

## Introduction

Thank you so much for accepting the role of leader or facilitator of your group. You might well have more talent than you think as you get into this. Allow yourself to keep learning and growing in how you interact with the group. Enjoy the opportunity and the people there with you. Some mistakes will be made. These can be beneficial actually because as parents and grandparents when we look back there will be regrets. So, we want to learn to have compassion on ourselves and others. It is an important point for every family leader to embrace.

Read through the reading material, the power point found under Curriculum, then scroll down and click Courses on [adultssavingkids.org](http://adultssavingkids.org) website. Also read over the discussion questions on the power point ahead of time. Plus read this Leader's Guide, First Session, Course One Be prepared to hand out the questionnaire for the next session. This is their homework and is needed to get them thinking into the session where their prior preparation of filling out the questionnaire for the next session will add to more fruitful discussions.

Consider the people in your class, go from one to the next to think how they fit into the group and how they will be part of the discussion. Perhaps have chats between sessions with different members. If they have concerns, listen. If they have contributed, acknowledge, if you see they have something to offer but are being hesitant, encourage them to share. Seek to see more of what they are thinking and be there to encourage them. Acknowledge them for whatever strengths, insights, and contributions they are making in the group.

The material in these lessons can be intimidating for some. Help the participants to see that much of this material is not something our culture is talking about and maybe not so much in your congregation. This makes them pioneers. So, help people to recognize they are going into new territory. That means things might not always go as expected. It is up to the class to make this work, just as it was up to the wagon train people to keep moving westward in spite of hardships. It was a challenge for all concerned but they kept on going anyway.

We must recognize that we are dealing with a contradictive situation here. Most people who have jobs have had a period of training, perhaps expected to have had years of classroom education. The idea that a person would be put in a responsible position without any training is almost unheard of. Not only that but they are then given an assigned job description. This lays on them the need to be accountable for what they are doing for someone is watching, taking note of their effectiveness. Work pressure can be very intense.

When it comes to parenting and grandparenting, no one has laid out a job description. Few have been provided training. There is no one checking up on these family leaders, no one to be accountable to. How they go about parenting and what is happening in their families is neither looked at nor evaluated for effectiveness. One of the only times a spotlight is shined on parents is if their child a shooter in a school shooting or something major like that. So, we have this strange phenomenon where it seems no



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one cares what is going on but then suddenly the kind of parenting someone has done becomes national news.

What this means is congratulating those who have become proactive, who have put themselves into this class, taking their responsibilities for raising their offspring seriously. This, in spite of no one telling them what they are responsible for or who they are accountable to. It comes down to them caring enough for their offspring to make sure who they can be for them is a one chance in a lifetime. Those same kids of theirs will soon be grown up and gone.

Even though what is being talked about is important. It becomes helpful to start thinking how is a leader going to go at this. First of all it is new for most participants. The class period may be seen as scary and intensive. That means it can be an uncomfortable situation for many. Their presence in the class is a real indication that they are taking their parenting or grandparenting calling seriously. This course is designed to not to fool around but to honor them. To take what they can provide for their offspring as a great gift and one worth preparing for so it becomes even more precious.

Therefore, starting the class period with an icebreaker, some humor, some joke, small talk can help people see we are not getting so serious here that they cannot be themselves. Also the leader can be ready with some story or quote that can flesh out more what the session is focused on. There is much to be found on the Internet like jokes, statistics, videos, quotes, topics that can help fortify you for what conversations come up in the discussion. An attitude of acceptance, of being nonjudgmental, of hearing people say what they are saying without criticism. If someone gives a questionable response, don't make a lot of it. Get in the habit of moving on. If nobody knows the answer to something, that might be very understandable. For example, many people have not done a lot of Bible study so may have trouble thinking of anything the Bible says or where to find a book or passage in the Bible. No big deal! We all can only start from where we are at.

This does not mean the class become dependent on you to take over and they become your audience. No, we believe there are many things that only the class members can bring to the discussion. What are they struggling with, what have they learned the hard way, what got passed on to them by their parents or grandparents, what situations have they encountered in their lives that help class members see some of the challenges people face and get them thinking how would I or my kids handle this kind of situation. Remember there is gold in the room, in the participants' lives, heads, hearts. The discussions give the class the mining tools to discover it. Then we will keep moving on to find out how to mine for that gold.

Remember it might take a few sessions before the group begins to find itself. Everyone starts in a group with their own expectations, their own concerns, their own way of thinking how a group is supposed to work, Don't be too hard on yourself. Pray for the group, for each member of the group during the week before you meet. Notice any advance in what is happening. Don't be afraid of criticism. It might well set up something special the group can discover and find in itself. Remember Proverbs 27:5,6. "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted but an enemy multiplies kisses."

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We are all still learning so what responses people express does not mean we have to take it personally. Beware if those who seek to tear down or control the group but accept and acknowledge those whose comments seem to be building up the group. We are not talking false compliments here but real perceptiveness.

As parents our culture has asked little of us. We might even be proud that we are doing a credible job of parenting without any training, without any discussion. We might just be operating as though we have learned enough, watched enough and come to conclude we need no help. This is one of the reasons we have to look at stories that reveal how unprepared we are and how it is our children who have to suffer for what we don't know and what we are not doing. So this course and future courses are designed to confront what we still need to be thinking about, learning and what we can do for our kids which we may not have considered.

There should be key ground rules established and agreed upon by the group before the meetings which inhibit this type of behavior. Key ground rules would be: start on time, end on time, only one person talking at a time, taking scheduled breaks depending on length of session., phones silenced, no side conversation, seek to understand before being understood, don't dominate the conversation, what is said in the session is to stay in the session, confidentiality builds trust, respect for each participant and their viewpoint, a pointing to helpful resources as needs arise.

As leader or facilitator make sure you do eight things.

1. Welcome everyone warmly.
2. Have each person introduce themselves, name their children and also grandchildren if they have some.
3. Read the Leader's Guide for each session you are preparing for. You have just done that for session one.
4. Read through the written material for Session One found on [adultssavingkids.org](http://adultssavingkids.org)
5. Review the power point there which you will be going through with the class. 5. Write down any examples from your own life and thinking that touches on what this session is about.
6. Scan the Supplemental page which is on the website even if you don't get to it.
7. Pray for each person in the course.
8. Print off the questionnaire leading to Session Two on "Wolves" before the class meets. Hand this out at the end of the class. It is homework to be filled out at home and brought back to the next session. It will help the class member to begin thinking their way into the topic of Session Two.

Remember, if you have questions or concerns you can always call 612-708-1875 to discuss those.

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