



Small Group Facilitator's Guide

Introduction

Thank you for partnering with us to strengthen the marriages in your church and community! This guide is for facilitators who desire to use the Together for Good series as a small group resource. The five video sessions will present the marriage enrichment content. No additional teaching is required on your part. Instead your role as facilitator is key to helping each couple in your group use the materials to strengthen their marriage.

Your main role will be to facilitate two types of discussion:

- 1) Conversations for couples to have privately, spouse to spouse, which will be prompted by the videos.
- 2) Conversations for the whole group to have, which we suggest take place at the end of each session. There are questions provided in this guide for you to facilitate the group discussions.

Format

- Five or six sessions (5 video sessions and 1 session for a concluding group debrief).
- Video content runs 45-60 minutes.
- We suggest an additional 25-30 minutes each session for the debrief/application discussion.

Here's a suggested time breakdown for each meeting:

- Welcome - 10 minutes
- Video Session - approximately 55 minutes
- Debrief Discussion/Application Steps - 25 Minutes

Questions are provided in this guide to help your group process each session, but you can also use these more generic questions:

- ❑ What's something that stood out to you in the session? Why?
- ❑ Was there a new thought or perspective that has helped you understand yourself better? Or understand your partner better?
- ❑ What is one thing that you want to apply this week?

Tip for Building Openness and Trust

If you, as the host couple, share some of your own challenges in the first few sessions regarding differences, drift and conflict, that will greatly help to create a safe atmosphere for open conversations. Your transparency will free the participants to share their own experiences. Make sure to intentionally affirm others when they share, as that will encourage even more group interaction. As group sharing increases, there will be less of a need for you to contribute, but continuing to share where appropriate will be helpful and appreciated by the group.

Preparation

Resources

[Download or rent the series on Vimeo.](#)

[Order](#) or [download](#) the workbooks. It is not recommended that couples share a workbook, as each spouse will likely have different notes they may wish to take.

Invite Couples

Brainstorm a list of couples who should be invited. Nothing is better than a personal invitation. Even if the series is being promoted in your community or church, personal invitations are the best way to encourage participation. When you personally invite couples over the phone, via email or in person, tell them to visit familylifecanada.com/tfg to learn about the series. In addition, explain to them how the discussion format will happen so they know they won't be expected to share marriage secrets with the group.

Setting

In Person - each couple should ideally have physical space for private one-on-one discussions. Use a facility or home that has enough space for them to spread out.

Digitally - Zoom or other platforms can provide a group experience where the video sessions are played through a shared screen. This works best if the host has purchased and downloaded the series. That way they can play the videos from their computer instead of relying on streaming. This will increase the video quality, putting less strain on Internet bandwidth.

Another online approach is to gather on a video platform, such as Zoom, for group debriefs weekly or bi-weekly. Each couple would join in, having already completed the video session and the private conversations on their own.

Technical Support

For the Zoom Call... **Practise, practise, practise!** Try out the steps below with at least 3-4 others on a Zoom Call. If you have specific questions or issues with using Zoom you can also [access their Help Centre](#).

Playing Videos

- ❑ We can't emphasize this enough - **plug your computer directly into your modem so your computer is hardwired into the Internet, not just on wifi.** Turn off all other apps that may delay your upload speed. The host should instruct attendees to turn off their webcam when the videos are playing.
- ❑ Playing the videos off your own computer seems to work best. Download them and keep them in a separate folder. Practice using your video-playing apps beforehand.
- ❑ When you share a video make sure you have "Share computer sound" checked! Keep your mic off at all times so participants don't pick up your sound as well.
- ❑ Have someone else on the call designated to let you know if there are any issues with sound, etc. For example, they could send a text to your cellphone if there is an issue. Often it'll look like everything is running well from your perspective, even when attendees are noticing issues.

Chat

- Turn chat to “Participant can chat with Everyone” or “Participant can chat with Host Only.” Having everyone on the chat builds community but can be a distraction due to a visible thread of comments. It’s up to the host, so check with them. Once in the call, click on the chat icon — the “...” in the bottom right and make your selection.

Other Features

- Consider using [Polls](#) and/or [Breakout rooms](#) depending on how you would like the group to interact and engage with the content.

Session One

Introductions & Together for Good - Differences and Drift

Personal Introductions: Have each couple introduce themselves and share a snapshot of their relationship: how they met, years married, significant milestones, favourite trip together, etc. Suggest they bring a wedding picture or favourite photo for show and tell. Make it fun!

Overview of Together for Good: Introduce the theme and briefly outline what they will see and experience in each session.

Ground Rules: Clear guidelines will make couples feel comfortable and secure.

Confidentiality: Agree that no personal information will be repeated outside the group.

Permission: Couples agree not to share information about their partner without permission.

Discussion Times: Two types of discussions will be used: 1) Small group times with the opportunity for everyone to engage; 2) One-on-one times (built into the video sessions) that are just for the couples to discuss key points privately and make personal applications.

Workbooks: Better engagement will happen when each individual has their own workbook, rather than a couple sharing one. The speakers in the videos often refer to the workbooks, which also outline the individual and couples’ assignments.

