
how to... prevent and solve problems

1. Frustrations over children (making messes, babysitting issues, paying the sitter, noise, etc.)
 - Define house rules upfront regarding:
 - accessible areas
 - curriculum or activities
 - snacks for kids
 - babysitter & rate
 - who is responsible to secure sitter
 - discipline procedures
 - clean up
 - parent's responsibility level for their own children
 - If you have not set these goals up front, you will need to bring it up in a meeting and set some guidelines that will solve the problems. If you have a particular situation or child at the root of the problem, sit down with the parent(s) alone and discuss possible solutions in a loving manner.
2. Fights among members
 - Hosts should intercede. Talk to members involved separate from the group to discuss the Biblical principles that should be applied. (See **Matthew 18:15-17**)
 - If the situation cannot be resolved, call the Small Groups Director to get support.

*And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. **2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NIV)***

3. Members disgruntled with church, staff, or pastors
 - Discuss with the members involved, separately from the group, their Biblical responsibility to talk to the person involved. They can contact the Small Groups Director who can assist them in working with the church staff to resolve the issue. In most cases, a simple conversation can result in a pleasant and peaceable resolution.
 - Discourage them from discussing their concerns with other members, causing a negative effect on the group.
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*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light... **Ephesians 5:8 (NIV)***

*How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!
Psalm 133:1 (NIV)*

4. Salvation issues

- Refer to How to Share the Gospel, which can be found in your Small Group Members Guide and on the Grace website.

5. Doctrinal issues

- Refer to Our Statement of Faith, which can be found in our Small Group Members Guide and on the Grace website.

6. Questions you can't answer.

- Be honest and tell them that you are not certain of the answer, but you will find the answer and get back with them.
- Email the Christian Education Pastors at ChristianEducation@gracechurchco.com. They can answer your questions and even come and teach your group if your group has lots of questions about a specific part of the Bible.

7. Inconsistency

- Call to encourage the member that their participation is missed and needed. Discuss possible scheduling alternatives, if necessary.

*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)*

8. Latecomers

- Start your group on time; waiting for latecomers only perpetuates the problem.

9. Running out of room

- Approach your members about a possible alternate meeting location.
 - If your group becomes too large to physically fit in someone's home, you should consider breaking into 2 separate groups. You can meet as 2 groups for your Small Group time and then continue to all meet together for larger fellowship activities.
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10. Summer schedules & holidays

- Plan ahead.
- Look at your calendars periodically to anticipate schedule conflicts and make alternate plans.
- Avoid prolonged periods of down time. A broken routine is always hard to get restarted.

11. Someone struggling with obvious sin

- Handle with love.
- Be careful not to jump on a situation that spiritual maturity will address. Remember that new Christians do not have the discernment and wisdom that comes with spending time with Jesus.
- Use your discretion and do not allow the sin to affect or infect the group.
- Lovingly share with the member the Biblical principle they are violating and the consequences you are trying to prevent.
- Encourage them, pray with them and, if needed, call the Small Groups Director to meet with you.
- Don't allow your group to gossip about the situation.

*For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. **Ezekiel 34:11-12 (NIV)***

*Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" - and you forgave the guilt of my sin. **Psalms 32:1-5 (NIV)***

12. Gossip in group

- Gossip is dangerous and will kill a group.
- Don't allow direct or casual conversations that include gossip about others.
- Speak to the problem individually or as a group as necessary.
- Use your study time as an opportunity to teach Biblical principles like this as much as possible.

*Gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. **Proverbs 20:19 (NIV)***

*Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. **1 Peter 1:22 (NIV)***
