

# GROUP LEADER RESOURCES

## How to Integrate New Group Members

Joining a new group can be daunting, especially if someone doesn't know other people in the group. Here are steps you can take to help new members feel welcome and part of your group family.

- **Meet in advance.** Prior to them coming into your group, meet with them to give them insights into your group. Don't disclose personal details but give them an idea of group makeup, what you're studying, meeting format, etc. Also, share your group agreements if you have those.
- **Tell your group.** Before the new person/couple comes to your group, tell your group a little about them. For example, if they are tentative because of a prior negative experience, discuss how your group can help them feel comfortable and welcome.
- **Acclimate your guest(s).** You might ask them to come a few minutes early so you can give them a friendly greeting, show them the restroom and even ask them to help you set up. This sets the expectation that everyone in the group has a role. As soon as they can contribute, they'll feel a part of the group!
- **Spend time on introductions.** It's obvious but, instead of just basic intros, ask each person to share something meaningful. Examples are: When did you accept Jesus? Who has been a positive influence in your life (why)? What is one thing you're grateful for right now? What is your top bowling score (without bumper rails)? What's the most repulsive thing you've eaten? (If someone answers, "What I just ate.", you might have your food coordinator make a note of that.)
- **Check back with them.** Every few weeks, check in with the new person(s). Get their thoughts on their experience with your group so far. Uncover any concerns.
- **Continue relationship building.** Over the next several weeks, use icebreaker questions to learn more about each group member. Stronger relationships lead to greater vulnerability.
- **Encourage interconnection between members.** Building relationships should not just be up to the group leader. Everyone in the group benefits from connecting with others outside the meeting time. Encourage members to text, call, or get together with other group members periodically.