

Skills for New Leaders

A Turbo Group Training Program

By David Stiles

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About the Author

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For more information about Turbo Groups and materials for developing leaders call (513) 779-4988 or visit the website: www.dstiles.com

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many leaders I have had the opportunity to "turbo" with over the years. I am also deeply indebted to those who have invested their time and energy into helping me develop as a leader. In particular I would like to thank John and Pam Bertram, my first small group leaders, Randy Emelo who first introduced me to the Turbo Group concept, and Greg Kazanjian who encouraged me to write this manual.

Special thanks to my parents, John and Betty Stiles, who encouraged me and helped with the editing. Final thanks to my wife Sue, for her encouragement and support throughout the writing process.

At A Glance

What's it all about?

This discussion guide is designed to help you quickly put into practice important leadership skills to help you create a fun, interactive, Christ-centered small group.

Why is the format called a “Turbo Group”?

A Turbo Group is a short-term leadership training group designed to help potential leaders discover their leadership abilities and accelerate the start of new small groups.

What's different about this group?

In order to gain experience as small group leaders, you and other group members will be asked to share in the task of leading. Each week a different group member will lead the discussion and prayer time for your group.

Another unique aspect is the structured feedback that will be given at the end of each group. During that time, suggestions will be given to that week's leader to encourage their future growth.

What will I learn?

Your Turbo Group is designed to help you gain practical, hands-on experience for leading a small group.

You will learn how to:

- ▶ Create a safe environment where group members feel welcome and accepted.
- ▶ Encourage discussion by asking helpful questions.
- ▶ Communicate respect and understanding by listening and responding with concern.
- ▶ Stay focused on the goals of your group when problems and distractions occur.

What is the commitment?

Your Turbo Group is designed to last eight weeks (16 weeks if you meet every other week). Prior to each group meeting you will need to complete two sections of your workbook [called the “Turbo Tutorial” and “Scripture Study”]. You should also expect to lead the discussion and prayer time for one group meeting.

How to Use Your Workbook

After the introductory chapter you will find five sections in each chapter of this workbook:

Turbo Tutorial

The “Turbo Tutorial” section contains an overview of various skills, tools and techniques that are essential for leading a small group. This section will need to be read prior to your group meeting.

Scripture Study

In the Scripture Study section you will examine a relevant Biblical passage to help gain insight and perspective on Christian leadership. Like the “Turbo Tutorial”, this section will also need to be completed prior to your group meeting.

Leader Lab

The “Leader Lab” section contains questions and activities that your Turbo Group will do together to help learn more about the week’s topic. This section will be led by the week’s Group Leader.

Prayer and Sharing

The “Prayer and Sharing” section contains questions to help you share your needs and to hear the needs of others in your Turbo Group. After sharing, the group will pray and petition God together. Like the “Leader Lab”, this section will be led by the week’s Group Leader.

Feedback

This section will be led by your “Turbo Trainer.” During the “Feedback” time, group members will reflect on their experiences in the group meeting and give helpful suggestions to the week’s Group Leader.

Preface



Why Turbo?

“I will bless your work here.” I thought I heard God say above the noise of the motor of my rusted Honda Accord.

“It’s about time.” I thought.

After three years of struggling to start a church, I welcomed a new job and a new place to live.

It was the spring of 1994, and I had just been offered what for me was the job of a lifetime. I was to serve as a pastor on the staff of a large church, responsible for the oversight of home groups, Bible Studies and groups for young adults. I felt overwhelmed at the task ahead of me, but determined not to repeat the mistakes I had made while attempting to start a new church.

I had made many mistakes in my previous role as a pastor and church planter; however, the area that I felt I failed in most was developing new leaders. I had wanted to share my passion for small groups with others, but found it difficult to train and develop new leaders.

Upon arriving at my new job, I soon discovered the need for a large number of trained leaders. I was serving a church of 2,500 and we desperately needed more small groups to care for our existing members and the new people coming to the church.

Soon after I took the new job, a pastor on staff invited me to a group that met at his house. He called it a “Turbo Group” and told me he had heard about the concept from Kent Odor, a pastor at the East 91st Street Church in Indianapolis.

Over the course of the next two years I led seven Turbo Groups, training over seventy people for small group ministry. Nearly all of the participants in the Turbo Group went on to serve as leaders of small groups or ministry teams. A number of the Turbo Group members became members of “core teams” that helped direct and oversee the ministry areas for which I was responsible. For curriculum, I originally used books on leadership written by others; however, over time I saw the need to develop my own training materials so leaders could learn not only theory but the practical skills for leading small groups.

What is a Turbo Group?

A Turbo Group is a short term leadership training group designed to help potential leaders discover their leadership abilities and accelerate the start of new small groups.

There are several points worth expanding in the definition above:

short term – Learning about leadership is a lifelong process; however, my experience has been that people can learn an overview of basic leadership skills in the course of a few weeks. Turbo Groups can serve as a place to quickly learn skills for leading small groups.

leadership training group - There are many ways people can learn about leadership. I have found that in a group setting, learning is enhanced as people strive for answers together. People find encouragement from others who are also seeking to grow in their leadership abilities.

potential leaders – There is no guarantee that every member of a Turbo Group will become a leader. In most of the groups I have led, there have been one or two participants who decided that they are either not ready or not called to be a leader. If people are uncertain about leadership, a Turbo Group can be a great place to find out if group leading is for them.

discover leadership abilities – There are several ways that learning occurs in Turbo Groups. There is weekly homework that is done as well as group discussion. Group members take turns leading the group each week so there is also “hands-on”, practical discovery. At the end of each group, there is a feedback time to give helpful suggestions for development as a leader.

accelerate the start of new small groups – The ultimate goal of a Turbo Group is to produce leaders to care for and minister to others. The needs in local churches are great. Small groups provide a place for people to encourage and serve one another while growing in their relationship with the Lord. Many leaders are needed to help with this task. Turbo Groups exist to fulfill Paul’s advice in II Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

Turbo Values

There are many ways to develop leaders. I believe that Turbo Groups are one of the most effective ways to develop new group leaders because they incorporate many of the techniques that were used by Jesus and have been used by Christians for centuries. Here are a few:

▶ *Modeling.* One of the most effective ways for people to learn new things is by seeing a model. In a Turbo Group, participants see a model of what a healthy small group should look like. They participate in structured social times to help build relationships. They participate in a planned outreach event to help the group discover the joys of serving others outside the group. Finally, they participate in a structured time of sharing accountability areas that leads to deeper relationships among group members.

▶ *Apprenticeship.* For centuries people have learned new skills by working alongside veteran leaders. Jesus had his disciples watch him teach and pray before he sent them out. In a Turbo Group, participants are able to “practice” and take a trial-run at leading others alongside of a “veteran” leader called a “Turbo Trainer.”

▶ *Group Learning.* Another method to help people learn is through group learning. There is a powerful dynamic when many are gathered to focus on a common objective. After completing homework individually, I have found discussions to be rich as people seek to understand difficult concepts together.

▶ *Mentoring.* A final approach that has been used to develop leaders is mentoring; the process of a leader working with an individual to help them accomplish personal goals. Mentors share wisdom and insight with others and provide opportunities for growth. Turbo Groups are run by veteran leaders whom I call “Turbo Trainers”. These veteran leaders serve as mentors, sharing a unique perspective that has come with years of leadership experience.

Turbo Group Benefits

Here's what previous group members have said about the benefits of their Turbo Group:

- ▶ "It answered questions I had about leadership issues."
- ▶ "It gave me practical leadership skills in a controlled leadership environment."
- ▶ "It gave me the opportunity to see other leadership styles and techniques."
- ▶ "It eased my nervousness of leading a group."
- ▶ "It taught me the fundamentals of group dynamics."
- ▶ "It was a great opportunity to talk with other leaders and discuss similar issues."
- ▶ "It was a comfortable learning environment that allowed me to practice new skills before needing to use them."
- ▶ "Good overview of responsibilities of a leader in the church."
- ▶ "I learned some creative ways of instruction from others in the group."
- ▶ "It clearly showed me my strengths and weaknesses as a group leader by presenting clear standards to aim for, and having the trust, honesty, and safety of the group to hear this and work on it, digest it, and learn from all the feedback as we actually modeled our leadership styles."
- ▶ "Met new friends that remained as friends."
- ▶ "Learned the techniques for new leaders."
- ▶ "Gained confidence to lead a group."
- ▶ "My wife and I had been part of many groups over the years and we had led a number too. However, we both felt that we were inadequate for the task. After Turbo we both were saying to one another, 'I can do that.' It was a good experience for us and the relationships we made."
- ▶ "It gave me the opportunity to practice 'hands on' leading of a group before actually taking on my own group."
- ▶ "I appreciated observing other group members' leadership styles and the giving and receiving of constructive criticism after each group meeting—it helped me and everyone else become better leaders."

- ▶ “I liked that we were taught how to utilize listening skills to help those who might be a little shy to participate in a group setting.”

For further information

My hope is that you will learn much about God’s plans and purposes in your life through this Turbo Group.

If you are interested in further resources or have additional questions please contact me at:

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Chapter 1

Introduction



Overview:

Serving as a Christian leader is difficult. Christian leaders frequently encounter hardship, difficulty and opposition. In the face of difficulty, however, Christian leaders can also count on God's faithfulness and strength.

According to Paul, those who seek leadership "desire a noble task."

God wants leaders serving in the church and society to help accomplish His plan to bring His Kingdom to this broken world. This Turbo Group is designed to help you become more effective as a leader and understand how God would have you serve Him.

