

15 Vital Tips
for
LAUNCHING

A Women's Bible Study

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F Feeling the nudge to begin a women's ministry or small group? Were you asked by a leader of your church to consider launching a Bible study but feeling overwhelmed or not sure where to start? Many women today crave a deeper understanding of God's Word, a sense of belonging, and the knowledge to live into a life of God's grace. They long for something more. Women's Bible study is a fulfilling and effective way to connect and learn alongside other women. And yet, sometimes it can feel overwhelming to get started (for those who are new or even those who are seasoned). These tips will help you successfully launch small group Bible study in your church or neighborhood so that you may grow and learn together.

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1 Be Excited

Share your passion for learning and studying God's Word. Simply be excited about the possibilities of others joining you for study. Women new to Bible study often feel overwhelmed when asked to add "homework" or study time to their already busy lives. Your excitement for the growth you've experienced from your own study may provide the encouragement they need.

2 Pray

It sounds foundational in regards to ministry, but we sometimes let this powerful step slip to the bottom of the list. Be intentional in prayer!

3 Find your Space

Effective small groups can take place anywhere. Gather in a location that is comfortable and inviting, whether it is in a church, a home, or a side room in a local coffee shop. Keep in mind that in order for women to feel comfortable sharing, an intimate setting will be more fruitful than a large room or loud restaurant. Meet where you feel most comfortable.

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4 Pick a Time

Select a time that works for your schedule and that you can commit to over a determined period of time. Allow plenty of time before and after each scheduled session as you'll often need extra time to prepare and clean up each week.

5 Provide Options

Recruit leaders for additional groups, so that those who can't attend your session may choose a group that fits their schedule. You may find that you can easily offer morning and evening sessions of the same study this way (this helps to reach women in different stages of life).

6 Partner with a Hostess

Ask a member of your group to consider serving as hostess. As the leader of your small group, you may find it helpful to ask someone else to host your group in her home or another location such as a church or community meeting space. Each of us has gifts, and hospitality may be a great strength of one of your group members. Encouraging participation from other women leaders also increases ownership of the group.

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7 Select a Study

Select a topic that connects not only with you, as the leader, but will also be a good fit for the women who will be participating. It is a good practice to test a study topic by polling your participants' interest before making a final decision.

8 Invite

You never know who may need to be a part of your small group; never assume that others aren't interested. The topic you've been led to study is likely one that others will be interested in as well. Invite others in person, through church or community announcements, and through social media. Be sure to announce the class time(s) as well as the starting and ending dates. Women are busy yet open to adding important priorities to their calendar (if they know full details and what to expect).

9 Use Social Media

Social media really is a great tool for inviting others to Bible study. Someone who otherwise might not have heard about the study may see the post and decide to join you. Consider creating a Facebook event or Twitter chat (depending on where you most often gather online).

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10 Be Intergenerational

Think all ages. Many times small groups are focused on one age group. This can be great. However, it can also be a true blessing to invite women from all stages of life into your small group. This allows for greater depths of mentoring and learning from one another's life experiences.

11 Be Open

Try to avoid becoming a clique before you even get started by staying grounded in your purpose of involving women in Bible study and open to adding new members as your meeting space allows.

12 Let Go

Let go of any expectations or demands. Don't be discouraged if your small group starts off very small and not everyone returns having completed each day's reading. Solid groups grow over time.

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13 Be Real

You are a leader and facilitator. However, you are not expected to know all the answers. Be real, honest and vulnerable as a leader and you may just find that even more women want to come alongside you on this journey.

14 Listen

Listen to God's nudges. God knows every detail related to the life of your small group or women's ministry and often will nudge you toward that next step you need to take at any given moment. Listen to God as well as the needs of the women around you.

15 Give Thanks

Give thanks for the opportunity to learn and grow in faith alongside other women.

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hink outside the box; remember, this isn't your mother's Bible study. Women are changing; times are changing. Lead authentically in a way that invites other women to walk alongside you into a life of grace.

Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (CEB)

Need tips for leading? Be sure to download the 15 Vital Tips for Leading a Small Group Bible Study at www.abingdonwomen.com.

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