



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Introduction

This Discussion Guide is an exercise designed to help your group create your own service opportunity. This Guide tells you what you'll need for the group meeting and walks you through the exercise.

The purpose of this discussion is to make a definitive plan for when and where your group will serve during the winter “Love Starts Here” group alignment. (Nov/Dec 2015)

Opening Thoughts to the Group

Our opportunity today is to create our own service project. We'll talk a little about our experiences serving others and our expectations for serving together. We'll also do an exercise that will help us figure out whom we can serve.

Serving together as a group can help Faith Promise in our journey to become the kind of compassionate and giving church that unchurched people want to come check out. If we follow through with this as a group, we'll help our church provide more service projects for those who are not connected in groups. Also, we will help be the change in our church culture, living with an outward focus as we experience life with a new perspective and joy.

Before we dive in, here are a couple of simple thoughts that will help guide our conversation:

- Ideally, we will find a service opportunity that we can do together.
- We can all serve someone
- The most helpful service opportunities are the ones that are most dignifying to those whom you are serving.

Discussion

- Share about a time when you served someone else.
- Imagine if everyone at our church served. Talk about the kinds of things we could accomplish collectively in our local communities.
- What is an obstacle you face in giving your time to serve others? What can this group do to help you remove or overcome that obstacle?
- What do you have to offer others in service? Think about your abilities, skills, talents, resources, experience, and temperament. Be as specific as possible.



Activity Time

Write down the responses to the following questions (preferably where everyone can see).

- What are the names of widows whom you know?
- What are the names of single-parent families whom you know?
- Who do you know who is struggling with unemployment?
- Who do you know who is struggling financially?
- Who do you know who is suffering a loss?
- Who are the people new to your neighborhood? What are their names?
- What are some nonprofits that you know about and like?
- What are the names of other people or families you know that are hurting or struggling, for reasons we haven't talked about?

Review the list of names with your group. Remind one another that you can serve someone.

Spend the rest of the group meeting deciding whom you will serve and the steps you will take.

- Begin with the people, families, or nonprofits that may allow you to serve together. Be creative.
- Discuss how you might use the skills, resources, experience, etc., that you listed earlier.

Define clear next steps.

- Who will contact the person, family, or nonprofit?
- When?
- What will you offer to give or do?

Note: *It is far more helpful to offer to do something specific, instead of asking them to let you know if there's anything you can do. This is particularly true for offers to families and individuals.*

Note: *Nonprofits sometimes have a harder time employing specific talents and experiences. "What can we do for you?" is a more appropriate and helpful offer to them.*

What if that option does not work? Have a backup.

There is a list of **Serving Starter Ideas** on our mission's page at faithpromise.org/missions if you need a nudge of creativity.



Here are a couple examples of clear next steps:

a. The Davis family next door is going through a difficult season of life. Mark is going to call the Davis family this week to let them know that our small group would like serve them if we could.

- Tell them we'd like to make some meals for them, ask them if they have any food allergies or if there are specific foods they don't like, and set a date or dates to deliver the food.
- Ask if the group can come by Saturday to do some fall/winter yard work.
- See if they have any specific things they would like done. Are they looking for anything in particular (furniture, jobs, or a church)? If so, use your networks to help them.

b. Mrs. Roberts is an elderly lady that Kathy sees walking in the neighborhood. Kathy knows Mrs. Roberts is a widow and often alone. On behalf of the group, Kathy stops by Mrs. Roberts house with some fresh cookies and talks to her.

- Invite Mrs. Roberts to an upcoming holiday meal or a party with the group.
- Ask her if she would like to join some of the ladies in the group for a manicure . . . on us.
- See if the group can come by next Saturday to tackle some projects around the house (painting, cleaning, yard work, just social time, etc.)

Plan to follow-up at your next group meeting

- Have group members share updates on potential service opportunities into which they were looking.
- Make final decision on your service project.
- Whom will you serve?
- What will you do?
- When will you do it?
- If nothing else seems to work, you can sign up for a pre-designated service project that FP has created at www.faithpromise.com/missions under the "Love Starts Here" link.
- Determine next steps and action plan.
- **Assign someone to post at www.faithpromise.org/missions and share when/where you served after it occurs**

Pray. Commit your efforts to the Lord and ask for his guidance, courage, and persistence.

The Wrap Up

In closing, communicate this to your group...It's always easier to talk about serving than to actually serve. I hope this discussion was a step toward action. Whether or not we follow through is up to us. Let's encourage each other and hold each other accountable. We can always contact the church missions or groups office at missions@faithpromise.org or by calling 865-251-2590.