This Introductory chapter is designed to help you get to know others in your group and understand the group's:

- ▶ underlying assumptions
- ▶ ground rules
- ▶ schedule

Leader Lab

Introductions (20min.)

1. Break into pairs (try to pair-up with someone you do not know).

Introduce yourself to your partner by describing your favorite things such as hobbies, restaurants, activities, etc. Use the section below to make any notes about what you have learned about your partner.
(10 min.)

2. Take turns introducing your partner to the large group (10 min.)

Christian Leadership (20 min.)

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

▶ What is your earliest memory of serving as a leader?

▶ How do you define leadership? How has your definition changed over time?

▶ What gets you most excited about serving as a leader?

- making a difference in the world
- giving away what I have learned
- seeing people change
- knowing I'll be serving God
- other:
- I'm not that excited

Week One

▶ How have you learned about leadership?

▶ How will this group help you learn more about leadership?

Turbo Foundations (15 min.)

As a large group, take turns reading this section aloud and then discuss the questions that follow.

This workbook is based on a number of assumptions about you and the other potential leaders in your Turbo Group. Here are a few:

Emerging Leaders need mentors.

Experienced leaders like your “Turbo Trainer” can provide a wealth of support as you step out to lead. According to Proverbs 15:22, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.”

Emerging Leaders need a safe place to practice.

In nearly every profession there are opportunities to practice before you perform. In sports there are drills and scrimmages before “game day.” Musicians practice individually and as a group before a concert. Your Turbo Group can help you practice in a safe environment before you lead a group of your own.

Emerging Leaders take responsibility for their own growth.

A successful Turbo experience depends on one person...you. If you are willing to test your leadership abilities, attend the group regularly and do the required work you will learn much about leadership from this group.

Emerging Leaders desire constructive feedback.

We grow by hearing how others perceive what we do. Proverbs 12:15 says, “A wise man listens to advice.” At the end of each group meeting there will be a brief feedback time to help identify areas of strength and areas for further growth.

Emerging Leaders need other emerging leaders. Being in a learning environment with other emerging leaders can provide you with a network of supportive relationships and allow you to see a variety of approaches to leadership. The writer of Proverbs captures this dynamic in Proverbs 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Were there any surprises or things you did not understand in the “Turbo Foundations” section?
2. Which “foundation” statement seems like the most difficult to implement? Why might that be?
3. Which statement was the most interesting to you? Why?

Turbo Charter (15 min.)

This section covers the expectations, group rules and guidelines for your Turbo Group. Read this section as a group then discuss with your Turbo Trainer.

This group will normally meet every _____ through the _____ of _____, at which time we will endeavor to begin new groups. We will continue to meet monthly as a group for _____ months to further encourage our development as leaders.

Our group will start at _____ and end at _____. We will use this manual for discussion and development. We will attempt to take on the marks of the Christian life as we understand it in support, community, prayer, worship and mission.

1. **Confidentiality.** We agree that whatever is shared in the group will stay in the group.
2. **Respect.** We agree to communicate in ways that are respectful and give advice only when it is requested.
3. **Attendance.** We agree to attend each group meeting unless a genuine emergency arises.
4. **Participation.** We agree to be prepared to lead the discussion/prayer time when called upon and to do the necessary homework for each group meeting.
5. **Commitment to outreach.** We will commit to go out as a group to serve our community one time during our time together. As we believe that the essence of leadership is service, we see this as an opportunity to learn.

6. Turbo Targets: Areas for Further Growth

We will each choose one topic from each of the two following areas and set goals for ourselves. We will share these goals with the group at our third group meeting for ongoing accountability and encouragement.

Leadership Skills

- a. Welcoming Others
- b. Asking the Right Questions
- c. Listening with Understanding
- d. Keeping the Group On Track

Personal Growth Areas

- a. Spiritual health (prayer, Scripture reading, etc.)
- b. Physical health
- c. Relationships (spouse, children, work, friends, family, etc.)
- d. Financial management
- e. Time management
- f. Other:

Prayer and Sharing (15 min.)

In the following section you have an opportunity to share any prayer requests that you have for the week to come.

1. In groups of three, spend several minutes introducing yourselves.
2. Share your prayer requests with others in your group.
3. Pray for those in your group.

Feedback (15 min.)

In the following section you have an opportunity to provide this week's leader with helpful feedback about their leadership. This section will be led by your "Turbo Trainer."

1. What did the group leader do to help you get to know other group members and understand the Turbo Group format?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week's group? Why?
3. What have you learned tonight that would be helpful in a small group that you might lead?
4. Next week's leader: Identify a person who would like to lead the group discussion and "Prayer and Sharing" section for next week.

Chapter 2

Preparing for Leadership



Overview:

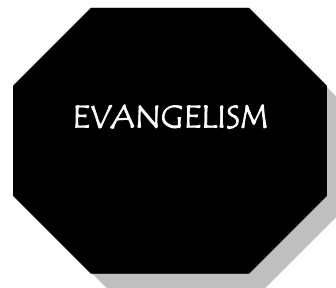
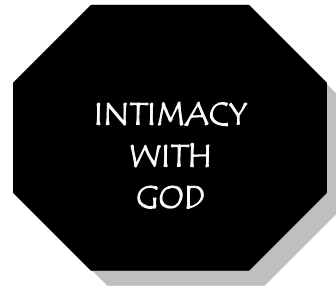
This chapter will assist you in the task of leadership by providing you with:

- ▶ a description of four main components of small groups
- ▶ a list of roles and responsibilities for your group
- ▶ helpful hints on what to do before and while you lead

As a large group you will:

- ▶ plan your Turbo Group events
- ▶ complete the Group Schedule

Four Components of Group Life



Turbo Tutorial

In this Turbo Tutorial section you will examine four key components of Christ-centered small groups. Later, you will explore the different roles and responsibilities needed for a successful small group.

Components of Group LIFE

There are four things that small groups do well. Although there are many different kinds of groups, most Christian small groups share these four elements in common:

- Lessons for Living
- Intimacy with God
- Fellowship
- Evangelism

Week Two

There are many benefits to groups that attempt to grow in these four areas. First, group members can find practical Biblical solutions to the problems they face. Group members can also grow in their relationship with God, build friendships and find a network of supportive relationships. Finally, group members can see lives changed as they serve people outside of their group.

As a potential group leader, it is important for you to understand your preferences regarding these four components. If you decide to lead a small group, you might feel pulled in several directions by people who want to focus on one of these areas more than another. You will need to seek guidance from the Lord, veteran leaders, and other members of your group as to which areas your group should focus on.

You should also be careful to avoid making the common mistake of assuming that the areas you enjoy are exactly what others in the group have a preference for. It is important to regularly ask yourself and others in the group:

“Am I focusing on one area too much?”

“Are there others in the group that have interest, gifts or skills in areas that I do not have?”

The acronym “L.I.F.E.” (taken from the first letter of each of these four areas) should help you remember these four components of group life.

Lessons for Living

Life can be difficult. At times it is filled with pain, disappointment and frustration. Jesus, however, offered hope. In Matthew 11:28 he said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Week Two

Groups help people learn to find rest and hope in Christ as they offer “Lessons for Living.” Lessons for Living are the practical, Biblical solutions groups offer for people who are struggling with life’s problems and difficulties.

These solutions come in many forms. Some solutions help people recover from a chronic problem, dependency or hurt. Members might learn how to:

- ▶ overcome an addiction or adversity
- ▶ have healthy boundaries
- ▶ deal with disappointment, fear, shame, doubt, depression

Some “Lessons for Living” help group members better fulfill their responsibilities to others. Group members might learn how to be a better:

- ▶ Parent
- ▶ Grandparent
- ▶ Friend
- ▶ Spouse

As you consider leading a small group, it will be important for you to determine what “Lessons for Living” you want members of your group to learn. People struggle every day with problems and difficulty. Your group can serve as a place where people can learn helpful, practical, Biblical solutions for dealing with the pain, stress, and difficulty that they encounter.

Intimacy with God

People are meant to know God. In the Old Testament we learn:

“..but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 9:24)

In the New Testament, Jesus spoke of this knowledge of God when He described eternal life,

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:33)

Through activities such as Bible Study, worship and prayer, group members can acknowledge and rejoice together in the love that God has shown us. They can bring their joys and concerns before the Lord and experience closeness with Him.

As a potential leader, it is important for you to think about how group members will grow in their “Intimacy with God.” Making time in your group for prayer and worship is important for growing in this area.

Fellowship

Many people see a small group as a place where they can make friends and share important issues about their life. Groups provide a network of support and care when people go through difficult times. In groups, people can be vulnerable, develop strong relationships, rally around each other, grow closer to others, find accountability, gain encouragement and express their feelings.

There are many passages in Scripture that encourage people to fellowship and care for others:

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

“This is the message you heard from the beginning: we should love one another.” (1 John 3:11)

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (1 John 3:16)

There are many activities that groups do to encourage fellowship, such as:

- ▶ doing social/fun events together
- ▶ calling or talking between group meetings

- ▶ serving people within the group
- ▶ praying for each other
- ▶ asking about accountability areas
- ▶ serving together
- ▶ sharing issues with one another

Evangelism

The fourth area in which groups can be effective is evangelism. Groups can help make a difference in the world by fulfilling the Great Commission:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

Groups can work together to reach non-Christian friends and family with the love of Christ. Typically, groups either focus within the group or they choose to focus on people outside of the group for evangelism.

