

...indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding...

Proverbs 2:3

There are plenty of little details to concern yourself over when leading a small group, from the timing, to attendance, to the study itself, to the snack, and more. But one item may cause more concern than all the rest - silence. Yes, that silence that ensues after you ask a question in relation to your material. Maybe your group is just tired after a long week, or perhaps they're nervous about answering, or, it might be that the question you asked is the problem in itself. No matter the reason, there is no sure fire way to avoid "the silence" 100% of the time, but there are some things you can do to help yourself along as you prepare the questions for the discussion. Here are four...

Warm-Up Questions

A couple of questions asked at the start of the session, loosely related to the topic at hand, can help to loosen people up and prepare them for what's coming. For instance, if the topic was the need for God's mercy, you might ask...

- If you were caught with your cookie in the cookie jar, what kind of cookie would you be hoping to pull out?

You might follow that up with...

- Can anyone remember a time in childhood when you got caught doing something wrong? How did you feel or respond when you were discovered?



The idea is to have some light conversation to open things up, and to get them thinking along the lines of the general topic.

Google Map Guidance

One of the features of Google Maps is that they will provide you with more than one route to get to your desired location. When crafting good discussion questions, consider asking questions your people can answer in multiple ways. For instance...

- What Bible stories illustrate God's mercy?

Can you think of multiple stories that answer that? If you can, your group likely can too. Something important to remember about this type of question: you still need to know where study is headed. Multiple answers to a question doesn't mean the study direction is up for grabs. Knowing where you're heading will help you entertain different answers while helping you stay in track headed the direction you need to go.

Houston, We Have a Problem

In some passages of Scripture, a lack of clarity may cause either confusion or misapplication. It's important to anticipate these potential problems. You can choose to bring the group into the problem by broaching it with them and allowing them to chew on it for a while, and to work it through as a group. A good question to help the group frame their discovery could be...

- Are there passages of Scripture that help direct us in understanding this one? Remember, do as much prep as you can beforehand so that you're prepared.

Achilles Heel

Finally, in your prep you may come across an issue that you hope no one asks you about. Either it's awkward, or it's difficult, or you don't know how to answer. This is precisely the question you should work to answer as you get ready, because it will most certainly come up. Remember - it's ok to say, "I don't know."

Much of the information in this article is taken from, "Asking Better Questions in Small-Group Discussions", found on thegospelcoalition.org. The article was written by Melissa Kruger

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