

## Life Group Helps and Tips

### 1. What does the Leader do?

- **He Launches the Discussion**

*How?* By asking questions that gets people to talk and share their thoughts.

Examples: What did you see/learn here? What did you observe, discover etc?

- **He guides the Discussion**

*How?* By keeping the conversation moving, and drawing out the main thoughts the group is sharing.

Examples: Who else would like to comment? What did (point out person) think of \_\_\_\_\_ thoughts? Does anyone else would like to add something?

- **He keeps the Discussion on track of topic.**

When the conversation gets off track, you may need to redirect back on track.

*How?* By keeping the conversation on point and avoiding rabbit trails or controversial topics not connected with your planned topic.

Example: That is interesting, but we have left the topic. Perhaps we can discuss this more at a different time? \_\_\_\_\_ what do you think about (last thing talked about)?

- **He summarizes the Discussion.**

*How?* At different parts (transition times from thought to thought), you may need to pause and give the group a BRIEF review of what is being said at that moment...you can then transition to the next part of the flow of your planned discussion.

- **He includes everyone in the Discussion.**

*How?* By including shy people and limiting (nicely) overtalkative folks in your group.

Example. \_\_\_\_\_ that is a great thought, (different person) what do you think of that statement.

### 2. Asking Questions

Questions are the bedrock of our life groups. Questions allow people opportunities to come to your thought/intent on their own and in a way that is natural and non-coerced. Avoid yes/no q's. Also, ask more questions than talk. (this is the litmus test of the health of your group. There are times when you can summarize a thought, but your peeps should be talking more than you.)

#### a. Types of questions:

- **Introduction:** Easy to grasp, open ended questions that connect and set up the spiritual topic of the Bible study you are addressing. You can use anything here, as long as the response is directly connected to the image you are going after.

Example: (on fear) When you were a kid, what was a monster you were scared of? What tricks did you use to “defeat” him?

- **Observation q’s:** these are questions right after reading a text of the Bible. Point here is to simply recall the information that you just read. The who, what, where, when, how part. This is also where people can show their gut-reaction meaning of the passage and will transition to your main point/application questions.

Example: What is one thing that jumped out at you from this passage?

What is going on in this passage? What is Jesus trying to say? Who are the characters in this passage? Why is it a big deal for Jesus to say this to this person?

- **Application:** Deeper q’s that connect the main point of the study to your own life.

Jesus said “....” What is a way that you can do this in your life? Or How can this be difficult to do in your life? Etc...

### 3. Some Don’ts to Avoid

- Not making the q’s sound conversational. When you prepare, speak them out. Are they natural and would be used in a normal conversation?
- **Don’t be afraid of silence after a question.** Silence is your best friend. Ask a question then allow people time to answer. Don’t be impatient or nervous. Do allow ppl to think.
- **Don’t limit yourself only to asking questions.** You are a part of the group and should participate at times. Share freely, but don’t dominate the discussion.
- **Don’t combine 2 questions into 1.** Ask one at a time.
- **Explain what you want the group to do.** You two are in charge. Don’t hesitate to step in from time to time to influence the direction of the discussion, to end the discussion on time, to call on someone to pray, and so on.
- **Don’t try to maintain too much control.** If the discussion “takes off” don’t worry about it as long as the discussion doesn’t wander too far off from the Word.
- **Don’t ask a yes/no question.** This hinders discussion. Avoid these like the plague.
- **Don’t ask questions that are too complex.** State each simply and clearly.
- **Don’t emphasize your own viewpoint or application.** Don’t expect everyone to be deeply impressed with the same things in Scripture that deeply impress you.
- **Don’t echo.** If people don’t hear them, ask them to repeat.
- **Don’t look for one answer.** A good way to kill discussion.

- **Don't tell people they are wrong.** Look for positive reinforcements to bring people back...unless there is a legitimate theological error presented..but you don't have to tell people they are wrong...they will figure it out most of the time.

#### 4. Some Do's to do.

- **Use discussable questions:** For example, asking “why do you think 4 gospels are included in the Bible is much more discussable than “what are the four gospels?”
- **Minimize leader talk.** The more you talk, the less they will.
- **Redirection:** Have several people answer the same question.
- **Prompting:** If you ask a question no one answers at first, scale it down or give ppl direction.
- **Ask for clarification:** Have people unpack their thoughts. When they respond, ask “help me understand that more...unpack that for us, etc..”
- **Give positive reinforcement:** “Good idea,” “excellent”, “so true” or frequent smiles and nods are great!
- **Call on non-volunteers.** After asking a question, pause and look several people in the eye. About 50% of the time, call on someone to answer...but ALWAYS give people time to think.

#### 5. A Checklist

Here are q's to ask yourself after each Life Group

- Was I familiar enough with the material to feel free in leading the discussion?
- Did everyone take part in the discussion? Or was it a lecture with me talking the most? Or a convo with just 2 or 3 of us?
- Did we keep on subject without wandering?
- Did I frequently summarize the main ideas brought up by the group?
- Did the discussion lead to further understanding of the truths the group members discovered in the study? Was spiritual connections made?
- Did we discuss adequately how we can apply what we learned to our lives?
- Did the discussion end on time?