Evangelism Within a Group

Some groups will intentionally design their group to be a place where non-Christians can attend and learn more about God. They use material that “seekers” will find compelling. These groups deliberately refrain from using language that non-Christians might not understand and focus on helping people understand the claims of Christ.

Evangelism Outside of Group

Some groups focus on serving non-Christians outside of their group. Groups might plan service projects together such as bringing food to the poor or doing practical acts of kindness in their community in order to tell others about the Gospel (the Good News about Christ).

Notes:

Group Roles and Responsibilities

There are many roles needed to have a successful group. Here are a few roles that you will need to consider before leading. The first role applies only to this Turbo Group, the rest will be helpful in other small groups you lead.

Turbo Trainer

A Turbo Trainer is a veteran leader who ensures that the overall goals of the group are being met. They are responsible for modeling how to “do group” by leading the first group meeting. Turbo Trainers are also responsible for leading the “Feedback Time” at the end of each group meeting by initiating discussion and keeping the feedback time focused on helpful suggestions.

Outreach Coordinator

By serving other people on a regular basis, groups can avoid the trap of being “inward focused”. The Outreach Coordinator helps implement the outreach projects that the group decides to do. There are many things your group can do to help others. You could: go Christmas caroling, serve together at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, help neighbors in need, help at a nursing home. The list goes on and on...be creative!

Social Event Coordinator

In order to build friendships within a group, it is important to spend time outside the scheduled group time with members of the group. The Social Event Coordinator helps implement the ideas that the group decides upon. Have fun!

Recorder

It is helpful for people to have written information about the group. The Recorder can develop a phone list of group members and keep track of prayer requests. In your Turbo Group, the group's Recorder can write down the different "Turbo Targets" that each person identifies in the third week of the group. The Recorder can then distribute copies of these items to the rest of the group for continued prayer and encouragement.

Timekeeper

In order to cover all the information in your group meeting, it can be helpful to have a designated Timekeeper. In this Turbo manual there are suggested times for the questions and activities you will do together as a group. It will be up to each week's leader to determine how they will utilize the Timekeeper.

Group Member

The responsibility for a fun and interactive group discussion does not rest solely upon a group leader. Group members should see themselves as co-facilitators, eager to share, listen and ask questions of others.

Weekly Group Leader

In this Turbo Group, a different person will take the role of Group Leader each week. This person is responsible for leading the “Leader Lab” and the “Sharing and Prayer” times. If there are more than seven people in your group, some people may want to partner together on leading the group or you may decide to add additional weeks to the Turbo Group so that every person gets a chance to lead.

The following sections describe Group leader responsibilities before and during the group meeting.

Notes

What To Do Before You Lead

Here are some things to do as you prepare to lead the group:

☑ **Pray.** In a Christ-centered small group, it is essential that you seek God to help guide you. In the Old Testament, God told Joshua (another leader stepping into new territory) “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

☑ **Prepare.** It is important that you understand the concepts and skills in which you are leading the group. You do not have to be an expert, you only need to know the next steps. If you have questions about the material call your “Turbo Trainer” prior to the group meeting. You might find it helpful to outline the chapter, rehearse what you will say and look at areas that could be shortened if you are running out of time.

☑ **Think of Ways to Involve Others.** Groups are designed to be interactive. It is important that you help people share their ideas and feelings by asking questions that will encourage participation.

☑ **Be Selective.** You do not have to use every discussion question in this manual or in other curriculum that you use after the Turbo Group.

Week Two

☑ **Create an Outline/Agenda.** An outline can be very helpful as you lead a group. It can help you stay on track when the discussion goes in different directions and it can help you focus if you are covering a lot of material. An outline can also be helpful to group members so they can understand the objectives and goals you have of the group meeting.

☑ **Show Up Early.** It is helpful to make sure the room is set up for your needs. When you arrive early, you can arrange the chairs in the most appropriate setting, making sure all materials are available such as pens, pencils and paper and you can review the material one last time.

What to Do When You Lead

After the first group meeting, leadership will be shared among group members. When you lead you will be expected to:

☑ **Be Yourself.** One of the keys to leadership is being yourself. It is important not to distance yourself from others in the group by appearing to be “the expert” or problem-free. It is helpful to be vulnerable and share about the difficulty you have faced.

☑ **Review.** Because a week (or two) has passed since the group last met, it can be helpful to review previous topics before jumping into a new topic. It can also be helpful to review group rules.

☑ **Start Strong.** People typically remember the first and last things they do as a group. It is essential that you engage group members at the beginning of the group by helping them see the importance of the topic being discussed.

☑ **Encourage Interaction.** It is important that people do not just receive information but that you help them share their ideas and feelings. Ask questions that encourage both discussion and thought.

Week Two

☑ **Stay on Time.** It is important to stay within the time parameters of the group. In the Turbo Group you will have an hour and a half to do the “**Leader Lab**” and the “**Prayer and Sharing**” sections. You may have to omit some discussion questions or exercises if you are running out of time. (Note: The “Turbo Tutorial” and “Scripture Study” are designed as homework, to be done by all group members prior to attending each week’s Turbo Group.)

☑ **Encourage Prayer.** It is vital that group members have the opportunity to share their concerns with others and seek God for help.

☑ **Be Open to Feedback.** At the end of the Turbo Group meeting your Turbo Trainer will lead the group in a brief time of structured feedback. This feedback time can help you look at your strengths and your areas of improvement. One important role of your Turbo Trainer is to keep the feedback time safe and constructive.

Scripture Study

In this week's Scripture Study, you will read about community life in the early church and compare it to the four components of Group LIFE.

1. Read Acts 2:42-47. What did the early church do to meet the needs of others?
2. What did the early church do to grow in their intimacy with God?
3. What did the early church do to build fellowship with one another?
4. What could you do to help groups you lead be more like this?

Leader Lab

Introduction (20 min.)

As a large group, answer the following questions:

1. If someone made a movie about your life, what actor would you want to portray you? Why?
2. What have your most significant times been in a small group or with others that were close to you?

Components of Group LIFE (20 min.)

1. In groups of three discuss the following questions:

- ▶ What do you like most about groups?
- ▶ What needs have you seen addressed in small groups?
- ▶ As a leader, what needs would you like to help meet?

2. As a large group discuss the following:

- ▶ How would you describe or define the four components of Group LIFE?

Week Two

▶ Of the four components of Group LIFE, which area might be the easiest to implement in a small group? Why?

▶ Which component might be the most difficult to implement? Why?

Scheduling (30 min.)

Use the following pages to schedule your Turbo Group's social and outreach activities and plan the group's leadership responsibilities.

Group Events (15 min.)

As a group, you will schedule two fun social events and one outreach.

1. Individually, list your ideas in the space below (to help, you might recall the discussion of favorite restaurants from the previous chapter).
2. Share your ideas with the group and have a volunteer record all the ideas.
3. Next, as a group, decide what to do. (A quick way to make a group decision is to have each group member cast two votes for their favorite choice. Then schedule the event that receives the top number of votes.)

Fun/Social Ideas:

Outreach Ideas:

Turbo Schedule (15 min.)

As a group, decide on each of the remaining Group Roles. Roles should be determined on a volunteer basis. Roles can be shared by more than one person.

Facilitator

Week 1: *Turbo Trainer*

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

Week 5:

Week 6:

Week 7:

Week 8:

Week Two

Date of Fun/Social Times:
Coordinator(s):

Date of Outreach:
Coordinator(s)

Group Recorder(s):

Group Timekeeper(s):

Notes:

Prayer and Sharing (15 min.)

In the following section you have an opportunity to share any prayer requests that you have for the week to come.

1. Share prayer requests you have for the follow week or for the weeks to come.
2. Pray for those in your group.

Feedback (15 min.)

In the following section you have an opportunity to provide this week's leader with helpful feedback about their leadership. This section will be led by your "Turbo Trainer."

1. What did the group leader do to help you get to know other group members and understand the Turbo Group format?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week's group? Why?
3. What is one area the group facilitator might improve upon for future group leadership?
4. What is one thing you would not want the group facilitator to change?

