4 Quick Tips — Training Lesson

A facilitated training for ministry teams and small group leaders

Goal: Equip ministry small group leaders with practical skills to facilitate meaningful, Spirit-led Bible studies.
Total Time: 60–75 minutes

Facilitator Note: Have notepaper or blank paper available for participants who would like to take notes during the training.

1. WELCOME + INTRODUCTION — 10 MINUTES

Teaching Point:

Leading a small group is a meaningful calling — this training will equip you with practical tools to lead with confidence and serve your group well.

Script:

Say something like: *'Welcome, and thank you for being here. Whether you are brand new to leading or have been facilitating for years, this training is for you. Today we are going to walk through four practical tips that will help you lead your group with more confidence and intention. For each tip, we will spend a few minutes on the teaching and then jump into a practice activity together. Our goal isn't perfection — it's faithful preparation and a genuine love for the people God has placed in your care. Let's get started.'*

PRACTICE & DISCUSSION

Facilitator Instructions: Go around the room and give each participant a chance to answer the introduction question. Keep it brief — this is meant to warm up the group, not become a lengthy discussion.

Introduction Question: "What's one thing you've enjoyed as a small group leader or a participant in a small group?"

Say something like: *'Before we dive in, I want to hear from each of you. Let's go around the room and answer this question: "What's one thing you've enjoyed as a small group leader or a participant in a small group?" There are no wrong answers — just share what comes to mind.'*

2. QUICK TIP #1 — COME PREPARED: PRAYER + STUDY — 15 MINUTES

Teaching Point:

Preparation isn't just practical — it's an act of faithfulness that positions you to lead with clarity, confidence, and dependence on the Spirit.

Script:

Say something like: '*Tip number one is to come prepared — and preparation has two parts: prayer and study. Let's start with prayer. Leading well starts long before you walk into the room. Make it a habit to pray regularly for your group — not just right before the session, but consistently over time. Pray for each person by name, for their hearts to be open, for their focus, and for their growth in Christ. And pray for yourself — for wisdom, discernment, creativity, and the Spirit's guidance as you lead. You cannot lead on your own strength, and you don't have to.*

'The second part of preparation is study. Reviewing the passage and questions ahead of time gives you clarity and confidence. It helps you anticipate confusing areas, decide which points to prioritize, and feel ready to facilitate rather than just get through the material. The more prepared you are, the more freedom you have to follow where the Spirit leads in the room.'

'And if you're stretched for time, reframe it. Let your quiet time with the Lord be your study time — you will meet with God and get to know his Word well enough to teach it.

> **PRACTICE & DISCUSSION**
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> **Facilitator Instructions:** Divide participants into pairs. Allow 5 minutes for Part 1, then bring the group back together for Part 2. Part 2, is an open discussion – allow it to run as long as it is productive. For part 2, write the sample question on a whiteboard or read it aloud.
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> **Say something like:** *'Let's put this into practice. First, I want you to find a partner. Together, take about 5 minutes to brainstorm specific prayers you could pray for your group before your next meeting. Think about the individuals in your group and what they might need. After 5 minutes, I'll ask a few pairs to share what they came up with.'*
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> ***Once you have heard from a few pairs, move on to Part 2:**
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> *'For the second part, we are going to practice one of the most important parts of preparation — learning to anticipate your group's needs before you walk in the room. A big part of studying ahead is not just knowing the passage, but thinking through how your participants might respond to the questions. Here is an example question: "What stands out to you in this passage?" As a group, let's discuss — how would you reword this question if your participants seemed confused or didn't respond? What would you say differently?'*

3. QUICK TIP #2 — ENCOURAGE OPENNESS — 10 MINUTES

Teaching Point:

A welcoming environment doesn't just happen — you build it intentionally, and it makes the difference between a group that stays surface-level and one that engages deeply.

Script:

Say something like: *'Tip number two is to encourage openness — and this starts before the lesson even begins. When you arrive early and take time to connect with your group through small talk and conversation, you are already lowering walls and building trust. That relational warmth carries into the discussion.*

'Once the lesson starts, your tone and transparency set the culture for the whole group. Stay positive and encouraging, even when discussion is slow or responses are surface-level. Use icebreakers to help people feel comfortable, especially with a new group or a new topic.
'Don't be afraid to call on people kindly. You are not putting anyone on the spot — you are inviting them in. A simple "What do you think, Sarah?" goes a long way.
'And be transparent yourself. When you share your own thoughts, struggles, and questions, you give everyone else permission to do the same. People follow your lead — if you model openness, your group will too.'

> **PRACTICE & DISCUSSION**
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> **Facilitator Instructions:** Split participants into pairs or small groups of 3. Allow 5 minutes for the activity, then bring the group back together for Part 2.
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> **Say something like:** *'Let's practice encouraging openness together. First, in your pairs or small groups, take a few minutes to brainstorm two or three icebreaker questions that would work well for your specific group. Think about the people you lead — what kind of question would help them feel comfortable and open up?'*
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> ***Once you have heard from a few pairs, move on to Part 2:**
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> *'For the second part, we are going to practice transparency. As a group, let's discuss — how do you personally share your own thoughts, struggles, or questions during a study without making it about yourself or derailing the discussion?'*

4. QUICK TIP #3 — GIVE PEOPLE TIME TO PROCESS — 15 MINUTES

Teaching Point:

Most participants are hearing the scripture and questions for the first time — creating space to think leads to deeper, more meaningful responses.

