

DISCUSSION GUIDES

NOTES

Group Discussion Guides for each of the thirteen sessions are included in this section.

The Discussion Guides will help you maintain a schedule and give you ideas to jump-start the support group discussion time; however, we want to encourage group leaders to be sensitive to what is on the hearts of group members during each meeting. If group members do not seem to have much interest in talking about the content of the video seminar, there may be other things that have occurred in their lives in the previous days that constitute more pressing or urgent concerns.

The best thing you can do for group members is allow them to express their feelings, concerns, anger, fears and successes. Be careful not to let one member of the group dominate, and be sure to guide the group back on track if members are giving inappropriate advice, but also allow group members the freedom to express their hearts. There is great healing in this kind of sharing.

If you sense that the members of the group want to talk about other things, spend a few minutes reviewing the key points of the video seminar to make sure there are no questions, comments or misunderstandings, then allow participants to share on the topics and experiences important to them.

Group leaders will find they can rely on the prompting of the Holy Spirit to guide the group in the proper direction.

Make sure that each group leader views the *Making DivorceCare Work* video (Disc 5). It offers suggestions for effective ways to use these discussion questions and lead a group.

Need copies?

You are free to copy the Discussion Guides (the following thirteen pages) for use by your co-leaders/facilitators as they lead a DivorceCare group.

If you would like to have these pages in an electronic format, you can download them from the DivorceCare LeaderZone at www.divorcecare.org/leaderzone under the Lesson Aids section of the Library.

Make Bibles available for participants

Some participants will not have Bibles. Plan ahead of time to have gift Bibles available to give to your participants so they can complete the **On My Own** Bible study at home.



www.divorcecare.org

- Register for the email Leaders' Forum
- Find DivorceCare groups worldwide
- Visit the DivorceCare bookstore
- Learn more about DivorceCare
- Access online leader resources at www.divorcecare.org/leaderzone

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

Opening the Session

ICEBREAKER: Ask each person to give his or her name and tell the group his or her favorite junk food.

Note: The icebreaker question is designed to be one that anyone can answer without feeling on the spot. This particular question often yields some laughter as well. Feel free to substitute other icebreaker questions, but avoid those that can be awkward, embarrassing or hard to answer. (Suggestions for other icebreaker questions can be found in the LeaderZone Library at www.divorcecare.org/leaderzone.)

Take a moment to introduce the participants to their workbooks. Direct everyone to the note-taking outline for Session 1. Explain how the outlines are located at the beginning of each workbook session and how they provide an outline for each video seminar. Also point out the weekly journal at the end of each workbook session, the Parent Pages and the Care Cards (located in the back of the workbook). Review the guidelines for your DivorceCare group (see page viii in the workbook).

Ask each person to share a short description of the circumstances surrounding his or her separation or divorce. (Group leaders should also share a short description of their personal experience with divorce.)

View Video

Use your workbook as the video is viewed to model note taking.

Discuss Video

What area of your life has been hardest to stabilize?

Have you had any success in stabilizing an area of your life?

Did this video seminar lead you to reset any expectations? If so, which ones?

Closing the Session

Encourage your group members to spend time with the **On My Own** Bible study section of the DivorceCare workbook.

Note: Group leaders are also encouraged to complete this study so that you can lead a short discussion about it at the beginning of each group session. There is more information on how to do so on the Discussion Guide for Session 2.

Encourage each person to come back for the next session.

Close with a prayer.

Note: The group leaders should always lead the closing prayer. You may wish to have group members form a circle and join hands as they pray.



Goals

- To help members of your group become comfortable with you, each other and the support group environment.
- To begin building a sense of “family” among group members.
- To begin building trust in the group.

What to Expect

Many people in the group will be nervous or uncomfortable about coming to the first DivorceCare session (especially if they have never been to a support group before). They may be particularly apprehensive about what to expect during the group discussion. The first video seminar is designed to address these concerns, but many people will still be uncomfortable until they’ve gone through a session or two.



QUESTIONS

We're here to help.
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Helpline at

1-800-489-7778.

Visit the DivorceCare
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THE ROAD TO HEALING/FINDING HELP

Goals

- To continue building a sense of “family” among group members.
- To give group members an opportunity to react to the concepts about healing discussed on the video seminar and to give them an opportunity to share their successes and failures as they have searched for personal healing.

What to Expect

At this stage in the development of your group, you will find a range of feelings among group members. Some will still be uncomfortable or embarrassed about being in such a group. Others will return enthusiastically after finding the last session helpful. It is important at this stage to continue to work on helping each person feel comfortable and accepted.

If there are people who did not return after the first session, take time to telephone them and encourage them to return.

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Opening the Session

Again this week, ask each person to introduce him or herself and to share a short description of the circumstances surrounding the separation or divorce.

Note: Repeating this question will help group members remember names and circumstances and will help newcomers get to know the others in the group.

Discuss On My Own

Encourage group members to complete the daily **On My Own** Bible study. Save some time at the beginning of this session to allow group members to discuss what they learned from the last week's study. A discussion question:

What did you learn about God's ability to help you heal from your divorce?

View Video

Use your workbook as the video is viewed to model note taking.

Discuss Video

What kinds of losses have you experienced in your divorce?
Which are the most significant?

Have you made any progress in grieving those losses? How have you done so?

Is there any grieving that you still need to do? What kind?
How should you grieve that loss?

What role does Jesus Christ have in your healing?

Closing the Session

Encourage each person to come back for the next session.

Invite group members to share prayer requests, and encourage group members to begin praying for each other. Lead a closing prayer that includes mention of the prayer requests (you may want to make a written list to follow as you pray or have group members write their requests on a small sheet of paper so you can pray for them during the week or send the requests to your prayer team; names do not need to be included).

Note: Many of the participants may be uncomfortable leading a closing prayer or participating in group prayer. We suggest that the leaders maintain responsibility for the closing prayer through all thirteen DivorceCare sessions.