

vertical marriage small group study

Vertical Marriage: A Small Group Study Guide to Deeper Connection

Are you ready to take your marriage to new heights? Feeling stuck in a rut or yearning for a deeper, more meaningful connection with your spouse? A vertical marriage – one grounded in faith and a strong relationship with God – can be the key to unlocking incredible intimacy and lasting love. This comprehensive guide offers a framework for a powerful small group study focusing on the principles of a vertical marriage, designed to help you and your spouse flourish together. We'll explore practical steps, biblical insights, and exercises to foster spiritual growth and strengthen your marital bond. Let's dive in!

Understanding the Concept of Vertical Marriage

Before we delve into the specifics of a small group study, let's establish a clear understanding of what a "vertical marriage" truly means. It's not simply about attending church together or saying grace before meals (although those are important!). A vertical marriage prioritizes a strong individual and shared relationship with God as the foundation of your marital relationship. Think of it as a triangle: God at the apex, with each spouse forming a strong individual connection to Him, and then together, forming the base of the triangle—the marital relationship.

This approach emphasizes that a thriving marriage isn't built solely on human effort, but on a spiritual foundation. By individually seeking God and allowing Him to work in your lives, you build a stronger, more resilient partnership. This shared faith provides a common ground, a source of strength during challenging times, and a deeper understanding of unconditional love. It's about seeking God's wisdom, guidance, and grace to navigate the complexities of marriage.

Structuring Your Vertical Marriage Small Group Study

Now, let's craft a structure for your small group study. Remember, flexibility is key; adapt this framework to suit your group's needs and preferences.

Session 1: Defining Vertical Marriage & Setting Intentions

Icebreaker: Share a favorite memory from your marriage.

Discussion: Define vertical marriage. Explore the benefits of prioritizing God in your marriage. Discuss individual and shared spiritual practices.

Activity: Each couple writes down three specific intentions for their marriage journey.

Session 2: Communication & Conflict Resolution in a Vertical Marriage

Icebreaker: Share a recent example of successful communication in your marriage.

Discussion: How does God's word guide communication? Explore practical strategies for effective conflict resolution based on biblical principles (e.g., Ephesians 4:26-32). Discuss forgiveness and reconciliation.

Activity: Role-play scenarios dealing with common marital conflicts.

Session 3: Forgiving and Being Forgiven

Icebreaker: Share a time when you had to forgive someone (spouse or otherwise).

Discussion: The importance of forgiveness in a Godly marriage. Understanding the role of repentance and reconciliation. Biblical examples of forgiveness.

Activity: Journaling exercise: Reflect on past hurts and write a prayer for forgiveness and healing.

Session 4: Intimacy: Beyond the Physical

Icebreaker: Share what intimacy means to you (beyond the physical).

Discussion: Explore the various facets of intimacy: emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical. How can a vertical marriage enhance each area?

Activity: Each couple discusses and creates a "date night" plan focused on deepening a specific type of intimacy.

Session 5: Prayer & Spiritual Disciplines in Marriage

Icebreaker: Share your favorite way to connect with God.

Discussion: The power of prayer in a marriage. Exploring different spiritual disciplines like Bible study, fasting, and meditation, and how to incorporate them as a couple.

Activity: Each couple creates a joint prayer list for their marriage and personal lives.

Session 6: Building a Legacy of Faith

Icebreaker: Share your hopes and dreams for the future of your family.

Discussion: How to raise children in faith. Passing on spiritual values and traditions. Building a strong family foundation.

Activity: Each couple creates a vision statement for their family's spiritual journey.

Choosing Your Study Materials

Supplement your sessions with relevant scripture readings, insightful books on marriage and faith, and inspiring testimonies. Consider resources like:

The Bible (especially books like Ephesians, Proverbs, Song of Solomon)

Books by authors like Gary Chapman ("The 5 Love Languages"), Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend ("Boundaries"), and other authors focusing on Christian marriage.

Making the Most of Your Study

Create a welcoming and safe environment: Emphasize confidentiality and mutual respect.

Encourage open and honest communication: Create space for vulnerable sharing.

Focus on practical application: Help couples translate concepts into actionable steps.

Celebrate successes and offer support during challenges: Reinforce the power of community.

Conclusion

Embarking on a vertical marriage small group study is an investment in your marriage and your relationship with God. It's a journey of growth, discovery, and deepening intimacy. By prioritizing your relationship with God and working together, you can build a marriage that's not just strong, but divinely blessed. Remember, consistency and commitment are key to seeing lasting results. Embrace the journey, and enjoy the incredible blessings that await you.

FAQs

1. Can couples who aren't actively religious participate? While this study focuses on a Christian perspective, many principles of strong communication, conflict resolution, and forgiveness are universally applicable and beneficial for any couple seeking a deeper connection.
1. How long should each session last? Aim for 1.5 to 2 hours per session, allowing ample time for discussion and activities.
1. What if couples disagree on the level of their faith? Open and honest communication about differing viewpoints is crucial. The study can be a catalyst for discussion and mutual understanding.
1. Is it necessary to have a leader for the small group? While a facilitator can be helpful to guide discussions and ensure smooth transitions, a group can function effectively with shared leadership or a rotating facilitator role.
1. What if my spouse isn't interested in participating? Consider inviting your spouse to a session or two to see if they connect with the group and its focus. Alternatively, you might find personal benefit from participating alone, which you can then apply to your marriage.

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