

# How to set up a small group to support dads

A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and glasses kissing a baby on the cheek. The man is wearing a dark denim jacket and glasses. The baby is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and is smiling. The background is a dark teal color.

**WHO LET THE  
DADS OUT?**

Who Let The Dads Out? is a movement that inspires and resources churches to support fathers, father figures, and their children.



# Setting up a Who Let The Dads Out? small group

We are passionate about encouraging and equipping churches to support dads and their children. Our usual model involves fathers, father-figures, and their children having fun and exploring life together.

This last year has shown us how valuable these groups are to dads in our communities. Through the ever-changing regulations and restrictions of this season, WLTD0? groups have needed to find creative ways to stay connected.

## The purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to help you to set up a small group gathering online for the dads in your WLTD0? community. This could be for a short season, whilst we navigate the closing stages of the pandemic, or it could become a new model for more in-depth support when our face-to-face groups return.

## What do we mean by a small group?

A small group creates space for people to get to know each other in an informal setting. It can often become the foundation for deeper relationships to form, and become a source of strength and support.

### We would suggest the following:

- Keep the group small – around 5-6 dads
- It's good practice to have two leaders in the group. This helps to bring variety to the session topics and activities, whilst also providing support to the leaders themselves.
- If you have enough leaders on your team, consider creating more than one group to accommodate as many dads from your WLTD0? group as possible.

## What do we do in a small group session?

There are no set guidelines to running your session; you can be as inventive as you want to be! We recommend having a monthly activity that each dad can do with their children, as well as prioritising time where the dads can get to know each other better.



# Here's our step-by-step guide

## Step 1: Share the idea with your church leaders

We would recommend contacting your church leaders to share your ideas before you make preparations for your first small group. Their wisdom and input could be a valuable resource as you continue to support the dads in your community.

- It's important that this ministry is seen and valued by the whole church. Getting your church leadership involved will help to support what you are doing.
- You may need some financial support from the church to help you fund the activities you are planning to do.

## Step 2: Build your team

Most of our groups have had to put their plans on hold throughout the pandemic while we navigate the social distancing regulations. This has given our teams a well-deserved break away from running group sessions.

Now is the time to gather our teams together again, as we begin to look forward to re-establishing our groups in person. It may take some time to get our WLTDQ? groups back together in person, but an online small group could be the ideal stepping stone towards this goal.

### Use this time to:

- Check in with one another and have some honest, but encouraging conversations.
- Remember why you do what you do to support dads.

- Share your online small group plans.
- Identify potential leaders for the group.

## Step 3: Invite some dads!

If you have been running an existing WLTDQ? group, you will likely have contact numbers for the dads in your group. You may wish to take a fresh look at your church congregation or community, to see if any new dads have arrived.

- Call or message dads to share your plans for the group and invite them to join you.
- You are more likely to get a response through a personal invite.
- If you get a good response and a lot of dads want to join, you may wish to set up another group if you have enough leaders in your team.



## Step 4: Set your theme and monthly-activity challenge

Each month, the leader will send an activity idea to all of the dads in their group. You may have a monthly theme that this activity connects to, or it could be something fun and engaging for dads to do with their children.

- Set a challenge time frame – for example, over the next weekend or by a certain date.
- You could encourage the dads to capture the 'moment' or 'finished activity' on their phones to send to the group.
- If you're able, you could deliver an activity pack containing all of the materials they will need. This creates a great opportunity for a doorstep chat with each of the families, as well as giving the dad all they need to do the activity – without any of the hassle.

## Step 5: Set up the meeting online

While you're preparing the theme and monthly activity, you'll also need to set up the meeting online. It may be worth sharing these responsibilities and having the second leader handle the technical set up and invitations.

- Create an account on Zoom (or another similar video conferencing platform) and schedule the meeting. There are helpful guides on how to do this on the providers' websites.
- Send the meeting invitation to your group. We would recommend using a WhatsApp group as an easy, free messaging service. This allows you to share videos and pictures easily after your monthly-activity challenges.

## Who can join the small group meetings?

You can decide whether you want the small group to be dads, or dads with their children. Both options have their benefits, which may be a good conversation to have with the dads when you invite them.

These small groups can adapt and flex to support the dads in your community. You may have one group of dads that could really benefit from some time without the children, whilst others are missing the opportunity to have fun collectively with other families. Create the environment that works best for your small group of dads – for example you could offer a blend of both options and utilise every third session as a 'dads and their kids' session.

## Step 6: Review

Once your group is up and running, we would suggest arranging a follow-up call with your leaders, to find out how things are going, particularly if you start multiple groups.

### It's good to think about the following:

- How is the group going?
- How are the dads responding?
- What works well, or not so well?
- Is there anything that needs to change?

As these groups develop and friendships deepen, you may find that they create more opportunities for you to encourage and support dads in new ways.



# Get inspired!

Our WLTD0? Facebook groups are a great place to share activity and theme ideas across the whole WLTD0? community.

Please do share your ideas and experiences on these groups, or contact a member of the WLTD0? team. We would love to hear from you! Email: [mail@cff.org.uk](mailto:mail@cff.org.uk)



[Click here to join WLTD0?  
on Facebook](#)



[Click here to join the WLTD0?  
Leaders group](#)

## Resources

Care for the Family has a vast array of resources to encourage and equip us as parents, through online events that can be streamed and discussed together as a group, to downloadable video-based resources and podcasts. Find out more [here](#).

Take a look at our parenting podcast, **'The Dad Cave'** and join Mark Chester and Stephen Hayes as they interview people around topics that specifically affect fatherhood.

You can also find many relevant resources, guidance and articles to encourage you and your group on the WLTD0? section of the website [here](#).

## About Care for the Family

Care for the family has been working to strengthen family life since 1988. Our aim is to promote strong family relationships and to help those who face family difficulties.

Working throughout the UK and the Isle of Man, we provide parenting, relationship and bereavement support through our events, resources, courses, training and volunteer networks. Our work is motivated by Christian compassion, and our resources and support are available to everyone, of any faith and none.

## For more information



029 2081 0800



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