



EQUIP YOUR LEADERS

How to Host an Online Small Group

The Opportunity

The opportunity is huge. Your students may be more eager to meet on-line than they would be to meet in person. You get to communicate what is TRULY important when you make changes like these. So don't miss the opportunity to communicate what is important during the changes you implement!

All the things you value for in-person small groups, you need to value for online small groups. The vehicle has changes, but the destination/mission has not.

Tools for the Job

Google Hangouts, Zoom, and Facetime.

Google Hangouts is free, everyone needs a Google account, max of 20 people at one time.

Zoom has free and paid plans. Free, you can send a meeting link, not everyone needs an account, but the limit is 40 minutes in length. The \$15+/month paid plans get rid of that restriction.

How to Host a Good Small Group Online

- **Be Present: Show Up Predictably and Randomly**
 - The old routines are out the window and kids thrive when they know what to expect. Let your small group be part of their new routine
 - Showing up randomly means sending birthday messages, asking about their games or performances, and showing up outside the 1 hour per week during small group.
- **Create a Safe Space:**
 - We anticipate kids being more openly honest online than when in the room.
 - Lead the group and make sure there are two adults in the chat/video call.
 - Come up with a new mission statement. Make sure it talks about acceptance, confidentiality, and honesty.
 - Conversations go like this: My dad used to eat his boogers. My mom had three milkshakes last night, my friend doesn't believe in God.
- **Partner with Parents**
 - Cue the parent

- Get the parents information, have them all fill something out
- Honor the parent
 - If you're not on the parent's side, you're not on the kids' side
- Reinforce the family
- Mobilize your students
 - If we want them to think church is important, we need to give them something important to do.
 - Look for ways to mobilize your students through creating online content, experiences, hangouts, mission projects, and more.
 - This may also look like having a group chat going on during the other 167 hours of the week. WhatsApp, GroupMe, Facebook Messenger, and SMS are all good options.
- Be familiar with the tools
 - Have your equipment tested out
 - Make sure they can see your face at a good angle and in good lighting.