Chapter 3

Skill Overview



Overview:

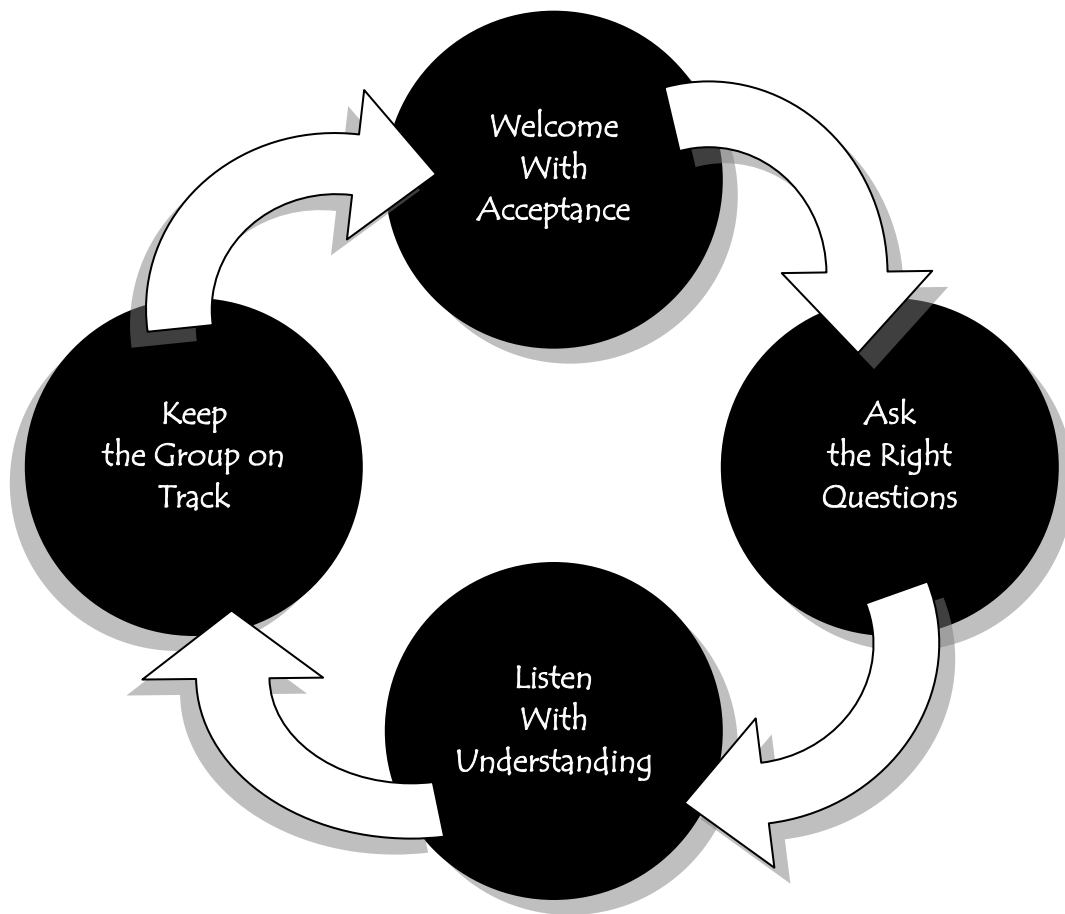
This chapter provides you with an overview of Biblical leadership and the four important skills utilized in your Turbo Group.

Individually, you will read about the four skills used in this Turbo Group, read an overview of Biblical Leadership and study and passage from II Timothy.

In your Turbo Group you will assess your current abilities, review and explore the different areas of skill development and share your “Turbo Targets” with the group.

W.A.L.K. Through a Small Group

In the next several weeks we will explore four skills that are essential to leading small groups:



Turbo Tutorial

Your Turbo Group will focus on four skills to help you become a more effective leader. As a way to remember the skills, we have taken the first letter of each skill and created the acronym, WALK. Here is a brief introduction of each of the skills:

Welcome with Acceptance

How will you help people feel welcome in a group that you lead? Welcoming others with acceptance can be difficult. Through this group, you will learn how to give supportive comments and reduce fears to help others feel welcome and accepted.

Ask the Right Questions

In future groups you lead, how will you encourage interaction and discussion in a group? Another skill you will learn in this group is how to ask the right questions. You will learn how to ask questions that uncover needs and help people practically apply truth to their lives.

Listen with Understanding

In groups you may lead in the future, how will you let people know that you have understood what they are saying? Learning the skill of “Listening with Understanding” will help you be an “Active” listener. You will learn how to communicate to people in a way that lets them know you have understood the content and the feelings of what they have said.

Keep the Group On Track

In the future, how will you deal effectively with distractions and problems that arise in your group? In your Turbo Group, you will learn how to prevent most disruptions from occurring and learn several helpful solutions to common group problems.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why might these skills be important for group leaders?

2. How have you seen leaders demonstrate these skills?

Leadership as Stewardship

According to the Bible, leadership is stewardship, the practice of being responsible for things entrusted to you. Throughout Scripture we see how God entrusted leaders with ideas and resources to help carry out His plans.

In the Old Testament we can observe the leadership of:

- ▶ Moses, who was sent to help deliver the Hebrew people out of slavery and into the Promised Land
- ▶ Jonah, who was sent by God to speak to the people of Nineveh
- ▶ Nehemiah, who was sent by God to rebuild the city wall of Jerusalem

In the New Testament we can observe the leadership of:

- ▶ Jesus, who modeled the sacrificial life He wanted His followers to lead. When asked about leadership, He said, “The king of the Gentiles lord it over them...but you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest of you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves...but I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:24-27)
- ▶ Paul, who declared leadership a “noble task” (I Timothy 3:1) and was sent by God to tell the non-Jewish world about forgiveness and salvation in Christ.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How have Christian leaders helped your personal and spiritual growth?
2. If leadership is stewardship, what are some areas leaders might be responsible for?

Scripture Study

In this week's study, you will read some advice that Paul gave Timothy about leadership.

1. How have veteran leaders helped your development as a leader?
 - modeled how to do things
 - provided opportunities to try new things
 - cast vision for the future
 - encouraged me to lead
 - had high expectations of what I could do
 - challenged me further
 - confronted me about issues I needed to work on

2. What examples can you recall of previous leaders doing the things listed above?

3. Read II Timothy 3:10-4:8. What does Paul say Timothy should have observed about him (3:10-11)?

Week Three

4. What advice does Paul give to Timothy in Chapter 4, verse 2 and verse 5?
5. What similarities do you see in the two verses? What differences do you see?
6. What words does Paul use to summarize his faith in Christ? (4:6-8)
7. How might Timothy be encouraged by these verses (4:6-8)?

Questions for Reflection:

1. What about this passage has been helpful as you consider where God is directing your leadership gifts?
2. How can you implement the advice that Paul gave Timothy in 4:2 and 4:5?
3. What verse in this passage did you find the most significant? Why?

Leader Lab

As a group, you will discuss the importance of leadership skills and your “Turbo Targets”.

Introduction (20 min.)

As a large group, answer the following questions about your previous group experiences:

1. What has been your best experience with a small group?
2. What activities did you do as a group?
3. What were you responsible for in the group?

Review (20 min.)

Break into groups of three then answer the following questions.

1. Why is it important for leaders to master the four skills described in the Turbo Tutorial?

2. What might a leader look like who...
 - ▶ welcomes others with acceptance

 - ▶ asks good questions

 - ▶ listens with understanding

 - ▶ keeps the group on track

3. What other skills might be necessary for leadership?

Skill Assessment (20 min.)

Even though you may not currently have the title of “leader”, it is probable that you regularly influence others at church, work, school, or home. When we act as influencers, we are serving as leaders.

Spend a few moments reflecting on your previous leadership experiences. Read each description, then assess your leadership skills. Rank each skill on a scale from 1- 10.

1 = the description does **not describe** my leadership skill in that area

10 = the description **accurately describes** my skill in that area

Welcoming with Acceptance

People feel welcome and accepted when I lead. They are vulnerable and share their feelings, ideas, fears and concerns with others. Newcomers do not feel intimidated and easily become part of the group.

Self Assessment: _____

Asking the Right Questions

When I lead, there is a large amount of group participation because I ask helpful questions. I frequently ask questions that help people identify and gain insight about their personal, spiritual, and relational needs. Additionally, I ask questions that uncover facts about the topic being discussed and help people apply truth to their lives.

Self Assessment: _____

Listening with Understanding

I respond to others in a way that lets them know I understand them. I frequently rephrase or restate the content and feelings of what I have heard in order to better understand what people have said.

Self Assessment: _____

Keeping the Group On Track

If a problem or disruption occurs when I lead, I know how to effectively deal with it. I can prevent most disruptions from occurring and can quickly and respectfully solve problems when they occur in the group.

Self Assessment: _____

Questions for Discussion:

Within your group of three discuss the following questions:

1. What skill held your highest score?
2. How have you demonstrated this skill as a leader?
3. What skill held your lowest score?
4. What are some instances where you would have found this skill helpful?

Turbo Targets (20 min.)

As a large group share your goals for the group. Your Group's Recorder can write down the individual goals, for future accountability and prayer.

Consider making your goals challenging to reach but still attainable. You should also consider making your goals specific, rather than general. Instead of setting a goal of "reading the Bible more" consider specific ways you might grow in that area such as: reading a specific number of chapters in the Bible or reading a specific number of minutes.

- ▶ What leadership skill would you like to grow in the most during this group?
 - a. Welcoming Others
 - b. Asking the Right Questions
 - c. Listening with Understanding
 - d. Keeping the Group on Track

- ▶ What personal growth area would you like to develop during this group?
 - a. Spiritual health (prayer, Scripture reading, etc.)
 - b. Physical health
 - c. Relationships (spouse, children, work, friends, family, etc.)
 - d. Financial management
 - e. Time management
 - f. Other:

- ▶ What specifically could your Turbo Group do to help you reach your goals in these areas?

Prayer and Sharing (20 min.)

Read the following passage then answer the following questions.

In II Timothy 4:5, Paul writes, “But keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all duties of your ministry.”

1. When you think about “the duties of your ministry” how have these changed over time?
2. How would you describe “the duties of your ministry” today?
3. Paul encourages Timothy to “endure hardship”. What hardships are you enduring today?
4. After you have shared, pray for each other. Try to incorporate the Turbo Targets each person shared earlier into your prayers.

Feedback (15 min.)

1. What did this week's leader do to help you better understand the group roles, schedule, and skills for leadership?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week's group? Why?
3. What is one area this week's leader might improve upon for future group leadership?
4. What is one thing you would not want this week's leader to change?

Chapter 4

Welcoming with Acceptance



Overview:

In this chapter you will explore ways to help group members feel welcome and accepted.

Individually, you will read how leaders serve as the “atmosphere architects” in their groups. In the Scripture Study section you will read several parables that Jesus told about welcoming and accepting others.

