

Instant Reflective Session

Looking Back, Together

Small group times are opportunities to encourage chat, understanding of ourselves, each other, and God, through reflection and thankfulness. When else does this happen? What a joy that your role can facilitate this!

You will need: paper and pens – enough for a sheet and pen for each member of the group.

Start your evening by praying – invite Father, Son and Holy Spirit into all that you do in this space tonight, and thank them in faith for their presence.

Reassure your group that whatever is said in this room stays in this room, between you people, so that you may pray and support one another through life, loving as Jesus taught us to love one another.

Let people know that tonight will involve a simple, guided writing exercise, and that it would be great to be able to share thoughts from it, but that people need only share if they feel comfortable with it, and no one will be put on the spot or made to feel pressured – so that everyone can relax and feel safe.

Give everyone a piece of paper and pen. Ask them the following three questions, giving them five minutes to write for each question.

1. What are you walking through in your life at the moment?
2. What is God teaching you through this experience?
3. What are you thankful for right now?



That's it. Really, that's all there is.

Give people five minutes to ponder each question and write their answers down. They might prefer to write in list form. Reassure them that this is not a test of grammar or punctuation, neither are you trying for any prize winning efforts. Don't over-think things, just write what comes first to mind, and then keep writing.

If anyone says, "I don't know where to start," encourage them to write the words "Right now, the main thing on my mind is..." and to keep writing that sentence, so that they feel their way into the exercise.

Put music on in the background if it helps people relax (music without words is best for writing to).

When people have written, ask them to share. Don't force anybody to share, but do invite contributions, and don't be afraid to wait a few seconds for people to speak up. People are hesitant – but that often reflects a shyness rather than an unwillingness.

After you've shared those ideas, you'll have plenty to pray for each other about. Pray in pairs or as a group, as you judge most comfortable for your group. Don't forget prayers of thankfulness for item 3 on the list.

Free Your Group to Hear God

At the end of the evening, bring the group back together and explain that you're going to sit in silence for two minutes to allow God to speak to each person there. He may give them a picture, he may bring a bible verse or a song to mind. He may have words for them directly, or through someone else in the group. Invite them to sit comfortably, rest, close their eyes and just listen.



If you find it easier to have some quiet instrumental music on in the background, that's fine. Silence takes practice, and group silence can feel awkward to start with. Reassure them that after two minutes, you will bring it to a close.

At the end of the two minutes, ask if anybody sensed anything that they would like to share to build one another up as Christ's church. It may be simple, it may be complex – encourage all to contribute freely. This atmosphere of hearing from God and sharing will breathe the living breath of the Holy Spirit into your group.

As you do this regularly, expecting to hear from God and to build one another up will become a normal part of your group's culture and experience. What a joyous expectation to come to small group with!

It is extremely unlikely that anyone else in your group's week will say *Sit still for two minutes and listen for God's voice: what's he saying to you?* This is your privilege as a small group leader – to facilitate times and spaces that enable others to draw closer to God and each other.

