

SMALL GROUPS



Facilitating Better Group Discussion

While curriculum is a great place to start with group discussions, it is also helpful to know these tips in order to keep a good discussion going as well as handle awkward or difficult questions that may arise.

1. **Ask open-ended questions and avoid “yes or no” questions.** “How do you feel about...”, “What would you do if...”, or “Why do you think...” are great ways to phrase questions. Questions with straight yes/no answers stop discussion rather than promoting discussion.
2. **Don’t be afraid of silence.** Give people time to process what has been said or viewed. Don’t feel pressured to fill the lull in conversation.
3. **Be ready to share first.** As the leader, be prepared to be the first person to share. Your openness will encourage others to open up as well.
4. **Practice the art of listening and do your best not to interrupt.** Really listen to what others are saying rather than thinking about what you are going to say next (while they are still talking). Interrupting people makes their future input less likely.
5. **Thank people for sharing.** This will encourage them to share again.
6. **Preview the video or printed materials beforehand.** Being familiar with the discussion material is key to keeping the group focused and headed in the right direction during discussion.
7. **Be flexible.** Sometimes other issues need discussed even if they are not scheduled. Be attentive and adapt to the needs of those in your group.
8. **Keep the discussion on topic.** When needed, say something like “let’s refocus back to this week’s topic.”
9. **Treat others with respect.** Treat everyone’s comments and questions with consistency. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as a “dumb” question or comment.
10. **Don’t think you have to be an expert.** Remember, leading a Small Group does not require you to be a Bible scholar, theologian, counselor, or any other kind of expert.