As a group, you will seek solutions to welcoming others by discussing and role playing different group scenarios.



Turbo Tutorial

People attend small groups with the expectation that they will be loved and accepted. They want to safely express their feelings and concerns with others without fear of rejection or ridicule.

Most group members, especially newcomers, are particularly concerned about the group's "atmosphere of acceptance". They might ask themselves, "Will these people accept me for who I am?" or "Can I share a personal issue without reprisals or rejection?"

Atmosphere Architects

For leaders, communicating genuine acceptance to others is a vital part of small group leadership. Problems can quickly occur, and people will most likely leave the group, if they feel excluded and not accepted by others.

The following pages describe how you can become an "Atmosphere Architect" in order to increase the "atmosphere of acceptance" in your group.

There are three things you can do to help people feel accepted and welcomed in your group:

- ▶ Provide Supportive Comments
- ▶ Decrease Fear
- ▶ Encourage Success in Activities

Provide Supportive Comments

To give supportive comments make sure you:

- Acknowledge Concerns** by listening to comments and questions (even if you don't agree with them). Restate people's concerns to let them know you have heard them.
- Encourage vulnerability, risk taking and acknowledging mistakes** by modeling this yourself.
- Avoid Insider Language and Inside Jokes.** Explain terms and give background/history to newcomers.
- Avoid putting people on the spot.** It is important to give people a chance to "pass" if they do not want to answer a question.

Reduce Fear

To help reduce fears and tensions make sure:

- People are Personally Greeted.** Try to greet group members and do introductions for the newcomers before you start the group discussion.
- Materials and Supplies are Available.** Have supplies such as paper, pens, study guides, Bibles, etc. available for group members.
- Lighting and Temperature are Appropriate.** It is important that people are as comfortable as possible.
- People Can See Each Other.** You may need to move chairs or ask people to move if group members cannot see each other. This enhances group dynamics.

- An Outline is Given.** At the beginning of each group meeting try to help people understand what they will be doing and how it will help them.
- Group Guidelines are Covered.** These can help people understand how to relate to each other in safe, encouraging ways.
- Group Members are Involved Early.** You can eliminate tension by simply asking people to participate.

Encourage Success in Activities

To further help group members feel accepted:

- Provide noncompetitive group activities** to avoid a situation where someone is the “loser”.
- Give detailed instructions** for group activities to avoid a situation where someone feels “lost”.
- Make sure any outside activities have intentional ways for all people to get involved.** You do not want to only do things for the veterans in your group.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could these three areas benefit a group?

2. What leaders have you worked with who demonstrated these skills?
What specifically did they do to:

▶ Provide supportive comments

▶ Reduce fear

▶ Encourage success in activities

Questions for Reflection:

1. In reflecting on the parable of the lost son, do you find yourself acting more like the father who was quick to forgive and welcome with acceptance, or more like the older son who was quick to reject?
2. What are some recent examples in your life when you acted like the father? When have you acted like the older son?
3. What are some ways you can put into practice the acceptance and forgiveness that Jesus taught in this passage?

3. What five words best describe the positive elements of your church's "atmosphere"?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Tutorial Review (20 min.)

Your "Turbo Tutorial" described three things leader could do to create an atmosphere of acceptance:

- ▶ Provide supportive comments
- ▶ Encourage success in activities
- ▶ Reduce fear

Instructions:

- A. Break into groups of three, then pick two of the scenarios on the following page.
- B. Read the related information in the "Turbo Tutorial".
- C. Discuss with your partners how you might demonstrate the scenario to the larger group (you can be as humorous or serious as you desire).
- D. Spend no more than two minutes modeling the scenario for the larger group.

Scenarios:

#1. A leader who provides supportive comments.

#2. A leader who demonstrates skills that lessen newcomers' fears.

#3. A leader who encourages success in activities.

#4. A leader who does not provide supportive comments.

#5. A leader who does not eliminate fears.

#6. A leader who does not encourages success in activities.

Questions for Discussion:

After viewing the scenarios, in your large group answer the following questions:

1. How would you define an "atmosphere of acceptance"?
2. What are the benefits of having an "accepting atmosphere" in a small group?

3. What are some things leaders might need to be careful of as they try to welcome others with acceptance?
4. In a few words, how would you like visitors to describe the atmosphere of a small group you might lead in the future?
5. How could you implement these ideas?

Scripture Review (20 min.)

In your large group answer these questions regarding the Scripture Study.

1. Review your responses to the “Questions for Reflection” page in the Scripture Study section located on page 70. What point was Jesus trying to get across about God’s acceptance in the parables?
2. What barriers have you found in having a clear understanding of God’s acceptance?

Prayer and Sharing (15 min.)

1. In groups of three share your “Turbo Target” from last week and pray for these areas and any additional prayer requests you may have.

Feedback (15 min.)

1. What did the group facilitator or others in the group do to welcome you with acceptance?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this weeks' group? Why?
3. What is one area the group facilitator might improve upon for future group leadership?
4. What is one thing you would not want the group facilitator to change?

Chapter 5

Asking the Right Questions



Overview:

In this chapter you will discover ways of asking questions that will help members of your small group share their ideas, feelings and experiences.

Individually, you will read about different types of questions and why they are used. You will also read a letter from the apostle Paul, which will help you reflect further on leadership.

As a group, you will practice using this skill to create questions that help encourage reflection and participation.

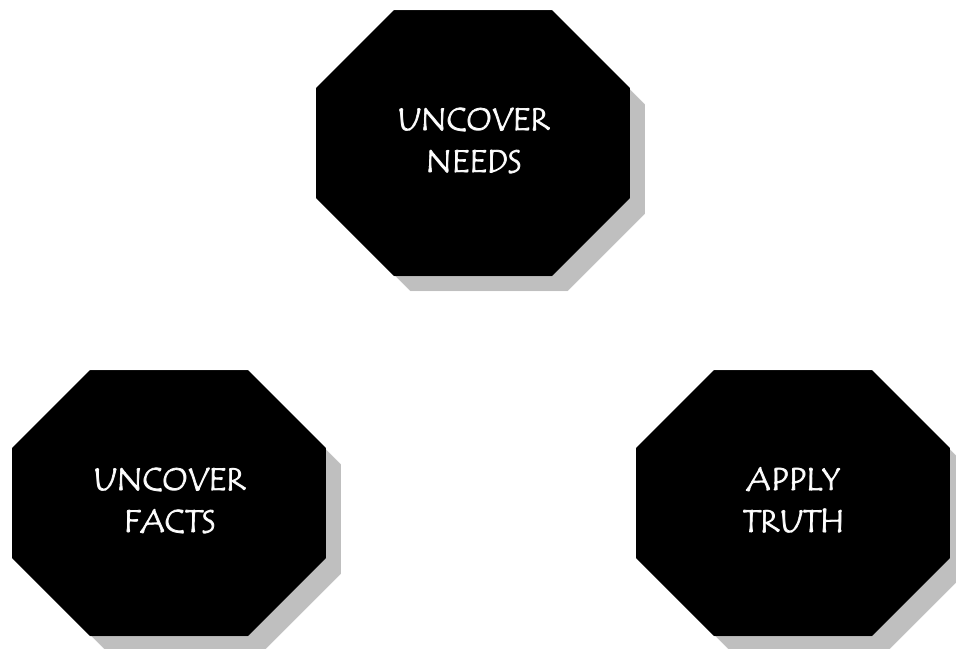


Turbo Tutorial

The New Testament records Jesus asking 153 questions. These questions were addressed to many different types of people in many different contexts but they had a profound impact on how people viewed God.

Sometimes Jesus asked questions to uncover needs, such as when He asked His disciples, “Where is your faith?” in the midst of a storm. On other occasions Jesus asked questions to uncover facts, such as the time He asked “who touched me?” or “what does it say on the coin?” Other times Jesus asked questions to help people personally apply the truth that He preached such as when He asked Peter, “Who do you say that I am?” In this chapter we will look at:

Three Types of Questions That...



Questions that Uncover Needs

Asking questions about needs can help you know more about the individuals in your group and encourage participation. You could use this type of question when you want to:

- ▶ Start the Group Discussion
- ▶ Evaluate Comprehension
- ▶ Uncover Attitudes
- ▶ Ask the Group for Help

Examples of Questions that Uncover Needs:

1. Start the Group Discussion: “We’re going to be discussing the account of how Joseph in the Old Testament overcame adversity with God’s help. What types of adversity have you been faced with this week?”
2. Evaluation Comprehension: “What are the key things we learned the last time our group was together?”
3. Uncover Attitudes: “How do you feel about what we’ve covered so far?”
4. Ask the Group for Help: “What do you think should be our next step? What teaching do you need?”

When asking questions that Uncover Needs make sure they:

Can be Answered with More than a One Word Response

Ask questions that encourage people to “tell their story” instead of simply answering with a “yes” or “no” response. Instead of asking, “Did anyone have a difficult week?” ask, “What about this week has been difficult?”

Are As General As Possible

If questions are too specific they might exclude some people from answering. For example, the question, “So, who’s had difficulty at work this week?” might not encourage people to answer if they have had difficulty in other areas of their lives.

Are Free From Your Own Preferences

Avoid phrases such as “Don’t you think...” and “I think...” when you ask questions. Most people will not answer a question if they think you already have the answer.

Are Welcoming To Others

Newcomers are especially sensitive to feeling “put on the spot.” Try to avoid calling on people by name, so they don’t feel like you are asking, “So, as a newcomer, why don’t you tell us what your needs are?”

