

## 7 Characteristics of Effective Small Group Leaders

By Kathy Howard

Can you feel the excitement building? The books are in... The coffee pot is on standby... The name tags are ready... A new semester of women's Bible study is about to begin!

The success of women's Bible study depends heavily on the small group leader. Maybe you've been asked to lead a group. Maybe you're responsible for finding and training leaders. I've done it all – and sometimes all at the same time! Leading a small group or teaching a Bible study class is a great responsibility because we *will* influence the members.

Over the years, I've noticed some common attributes among leaders who make a positive spiritual impact on their group members. Although not an exhaustive list, these characteristics are ones all leaders can work to incorporate into their small group ministry.

1. **We are students** – Leaders don't have to know everything about the Bible, but we need to be constantly learning. Do your best to study the lesson's passage and don't be afraid to say "I don't know, but I'll find out."
2. **We are accountable** – It's easy to get lazy in our study and discipleship unless we give someone permission to hold us accountable. Ask God to give you an accountability partner or mentor who will pray for you and ask the hard questions.
3. **We are transparent** – Share honestly from your own life and spiritual journey. A "perfect" leader discourages the group members. A leader who talks about her own struggles with life and faith connects with the women and encourages them to open up too!
4. **We are passionate** – Passion for God's Word and work is contagious. Don't be afraid to show some excitement over what God is teaching you and about what He has been doing around you. Your spark will start a fire!
5. **We are jealous** – Paul had the attitude of a mother bear when it came to his spiritual children (2 Corinthians 11:2-6). As leaders and teachers of God's Word, let's diligently protect their hearts and minds against false teaching. Don't be afraid to stand firm for the truth.
6. **We are disciples** – Our students need leaders they can follow. Like Paul, I want to be able to say: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Let's set a godly example for our groups in prayer, spiritual growth, holiness, and commitment to the body of Christ.
7. **We are investors** – Each student has individual needs. Good leaders take time to know the students and their needs. Connect with them outside of class. Encourage them with calls, emails, and Facebook messages. Pray for them and let them know you're praying for them.

Women's Bible study impacts women for Christ. Your faithful leadership will make an eternal difference in their lives. Are you ready to get started?

*Kathy Howard* is the author of 4 Bible studies including *Unshakeable Faith* and *Embraced by Holiness*. Find out more at [www.kathyhoward.org](http://www.kathyhoward.org)