

5 Tips for Leading a LATINO SMALL GROUP

1. HOSPITALITY: “BIENVENIDOS”

As a small group leader, you always want to be asking yourself, “How can I be a good host in this setting?” When you host well, it increases the comfort level of everyone present and places them in a position to be actively engaged in Bible study, prayer, and community time.

2. COMMUNITY CENTERED: “EN CONJUNTO”

Listen well to other people’s comments and build on their ideas so that the Holy Spirit can bring us to the truth of Scripture together. Acknowledge each other’s ideas and don’t compete about who is smarter. This practice may feel unusual for participants who are accustomed to the leader doing most of the talking.

When appropriate, encourage participants to say something like:

- “I love what Minerva said about _____. It makes me think that _____.”
- “I agree with Esteban about _____, and I want to add that _____.”

This encourages community, clarity, confidence, belonging, and space for all voices in the group.

3. ENJOY LIFE: “GOZAR LA VIDA”

Study Scripture with seriousness but also with a sense of lifegiving joy (*gozo*). Have fun with the passage, knowing the Lord’s love and grace is present in His Word as we study together. In many Latino Churches, it is common—even in the midst of times of loss and difficulty—to hear the Word and then pause in worship to praise the Lord for His goodness and faithfulness. So take time to laugh, worship, and enjoy your experience together with the Lord.

4. RESPECT DIVERSITY

While many of us have a common language and some wonderful cultural similarities, we must respect our inter-ethnic diversity. Even with our shared heritage, we bring unique perspectives. Listen carefully to your *hermanos* and *hermanas* who have different backgrounds and ethnic roots from you, seeking out both commonalities and differences that enrich our understanding of Scripture. When you come across a difference, pause to celebrate and explore it. Phrases like “Tell me more” and “I wouldn’t have noticed that” can help the conversation go deeper.

Note: Be aware that we also have church background diversity—Catholic, Protestant, charismatic—that we should respect, honor and learn from.

5. SPANISH LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Before you begin to lead, get a sense of how many Spanish language speakers you have in your group. This will help you to know how much Spanish and English to speak. For example, if everyone in the group is fully bilingual, it would be appropriate to freely utilize both languages, or just Spanish, during the Bible study. This will give students the freedom to use Spanish words that feel more descriptive or hold a stronger image for them. If several students do not speak Spanish, the group leader must also be sensitive enough to have everything translated to avoid confusion and alienation.