Questions that Uncover Facts

Questions that Uncover Facts are best used when your group is trying to understand a passage from a book. These questions might start with:

who?

what?

when?

where?

These questions help group members come to a common understanding of the ideas that are being discussed.

Examples of Questions that Uncover Facts About a Book:

- ▶ Who is speaking in this passage?

- ▶ What structure can be observed?

- ▶ Are there clear units or sections?

- ▶ What is the historical context?

- ▶ Who is it written to?

- ▶ What words or themes recur?

When asking questions that Uncover Facts make sure you:

Avoid being the “Bible Answer Person”

You do not need to know all of the answers. If someone asks you a question that you are uncomfortable with, or that you might need to research further, you can be honest and let them know that you will attempt to find an answer to their question, or you can ask for feedback from the group.

Summarize the Group’s Answers

It is easy for group members to “get lost” with all of the information discussed in a group. Try to periodically summarize the facts that the group has uncovered.

Avoid Using Jargon

Jargon are terms that are technical or “insider language.” If people use words that might be unfamiliar to your group, ask the person, “Could you tell us what you mean by that?” Or, if an uncommon word is used in the passage of Scripture you are studying, you can provide group members with a definition.

Personal Application Questions

Personal Application Questions help group members take the ideas and information discussed in your group and see how they can use it in a practical way.

Examples of Personal Application Questions

- ▶ What about this makes you feel glad?
- ▶ What about this makes you feel sad?
- ▶ What about this makes you feel scared?
- ▶ What does that look like to you?
- ▶ How does that affect you?
- ▶ How does that work for you?
- ▶ How do you manage that?
- ▶ How does this passage (topic) confirm what God is doing or has done in your life?
- ▶ What changes should you make with your time, energy and resources?
- ▶ What prayer should you pray in light of what you have learned?
- ▶ What sin should you confess in light of what you have learned?
- ▶ What truths have you learned about God, yourself or others?

What to Avoid When Asking Personal Application Questions:

☑ **Making Assumptions.** Group members may have knowledge and skill levels that are very different than your knowledge. Don't assume that people in your group have: heard the Gospel, are all Christians, have heard the basic doctrines of the faith, or are familiar with Scripture.

☑ **Looking Away.** Looking at people when you ask questions can help them feel much more relaxed and less "put on the spot".

☑ **Speaking When It's Silent.** It might take some time for people in your group to answer. Do your best to resist the urge to jump in and talk because there is initial silence.

Turbo Tip: one way to help people process their ideas is by asking them to write down their ideas first, then share with the group.

☑ **Getting Nervous.** Asking questions about personal issues can be tough. It is important for you to remember that God wants to help the people in your group and He wants to help you as a leader!

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could these three types of questions be helpful?
2. Think of some times when you have been asked these three types of questions. What were the circumstances? What was the result? How did you feel? Why?



Scripture Study

In the following section you will read a letter from a leader. The letter attempts to influence the recipient's decision and has profound implications for Christian leaders. Later, in your group, you will use the skill of "Asking the Right Questions" to better understand the letter.

1. Think about the last time you tried to influence someone to make a decision. What method did you use?
 - a. Persuasion
 - b. Arm Twisting
 - c. Negotiation
 - d. Guilt

2. How was the method you used helpful?

3. What could you have done differently?

4. Read the letter to Philemon (found between Titus and Hebrews in the New Testament). What words does Paul use to describe himself in the letter (verse 1, 9, 17)?

Week Five

5. What words does Paul use to describe Philemon in the letter (verse 1, 7, 20)?

6. What words does Paul use to describe Onesimus in the letter (verse 10, 12, 16)?

7. Compare verses 8-9 with verse 14. What similarities do you see in the way Paul tried to influence Philemon's decision?

8. What is Paul trying to tell Philemon about his leadership in verses 8-9 and 14?

Questions for Reflection:

1. When you try to influence others, are you more likely to “appeal on the basis of love” or order others to do things?

2. Can you think of a time when you ordered others to do something?
What was the outcome?

3. Can you think of a time when you “appealed on the basis of love”?
What was the outcome?

Leader Lab

As a group you will review the sections you did individually, then, you will practice the skill of “Asking the Right Questions”.

Introduction (10 min.)

As a large group discuss the following questions:

1. Have you ever been mistaken for someone else? What questions were you asked?

2. Do you prefer questions that explore ideas or questions that focus on feelings? Why?

3. How can good questions influence others?

Tutorial Review (15 min.)

Break into three smaller groups and answer the following questions.

1. What are the three types of questions that were explained in the Turbo Tutorial?
2. How could these questions benefit a small group?
3. What might be the most difficult type of question to ask? Why?
4. What might be the easiest type of question to ask? Why?

Scripture Study (55 min.)

1. The following exercise is designed to help you create questions from a passage. (Note: Although you will be creating a number of questions, there will not be sufficient time within the Turbo Group to discuss all of the answers to the questions).

For this exercise you will continue to meet in your three groups. Each of the three groups should be numbered. Identify Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3.

Week Five

2. Each group is assigned a passage in Philemon.
Group 1: Philemon 1 – 7
Group 2: Philemon 8 – 16
Group 3: Philemon 17 - 25

3. Imagine that you have been asked to lead a small group through your assigned section.

4. Read and discuss the passage by identifying the main issues or themes that appear in the passage. (10 min.)

5. On the worksheet on the following page, write four questions that would help **uncover needs** related to the themes you identified. (10 min.)

(Use the Turbo Tutorial for help).

6. On the worksheet on the following page, write four questions that would help your group **uncover the facts** about the passage. (10 min.)

(Use the Turbo Tutorial for help).

7. On the worksheet on the following page, write four questions that would help your group **apply the truth** of things they learned in the passage to their personal lives. (10 min.)

(Use the Turbo Tutorial for help).

8. Share your questions with the larger group, observe how the group responds. (10 min.)

Asking the Right Questions Worksheet

Questions that Uncover Needs

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)
- 4.)

Questions that Uncover Facts

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)
- 4.)

Personal Application Questions

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)
- 4.)

9. As a large group, discuss the experience of creating and asking the questions. (5 min.)

- ▶ What about this was easy?
- ▶ What about this was difficult?

Prayer and Sharing (15 min.)

In the following section, you have an opportunity to share about the questions you have in your own life.

1. Return to the three subgroups.
2. Reflect on your current needs and share your answer to the question:

“What questions do I currently have that I need God to answer?”
3. Pray as a group about those issues. If you pray out loud, make sure you are considerate of other group members around you.

Feedback (15 min.)

1. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week's group? Why?
2. What questions were asked to help you enter into the discussion?
3. What is one area this week's leader might improve upon for future group leadership?
4. What is one thing you would not want this week's leader to change?

Chapter 6

Listening with Understanding



Overview:

In this chapter you will learn how to listen to others in a way that communicates respect and understanding.

Individually, you will learn how to be an “Active Listener”. Then, you will read a related passage from John chapter 9.

As a group you will practice these listening skills as you listen to fictional and real problems from others in the group.

Some of the exercises in this chapter have been adapted from “Listening for Heaven’s Sake” a listening skills training developed by Equipping Ministries International, a training program that I recommend.



Turbo Tutorial

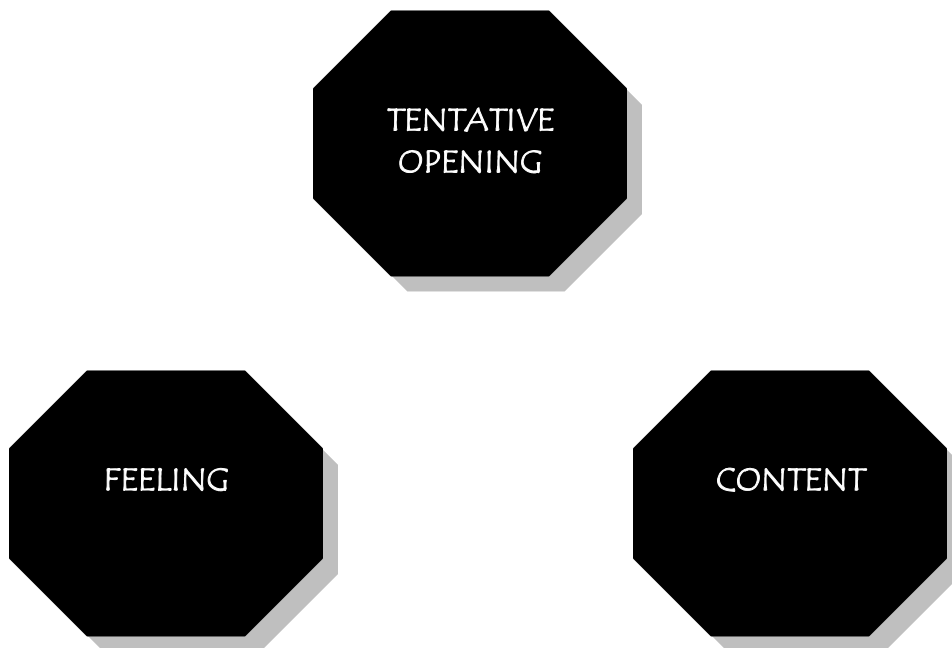
How should you respond when someone shares about a difficult problem they are facing? Many leaders, unfortunately, feel they should respond by giving advice or saying that they have “felt the exact same way”.

