

10 tips for facilitating



KEYS TO FREEDOM ONLINE

10 TIPS FOR FACILITATING KEYS TO FREEDOM ONLINE

More and more these days we are seeing *Keys to Freedom* study groups move online. If that's where you find yourself, this document is for you! We asked *Keys to Freedom* facilitators for their best tips for facilitating the study online and gathered them here!

We've seen groups gather via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangout, and more! So many people are finding freedom in so many different settings! What an exciting time!

TIP #1: Smaller Groups Work Best

It can be difficult to keep up with lots of people on a video call. We recommend keeping the study between 4-8 people.

TIP #2: Be aware of Screen Fatigue

Many of the participants in your study may be on the computer all day at work. It can be difficult to commit to looking at a computer screen for a study as well. You can help with this by 1) keeping your meetings much shorter than you might for an in-person and 2) establishing both a start time and end time so your conversation doesn't go on too long.

TIP #3: Set Communication Guidelines in Advance

Explain how to use the mute option or set a group mute and take people off as they share. This will ensure you don't hear dogs, kids, or other background noise. ***It will help if you, as the facilitator, become familiar with the video platform/mute options before your first meeting.

Does the video platform you're using allow for chat? Use it! We've found some people are more comfortable sharing there. Direct participants to the chat and tell participants this is a space people can respond and "comment" on another person's sharing without unmuting themselves. This is a great place for group members to encourage one another!

TIP #4: Remember the Commitment to Confidentiality

We recommend asking participants to make arrangements so others in their home, or wherever they are, can't hear the conversations of those in the study group. This can be difficult, but it is incredibly important!

Never record. Many video chat options allow for recording, but due to the personal nature of conversations related to *Keys to Freedom*, we ask that facilitators never record a group session.

10 tips for facilitating



KEYS TO FREEDOM ONLINE

TIP #5: Commit/Participate Like You Would in Person

Ask the participants in your group to commit to the study online just as they would in person, including the preparation days before the meeting. The work is done on your own, 15–20 minutes a day, 5 days a week, giving the Holy Spirit time to work. The group aspect gives you accountability and an opportunity to share all God is showing you!

TIP #6: End on a High Note

Keep participants interested in the *Keys to Freedom* study week after week by ending your group time on a high note! Encourage your group to share about what God is doing, where they have been versus where they are going and praise reports!

TIP #7: Consider Follow-Up Content

Many facilitators will send their groups podcasts, blog posts, or other resources from Mercy Canada in addition to the weekly homework. With the group meetings being shorter, people may have time for deeper content outside of the group.

Listen to the MercyTalk Podcast here: <https://mercymultiplied.com/mercytalk-podcasts/>

Read the Mercy Blog here: <https://mercymultiplied.com/mercy-blog/>

TIP #8: Keep a Referral List

We always encourage facilitators to keep a referral list of pastors, counselors, and other helpers in case someone needs it. Find Christian counselors in your area at <https://paccp.ca/>

TIP #9: Check in Throughout the Week

Consider setting up a group text/chat, email chain, or even a closed Facebook group so your group can stay connected throughout the week.

Even if the entire group is not connected, you as a facilitator should be sure to keep up with everyone. Do not let this overwhelm you. This does not mean you need individual discipleship meetings with each participant. Just let them know you're praying for them!

TIP #10: Remember that God's Word is Powerful

No matter what platform - in-person or online - God's Word is powerful. In fact, it is just as powerful when we pray boldly online as it is when we do so in person! Take the pressure off for having a perfect online presentation and remember that it is still people on the other end of the call, all needing a touch from God and to deepen their relationship in Him!