

Immerse Groups Training Manual

Natalie and I would like to thank you for embracing the spirit of Faith Fellowship Ministries of Southern New Jersey, and for sowing your gifts and talents into the lives of those around you. Words can't describe how vitally important you are to fulfilling God's mandate for this ministry. God Bless you as you serve as unto the Lord.
Pastor Joe Fortunato

Faith Fellowship Ministries of Southern New Jersey Vision

To know Him, and make Him known.

Immerse Groups Goal

To reach all of Southern New Jersey with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, one household, one community, one city at a time.

Foundational Scripture

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord"
2 Peter 1:2

Volunteer Requirement

You must be a born again, and a believer that is ready to minister to the needs of the people.

Schedules and Absences

Your service to the Lord is invaluable to this ministry, and consistent Immerse Group meetings are imperative to the level of excellence that we aim to achieve at FFMSNJ. It is helpful to select the same day of the week to host your group, if possible, so that participants can clear their calendar well in advance and not have to wait until they receive an invitation. In the event that a church function is scheduled on a day/time that you would like to hold your Immerse Group, we request that you please select another day/time.

Contact Information

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Training and Communication

To maintain an optimum level of excellence at FFMSNJ, we ask you to attend a training meeting held once a year on a Sunday. The training date, times and locations will be given with as much advance notice as possible. Feel free to contact us anytime with any questions, concerns or ideas that you may have. We will also send periodic emails to keep you up to date and informed.

Child Protection Policy

If you choose to provide child care at your Immerse Group, in order to ensure a safe and secure environment for the children and youth, make sure that all children are well supervised by a trust care giver.

HOW DO I BUILD MY IMMERSE GROUP?

1. Make a list of one or two people from each of these groups:

FAMILY: Ask a family member to join you in leading the Immerse Group. A family member will be supportive and will always strive to make your meeting a success.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS: It is easy to talk to your friends and neighbors. Choose the ones that you think would benefit most from an Immerse Group.

FELLOWSHIP: Talk to people you worship with that live in your area.

RECREATION: Talk with people you meet at the gym, supermarket or other community functions. While you discuss the weather, current events, etc, ask God for an opening to talk to them about your Immerse Group. You'll be surprised how willing people will be to attend. Let them know how other people are enjoying an evening in your home. Explain what takes place at each meeting.

WORK: If you work locally, introduce Immerse Groups to your coworkers. You'll know the ones that are in need of fellowship. What a great way to bring Christ to those who need Him the most. You'll be surprised at how people are looking for the "real thing."

2. Pray for an opportunity to tell them about your group.

3. When you speak to potential members of your group, remember you are inviting them to spend time with your Heavenly Father, who is interested in every facet of their lives.

4. Every person you select from the five groups listed above has been given a purpose by God. You will help them discover their place in their God-given destiny.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING AND IMMERSE GROUP

1. CONTACT PARTICIPANTS WELL IN ADVANCE

Contact your guests well in advance of the meeting via email, text or phone call. Make sure to generate interest by mentioning the lesson topic of the Immerse Group for that session, as well as a brief description. Do not share any of your guests' personal information with other guests for any reason. Make sure to invite new people that come across your path.

2. PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP MEMBERS BY NAME

Before you begin your session, take a few moments and pray for each of your members by name. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of every person in your group. Expect God to lead you to whomever He wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead.

3. BE PREPARED

All 48 Immerse Group lessons are available on the Immerse Group Facilitator/Host page. They are divided into Level One, Two and Three, with 16 Lessons in each level. Simply go to the www.faithfellowshipministries.net home page

- Click on "Get Connected" on the menu across the top of the page

- click on "Connect Groups"
- at the very bottom of the page, click on "Current Volunteers"
- enter the password: 1234serve
- click on the link for IMMERSE Group Host/Facilitator

Download and review each lesson and write down your thoughts. Being unprepared gives the impression you do not think your member's time is important. Make enough copies of the lesson for each of your guests, and a few extra for potential first time visitors. The lessons are in pdf format, so when you open it, you can also save it and email it to your guests if you would like.

4. THE LOCATION

The location where you meet is your choice. Make sure to have made prior arrangements if you are meeting at your workplace, and that the location is conducive to a Bible study if it is a public place. If you choose to provide light refreshments, make sure that everything is in place before the guests arrive. Though this is a kind gesture, do not lose focus on the priority of the evening, the Word and fellowship.

5. BE FRIENDLY AND BE YOURSELF

God will use your unique gift and temperament. Greeting people at the door with a big smile and a warm welcome will set the mood for the whole gathering. Remember, they are taking as big a step as you to show up at your house! Don't try to do things exactly like other hosts, do them in a way that is comfortable for you. Admit when you don't have an answer and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it and you will sleep better at night. You are not required to have all the answers. If you are asked a question you can't answer, just say, "I will get the answer for you before our next meeting". Email your questions to nfortunato@faithfellowshipministries.net and make sure to report back to the group what you have found the following week.

6. FOLLOW THE FORMAT

Immerse Groups are designed to meet weekly. Start the meeting on time, regardless of how many guests have arrived. Always open in prayer and make sure that everyone has a lesson, Bible, pen/pencil. After prayer, always make the declaration over the vision for the year. Make sure to have a copy of the Vision Declaration with you, which can also be found on the Current Volunteers webpage. Follow the Vision Declaration with the lesson. The lesson can take as little as 30 minutes, or go for as long as 1 ½ hours. Always leave enough time for prayer and end on time, your guests will appreciate the fact that you value and honor their time.

7. BE PATIENT WHEN ASKING THE GROUP A QUESTION

Often times people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question. If silence does not bother you, it won't bother anyone else. Someone will eventually answer. When a response is given, affirm the response with a simple "thanks" or "great answer". Then ask, "How about somebody else?" or "Would someone who has not shared yet like to add anything?" Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who are not ready to speak, pray or do anything. If you give them a safe setting, they will blossom over time. If someone is a "wall flower" who sits silently through every session, consider talking to them privately and encourage them to participate. Let them know how important they are to you; that they are loved and appreciated,

and that the group would value their input. Don't force them to participate if they are not ready. On the other hand, do not allow one person to dominate the discussion or go off topic either. Gently interrupt or change the direction back to the discussion at hand.

8. PROVIDE TRANSITION BETWEEN QUESTIONS

Ask for a volunteer to read the scripture and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads.

9. POST MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

Complete and submit your Host/Facilitator Weekly Report immediately after your IMMERSE Group takes place. Simply go to the www.faithfellowshipministries.net home page

- Click on "Get Connected" on the menu across the top of the page
- click on "Connect Groups"
- at the very bottom of the page, click on "Current Volunteers"
- enter the password: 1234serve
- click on the link for IMMERSE Group Host/Facilitator
- scroll past all the lessons and complete the information under "IMMERSE Group Host/Facilitator Weekly Report"
- Make sure to press "Submit"

10. DON'T FORGET THE PURPOSE FOR IMMERSE GROUPS

As leaders we serve to create a learning environment, have fellowship and together grow in God. IMMERSE Groups are NOT an opportunity to get on the proverbial "soap box" or voice your personal views regarding politics, social issues, etc. Remember Jesus said he who is the greatest, must be the servant of all. Immerse yourself in grace! Serving God and His people with gladness and joy is fulfilling His desire and He will bless us abundantly.

