

Small Group Planning Guide

Having been in charge of small groups, I know the challenges you can face putting groups together. Here are some suggestions you may find helpful. Feel free to modify them as you see fit. If you have any questions, please email me at me@joshkelley.ink.

First, determine how many weeks you want the study to last. With that number in mind, you can easily customize the study, using one of the options below:

1. *One chapter a week (18 weeks)*
2. *Several chapters a week (8 weeks suggested)*: Of course you can divide it up any way you like, but I think the "Eight-Week Study Guide" divides it up into logical chunks.
3. *Selected reading (minimum 5 weeks)*: To get a good overview of *Radically Normal*, I'd suggest that you discuss the following chapters:

Chapter 3, "It's Okay to Be Normal"

Chapter 4, "Honorable Work"

Chapter 8, "In Defense of Earthly Joy"

Chapter 11, "Happy Holiness"

Chapter 18, "Onward"

If you have more than five weeks, insert as many chapters as you have time for. You can even ask the entire group which chapters interest them the most.

Second, invite people to attend your group or announce it at church. You'll want to give yourself three weeks' lead time. If you like, you can use and modify the "Small Group Bulletin Announcement."

Third, ensure everyone has a copy of *Radically Normal*. While people can participate in the discussion without reading it, I think everyone will benefit more if they do. The books can be purchased from an online retailer (such as Amazon.com), a local Christian bookstore, or my website.

Fourth, make sure all participants know when and where the group will meet. Encourage them to read the first chapters in advance.

Finally, prepare for the first meeting by reading ahead in *Radically Normal* and praying for your group. Here are suggestions on how to facilitate the meeting:

- Begin with some food and beverages – there is something about eating together that opens hearts.
- Begin your discussion with prayer, asking God to guide you.
- Ask this open-ended question to start things rolling, “What was the one thing you want to remember the most from this chapter?”
- Use the discussion questions found in the back of *Radically Normal* (or you can print them from my website). Don’t be in a rush to answer all of them; they’re a tool to use, not an assignment to complete.
- End your time by asking “What’s the one thing you want to do differently based on what you’ve learned?” Take prayer requests and close with prayer.

Aside from that, I’d encourage you to think of yourself as a facilitator, not a teacher. This is your chance to serve the participants. Encourage everyone to speak and don’t be afraid of long pauses – sometimes that’s what it takes to get some people talking!