Regrettably, those responses leave much to be desired. Advice giving can be dangerous because:

- ▶ you may not know all of the facts
- ▶ your advice might not be sought
- ▶ you do not truly communicate understanding

A helpful alternative to advice giving is “Active Listening”. This skill has three components.

Three components of Active Listening



Tentative Opening

A tentative opening is the first step in responding with understanding. When you respond tentatively to someone who has just shared about a problem or concern, you are asking the person whether you have heard them correctly.

It is important to respond tentatively because you want to communicate the person that you are genuinely seeking to know what they are thinking and feeling and not rushing to a conclusion.

Here are a few ways you might start to respond to someone who has shared about a difficulty:

Examples of Tentative Openings

- It sounds like...
- What I hear you saying...
- It seems like...
- You appear to...
- What I'm hearing is...
- So you seem to be feeling...
- So you seem to be thinking...
- I'm not sure, but I hear you saying...

Identifying Feelings

The second step in being an "Active Listener" is to accurately restate the feelings you heard the person share.

It is important that you avoid “reading feelings into” what people are saying. In this second step you simply want to “mirror” back the feeling that you heard the person say. This can be difficult if a person does not use many words to describe their feelings (or if the person has used a number of words), but with practice your skills will improve in identifying the “feeling words” used by others.

Examples of Feeling Words

Here are five feeling words that you can use in responding to others with understanding.

- ▶ mad
- ▶ glad
- ▶ confused
- ▶ sad
- ▶ scared

Identifying Content

You will also want to respond with words that identify the facts of what the person has shared.

Content identifies the who, what, when, where, why of what was shared.

People may share in your group that they have strong feelings about:

- ▶ a child graduating from High School
- ▶ problems in their marriage
- ▶ opportunities at work
- ▶ challenges in their relationship with God

People will share many things in your group. Some issues will bring joy to the group, others will be more difficult. Regardless of the situation, it is important for you to identify the subject matter of what is being shared, so that you can state it in your response.

Putting it Together

When you are an “Active Listener” you combine all three of the areas to respond in a way that communicates a genuine understanding.

For example, if someone in your group shares that they are sad because their son has moved away, you might say:

- Tentative Opening: It sounds like
- Feeling: you’re feeling really sad
- Content: because your son has moved.

Another member of your group may share that they are euphoric at having passed a test in night school. You might respond by saying:

- Tentative Opening: You appear to be
- Feeling: ecstatic
- Content: because you passed the test.

When you first try this it may feel “fake” or “awkward.” Over time and with practice, it will feel more natural.

Exercise

Instructions: Read the scenarios below and write a response using your new Active Listening skills.

1. "I'm really scared. My mom needs to be put in a nursing home but she doesn't want to be admitted. I'm not sure what we're going to do."

Tentative Opening: _____

Feeling: _____

Content: _____.

2. "I'm so mad at some people at work. I have two co-workers who are real jerks."

Tentative Opening: _____

Feeling: _____

Content: _____.

3. "I can't believe the good things happening in small group. I'm thrilled to see lives changed."

Tentative Opening: _____

Feeling: _____

Content: _____.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Which of the three components to Active Listening seems to be the most challenging? Why?
2. How do you see yourself using the skill of Active Listening?
3. How would you feel if someone responded as an Active Listener when you shared your concerns?



Scripture Study

In this section you will read about a man born blind and his encounter with Jesus.

1. What have you found to be the most difficult obstacle in understanding what people are saying?
 - a. Distractions
 - b. Preconceived ideas
 - c. Thinking about how to respond
 - d. Different cultures
 - e. Different meanings of words
 - f. Other: _____

2. When was the last time you misunderstood someone? What was the situation?

3. Read John 9. The man in John 9 went through several steps in discovering who Jesus was. What words did he use to describe Jesus?

Verse 11 –

Verse 17 –

Week Six

Verse 33 –

Verse 38 –

4. In light of the previous question, what progression can you observe in the man's understanding?

5. Why was it difficult for the Pharisees to comprehend what the healed man had told them?

6. How did the man respond after the Pharisees refused to believe him (verse 27)?

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what ways have you seen your relationship with God change over the years?
2. What are some ways you can make sure you listen actively to what God is saying?
3. What are some ways you can make sure you listen accurately to what people are saying?

Leader Lab

As a group, you will have the opportunity to examine the listening skills introduced earlier in this chapter. After reviewing the skill of Active Listening, your group will practice the skill by listening to fictional as well as real concerns shared by group members.

Introduction (20 min.)

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

1. When you were young, what three people did you confide in most?
2. What did those people do to let you know that they were listening and understood what you were saying?

Tutorial Review (40 min.)

Break into groups of three.

1. Review your answers from the Exercise Section in the “Turbo Tutorial” (page 97). Did you create similar answers? How were they different?

2. Next, work with your partners to complete the following sentences.

- a. "I never thought my son would ever take drugs. I can't believe it, it makes me so sad."

Tentative Opening: _____

Feeling: _____

Content: _____.

- b. "I'm so excited about this meeting. It's amazing the new things I'm learning!"

Tentative Opening: _____

Feeling: _____

Content: _____.

- 3. While still in your group of three, decide who will be an "Observer", who will be a "Personal Sharing a fictional problem" and who will be the "Active Listener".
- 4. Next, the "Person Sharing" should share a fictional problem with the "Active Listener".
- 5. The "Active Listener" should respond using the skills described earlier. Share (and listen to) three fictional problems.

6. After several responses, the “Observer” should give the “Active Listener” feedback on what was observed.

7. Rotate roles so everyone in your group has the opportunity to serve in all three roles.

Group Discussion (20 min.)

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

1. What benefits do you see in using these listening skills?

2. Do you think you will feel pressured as a leader to solve other people’s problems or have all of the right answers? How could these listening skills help you feel less pressure to give advice to people who share about difficult situations in their lives?

3. What is the most challenging part of using these listening skills?

Prayer and Sharing (15 min.)

In the following section, you have an opportunity to share and have others listen with understanding to real concerns in your life.

1. Think about the issues in your life, perhaps they are “Turbo Targets” or other important concerns you have. What do you need to hear from God about these issues?
2. Share your thoughts with your partners. Use the listening skills to help others know that you want to understand their needs.
3. After you have shared, pray for each other.

Feedback (15 min.)

1. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week's group? Why?
2. What questions were asked to help you enter into the discussion?
3. How did other group member's "active listening" make you feel?
4. What is one area that the group facilitator might improve upon for future group leadership?
5. What is one thing you would not want the group facilitator to change?

Chapter 7

Keeping the Group On Track



Overview:

In this chapter you will find solutions to common group problems that will help keep the group focused on achieving its goals.

Individually, you will read about some common distractions that you might encounter in a group. Then, you will read a passage from I Peter that is related to this issue.

As a group, you will discuss common group experiences and work on solutions to some specific problems that you might encounter as a group leader.



Turbo Tutorial

How will you respond if people behave in hurtful ways to others in your group? What will you do if someone attempts to monopolize the group's time and focus?

As a group leader you will need to keep the group focused on its goals and objectives and help ensure healthy communication within the group.

The best thing you can do to minimize the chance that people will be disruptive is to use group guidelines.

Group Guidelines

Group guidelines are the rules that are used in a group that set the standards for communication, limits and roles. Setting group guidelines will help stop many distractions before they start.

Sometimes, even with group guidelines, you may encounter distractions and disruptive behavior. The following pages will help you discover solutions for dealing with these problems.

For an example of Group Guidelines for a small group, review the "Turbo Charter" on pages 20 and 21.

Types of Disruptive Behavior

Here are some common types of disruptive behaviors. When you lead, you might encounter people who are overly:

- Negative.** Group members who disagree beyond reason and point out how flawed an idea is.

- Talkative.** Individuals who monopolize the discussion by talking for long periods of time.

- Withdrawn.** People who refuse to participate in the group discussion. They might sit quietly, leave the room, or engage in something different than what the group is doing.

- Giving Advice.** Group members who “know exactly” what others need. They will tell another in the group exactly what to do, even though the person did not request their advice.

- Using Insider Language.** Group members who tell insider jokes or use terms that others are not aware of.

- Diverging.** Individuals who will get off the subject being discussed and focus on other issues.

Questions for Reflection:

1. From the list, what do you think might be the most difficult disruptive behavior to handle?

2. What types of disruptive behavior have you observed?

Tips for Dealing with a Disruptive Situation:

Here are eight tips to consider if you are faced with a distraction or a disruptive situation.

1. Feel free to “jump in” to get the group back on track
Remember *you are the leader* and you can lead the discussion. For example, if someone is not following the Group Guidelines and begins to monopolize the discussion, is giving unwanted advice or is diverging onto a very different topic than what your group is focusing on, it is fine for you as the leader to say:

“Okay, hold on, let me just jump in here, and get us back on track...”

Leaders are sometimes reluctant to “jump in” and interrupt out of fear of hurting a person’s feelings – but if a small group leader simply observes passively as a person is monopolizing the conversation or is not following the Group Guidelines, the small group leader is no longer leading – they have ceded their leadership to someone else.

2. Remind the individual of the Group Guidelines that are the group’s standards for communication and behavior.
3. If possible, Confront Outside of the Group
Try to speak to the offending person privately after the group meeting to explain why their behavior was not helpful to others.
4. Rely on Others in the Group for Help
Over time, group members should take more responsibility for the health of the group. You do not have to shoulder the burden alone. If a problem or difficulty arises, ask a trusted group member for their thoughts on the issue.

