

How to Plan a Response

But first, why?

By interacting with the material in a response activity, they are, in essence, forced to consider the Biblical truths presented in the lesson with a higher level of thinking.

A good response will also give the people in your life group something to think about throughout the upcoming week so that the Biblical truths are being turned around in their mind for more than just one hour each week.

By incorporating a simple response into your life group lesson, you require the people in your group to be involved with the topic for the day. They aren't able to just come and go. They can't even just share a few thoughts during discussion but not actually consider what others are saying. They need to respond.

When we encounter real Biblical truths, we need to respond. Knowing what salvation is means nothing unless we respond to that call. Knowing what water baptism is means nothing unless we respond to that command. **Knowing what you learned in life group that day means nothing unless we respond, interact, and apply it to our life.**

Step 1: Goals

Start at the end. Figure out your goal. Where do you want the people in your group to go? What do you want them to get out of the lesson as a whole?

This is the most important part of a response. If it doesn't line up with the lesson, it won't reinforce what you want the people in your group to know.

Step 2: Type of Response

Will the people in your group work better with a craft, a journaling prompt, a challenge, an activity?

Different groups will react better to different types of responses. Think about your group, and decide which type of response will work best. There is a lot to be said for consistency, but try to add variety. Explore how people react when you don't always stick to the same type of response.

Step 3: Purpose of the Response

Is the purpose of your response to create an analogy so they understand the lesson better? Is it something tangible they can take home to remember the lesson throughout the week? Do you want to spend a chunk of time focusing on a certain aspect of the lesson (should extra time be reserved for an activity during the hour-long life group)?

Step 4: Plan

When you have the first three steps solidified, determine the exact response that would align with the goal, type, and purpose of the response.

Be creative! Just because no one has done it before, doesn't mean you can't.

Ask the Holy Spirit for inspiration (Seriously. Stop. Pray about it!).

Search Pinterest.

Google ideas.

Skim life group lessons online.

Sample Responses

Community/Prayer

Goal: Community will surround each member of the group as they bring each member's prayer requests before God.

Type: activity

Purpose: focused time

Plan: One person at a time will present their prayer requests/struggles/problematic situations, and the rest of the group will lay hands on them in prayer.

Any

Goal: any

Type: challenge

Purpose: remembering

Plan: Everyone will remember a certain Bible verse or passage by a set time.

Fruits of the Spirit

Goal: Remember that the fruits of the Spirit take time to grow, but with intentional care and perseverance, they will bloom.

Type: craft/activity

Purpose: analogy/take home

Plan: Everyone will receive a mason jar full of top soil. Each person will write down which fruit of the Spirit they want to grow in on a small slip of paper. They will plant that slip of paper with a flower seed. As they take care of the seed and watch it grow, they can remember to take care of their fruit and see it grow. The people in the group can also decorate their mason jars with encouraging Bible verses.

Any

Goal: any

Type: journaling prompt

Purpose: focused time

Plan: Ask the people in your group one or more thought-provoking questions (the questions should be more than "Write your thoughts on this topic.") that they can address during a set time to write in their journal.

This can be either a time to organize thoughts before discussion, or a time to journal thoughts that remain between them and God.

God's Got This

Goal: Give our lives up to God

Type: activity

Purpose: analogy/help to remember the lesson

Plan: As we try to wrap our minds around something as abstract as giving our life or specific situations over to God, we could illustrate it like this: Each person in the life group will have an Alka-Seltzer tablet. They will write a word or short phrase on it with marker before they drop it in a large pitcher of water to watch it disappear. It is no longer theirs. Prayer can be incorporated before writing, as they are dissolving, after, as a group laying hands on each person, etc.