Video Session One: Introduce the theme of video session one: two key challenges to all marriages — differences and drift. **Play video.**

Suggested group discussion questions:

- ❑ How have you seen differences impact your marriage?
- ❑ What factors/currents are causing drift?
- ❑ What's one thing you want to do to manage differences or address drift?

Suggested Projects (couples choose one):

- ❑ Each day this week, give your partner a compliment or share one thing you appreciate about them. Talk together for 15 minutes each day. No logistics stuff.
- ❑ Talk about your thoughts, desires and yes... feelings!

Session Two

Together for Good Tools - Dealing with Drift

Welcome the group.

Check in on action steps from the last session: "Any reflections on differences and drift?"

Introduce the theme of video session two: Dealing with Differences in Communication Styles:

- ❑ Staying Connected
- ❑ Communication Style Differences
- ❑ Speaking Clearly
- ❑ Listening Carefully

Play video session two.

Suggested group discussion questions:

- ❑ What's one thing you discovered about your communication patterns/styles?
- ❑ What are some adjustments you would like to make when it comes to speaking clearly and listening carefully?

- What one step are you going to take to improve your communication?

Suggested Projects (couples choose one):

- Review “Communication Style Differences” and talk about how they have influenced your communication during the past week.
- Talk about “Speaking Clearly” and “Listening Carefully.” Agree on one thing you will do to improve your communication.

Session Three

Together for Good Tools - Managing Conflict

Welcome the group.

Check in on action steps from the last session: “Any new insights about communication for you as a couple?”

Introduce the theme of video session two: Navigating Differences (Conflict):

- Conflict is Inevitable
- Conflict Starts with a Spark
- Managing Conflict
- Seeking and Giving Forgiveness

Play video session three.

Suggested group discussion questions:

- What’s one thought that caught your attention about conflict?
- What are some ways to make conflict a friend?
- What practical step will you take to manage conflict better?

Suggested Projects (couples choose one):

- ❑ Develop a set of ground rules for healthy conflict.
- ❑ Identify your top 3 areas of conflict and how you will manage them.
- ❑ Review and discuss “Seeking and Granting Forgiveness” from the workbook.

Session Four

Together for Good - Sex

Welcome the group.

Check in on action steps from the last session: “Any new reflections about the area of conflict?”

Introduce the theme of video session four: Differences and Drift in our Physical Intimacy (This can be a sensitive topic for some couples. Respect each other's level of transparency.)

- ❑ Deep Issues: 3 A's
- ❑ Drift - Currents: Cultural, External, Internal
- ❑ Difference - Physical, Emotional, Desire

Play video session four.

Suggested group discussion questions:

- ❑ What's one thought/perspective that caught your attention?

Suggested Projects:

- ❑ The project for this week is the one outlined in the workbook (Session 4, p.5-6).

Session Five

Together for Good - A Greater Good

Welcome the group.

Check in on action steps from the last session: "Any new reflections about the area of physical intimacy?"

Introduce the theme of video session five: Differences and Drift in our Spiritual Intimacy

- The Good Gift - Relationship with God
- Growing - Spiritual Pathways
- Growing Together for Good

Play video session five.

Suggested group discussion questions:

- What is one thought that stands out to you?
- How has a relationship with God played out in your life/marriage?
- How does the concept of spiritual pathways unlock new ways to connect with God and/or with each other spiritually?
- What does growing spiritually look like for you?
- What is one thing you would like to apply?
- Refer to the Target: Ask if there has been any movement toward Together for Good.

Suggested Projects (couples choose one):

- Share where you feel you are at spiritually in this season of your life, and why.
- Review and discuss: "Growing Together for Good List (Session 5-5)." Discuss what you might do together to grow spiritually. Pick one activity you will try this week.

Prepare couples for your final meeting:

Share the debrief questions for Session Six (below) with the group. Ask couples to consider responding to one or two of the questions during your final meeting. Email the questions to each couple a few days before the next session so they are reminded and can better think through what they may wish to share.

Alternate Schedule

Depending on your group dynamics, another option is to skip a sixth session and to instead extend your fifth session to include a final group debrief discussion, for which there is an outline below.

Session Six

Together for Good - Group Debrief Discussion

For your last meeting, spend some time as a whole group discussing key take-aways. Make room for couples to share stories about changes they've experienced in their relationship. Encourage couples to consider next steps, not only for their own marriage, but for how they might help other marriages as well. Conclude by praying for one another.

Debrief Questions:

- How have the past few weeks impacted your relationship?
- Were there any "Aha" moments?
- What has been most helpful?
- What changes have you made in the way you interact with each other?
- What are one or two healthy habits you want to practice to grow closer together?

Next Steps:

- Offer the couples the opportunity to host a Together for Good small group of their own.
- Offer the couples the opportunity to either become [marriage mentors](#) or to be mentored themselves. (Here's a 3 minute [clip](#) to introduce mentoring.)

Pray for One Another:

- Spend some time in prayer celebrating the positive changes and the help and hope couples have experienced. Also pray for healing and growth in areas of frustration or hurt, especially for those who have shared about personal challenges. Make sure to end things on a positive note.