

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Who may attend group?**

Anybody you feel would benefit. As you begin, we encourage each attender to invite at least one other friend to join. The best time to have people join the group is in the first or second week of a new study. Take some time at your first meeting to share names of friends of group members so that as a group you can pray that they might be open to attend.

### **How long will this group meet?**

Be sure to communicate the commitment and expectations. Ask them to commit to the group for the duration of this study for their benefit and the groups benefit. (*If a study that you desire to do is longer than 8 weeks you need to get permission form the Connection Group Staff Director.*) Explain that at the end of this study, each group member may decide if he or she desires to continue on for another six-week study. In your final session, take time to discuss your *Group Agreement*, and what study you might do next. Also let them know the duration of each study (1-2 hours is the standard). Be sure to end the group on time, or ask permission to go longer.

### **Who is the leader?**

All St. Joe connection groups have a leader. We recommend that you rotate the job of facilitating your discussions, creating opportunities for everyone's gifts to develop. Several other responsibilities can be rotated, including refreshments, prayer requests, worship, or keeping up with those who miss a meeting. Shared ownership in the group helps everybody grow.

### **Where do we find new group members for our group?**

This can be an issue for groups, especially new groups starting with just a few people, or existing groups that lose a few people along the way. We encourage you to think about you circles of influence and brainstorm a list of people from your work, church, neighborhood, children's school, family, the gym, and so on. Then pray for the people on each member's list. Have each group member invite

several people on their list. No matter how you find members, it is essential to continue actively looking for new people to join your group. All groups go through some healthy attrition as a result of moves, releasing new leaders, ministry opportunities, and so forth. If the group gets too small and ceases to connect other people, it runs the risk of shutting down. Remember, the next person you add just might become a friend for eternity. You never know.

### **How do we handle the childcare needs in our group?**

Very carefully. This is a sensitive issue in groups. We suggest that you seek creative solutions as a group. One common solution is to meet in the living room with the adults and share the cost of a *babysitter* (or two) who can be with the kids in another part of the house. Another popular option is to have one home for the kids and a *second home* (close by) for the adults. If desired, the adults could *rotate* the responsibility of providing a lesson for the kids. This option is great with school age kids and can be a huge blessing to families. Be sure not to unintentionally communicate to your children that they are not important to group life. As much as possible include them.

### **What if we cannot get through all the content each week?**

The curriculum is provided to serve you as a group and as a leader. Do not feel obligated to get through all the content of a study guide. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit during your group meeting. Some items will be more applicable for your group than others. Choose those items that best fit your group life. However, if an item stretches you as a group, do not ignore it. New experiences will breathe new growth and community into your small group.

Please feel free to adjust your pace according to the needs of your group. If the need arises to take a week and give attention to needs in your group, do so. Then come back to the study guide the next week. We encourage you to periodically meet together specifically for the purpose of building relationships within your group. You should end and or begin each new series with a group party or event. This is a great way to invite and connect new people to the group.

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