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BIBLE DISCUSSION HELPER INFORMATION

WHAT ARE THE BIBLE DISCUSSION FELLOWSHIPS?

These small-group fellowships are part of a larger ministry seeking to meet the physical, social, and spiritual needs of international students and scholars or their families, in the context of God-honoring love and hospitality. These small groups meet regularly to discover and study the Bible together; they also provide leadership training for international Christians. It is our goal to have internationals lead in as many aspects of the group as they are willing and able. Our small groups are structured to help Christian international students grow in their faith and help non-Christians understand God's plan of salvation. We desire to grow international disciplemakers (2 Timothy 2:2).

ARE ALL THE GROUPS THE SAME?

Each small group is designed to address particular needs. Some groups are divided into different ethnicities. Also, some are composed of only one gender or one age group. Let us know of your interests.

WHEN AND WHERE DO THE GROUPS MEET?

Most groups meet every Friday or Saturday evening, usually in homes although there are a few groups that meet at a church. Starting times may vary from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

ARE MY CHILDREN WELCOME AT THE FELLOWSHIPS?

Some of the Small Groups offer childcare on the premises.

ARE THERE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH THE BIBLE DISCUSSION FELLOWSHIPS?

Since this group serves the needs of internationals, we do have some guidelines for those attending the Bible Discussion Groups. We ask that you prayerfully read these guidelines to determine if you can comply with our requests. Coordination of all volunteers wishing to serve with the bible discussion groups is done by the Volunteer Mobilization team. Please be sure to call the Group Leader before you attend one of the Fellowships.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HELPERS?

Helpers will:

1. Assist the group leader by taking responsibility in one or more of the following areas: rides, hospitality, set-up, facilitating Bible discussion among students, planning social activities, follow-up of students.
2. Attend the majority of small group meetings.
3. Mentor internationals and volunteers who desire to become Bible study helpers.

Guidelines for Those Attending the IFI Bible Discussion Groups

Because many American Christians come seeking to determine if our fellowship can be a place for serving the Lord, we have written some guidelines about how we minister and what our expectations are. If you have any questions, we invite you to ask them. Also, we would like the privilege of praying for you as you seek God's will for further involvement.

1. Prior to coming, you will be asked to complete an application form and background check and attend an IFI volunteer training session, if you have not already gone through this process. Following volunteer approval, you will have an opportunity to discuss your commitment level and observe various groups, as you consider if and how God is calling you to serve on the Campus Ministry Team as a Bible Study leader or helper. **The first time you attend a Bible group, we ask you to observe and not participate in the small group discussion. This will allow you to see the interactions and relationship-building within the group.**
2. **Because we exist to serve the needs of internationals, we ask you to realize the following things:**
 - a. Many students who attend our meetings are not Christians. Some are studying the Bible for the first time. We want to give them time to know who Jesus is and consider His claims in their lives. Therefore, do not ask questions such as: "Are you a Christian?" or "How long have you been a Christian?" etc.
 - b. It is easier for you to speak in English (your first language) than for them to speak in their second language (English), so...
 - Be a good listener. It is easy for Americans to end up dominating the discussion in groups unless they intentionally hold back from answering questions and jumping in with comments. We want the international students to be encouraged to share and ask questions. The majority of the dialogue should be from the students, not the leaders or helpers.
 - Give them the opportunity to answer questions, even if you know the answers. Silence is OK. It is not necessary to answer every question asked during the discussion. These can often be followed-up with the student after the conclusion of the group discussion.
 - Speak clearly and slowly
 - Remember that the discussion groups are for the benefit of the students, not the leaders or volunteers. Bible truth discovery is preferred over lecturing or teaching. A Discovery Bible Study (DBS) format is preferred and recommended.
 - c. Students may be uncomfortable relating to strangers of the opposite gender. Actively seek out students who are of the same gender and limit interactions with those of a different gender.
3. **For those who believe this ministry is where God wants them to serve, we will discuss placement with a Campus Ministry Team mentor who will provide guidance and support in the learning environment of their group. Mentorship will range from three months to one year. We want to give you time to see how we operate and what we value. A few values are listed below.**
 - a. Because we come from a variety of churches, we focus on the central teachings of the Bible rather than on church doctrine. Along with this, we emphasize the importance of application in one's life. We ask that you focus on these same areas also.
 - b. Our group is **not** a recruiting ground for inviting people to church. Only after you have taken the time to know students well should you invite them to your church. Your home is a better place to start ministering to students, if you want to invite them someplace outside of the meeting. It is quite likely that an American church experience will be very different from what will be culturally available to students upon returning home. Begin with the end in mind - we want to position students to join healthy fellowships upon returning home.
 - c. We are a ministry that works primarily along gender lines – man with man and woman with woman. We ask that you do the same. Interacting across gender lines must remain respectful and professional at all times. Be aware of how cultural differences affect those interactions. We want everyone to be comfortable around us as we interact.
4. **Once released by your mentor to serve as Bible study leader or helper on the Campus Ministry Team, we will provide ongoing training, as well as opportunities to fellowship with others of like vision and commitment.**