

TAKING YOUR GROUP ONLINE

While most small groups find it best to meet in person, there are times and situations where meeting in person is not possible. Small groups are about living better connected and with online tools, staying connected is still possible even when not meeting in person.

To make your group most effective online, use a video chat tool and try to follow our best practices. If things don't work perfectly the first time, don't worry! Keep trying—it may take a few online meetings before your group is comfortable with the technology and used to how online meetings function best.



BEST PRACTICES

- **Select and test your technology** platform ahead of time. Each platform is a bit different. Make sure you are familiar with how key features work so the technology is helpful and not a distraction.
- **Choose a quiet and comfortable place.** Avoid locations with background noise or potential distractions. Find a comfortable spot so you don't need to move
- **Be on time**—or a little early. As the host, it is important that you are online and ready to welcome others, just as you would do if you were in person.
- **Adjust your camera** to center you in the video and look into the camera.
- **Check your lighting.** Good lighting will shine toward your face, not from behind you.
- **Take turns** and don't talk over one another. Mute yourself when you aren't speaking.
- **Try the chat** function for comments or questions during discussion.

ONLINE VIDEO TOOLS

There are many tools that make online meetings with video easy to host and easy to join. Some of the most popular and free tools include Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, Apple FaceTime, and Facebook Video Chat. All of these tools have similar functionality, so use the tool you are most familiar with. If you are not familiar with online meetings or video chat, you can ask if someone else in your group would get your group set up and help others get connected.

If you are unfamiliar with all of these tools, we recommend using Skype, Google Hangouts, or Zoom.

Skype

Skype is a popular tool that many people already have installed on their computers. Additionally, Skype offers a free online version that runs in a web browser and requires no registration or additional software.

1. Go to *skype.com/en/free-conference-call*.
2. Click the button *Create a free meeting*.
3. Copy the link and email it to your group members. This link never expires and can be reused by your group.
4. When it is time for your meeting, open the link and click the button *Join as guest*.
5. Enter your name and click the button *Join*.
6. Start the video meeting by clicking the button *Start call* in the upper-right corner.
7. If off, click the buttons to turn on the video and audio, then click the button *Start call*.
8. You will be placed in the meeting and notified as other join you.
9. To end the meeting click the red button *End call*.

Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts is a popular tool that is integrated into Google and requires no additional software. All participants must have a free Gmail or Google Account to join the meeting.

1. Go to *hangouts.google.com* and sign in with your Google Account. If you or group members do not have a Gmail or Google Account, go to *accounts.google.com* and click the link *Create account*.
2. When it is time for your meeting, click the button *Video Call*.
3. Enter the email addresses of your group members and click the button *Invite* or click *Copy Link to Share* and email it to your group members.
4. You will be placed in the meeting and notified as others join you.
5. To end the meeting click the red button *End call*.

Zoom

Zoom is a popular tool for businesses. You or a group member's company may have an account you are able to use or you can sign up for a free account that is limited to 40 minutes of meeting time per session. All participants must have the free Zoom Client for Meetings installed to join the meeting.

Sign up for an account

1. Go to *zoom.us*.
2. Click the button *Sign up, it's free* in the upper-right corner.
3. Enter your email address and click the button *Sign Up*. You will receive a link in your email.
4. Open the email and complete the sign-up process.
5. Go to *zoom.us/download* to download and install Zoom Client for Meetings.

Host A Meeting

1. Open the *Start Zoom* app on your computer and sign in using the email and password you created at sign-up.
2. Click the button *Schedule* to schedule your meeting.
3. Enter the date and time and click the buttons to turn on video for host and participants.
4. Click the button *Schedule*. Copy the text that appears and email it to group members.
5. When it is time for your meeting, click the *Join Zoom Meeting* link. You will be placed in the meeting and notified as others join you. Group members may want to try this in advance to ensure the Start Zoom app is installed and working for the meeting.

RESOURCES

Visit sov.church/groups/leaders for more resources to help you lead your small group.

- Curriculum Ideas & Suggestions
- RightNow Media links and instructions
- myShepherd Leader Guide
- Sample covenants for Group Leaders & Members
- Prayer Ideas
- Icebreakers
- Small Group Health Plans
- Spiritual Health Assessments
- Articles on handling difficult people, asking stimulating questions, and more



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