



## **LEADING SMALL GROUPS**

### **ENGAGE IN BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS**

Introduce yourself, define your facilitator role in the discussion, and let the group know that the questions are a proposed roadmap of where the discussion will go. You may not cover every question.

Allow each participant to share their name and favorite \_\_\_\_\_ (food, sport, actor, movie, etc.). Each person's time speaking should be 30 seconds or less. This gets everyone comfortable talking right away.

### **COME PREPARED**

Read the small group study questions ahead of time and anticipate possible answers. Think through possible follow-up questions to keep the discussion going within the group on each topic.

### **FACILITATE, DON'T DOMINATE**

Small groups are meant to be discussions, not lectures by the leader or any one person in the group. Encourage everyone to participate, realizing some might naturally be hesitant the first time being there.

### **AFFIRM PEOPLE'S ANSWERS**

People are often reluctant to talk unless they know their insights will be accepted. Simple encouragements like "That was a great insight," "Thank you for that encouraging response," or "I hadn't thought of that before" clearly show people that you value their thoughts and comments.

## **DO NOT BE AFRAID OF SILENCE**

You know what questions are coming up; they don't. Many people take time to process their thoughts before responding. It can take even longer if they are looking for a personal story or connection to the question to share. Silence allows time to process and people to gain confidence to respond.

## **ENCOURAGE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER**

A good question should allow more than one response. Plus, each person could have a unique perspective or experience that shapes their view on the question. Ask questions like, "What do the rest of you think?" or "How would you respond?" or "Who has had a different experience?" or "Anyone else?"

## **BE A SAFE PLACE FOR DOUBT OR HARD QUESTIONS**

A common insecurity people have in Bible studies is that they think they don't know the Bible well enough compared to everyone else. Encourage openness for people's doubts or questions by affirming them when they ask a tough question. A safe way to respond is, "I'm certain you're not alone in that thought." You might not have the full answer to a question. That's okay. Admit that you don't but then reach out to someone who can get the Bible's answer and find a way to share it with your group.

## **LET GOD LEAD**

A big mistake that can be made is being afraid to stray from the agenda. Often, the side questions prompted by the small group study questions go deep and are very personally encouraging. If the secondary question continues to focus hearts on the love of Christ, do not hesitate to spend time exploring those topics.

## **PRAY FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP**

Pray for wisdom to know when to speak, patience to know when to listen, and insight to know when to redirect the conversation. Talk with God about your small group discussion before your small group discussion talks about God!