

FOUR KEYS TO FACILITATING VIRTUAL GROUPS

Adapted from the *Life Group Guide*
available for free at stsaministries.org



1. START SOMEWHERE

We have an opportunity to build authentic community at a time when we all need it most. Virtual Sunday services are a great chance for teaching and communal prayer, but groups allow for two-way communication among members can reach members in a different, but essential way.

The ultimate goal of groups in any context is to build authentic community where people are encouraged, challenged, and where they can grow together. Rather than spend too much time planning and researching, start simply by putting out a note out to see who would be interested and set up a weekly virtual meeting using whatever meeting tool you have access to.

3. CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If people are willing to join your group and share in the discussion, they will want to know that the environment they are joining is safe. Keep groups limited to your members and take the appropriate security precautions (passwords, specific email lists, sign-ups, etc.) when setting up your virtual groups.

We recommend that group discussion facilitators be trusted members of your church, growing in their walk with Christ. Ask them to talk with the group at the first meeting about what will make it successful. Commit as a group to creating an atmosphere that promotes authenticity, confidentiality, respect, and fun.

2. BE FLEXIBLE

Things are changing quickly, and rather than be stuck thinking about groups in a specific way, be ready to adapt to the needs of your members. Remember, groups are not necessarily about teaching, but connecting, and they are just one way you are supporting members during this time.

Discussion questions are a great way to get the conversation going, but if someone takes a detour to discuss difficult circumstances, let the group support and pray for them. If one online platform isn't working, try a different tool the following week. Ministry is not about perfection or being afraid to fail. As leaders, we're learning to support our members where they are.

4. USE RESOURCES

There are many ways to facilitate virtual groups. We encourage you to determine whatever works best for your particular church community and with the appropriate permissions of your church leadership.

STSA Ministries has developed a more extensive guide to establishing groups for church leaders as well as a full curriculum of videos, schedules, facilitator guides, and discussion questions that are completely free for you to use and adapt to your needs.

For more support and ideas, join the orthodox leader community at www.stsaministries.org.

FINDING YOUR FLAVOR LIFE GROUP PACKAGE AVAILABLE NOW

Based on the book *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas, this package will explore why there is no one-size-fits-all approach to spirituality as we examine nine different ways that people experience God.

