



International Christian Fellowship (ICF) Home Group Guidelines and Training

1. **Purpose/Objective of Home Groups** – Provide opportunity for students to find a “home away from home” where they can experience the love, grace and truth of God by being part of a Christ community, learn about American culture, and develop friendships. Home Groups provide a natural way for believers to connect with, love and serve students and are a springboard for deeper relationships and personal ministry outside the home group.
2. **Home Group Description (Example)** - The Explore International Christian Fellowship (ICF) Home Group meets in an American home twice a month (2nd & 4th Friday) for ethnic and American food, meeting new friends, English conversation, fun games, and Bible discussion for those who are interested.

Our home group offers students the opportunity to experience American culture, develop friendships, practice English, and interact with Americans and students from around the world in a friendly and welcoming environment. We’re a culturally diverse group with students representing different countries, religious backgrounds, and degree levels. Come learn and grow together with us!

3. **The Four C’s** [*The 3D Gospel* by Jason Georges]

- Christ
- Community
- Cultures: Guilt – Innocence Shame – Honor Fear – Power
- Context (Gospel, Caring & Conversation, Time vs Event, Direct vs Indirect)

4. **General Guidelines**

- When starting a new home group, ISI/ICF requires you have at least six (6) people who are committed to being part of the leadership/host team. This helps spread the work and responsibility and lessen the load on everyone. Also, this gives you enough people to cover things when people are sick, need to be out of town, etc. Once your group gets going, invite people from your church to visit in order to help envision and recruit new/future volunteers.
- Expect to start slow – you will begin connecting with students early on, but it will take 5 - 6 months to develop deeper friendships and a real sense of community.

- Home Group Team needs to meet (monthly, beginning of each semester, etc.) for prayer and planning and more frequently in the beginning before your group starts. Things to decide...
 - What night will you meet? Friday or Saturday?
 - How often will you meet? Every week, every other week, etc.
 - Where will you meet? Same home each week, rotate homes, church youth room/building once or twice a semester, etc.
 - Will your group meet all together for English Conversation and/or Bible reading and discussion?
 - Will you read a Bible passage/story together and then break up into smaller groups for discussion, Q & A, etc.?
 - Will your group do M28 Bible Discovery study all together?
 - Will you offer both English Conversation and M28 Bible Discovery Discussion and let students decide which group they want to participate in? [If offering both groups, it's always good to give students the option to go where they feel the most comfortable].
- First meeting or two just do...
 - Get to know you types of things, introductions, human Bingo, etc.
 - Fun group/interactive games (individual participation or in teams)
 - English Conversation (do all together as group. Idioms, holidays, etc.)
 - Introduce Bible Discovery Study (*read and discuss the Bible*) during the first meeting and start study in second meeting if possible.

5. Structure/Format

- Food/Mealtime
 - Host home and/or other volunteers provide main dish and all team members contribute.

- Encourage students to bring something to share (homemade or store bought). Helps them take ownership (*their group*) and deepens their commitment.
- Vegetarians, Muslims, Hindus – plan to have vegetarian options.
- Tap into other groups like Sunday school classes, small groups, women’s groups, etc. to commit to bringing food on a rotating basis. Chicken, rice, rolls, pizza, hamburgers, casseroles, fruit, veggies, desserts, drinks.
- Church may provide funds to help with meals (each time, once a month, etc.)
- General Schedule (very flexible!)

6:30 – 7:00	Volunteers arrive
7:00 – 7:30	Greet, welcome students, name tags, contact info, etc.
7:30 – 8:20	Prayer (student), dinner and conversation
8:25 – 8:40	Gather for introductions, announcements, group games, etc.
8:45 – 9:30	English Conversation and Bible Discovery Study groups
9:30 – 10:00	Desserts, visit, hang out

6. **Roles and Responsibilities** - Divide responsibilities based on gifts and interests of team members and some nights people might have to serve in more than one role (good to rotate among group if possible).

- Greeters/Welcomers – assigned to greet students at front door, provide name tags, and have them fill out information forms (name, cell, email, country, major), media waivers, etc.
- Kitchen Hosts – organize the food, explain dishes, direct traffic, etc.
- Welcome and Prayer – host team and believing students
 - *“It’s our custom to pray and thank God for the food and our friends.”*
 - Ladies first
 - Americans in line with students so they can sit together. Have everyone number off and 1’s sit at this table, 2’s at another table, etc. Mix it up.
- Group Time Leader – after dinner group gathers for introductions, announcements, and group game(s) [different person can lead games]. Web sites for games: <http://wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>, <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/gamesballoons.html>

- English Conversation Leader (45 – 60 min) – picks topic (American culture, leadership, relationships, purpose/meaning in life, idioms, holidays, etc.) Web sites for idioms, topics and questions are: www.idiomsite.com, <http://earlyrain.org/>, <http://iteslj.org/questions/>, <http://esldiscussions.com/>
- M28 Bible Discovery Study Facilitator/Leader (45 – 60 minutes. Rotate among team and students) <http://www.isim28.org/bible-study.html>
 - Purpose of M28 Bible Discovery Study is to surface/flesh out “students of peace” who are open spiritually and hungry to know more. Follow up personally with these students to see if they’re interested in meeting another time (outside of home group) for personal or small group study.
 - Students love stories so in the larger Home Group M28 Bible Discovery Study, it’s best to focus on stories about Daniel, Zacchaeus, miracles/life of Jesus, parables, etc.
 - Have Bibles (same translation) or print out passages for students. www.biblegateway.com or www.bible.com
- Prayer Coordinator
 - Coordinates prayer among home group team for team and students
 - Notes prayer requests and needs of students and emails to HG team
 - Provides names of students to Home Group Team so that members can pray weekly for every student by name (salvation, openness to meeting for M28 DBS, opportunities to share the gospel, growth, and witness for Christ if Christian, etc.)
 - Pray for and with students and encourage students to pray for themselves.
 - Powerful to prayer for students and their needs as part of your home group time together.
- Communications/PR Coordinator
 - Email, Group Text (WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.) and/or Facebook message students about home group the Friday or weekend before
 - Can send reminder message on Tuesday or Wednesday

- Good to text students the Thursday before or Friday of home group
 - After first meeting – send personal email, text, etc. to each student thanking them for coming and that you look forward to seeing them again
 - Same as above when new students visit the group
 - Facebook Group – Students can set this up, post pictures, etc.
 - Transportation Coordinator(s)
 - Contact person for students needing rides and connecting them with Americans or other students for pick up.
 - Coordinate pick up location(s), carpools, etc.
 - Could also be the Communications Coordinator
7. **M28 Bible Discovery Study Training** (3 hours) – Outline and Content-ISI can provide to your home group host team, other volunteers from your church, etc.