

Five Principles for Effective Men's Faith Formation Groups
The King's Men, Inc
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1. **LEADERSHIP** – In order for a men's group to sustain its vibrancy and presence on a weekly or bi-weekly basis in a parish, there needs to be at least 2-3 strong leaders who are committed to attending (can take turns) and facilitating the meetings. It is essential that the facilitator/leader begins/ends meeting on time. An effective facilitator knows when to transition to a new topic of discussion and when to explore more deeply a topic that is interesting to the group. The facilitator needs to be comfortable modeling what is expected of each group member when it comes to sharing/accountability portion of meeting (based on TKM model of the 4 Cs – Commit, Confess, Challenge, and Confirm).
2. **STRUCTURE** – Effective men's groups have an institutionalized format for the meeting. For example, every group begins with an opening prayer (i.e. Rosary, Divine Mercy) and ends with a closing prayer of some kind. The meeting will have a catechetical resource that is intellectually accessible and enjoyable for its members. The resource should be authentically Catholic or any Christian resource which does not contradict Catholic Church teaching such as John Eldredge's Wild at Heart or The Way of the Wild Heart. Recommend that the resources used have a masculine focus, but not necessary as long as facilitator is effective at bringing the content towards the angle of authentic masculine development. It is also important to maintain a consistent and convenient meeting place for all attendees (i.e. parish hall).
3. **COMMITMENT** – Members of the men's group need to be encouraged and invited to take ownership of the meeting. The leaders need to identify those men who might be candidates for a facilitator role or for some other area of leadership within the group (i.e. recruiting others, submitting bulletin announcements, weekly email reminders). By giving some ownership to the men in the group, these men in turn develop a deeper commitment to the meetings, trust and accountability is fostered, and friendship/fellowship grows.
4. **CHALLENGE** – An effective men's group is not an “enabling” group. Each man needs to be challenged to courageously address the areas in his life where he needs to grow. For some this may mean the development of a particular virtue or identification of a root sin. For others, it may mean addressing their masculine development on a physical/natural level. Whatever the challenge for the man is, it is essential that he experiences progress/growth in his masculinity. If he is not being challenged and “fed” by the group he will stop coming.
5. **EXPERIENTIAL** – The men's group needs to have on a monthly basis an opportunity whereby men can put into practice what they are learning through the meetings. This experiential invitation must be given by the leaders to the members. The members should be encouraged but not forced to participate in this faith-to-action element of the men's group. Some examples of these growth opportunities are: attending a men's conference/workshop/retreat, activism in the community (i.e. pro-life prayers vigils, anti-pornography protests), lobbying for marriage amendment, feeding the homeless, taking a mission trip, building a house (Habitat for Humanity), or even going on a camping/hiking trip with other men in the group. Whatever opportunity is extended to the men, it needs to have an experiential, educational and spiritual dimension to it.