

Study Group Guidelines

- Establish that everyone is joining the group voluntarily because they have found value in *Conversations with God* and want to explore and study the book in depth with others who wish to do the same.
- Because of the intense personal nature of the study group and because participants will be sharing the insights and challenges of our spiritual explorations, CWG study groups demand the ultimate level of integrity and confidentiality among participants. In order to create a safe and orderly space for learning, all participants must agree that:
 - When speaking, do so honestly and openly. When listening, be objective, open and compassionate.
 - They will not reveal to anyone, or mention outside the study group, anything that another person expresses or experiences within the group.
 - The purpose of the group is to study the book *Conversations with God*. Though it is healthy to encourage participants to share their personal experiences and insights about the books as it often stimulates healthy discussion, caution is advised about turning the group into a therapy session. Even if you are a therapist, the purpose of this group is not to offer professional services.
 - They will understand that each person is discussing his or her interpretation of the book. Further, it's critical that the entire group allows plenty of room for alternative interpretation.

STUDY GROUP FORMAT (Adapted from the CWG BOOK I Guidebook by Neale Donald Walsch)

1. Begin each study group session with a brief meditation. Call forth clarity and understanding as your experience.
2. Take a moment for check-in by asking for a brief statement from each group member. But remember, this is not a "therapy" group, so resist the temptation to "get into people's stories."
3. After checking-in, move through the group for a 15 or 20 minute review of the results of last week's assignment or experiment. This is often an important time of sharing and mutual discovery.
4. A short break is often best placed after last week's review.
5. Begin this week's study material by having a member of the group read aloud from the CWG Guidebook. When you get to the exercise, read the directions aloud and then give the group 5 to 10 minutes to complete the process.
6. Discuss the exercise among group members. This is an important time of sharing and discovery.
7. After each exercise, have the group continue passing around the book to read aloud.
8. At the end of the chapter, read aloud and discuss the coming week's assignment or experiment.
9. Conclude the study session with a clearing process to make sure that no one is "hanging out" with "unfinished business" as a result of the meeting. This is the "goodbye check-in" to make sure everyone is all right.
10. Pick a volunteer to lead your next meeting.
11. End with a brief closing meditation.