5. Use Redirecting Questions

For people who make sweeping generalizations or attempt to monopolize the group's focus, it is helpful to respond by acknowledging their concern by putting the focus back on them.

For example, if Jim says, "Our group needs to do something about this issue!" You might respond by saying, "So for *you*, Jim, it is important to do something." This lets Jim know that he has been heard but also clarifies to the group that this may only be Jim's issue and not necessarily a group issue.

6. Don't get Hooked

Try to avoid becoming engaged in a conflict during the group discussion.

7. Don't take it Personally

There are many reasons people might be disruptive. There might be unknown issues happening with the person outside the group or the individual may be unclear about certain elements of the group guidelines. A "Storming Phase" is also a normal element to most small groups. This happens when group members are still learning more about their role in the group and the overall group goals. It is normal during this phase for some group members to question some elements of the direction of the group.

8. Maintain the self-esteem of the person causing the problem

Do not put the person down or use sarcasm to try to stop the disruptive behavior. In some cases, especially when the person is seeking attention, it might encourage the person to be more disruptive.



Scripture Study

In this section you will read a passage that will help you think about a Christian response to difficult situations.

1. What is your first reaction when problems occur?
 - a. Avoidance
 - b. Confrontation
 - c. Despair
 - d. Fear
 - e. Joy
 - f. Other: _____

2. What advice would you give to a group leader who encountered problems in their group?

3. Read I Peter 4:12-5:4. According to Peter, how should we respond when we suffer as Christians? (verses 13, 16 and 19)

4. What reasons does Peter give for seeing insults as a blessing (verse 14)?

5. What attributes and motives does Peter advise leaders/overseers to have (5:2-3)?

Questions for Reflection:

1. What gives you hope when you think about the problems and difficulty you may encounter as a leader?
2. Peter says to “continue doing good” in the midst of difficulty and suffering. What does that look like for you?
3. How can a small group help you “continue doing good” in the midst of difficult circumstances?

Leader Lab

After discussing personal experiences with difficult people and situations, you will work with others in your group to identify solutions to common group problems.

Introduction (15 min.)

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

1. What distractions or problems have you observed in groups?
2. How did the group's leader respond to the distraction or problem?

Tutorial Review (10 min.)

To understand the different types of common group problems, it is helpful to see them displayed in a group. In this next section, group members will demonstrate the disruptive behaviors, and then discuss ways of handling the situations.

Read all the instructions before starting this exercise.

Instructions:

1. Ask two or three volunteers to each pick a disruptive behavior:
 - a. negative
 - b. withdrawn
 - c. using insider language
 - d. talkative
 - e. giving advice
 - f. diverging

Note: Volunteers should not tell others what "disruptive behavior" they have chosen.

2. As the weekly group leader leads a 10 minutes discussion of the “Questions for Reflection” page from the “Scripture Study” (page 113), each volunteer will need to demonstrate the “disruptive behavior” they have chosen.

(Note: In the role play, try not to go too far overboard in the demonstration. Also, remember to treat people with respect even if they become disruptive).

3. Once the ten minutes are through, have group members try to guess which disruptive behavior the volunteers were demonstrating. Then, answer the following questions.

Questions for Discussion (30 min.)

1. For the volunteers: How did it feel to disrupt the group?
2. For others: What were your feelings as you attempted to interact with the disruptive people?
3. Was it difficult or easy to respond to others with love and respect? Why?

4. Using the skills you learned in other chapters and the information from this week's "Turbo Tutorial" specifically address each disruptive behavior. What could you do to deal with people who are overly:

▶ Negative

▶ Talkative

▶ Withdrawn

▶ Giving Advice

▶ Using Insider Language

▶ Diverging

Prayer and Sharing (20 min.)

1. Break into groups of three. Share about any concerns you have about “Keeping the Group on Track.” What seems to be the most difficult distraction? Why?
2. Share about your “Turbo Targets.” How are you doing with these two areas? What are the biggest challenges?
3. Pray about these concerns. If you pray out loud, make sure you are considerate of other group members around you.

Feedback (15 min.)

1. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week’s group? Why?
2. What questions were asked to help you enter into the discussion?
3. How did the leader, or others, listen actively to the needs of others in the group?
4. What things did this week’s group leader do to help keep the group on track?
5. What is one area that this week’s leader might improve upon for future group leadership?
6. What is one thing you would not want this week’s group leader to change?

Chapter 8

Next Steps



Overview:

In this chapter you will explore Biblical qualifications for leadership and the options that are available to you after this group.

Individually, you will read about the Biblical qualifications for leadership and several options that you may want to explore with the group and with your Turbo Trainer. You will also explore a passage in Ephesians that will help you learn more about leadership.

As a group you will discuss your future plans and pray for each other.

Turbo Tutorial

In this section you will explore three things that you will need to do before entering into Christian leadership.

It is important that you discuss these issues with your Turbo Trainer and others in your church prior to committing to leadership.

What Should I Do Next?

- ▶ Count the Cost of Leadership
- ▶ Commit to Biblical Leadership
- ▶ Choose the right Leadership Path

Count the Cost of Leadership

Leadership is not always easy. Jesus, we are reminded in Scripture, suffered greatly as a leader. Immediately after Jesus was commissioned into ministry He was tempted (Matthew 4). Jesus saw sacrifice as something He had to do and sternly rebuked Peter when he implied that Jesus would not suffer (Matthew 16:23). It is important that you consider the sacrifices you may need to make before you decide to commit to being a leader.

Here are some challenges leaders encounter:

Being held to a higher standard

According to the Bible, leaders are not expected to be perfect but are expected to be models to others (I Timothy 3:1-7).

Reduction in personal time

Luke 14:25-33 describes Jesus' followers as those who love Jesus more than they love themselves. When you serve as a leader, you will probably notice a loss in time spent on other activities.

Persecution

As we have previously read in I Peter 4:12-5:4, we should expect to be persecuted for the sake of Christ as we bear witness to His work.

Commit to Biblical Leadership

The Bible mentions several commitments that leaders must make before leading others:

Commitment to Christ

Biblical leaders align themselves openly to Jesus and commit themselves to His service. Biblical leaders trust Jesus to forgive their sins and embrace the new life that God offers to His children through the work of Christ.

Commitment to your local church

Titus 3:1-2 states, "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men." It is important that your personal vision and thoughts about Christian service be in alignment with those held by your church.

Commitment to People

Paul wrote, “in humility consider others better than yourselves” (Phil. 2:3). Biblical leadership means committing to the growth and well-being of others.

Commitment to Personal Growth

Biblical leaders want to learn from God. They seek to grow more like Him.

Choose the Best Leadership Path

Once your Turbo Group ends, you will be faced with the question: “what do I do now?” It is important to recognize that “one size” does not “fit all” in leadership. The direction you take may be quite different from that of others in the group. Here are several things you might do:

Wait on deciding to lead others

Perhaps you are unsure if leadership is the best option for you, or would like time to process the things you learned in your Turbo Group. Perhaps there are some personal issues you would like to work on before committing to leadership. Waiting to lead others might be the best choice for you.

Assist a current leader

Maybe you would like to learn more skills and observe a current leader “in action”. Most leaders would welcome the chance to help an emerging leader gain new insights and skills. If this is the case, assisting a current leader might be the best direction for you.

Week Eight

Co-lead a group

If you have scheduling issues or other concerns, or if you have built a relationship with another leader who shares similar interests and ideas, you might consider co-leading a group.

Start a Group

After discussions with your Turbo Trainer and others in leadership at your church, you might decide to personally start a small group. There will be many things to consider; whom to invite, who will help you, etc. Other veteran leaders can provide much insight as you make these decisions to start a group.

Scripture Study

In this section, you will read some advice and a prayer from a leader.

1. When you were young, what did you want to be “when you grew up”?
2. As you reflect on where you are currently, how close are you from your childhood dreams?
3. Read Ephesians chapter 3. How did Paul become a “servant of the gospel”? (verse 7)
4. According to Paul, what was his mission as a leader? (verse 8-9)
5. What is Paul’s prayer for the people he is leading? (verse 16-19)

Questions for Reflection:

1. Paul explained the focus of his leadership in Ephesians 3:8 and 9. How does that statement resonate with your vision for leadership?
2. What vision has God given you for leadership?
3. How would you like to see God use you as a leader in the future?

Leader Lab

In this final section of your Turbo Group, you will spend time reflecting on ideas for your “next steps”, discuss what you have learned in the Turbo Group and pray for each other.

Introduction (15 min.)

As a large group, answer the following questions:

1. What Christian leaders have you admired?
2. What was the vision the leader had?
3. Why was their vision compelling for you or others?

Group Discussion (30 min.)

In your large group answer the following questions:

1. How would you like God to use you as a leader in the future?
2. What specific “next steps” would you like to take?
3. What can Turbo Group members do to help achieve your future leadership goals?

Turbo Feedback (15 min.)

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

1. What about the Turbo Group did you find most beneficial? Why?

2. What about the Turbo Group was the most challenging? Why?

Prayer and Sharing (15 min.)

1. In the large group, share any prayer requests you have for the weeks to come and for your future leadership needs.

2. Pray for each other and your future leadership opportunities and challenges.

Feedback (15 min.)

1. How would you describe the atmosphere/climate of this week's group? Why?
2. What questions were asked to help you enter into the discussion?
3. What did the group leader do to help you share the next steps you would like to take?
4. What is one area that this week's group leader might improve upon for future group leadership?
5. What is one thing that you would not want this week's group leader to change?