



**JACOB'S WELL
C H U R C H**

Sample Small Group Guide

Updated 4.8.2020

This is an example of how to run a standard small group meeting over Zoom. Make sure to check out our “Zoom Help Guide” on the [Virtual Groups](#) page of the website.

You can replace the Bible study discussion part with any other curriculum or study, but this example shows a debrief and discussion of the weekend message.

The format is written to give a standard tips, but also gives some advanced ideas for those folks who are more tech-savvy. Check out the end of the document for helpful tips on how to have fun or create community during your group meetings!

If you have questions about leading a group over Zoom or other digital platforms, contact Jenna Kaiser, Formation Director at jkaiser@jacobswellchurch.church.

Time	Step	Standard Tips	Advanced Tips
5-10 min	Join the Call	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first time people join a Zoom call, it will take a little bit of time for everyone to get settled.• For following weeks, you should always expect that it will take 5-10 minutes for people to get on the call and troubleshoot any audio and video issues. This is normal and okay!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your group members are nervous about trying Zoom, set up a call with them one-on-one earlier in the week. Or, just make sure to call and answer any questions/alleviate nervousness.
3 min	Welcome & Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome everyone to the call and let them know what the plan is – a brief overview of the order of the meeting.• Make sure people know how to mute/unmute themselves and show them the chat feature in case they need it.	
15-20 min	Community Check-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give space for people to give updates about their lives (or introduce themselves if this is the first meeting!). It's helpful for the leader to call on people to share during this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your group is comfortable using something like GoogleDocs, you

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a good chance to insert some fun – here are a few ice breakers if you need them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>If you could describe your week as a song, what song would you choose and why? (i.e. “</i> ○ <i>If you could describe your week as an animal, what animal would you choose and why? (i.e.</i> ○ <i>Tell us about...[insert novel experience] (i.e. Worst injury, grossest food eaten, most embarrassing moment, etc.) *This one will definitely take more time ☺</i> 	could keep track of people’s updates and let people follow along on the document. Using a GoogleDoc helps people feel validated when they share and you can use it for other portions of the meeting, too.
2 min	Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up your time in prayer – this also helps people transition mentally from your fun ice breakers. 	
10 min	Scripture Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a passage of Scripture from the weekend message. You can choose to expand it a few more verses, if you’d like. • Have someone read the passage aloud. • Ask people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What did you notice in this passage? ○ What surprised you? ○ What would it be like to be one of the characters in the story or one of the people listening? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sharing your screen to bibliegateway.com and read from the same passage. • Consider writing down people’s observations in a GoogleDoc
15-20 min	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the loosest part of the outline and it’s important to both follow the group and lead them appropriately. However, you should try to point people back to the text whenever possible so you can avoid rabbit trails into discussions of other parts of the Bible, other sermons people have heard, or other beliefs that might be alienating for others in the group or biblically inaccurate. Here are some general starting points: • Ask the group what questions they have about the passage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss each question, trying to answer it from the text that was read aloud. ○ After the groups has discussed – check out some of the questions in the next point. • Debrief people’s experiences of the weekend message – but go beyond “I liked it”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was reassuring? ○ What was challenging? ○ What made you think or what questions do you have? ○ What was your main takeaway? ○ How are you applying the message to your life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can continue work in a GoogleDoc for this portion, too. • If you shared your screen to Bible Gateway, you can use the whiteboard feature when you share your screen in Zoom and mark up the passage in real time.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How can we, your community, help keep you accountable? 	
5-10 min	Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time praying together. We recommend sending people into breakouts to pray in pairs or groups of three. • Check out the "Prayer in Digital Spaces" resource for more tips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the GoogleDoc to track everyone's prayer requests. • Make sure your group has access after the call so they can continue praying for one another throughout the week.
5-X min.	Community Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend some more time connecting – asking what people are looking forward to, etc. • If your group is up for it, consider an extended time for more community (see some virtual options below!) 	
Total: 60-75+ min			

Additional Ideas for Community Fun

- Host a Jackbox Party
 - [Jackbox Games](#) is a game platform that uses smartphones (or other web-enabled devices) as the controllers. One person needs to have purchased the game in order to play and will need to share their screen with the group. Games are for 1-8 players but if more people want to play along, they can join as voting audience members and influence the game's outcomes.
 - Some of their games have been made available for free during COVID-19.
 - [They even have advice on how to play their games remotely.](#)
 - If you're new to Jackbox games, try out a free game (if it's still available) or go for [Quiplash](#) (\$4.99 at the creation of this document)
- Virtual Round Robin
 - Remember progressive dinner parties? You'd go to one home for appetizers, the next for dinner, then to another for dessert... and so on. One opportunity digital platforms give us is the opportunity to show people our living spaces and give them an "inside look" into our homes.
 - One person can share each week (or you can do them all in one night) and introduce your family/roommates/pets, etc. Show someone the

latest home project you've been working on, your makeshift home office, or the décor you're just really proud of!

- In-house scavenger hunt - find the object and bring it back to the Zoom call
- Play Pictionary on Zoom, [use Share → Whiteboard feature on Zoom](#)
- Would you rather questions -- A classic! Find a [list of examples here](#).

Additional Tips for Leading/Hosting Zoom Calls

- Make sure to check out our "Zoom Help Guide" on the [Virtual Groups](#) page of the website for the basics.
- Lean towards structured timelines and activities because looser/unstructured activities are more difficult online.
- Remember you can't "go around the room" in a discussion because everyone is arranged differently on screens. To achieve the same effect, after one person speaks, they can call on another person to go next, continuing until everyone has gone. (Alternatively, the host could call on people.)
- It can be harder to read visual/physical cues. Pay close attention when needed and make sure your actions are clear.
- Have grace and help others extend grace! It's easier to interrupt each other on digital platforms.
- In smaller groups, it can be comforting to have everyone leave microphones on and it not be so silent. But in larger groups, it's far too much background noise. Advise people appropriately.