your own life, then you are prepared to help others learn and apply the teachings to their lives.

2. *Pray for the members of your NBS:*

For the Bible to have a life-changing impact on your group, the Holy Spirit must be working in the members' hearts and minds before, during, and after the study. In John 15:5, Jesus said, *"You cannot do anything without me."* The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit makes your NBS different from any other type of discussion. Pray for the members of your group each week, by name preferably, asking the Holy Spirit to use the study material to speak into their lives.

3. *Begin and end the study on time:*

Let your group know that you value their time and will begin and end the study on schedule. If they know you begin on time, they will make an effort to be there. If you wait on those who run late, they will assume you begin when they arrive. Try to conclude the study 10 minutes early, to leave time for prayers, announcements, etc. If you consistently run late, the group can become frustrated when time commitments are not honored.



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4. *At your first meeting, explain the importance of group discussion:*

According to a research report by The William Glasser Institute, we retain:

- 10 percent of what we read
- 20 percent of what we hear
- 30 percent of what we see
- 50 percent of what we see and hear
- 70 percent of what we discuss with others
- 80 percent of what we experience personally
- 95 percent of what we teach to others*

Effective Bible Study material will provide questions for group discussion. As your women share their answers and insights, God's Word becomes real and practical in their lives, they learn from each other, and can encourage one another to grow in knowledge and understanding.

5. *Encourage several members to share answers to each question:*

Good questions should prompt more than one possible answer, and each person will have their own perspective. To stimulate and motivate sharing, ask questions like, "What do the rest of you think," or "Anyone else want to share?" until several people have had a chance to respond.

6. *Try to affirm answers when possible:*

People will respond to questions more easily when they know you hear them and appreciate their insights. Simple affirmations such as, "That's great insight," "Excellent idea," "Thanks for sharing your heart" or "I had not thought of that before," will show people you value their comments.

7. *Don't be afraid of silence:*

When you ask a question and the response is slow, sometimes people may need more time to think before they share. And the silence usually seems longer to you than to others. Try asking the question in another way, to make sure they understand and to give them more time to think.



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8. Resist answering the question yourself:

If you break the silence yourself by answering the question, even a talkative group can become passive if they think you will do much of the talking. After everyone has had a chance to respond to a question, you may share your own thoughts if you like, but be careful not to dominate the discussion.

9. Never reject an answer:

If you reject an answer, even if it is wrong, people may not risk giving their opinion again. To make sure responses reflect the truth of the Bible, you may ask, “Which verse led you to that conclusion?” Or let the group help bring the comment in-line with scripture by asking them what they think about the question.

10. Avoid tangents that take you off topic:

If people wander off course, gently bring them back to the passage and question being studied. If a question leads a person into sharing a difficult problem that could take you off topic, stop and pray for the person’s struggle, and move back into the study material.

11. Guide the pace of the study:

Try not to be so focused on the material that you become rushed to get through it, or spend too much time on one question. Most studies are designed to be completed in one session, rather than just ending and completing a lesson at the next meeting. This gives your group a sense of completion and closure, especially for members who may miss the next meeting. It is best to try and complete the lesson, even if you have to skip some questions to focus on key questions.