

FEBRUARY

It's almost here. The most awkward day in the small group calendar year. Valentine's Day as some group leaders call it. The only holiday on the books where how you celebrate is determined by your relationship status. I think that's why the romance element of Valentine's Day throws a curveball at just about any group dynamic (The one exception may be groups made up solely of married couples). That said, any good group leader like you is going to try to figure out how to turn V-Day into an opportunity for group growth instead of seeing it as a hurdle. And to help you with that, we've got four Valentine's day ideas for small groups.

1. Learn your group's love languages

Ever heard of the 5 Love Languages? Dr. Gary Chapman wrote a pretty well-known book by that title where he showed how each of us feel and express love in one of 5 ways: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. "Wait, isn't this just for your spouse to know about you?" you retort. Not really. The point of the study is to help us understand how we are wired relationally. So regardless of WHO we are interacting with, knowing how we are wired to respond to someone is valuable intel.

Make it happen: Have each group member take an online [free assessment](#) before group. During group time, share your results and use them as a springboard to discussing how your group can be more intentional in carrying out the "one-another" commands of scripture given what you now know about each other.

2. Wedding Themed Group Night (Married Couples Groups)

For married couples, it's almost always a healthy, and usually entertaining, exercise to tell the story of your wedding day. Valentine's Day affords a natural opportunity for couples to share their stories of how they met, fell madly in love, and exchanged vows. Use valentine's day ideas for small groups as a chance to hear everyone's stories in one night *and* have a good time getting to know one another.

Make it happen: Have each couple find and bring their wedding photo album to small group night. Theme the rest of the night. Find or make something resembling wedding cake. Lay the albums out around the room to peruse as you all get there. Then take a little time to allow couples to share their story during group time. Huge win.

3. Serve One Another (Any Group)

If there are people in your group with kids, you could do a BIG favor in their eyes by offering to hang with the children so they can go out on a V-Day date. By doing this, you not only show you care about them as friends, but you care specifically about their marriage, and this is how you

can help. Do you have any idea how loved they will feel to be OFFERED childcare instead of having to go search for it! Modified version: If all of you have kids, set up a childcare trade-off over a couple of nights between two or three families.

Make it happen: It's easy really. Have a couple of people from group (unless you are a pro, don't baby-sit alone, ok?) call a family and offer to watch the kids on Valentine's Day.

4. Serve your community (Any Group)

Sadly, Valentine's Day can be a self-centered holiday. As Christians, we know the love of the gospel is self-less. It gives expecting nothing in return. Because we've experienced generosity in the cross, we desire to share this generosity with others. So make V-Day about loving others instead of worrying about how you are loved. Maybe this is the time to begin developing a relationship with an area of need in your community.

Make it happen: Check with your pastors or leaders to see what local outreach ministry your church or organization may be partnered with already. Set up a time to have your group serve with them during V-Day week.

Regardless of what you do, remember V-Day is not an obstacle but an opportunity. Use these Valentine's Day ideas for small groups. Happy Valentine's Day!