

discussion leader's guide

Any father, youth worker, or mentor can lead a Young Man in the Mirror discussion group. You don't have to be an experienced Bible teacher to lead a discussion.

Suggestions for a Discussion Leader

Getting Started

- Photocopy the table of contents. Give to young men you want to meet with. Ask them if they would like to be in a group that would read the book and answer discussion questions in each chapter.
- The optimum size is four to six young men; seven is max.
- Plan to cover one chapter a week for fifteen weeks (this will no doubt take longer because of other scheduled events and holidays). You could also consider doing two chapters per week and meet for 8 sessions.

First Week

- Distribute a copy of the book to each young man.
- Have each young man introduce himself and answer an icebreaker question like, "Why are you interested in this study group?"
- Jump right in and read the first chapter together and answer the questions.

Proposed Meeting Schedule

- Plan to meet for 1 1/2 hours weekly.
- Thirty minutes-pizza, wings, or Chinese food with soft drinks. Consider varying the menu.
- Sixty minutes-read and discuss one chapter, a section at a time. Close m prayer.

Reading the Book and Leading the Discussion

- Not all the young men will be able to read the chapters in advance, so forget that idea unless you have some special powers! (or a very

unusual group). Instead, read the book out loud one section at a time. Use a different young man to read each section.

- Answer the question(s) at the end of each section identified by this symbol: ¶. The questions will always look like this:



*"You are not abnormal." OO you agree or not, and why?
How does it make you feel to know that you are not
abnormal?*

- If a young man asks you a question beyond your scope, simply say so and move on.

How to Have Great Meetings

- Call your young men each week to remind them of the meeting.
- Read the chapter yourself in advance.
- Look up and read Bible verses that support points being made.
- Lead your young men into a meaningful discussion based upon the questions at the end of sections.
- Make sure every young man gets "air time."
- Share from your own experience.
- Be vulnerable.
- Answer the secret questions the young men are too embarrassed to ask.
- Deal in their reality, not yours.
- Start and end on time.
- Include prayer to start and end-have the young men pray if it seems right to you.

Things to Avoid

- Don't preach or teach. Rather, lead a discussion by asking the questions at the end of each section and by offering nondogmatic advice when appropriate.
- Don't speak more than 25 percent of the time.
- Don't go off on tangents. Stick to the topic of the day

- Don't feel pressure to fill in the "quiet" after you ask a question. Let one of your young men break the silence.
- Don't ever put anyone down.
- Don't be sarcastic.
- Don't spiritualize when a practical answer is what they really want.

Graduation Ceremonies

- Plan a graduation ceremony, picnic, father/mentor and son retreat, or other event with fathers and mentors.
- Purchase blank certificates at an office supply store, put in "initiation into manhood" text, you and each father or mentor sign, and present at your graduation ceremony.
(See sample certificate on the next page.)
- Father/Mentor and Son Cookout. Have an activity that will appeal to your young men (my group did jet skis on our lake). Gather everyone in a circle after burgers or BBQ. Have each father or mentor write out a two-minute blessing in advance on "Why I love you and why I am proud of you." Have each father/mentor share first. Then, as the leader, pick one word that describes each young man and offer a tribute. Present each young man with his certificate signed by you and the father/mentor.
- Church Ceremony. Use as much imagination as you want. For example, you could have the young men stand before the church (possibly with their father/mentor at their side) and have the elders or deacons gather around, have the pastor acknowledge what they have completed, then offer a prayer of initiation into manhood.
- Consider videotaping your event and giving each young man a copy.
- Have someone act as the official photographer to get candid and a group photo. Give a 5 x 7 of the group photo to each young man.