

Helping Bible Study Guests Feel Comfortable

Ahead of Time

These are some tips to help create the right environment and prepare for a successful session.

1. **Straighten up.** Your house does not need to be a showplace. In fact, if it is too clean a guest can feel nervous. However, put away most of the stuff that is out – especially dirty dishes.
2. **Cool it.** Ratchet down the thermostat by 2-3 degrees F. Extra bodies in a room make it warmer and that makes people sleepier.
3. **Have snacks or at least drinks.** Provide several options. Holding a cup or plate helps people feel comfortable in a new place and with new people. If you know of any drinks or snacks that your guests like, be sure to provide them. Avoid messy foods. Think how uncomfortable your guest will be if he has a sauce stain on his shirt for the evening.
4. **Skip the China** You don't want your guests to worry about your nice things. They will feel more comfortable using disposable items than fancy dishes or glasses.
5. **Provide materials.** Have extra handouts, plenty of pens or pencils and even some extra bibles.
6. **Study.** Know the material as well as possible ahead of time so that you can relax.
7. **Set up.** Don't make your guests wait while you print handouts or hook up your presentation monitor to your computer. Have those things done before they get there.

Social Time

The time spent in fellowship is almost as important as the teaching of the Word.

1. **Greet every guest.** If you have several coming over, ask a friend or family member to be on hand to help out with other things, so you can be available to speak to each guest.
2. **Offer refreshments effectively.** Do not ask a guest, "Do you want..." The automatic answer to that is, "No, thank you." Instead ask, "Would you rather have Coke or Sprite?" Now your guest can comfortably accept a drink.
3. **Invite others who will contribute to the environment** Do not have so many churchgoers that your student feels mobbed. However, meeting and spending time with 1-2 other Holy Ghost filled people would be an added benefit of the time spent. Be sure to invite people who will converse with the guest and not get focused on you or one another.
4. **Be yourself and act natural.** No one likes a fake, so just be yourself.

5. **Sincerely praise others.** Don't use flattery, but genuinely give credit where credit is due. Find something nice to say about someone – it does not have to be the person you are speaking to or even your guest.
6. **Don't say anything hurtful.** Be really careful with this. Don't say negative things about anyone. You don't know who your guest voted for. Negativity just sounds bad. Don't make any racist slurs at all, even if you don't mean it and you "know" no one will mind – just don't say it.
7. **Make fun of yourself.** You know yourself better than pretty much anyone else, so it's easiest to make jokes about you. Everyone likes someone who's humble.
8. **Minimize others' mistakes** Do not correct other people, unless their mistake will end up making things worse for them or someone else. Also, downplay it if others point it out.
9. **Be inclusive.** Don't use inside jokes. Also, don't refer to something about which a person in the conversation doesn't know without explaining it to him or her.

Time for the Word

This is what it's all about.

1. **Pray first.** They need God to speak to their hearts.
2. **Be clear.** The Truth works. Tell it plainly and directly. Don't attack false beliefs, but don't be hesitant or afraid to declare Truth either. Stay on the simple point of the lesson. Don't try to impress them with your great knowledge.
3. **Don't make people read.** It can be good for students to read scriptures themselves. However some people do not feel comfortable reading out loud. You might be surprised. Don't put anyone on the spot. If you have several in a group, you can say, "Would someone like to read that verse?"
4. **Fill in the blanks.** Don't rush past the blanks on your handouts. Draw attention to them, make the correct answer overly clear, and take time to write it in yourself.
5. **I don't know.** That's the easiest way to answer a tough question. It can actually help your guest feel comfortable if you don't have all the answers. Tell them you'll ask someone else.
6. **Stand strong.** While we want our guests to feel comfortable, we do not want to misrepresent Truth. Do not agree with statements that are in error. However, do not necessarily confront them unless it is essential to what you are teaching. Usually when someone says something incorrect about the things of God, we can just smile and move on. If you have to disagree, avoid positioning yourself as an enemy. Say something like, "You know I used to think that, but then I saw..." or "It does seem that way, but the bible says..."
7. **Expect the best.** The only thing God needs for a harvest is laborers. When you teach the Word, God WILL minister!