

HOW TO MEET ONLINE AS A GROUP

With everything going on in our community right now, your small group is more important than ever. By keeping your members connected you can offer the care, support, and community that everyone needs, especially right now. Even though your group may not be meeting in person right now, it doesn't mean that you have to stop being connected.

STEP 1 // PICK A PLATFORM

Any small group can gather weekly through a video chat, conference call or a text platform (preferably in that order) to share life, discuss the sermon notes and pray for each other.

VIDEO MEETING: Zoom.us, Skype, FaceTime (apple devices only), Google Hangouts, or Facebook Video Chat by Messenger

NOTE: Check out this video tutorial from our friends at Saddleback on how to set up using Zoom: <https://youtu.be/prw7rEhehEQ>

AUDIO ONLY: Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, Facebook Messenger, What's App, or group conference call.

TIP: If tech isn't your thing, see if someone in your group enjoys it and invite them to lead the charge of connecting the group in this new way. As with all new things, it's a good idea to test it before group with a friend and have grace for each other as you try a new way to meet. **Remember, even if it's hard, the people in your group are worth it!**

STEP 2 // DECIDE ON CURRICULUM

We encourage your group to use Talk It Over, a sermon discussion guide created specifically for small groups. You can find the guide each week in the OBCC app, it's sent out via email, and also available here: <http://bit.ly/2WrHPbj>.

Your group can watch the service live at OBCC.ONLINE.CHURCH, as well as watch or listen to the message through the church website or app.

You may also choose to watch a video study available on Right Now Media. If you or others need to sign up for an account, you can do so through the church app or on the small group page at OBCC.CHURCH/small-groups.

TIP: Prior to meeting, remind your group members to watch or listen to the weekend message so they are prepared for the group discussion when your group meets.

STEP 3 // PLAN YOUR GROUP TIME

Meeting online may feel different than meeting face to face, but most of the flow and relational dynamics still apply in the virtual world. As you meet online, give yourself grace since mistakes will happen, and don't rush through your time together online.

Here's A Typical Flow If Your Group Were To Meet For An Hour:

- **Welcome Everyone (5-10 min):** People will be late online, just as your in-person group, so build in some buffer time to catch up in the beginning.
- **Warm up the group (5 min)** by getting people to use the "Mute" and "Unmute" button. Ask an icebreaker question. Let everyone answer the question.
- **Group Discussion (30-35 min):** Normally at this point your group would watch a video if you're doing a video based study, but for groups meeting online it's usually better to have people watch the video prior to arriving so you can jump right into the group discussion time.
 - **NOTE:** If you do want to watch a study together, be sure to pick one that is short and then you can share your screen with others so they can watch it.
- **Prayer (10-15 min):** Share prayer requests and be ready to pause on someone going through a tough season, or to see how you can meet the needs of others.
- **Hang Out (5-10 min):** When your group is finished with the questions and done praying, feel free to leave a little time for people to talk, like they normally would at an in-person meeting.
- **OPTIONAL:** Have someone pick a worship song to share with the group. If someone plays an instrument, ask them to lead your group in song. If your group doesn't have someone like that then find a worship song or two on youtube and then share your screen with the group so they can watch/listen (& even join in to sing).

STEP 4 // TIPS FOR A GREAT ONLINE MEETING

Login and get familiar with your meeting software. Know how to adjust your mic and camera, as well as how to mute and unmute. The creator of the meeting can mute/unmute any participant (at least on zoom and skype), which is helpful thing to know upfront.

Have group members download meeting software on their phone, tablet or computer prior to meeting and give it a test run.

Select the quietest place in your house (avoid turning your dishwasher or washer/dryer on right before group time)

Make sure your camera on your laptop is angled correctly (no one wants to be looking up your nose). Use a box to elevate and level your camera on your laptop if needed.

Have the primary light in your house shining onto your face (sunlight from a window or lamp) and not behind you. If the light is in the background your camera will struggle to display your face and you'll often look washed out.

REMEMBER, if you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Justin, he would love to help!

