

# Tools for Small Groups to Stay Connected



We always invite people at FBCOB to get plugged in to a Small Group or Sunday School Class. Literally being “plugged in” to a device (phone, tablet, computer) can help keep those connections going when a member or all members are unable to meet in person due to illness, travel, work, inclement weather, or whatever reason. This has perhaps never been more of a need than now as our routines and schedules have changed due to the coronavirus.

We encourage our Small Group leaders to find a connection method that works best for their class members. You might find that you need to use more than one. The following tools and resources provide a way to communicate with members and — more importantly — a way to enable connection between them. There are many tools available, and you are welcome to use whichever one you choose. We offer these here simply as a resource for your convenience.



Go to [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us)

Zoom is the leader in modern video communications, with an easy, reliable platform for video and audio conferencing. It is used by Houston’s First staff members to collaborate with each other across campuses, and with peers and ministry partners in other locations.

## REQUIREMENTS

- Leaders will need to create an account to begin using Zoom. A church account is not available.
- To use the video and audio features of Zoom, a participant needs a smartphone or a computer with a camera and microphone.

## PROS AND CONS OF ZOOM

- PROS
  - Zoom is FREE to use (unless you purchase a plan, starting at \$14.99/month)
  - Your entire small group can join in on a Zoom meeting
  - Meeting participants can see and hear one another during the meeting
  - Participants can access the meeting on their phone or computer
- CONS
  - Some people might find it difficult to use Zoom (helpful tutorials are available)
  - When using the FREE option, meetings are limited to 40 minutes each
  - A Zoom meeting is limited to 100 participants

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## USES IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

- Zoom is an ideal way to host small group members for a Bible study lesson, prayer group, or any reason you might want to get together in lieu of meeting in person.

## ZOOM RESOURCES

- [Getting Started with Zoom Meetings](#) – an optional 30-minute training webinar offered daily
- [On-demand video tutorials](#)

## zoom BREAKOUT ROOMS

A special feature of Zoom is the ability to break out your meeting into up to 50 separate sessions — or, Breakout Rooms. The use of Breakout Rooms is optional. The feature could be used in a large all-class Zoom meeting to separate people into Grow Groups, by gender, for prayer groups, or in other ways. Learn more about how Breakout Rooms [here](#).

## facebook

Go to [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

Facebook offers Groups for people with similar interests to connect with one another online. A Facebook Group is different than a Facebook Page. First Baptist Olive Branch and several of our ministries have Pages where the campus or ministry posts content for people to read and comment on. A Facebook Group, however, enables you to create your own environment where only people you invite or allow in (members of your small group) can participate. Group members can post content directly to the Group, and other members can post their reactions and comments.

## REQUIREMENTS

- You must have a personal Facebook account to create a Facebook Group.
- Individuals must have personal Facebook accounts to join a Facebook Group.
- Facebook Groups require at least one person to serve as the moderator of the group. The moderator is typically the person who creates the Group. However, other members can be given the ability to serve as a moderator (or “Admin”) once they join the Group.

## PROS AND CONS OF FACEBOOK GROUPS

- PROS

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- Facebook Groups are free to use.
- You can control who has access to see what is posted in a Group and who can join.
- You can host live video sessions that Group members can watch and comment on.
- You can post photos, documents, and links to websites for Group members to see.
- You can create events for Group members to RSVP to. (While in-person events are now limited, you could schedule live video sessions — or look forward to having in-person events once the need for “social distancing” goes away.)
- **CONS**
  - Small group members must have personal Facebook accounts to join a Group.
  - The live video sessions are only one-way (Group members can see and hear the person in the video, but the person in the video cannot see or hear Group members, only see comments).

## USES IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

- Your small group teacher or other class leaders can host live videos to share a lesson, a devotional thought, or other such messages.
- Members can post prayer requests and other members can comment on them.
- Members can ask questions, share stories, post photos, encourage one another — things you might normally do if you were together on a Sunday.

## FACEBOOK RESOURCES

- [How Do I Create A Facebook Group?](#)
- [How Do I Invite New Members To A Facebook Group?](#)



Go to [GroupMe.com](https://www.groupme.com)

GroupMe is a free group messaging app that offers a simple way to stay in touch with Life Bible Study members quickly and easily. GroupMe works on Windows, iOS, Android, and the web, so you can stay in touch on the go. Life Bible Study members without smartphones can join, too.

## REQUIREMENTS

- You must have a phone number to join a GroupMe group.
- To use GroupMe on your phone, you must download the GroupMe app or use SMS.

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## PROS AND CONS OF GROUPME

- PROS
  - GroupMe is free to use.
  - You can control who has access to your group.
  - Members can control notifications in their account settings.
  - You can share photos and web links in messages.
  - Members can send individual direct messages to one another.
  - GroupMe can be accessed and used through their website, allowing members to engage in the group without having to use their phone.
- CONS
  - Some small group members might be averse to group text messaging.
  - If members adjust their settings, they might not be notified of new messages.

## USES IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

- Get messages out quickly and easily to your small group members.
  - Example: "Reminder – our Zoom meeting is at 6:30p. Check your email for details."
- Members can post urgent prayer requests or needs.

## GROUPME RESOURCES

- [How Do I Start A Group In GroupMe?](#)
- [Group SMS on GroupMe](#)
- [More GroupMe Help Topics](#)

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## rightnow MEDIA

To browse available content, go to [RightNowMedia.org](https://RightNowMedia.org)

To create free account, go [here](#)

RightNow Media is like "Christian Netflix" with on-demand Bible study content for the whole family. RightNow Media hosts over 20,000 discipleship videos for kids, youth, and adults. Content can be accessed whenever and wherever you want — on your phone, tablet, computer, or at home on your TV.

## REQUIREMENTS

- You must have access to the internet and create a free account.

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## PROS AND CONS OF RIGHTNOW MEDIA

- PROS
  - Wide variety of content for all ages and stages of life.
- CONS
  - Members might need guidance or suggestions to help find content relevant to them.
  - Members will not be able to participate in any related class discussions if they are not able to access RightNow Media.

## USES IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

- Find relevant content and suggest that your small group members watch it.
- Ask members to watch suggested content by a certain time, then host a Zoom meeting to talk about what they learned.