Script:

Say something like: *'Tip number three is to give people time to process. Remember, most of your participants are hearing the scripture and questions for the first time. If you rush through the material, you are taking away their ability to think, reflect, and engage meaningfully.*

'One practical way to slow down is to print the questions for your participants ahead of time. When people can follow along, re-read the questions, and process what is being asked, they are much more likely to engage in discussion.

'Another tool is the 7-second rule. After you ask a question, count silently to 7 before you repeat or reword it. It will feel uncomfortable at first — but that silence is productive. People are thinking, and God is at work in those quiet moments. Don't be afraid of silence, embrace it.

'Finally, if you notice your group isn't sharing enough, or if you are asking a more reflective application question, invite participants to write their responses before sharing out loud. Writing slows people down in a good way — it helps them form their thoughts before they have to speak them.'

PRACTICE & DISCUSSION

Facilitator Instructions: Write the practice question on the whiteboard before beginning the activity. Have participants stay in their pairs from the previous activity. For the sake of the activity, instruct participants playing the role of the group member to pause and take their time before responding — even if their natural instinct is to answer quickly. This helps the leader practice holding the silence. Allow a few minutes for the role play, then bring the group back together for the debrief.

Say something like: *'Let's practice giving people time to process. In your pairs, one person will play the leader and one will play the participant. The leader will read the question on the board aloud and then count silently to 7 before saying anything else. Pay attention to how the silence feels — both as the leader and as the participant.'*

Practice Question: "What is one quality you think makes a great small group leader?"

> **Debrief:** After the role play, bring the group back together and ask: "What felt uncomfortable about the silence? What did you notice as the participant when the leader waited?"

5. QUICK TIP #4 — PROMPT MORE RESPONSES — 10 MINUTES

Teaching Point:

Discussion deepens when more voices are heard. While not every group opens up quickly, these strategies give you practical tools to gently draw more voices in.

Script:

Say something like: *'Tip number four is to prompt more responses. Discussion deepens when more voices are heard, and there are several practical strategies to help you draw more people into the conversation.*

'Avoid asking "Anything else?" because it gives people an easy out. They can simply say no and the conversation stops. Instead, follow up someone's answer by asking "What else?" or "Who else?" — this signals to the group that you expect more than one answer.

'You can also ask follow-up questions that send people back to the text. Try "What made you think of that?" or "Where did you find that in the passage?" These deepen the discussion and train your group to use Scripture as the source, instead of just trading opinions.

'Try partner sharing for open-ended or application questions. Have pairs discuss first, then invite a few people to share their own answer or their partner's answer with the group. This warms up quieter participants before opening to the full group.

'And finally, try setting a minimum number of responses out loud. Tell your group, "I want at least 3 people to share before we move on," and then hold the silence until it works. Setting that expectation creates a culture where participation is normal and expected. Just remember — know when to move on. Once the question has been sufficiently answered, it's time to keep going.'

PRACTICE & DISCUSSION

Facilitator Instructions: Have participants stay in their pairs from the previous activity. Write the practice question on the whiteboard before beginning the activity. Allow 5 minutes for the activity, then bring the group back together for the debrief.

Say something like: *'For this activity, one person will play the leader and one will play the participant. The leader will read the question on the board, and after one participant responds, the leader will follow up with either "What else?" or "Who else?" and hold the silence until a different participant responds. This is about practicing getting more responses — not just getting one answer and moving on.'*

Practice Question: "What is one way you have seen God at work in your life recently?"

Debrief: After the activity, bring the group back together and ask: "What felt effective about following up with 'What else?' or 'Who else?'? What felt challenging? For those who experienced silence during the activity — did it feel any easier to hold the second time around?"

6. WRAP-UP + COMMITMENT — 10 MINUTES

Teaching Point:

Your job is to be faithful — God's job is the heart change. The work you do as a leader is never wasted, even when you can't see it.

Script:

Say something like: *'We have covered a lot today — four practical tips that will help you lead your group with more confidence and intention. But knowing the tips is only the beginning. The real growth happens when you take them back to your group and put them into practice. In a moment I will give you time to create an action plan based on what you learned today, but first I want to remind you of an important truth.*

'There will be days when you do everything right — you prepare, you create space, you prompt responses — and it still doesn't feel like the group went well. That's okay. Your job is to be faithful. God's job is the heart change. Don't grow weary in doing good, because the work you are doing as a leader is never wasted — even when you can't see it. You may never know the impact of the seeds you are planting, but trust that God is using your faithfulness in ways you cannot yet see.

'Before we close, I want to give you a moment to reflect.'

PRACTICE & DISCUSSION

Facilitator Instructions: Give participants a moment to write quietly before closing in prayer. If you have the 4 Quick Tips Handout available, distribute it now as a takeaway reference.

Say something like: 'Take a minute to write down one action step you want to apply in your next group meeting. It doesn't have to be big — just one thing you want to try. When you are ready, we will close in prayer together.'

Closing Prayer: Close by praying together for wisdom, humility, and Spirit-led guidance as each leader goes back to their group.