



VISION

It is important to begin each small group with the vision in mind. Though how we are accomplishing this may differ at this time, the vision still remains.

Our vision at Next Level Church is to lead people to become fully engaged followers of Jesus. We seek to lead the lost people to be found, the found people to be free, and the free people to be empowered to make a Kingdom impact.

PROPOSED FLOW OF THE FIRST DIGITAL GROUP

Logging On (5 minutes)

As people arrive, make them feel welcome and comfortable. Address that you can see and hear them and troubleshoot when needed by calling the participant.

Official Welcome and Vision (5 minutes)

When you are ready to officially begin the group, officially welcome everyone and thank them for joining.

Spend a few minutes reminding the participants that though the avenue in which we accomplish groups has changed, the vision and heart of the group has not.

Cast vision toward the importance of continued participation within the group. Our Core Value of “Better Together” still remains true and we need each other now more than ever.

Share personally about your heart for your group and what you have been praying for, as well as what you are expecting.

You may find it best within this time to address the transition to online interaction only.

For some, using technology can elicit anxiety. For others, they may be mourning the loss of physical human contact. Regardless, it is important that we, as leaders, lead them to overcome their personal obstacles and continue to engage in authentic community.

Consider using the following statements:

- “Let’s all acknowledge the ‘elephant’ in the room. I understand that many of us would prefer to meet in person, but we feel it best to continue our group in this online model for the health and safety of you and your families.”
- “I understand that many of us are mourning the loss of human interaction, but let us thank God for the access we have to this technology that allows us to continue to see and encourage one another in this time.”
- “Using technology may be uncomfortable for some of us, but I want to assure you that I am here to walk you through anything you may not understand. We want you to continue to be a part of this group and are here to help you overcome any obstacles that would stand in the way of that.”

Zoom Tour (5 minutes)

For those in the group who are unfamiliar with Zoom, take them on a quick “tour” of Zoom, teaching them the following controls:

- How to Mute
- How to Stop Video
- Chat Features (if you plan to enable this)

Expectations (10 minutes)

Another important component of launching a digital group well is through the establishment of expectations – particularly addressing proper “online etiquette.”

Consider using the following:

- *Stay Muted*
Encourage participants to mute themselves as others are sharing to eliminate background noise.
- *Tune Out, So You Can Tune In*
Invite participants to tune out the messages fighting for their attention by activating “Airplane” or “Do Not Disturb” on their cellular devices, so they can tune in to the group. Though it may be difficult, encourage them to find a quiet space within their home where distractions can be minimized. You may even want to consider advising your participants to have prior conversations with their spouse to promote the importance of this time being set aside.
- *Engage, Don’t Just Watch*
When watching videos online, it might feel like just that – watching. However, we have the opportunity to engage just as we would any other week!
- *Get Social*
One of the greatest opportunities to facilitating groups online is that we can actually engage even more. Connect with others in the chat, share pictures from the group on social media, promote our online weekend services, and find new friends as we gather digitally.

- *Make Your Own Rules*

Have some fun and invite the participants to establish their own expectations of the group during this time of going digital.

Pastoral Icebreaker (15 minutes)

Before participants can really dive into meaningful discussion, we must break the ice and get people to participate with each other.

Consider using 1 or more of the following questions:

- How has life changed for you during this COVID-19 crisis?
- How are you personally?
- How are your friends and family?
- What is the loudest noise in your life right now?
- What needs do you have currently that are not being met?
 - Note: This can be both materialistic or emotional.

Leading the Group

As much as it is within your power, continue the content of your group.

- If you are a Life Group Leader, continue the engagement of video curriculum or the discussion of the book you are reading.
- If you are a Freedom Group Leader, continue the outlined agenda within the Freedom Leader Guide.
- If you are a Connect Group Leader, find engaging ways to continue to connect with your group and begin SOAPing together.
- If you are Serve Team Leader, watch online services together and discuss how you can apply the message within your personal lives using questions provided.

Regardless of the content, the goal is simply to lead your group toward becoming fully engaged followers of Jesus.

Next Steps (5 minutes)

Before your group concludes, spend a few moments identifying the best avenue(s) to continue the conversation throughout the week. Whether through Zoom, GroupMe, text messages, or phone calls, it is important to identify and establish a unified form of communication to ensure everyone can continue forward in clarity and confidence.

You may also want to consider re-visiting if the day and time your group is being hosted is what best fits for everyone in this new reality. If not, feel free to adjust the scheduling of your group to accommodate the majority.

Close and Prayer (5 minutes)

Formally dismiss the group by receiving prayer requests and ending in prayer.