

HOW TO RUN A FAITH STUDY NIGHT AT YOUR PARISH

Discover Discipleship Toolkit for Faith Study Coordinators

The time has come, your leaders are prepared, and parishioners have signed up.

It's Faith Study night. What else do you need to remember?

Here is a checklist of things to consider.

- ❑ **Reminder phone calls.** A couple of days before the study begins, get a few people to make personal calls to everyone who signed up. If your groups are already assigned, you can ask the Faith Study leaders to call members of their small groups to remind them and let them know how excited the leader is to have the opportunity to do the Faith Study together. Remind them to bring a Bible if possible.
- ❑ **Creating a comfortable environment.** Having all the parish Faith Study groups come together on the same Faith Study evening can create a great momentum. It can also create some struggles. Do your best to ensure that the small groups are dispersed enough so they can have conversations and comfortably hear one another. It is ideal if participants and the leader can sit together in a circle or around a table where everyone is visible and can easily participate in the discussion.

An alternative to all the small groups meeting at the same time is for them to meet throughout the week in the parish or in homes or local coffee shops. This may allow for more people to participate, while the different environment can attract different people in a more intimate setting.
- ❑ **Snacks.** Form a hospitality team or provide refreshments for the evening. Either put them out as people arrive so they can take them to their small group, or offer a time of fellowship before or after for the larger group. It doesn't have to be elaborate, but having something to share makes everyone feel welcome. You may even consider inviting different small groups to take turns providing the snacks to save costs.
- ❑ **Leaders packages.** If your groups are all meeting at the same time, you might want to make packages for each leader. These packages could include the Faith Study materials, the name tags, the surveys and even an attendance record. Have them laid out early so when your Faith Study leaders arrive they can take their package to their table.
- ❑ **Nametags or cards.** Make nametags or tent cards with names for the tables, especially in the first few weeks as everyone is getting acquainted.
- ❑ **Bibles.** Invite participants to bring their own Bibles, but it is also a good practice to have a few available to borrow.



- **Opening and closing prayer.** If you are gathering as a large group, offer the opening prayer as a collective. This is one place your pastor can get intentionally involved, or you can ask Faith Study leaders to do this, either in the small group or large group. The opening prayer is a key opportunity to introduce the night's theme and to align participants' hearts with what the Lord may have for them. Closing prayer, should time allow, is an opportunity for participants to voice their own intentions and pray together. Concluding with a common prayer (Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be) that everyone can participate in can be a nice wrap-up.
- **Child care or kids area.** Have an area for children while their parents participate in the Faith Study. It might be another room, or just a table for the kids to colour or work on homework. Consider what might make participation possible for families.

- **Intercessory prayer.** Invite parishioners to intercede for the participants and leaders while the small groups are meeting. Invite Faith Study participants to write prayer requests on a simple prayer intention cards. While they are going through the material they will know that others are lifting their prayers to the Lord. This can be a great way to engage parishioners who may not feel called to lead a small group. Ask intercessors to adopt a small group and pray for them throughout the journey. The battle for souls is real and we need to pray for participants.
- **Surveys.** Invite participants to offer feedback on the Faith Study and environment at the midway point and at the conclusion. Listen to their feedback to see if any changes can be made to improve the experience. There will also be an Archdiocesan survey intended to monitor the growth of participants and to evaluate if Discover Discipleship is achieving the desired results.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Keep groups to a maximum of six participants**
2. **Keep your strongest small group leaders leading Discovery.**
If participants enjoy their first experience they are likely to continue.
3. **Consider gender-segregated groups.**
Participants often appreciate the opportunity to talk about faith in this shared context.
4. **Consider grouping people according to age and state of life.**
This allows for more similar viewpoints and understanding in conversation.

