



Fortify Small Group Leader Guide

"Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose." Philippians 2:2

Purpose:

A community of married couples that encourage and inspire each other to fortify their marriages in God.

Goal:

To create a safe place for couples to grow in their relationship with God and with each other. This is created by the leaders and group members showing grace, love, and that they are not alone. This will help couples in the group to take a step to lead in some way. (Examples: *Lead a Fortify Group, lead a Small Group, join a Small Group, join the A-Team, lead in the workplace, lead a team, or start a new journey with Christ.*)

Small-Group Structure

Time	Example of the Night
7:30 (10 min)	Meet and Greet
7:40 (10 min)	Share Wins - Prayer over Night
7:50 (10-15 min)	Leadership Talk - Focus point for the night
8:05 (40 min)	Q&A and Discussion
8:45 (5 min)	Weekly Challenge
8:50 (10 min)	Prayer
9:00	End Group
9:30	Lights Out

- **Wins:** Taking time to celebrate our little (or big) victories is so important to set the tone of the group to encourage each other. This is not a time to share long stories. Just quick celebrations. (It is important to set it up that way!) Everyone in the group participates in this, so you can start with one person and go around the room from there.
- **Leadership Talk:** Using the topic for the week, have a leader (or guest leader) speak truth through ***scripture and testimony***. Keep this to around 10-15 minutes. This gives plenty of time for questions and discussion.
- **Q&A and Discussion:** Allow most of the time for questions or discussion. The questions that are on the guide are for support if your group isn't opening up with questions or discussion. Allow the Holy Spirit to move here by being flexible and be open. Allow vulnerability, questions, and allow the couples in your group to guide where it goes. Always point it back to Jesus.
(*Example- John & Lucy open up about a struggle they are walking through and after discussing and encouraging them, you feel a nudge to have the whole group pray for them. This is being flexible and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you as a leader.*)
- **Weekly Challenge:** Use this portion of the group to challenge the couples in your group with a practical action step God puts on your heart, to have your group encourage one another in community throughout the week.
(*Example- On 'Identity' week, you give your group a scripture to memorize about who they are in Christ.*)
- **Prayer:** Have a leader pray over the group and the week to come. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak words of life and encouragement for the week.
- **End Group:** End on time. An effective group should not exceed 1.5 hours. Respect people's time by ending on time. Also, get them excited about coming the following week by telling them the next week's topic!

- **Lights Out:** Set a lights-out time for your group. This is the set time you as a leader are asking for everyone to be out of your home. This helps people respect your time as a leader as well as those in the group. If people would like more time to talk, connect, or listen, we encourage leaders and other members to set up coffee or lunch throughout the week.

Fortify Resources

Weekly Topics

Click on the links given for guidance to give to your leaders coming in to share on the topic given for that week.

Topic
Week 1 : The Why and Overview- Guide for Week 1
Week 2: Love & Respect- Resource for Week 2
Week 3: Faith - Resource for Week 3
Week 4: Communication - Resource for Week 4
Week 5: Relationships - Resource for Week 5
Week 6: Conflict - Resource for Week 6
Week 7: Intimacy - Resource for Week 7
Week 8: Parenting - Resource for Week 8
Week 9: Balance - Resource for Week 9
Week 10: Stewardship- Resource for Week 10
Week 11: Free Choice of Topic
Week 12: Free Choice of Topic
Week 13: Celebration: See example of the night here . Celebrate all God has done in your group by celebrating stories, having some type of fun element, and intentionally connecting to Next steps.

Fortify
People Resource
(Leaders to come share)

At our Fortify Groups, we encourage you as a Small Group Leader to invite other leaders to come and invest into the couples in your group by sharing on the given topic.

It is good practice to communicate with leaders at the start of the semester with a formal or informal invitation.

Once the semester has started, follow up with the leaders a week out reminding them about the group and the topic of the week. If there is any special information about your group, make sure to communicate that to them as well. (Special instructions, gate codes, specific celebrations, or any ideas you want your group to hear.)

Reach out to people in the sphere of your influence at your location first. Your coach will have a list of people from your location for you if you need help filling any of the weeks!

Email Template

Use this when emailing Leaders to come and share at your group

Hey! [Co-leader and I] are leading a Fortify Small Group at [Location] this Spring. We are expectant and excited for the couples signed up for this group.

I am reaching out to you because you are influential leaders and I think that your voice would be valuable to this group of couples.

With that being said, [Co-leader and I] are asking you to pray about joining us for a week or two as an investment into the couples in this group.

What does this look like? Each week is a new topic. The nights are set up to share for 10-15 minutes on the topic using biblical principles and scripture, stories, and practical next steps. We have a 30 minute Q&A and discussion portion followed by a weekly challenge for that topic to implement that week.

*Pray about it, check out the schedule below and let me know if you can make any dates. Once you decide to join us, I can chat with you to help give you an idea of what to expect for the night. (**Or you can just come and observe any night you like.)*

Thank you for your investment,

**Attach or list dates of your group with a list of the weekly topics.

How to Prepare as a Small-Group Leader

- **Pray.**
 - Pray over each night. Allow the Holy Spirit to give you the words and be obedient to him.
- **Scripture and other Resources.**
 - Using the topic for the night. Find scripture that speaks truth to that topic. Study it, write it down, and use it to speak truth and life into your group.
 - Use the Resources as a guide for the topic.
- **Communicate.**
 - Set up a way to communicate to the group that fits best for you. *Church Center App, Group Text, Email
 - Make sure to remind your couples about the group on a weekly basis.
 - Include the topic and encourage them to come prepared with questions.
- **Invest.**
 - Send encouragement throughout the week.
 - Meet with the couples to hear their hearts and help them through their season.
- **Invite.**
 - Invite leaders at your location (or others) to speak to the group on a topic.
 - Prep them with vision and the why behind the group and time limits.
 - Offer them a chance to be part of the group and answer questions even if they aren't sharing that specific night.
 - Invite couples to attend and join the group.
- **Share.**
 - As a Fortify Small Group Leader, stay in contact throughout the semester.
 - Text other leaders questions and celebrate wins together.
 - Invite each other to attend and be part of your panel for the night.
- **Empower.**
 - Always be searching and praying for the next leaders for a Fortify Small Group next semester.
 - We exist to REACH and CONNECT. Be bold in the calling God has on your life.