

SMALL GROUPS 101

Thanks for investing in the lives of teenagers by serving in our ministry. I truly believe that God is going to use you in mighty ways this year. I am excited about the different opportunities we have as leaders to reach out and disciple this generation. I have put this sheet together in hopes that you could use it as a tool when facilitating a small group. I understand that each small group is just as different as each individual in that group but here are some things that I do when in a one-on-one setting or facilitating group discussion.

Ideally each group will consist of 4-12 students; a group larger than this needs to begin the process of creating 2 groups. When we attend retreats, camp, conferences I always like to ask two questions.

- 1.) What did God say to you?**
- 2.) What are you going to do about it?**

You will be amazed by what students will share, however, don't act shocked if a student says something that you can't believe. Your body language will speak to that student that is seeking your help and putting their trust in you before you even say a word, so let nothing surprise you! There is a lot of stuff that students deal with that you may not know. Here are some thoughts that will help you in these settings as well as in your small groups.

1.) Be yourself.

God has created you to be you . . . not a carbon copy of someone else. As He works in your life this year, don't be afraid to share that with your small group. The students need to see adults that are real and genuine.

2.) Don't feel like you have to have the answer for every question.

Sometimes students don't want an easy answer they just want someone to listen!

FYI - Sometimes, students will ask questions just to get you off the subject as well!

If a student asks a question you can't answer, just say, "That's a great question, I don't know if I have an answer for that question, but let me see if I can find one and get back to you next week."

3.) Let the Holy Spirit guide you.

The Spirit will guide you. He will give you wisdom so you will be able to minister to your small group.

4.) Don't promise to keep any secrets.

Now, you can tell your group that "what is said here stays here", that is fine, but we are required by law to report any child abuse, suicide threats, or threats to someone else. Usually if there is an issue like this, a student will single out an adult to share that info with. However, if it is shared in your group time, don't ask probing questions there. Ask that student if you could talk with them later about that issue. If this does happen I need to know!!

5.) Don't be afraid of silence.

Silence is uncomfortable, and as a leader, silence can cause you to think you are not doing a good job. However, silence can be the total opposite. When you ask a question, allow the students to think about it for a moment. The type of question asked dictates how long you need to wait. It may take them awhile to open up but they will. As a leader it is good for you to make eye contact with everyone in your group when you ask a hard question. If it's a general question ask, Jim, Sally, or Sue, "What do you think?"

6.) Be their friend.

Students sometimes view adults as a parent figure. Let's shatter that stereotype and show students that we really do care about them. You can do this in several ways, write a note, send an email/text or leave a comment on their Myspace, Facebook, blog, or attend one of their activities! These are things that can help them see that you really do care!

"Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope."

Ephesians 3:20