

Tips for Leading a Discussion

Leadership Track 201

Prepare

- Pray before the discussion time - for open hearts, listen well, Spirit to lead/work.
- Pray for the group during the week - that God would help you understand the needs of the group and be able to lead with joy and wisdom.
- Periodically remind group of the purpose of the time, this can help if the group gets easily distracted. Set a time limit and try to stick to it.
- Study the passage and material well and be ready with examples from your life or important cross-references and topics that you may want to use.
- Write extra questions based on the material and come ready to ask them.
- Ask group members to bring questions for the group and their answers.
- Ask group members to facilitate for a week if you think they are ready.

Lead

- Facilitating a discussion is like a lawn mower, you need to get it started and guide it along a good path.
- Jokes and some light heartedness can be good to set a relaxed tone, but remember part of your job is to bring the discussion back on track after it loses some focus.
- Try to rephrase the question in a different way if people don't seem to get it.
- Sometimes people may not get much out of the pre-written discussion questions. This is when you can be prepared with a couple of your own or a story from the Bible or illustration from your life. You can also ask the group to share a highlight to start off or select a few of your favorite questions to go through.
- Have people read the different passages and summarize them for the group. This can help bring out shy people and slow down a dominator.
- Draw out quiet people by asking them for their thoughts. This can bring some anxiety, but some people may need to be drawn out and have great thoughts.
- Careful of an aggressive dominator, may need to have an outside conversation for tips and clarity on how to interact with the group.
- Be sensitive to how the discussion is going. Maybe there is a question or topic that hits a need. If so, go with it for a bit and see how God may work. It is ok if you don't get through all the pre-made questions.

Adjust

- After each discussion, reflect on how it went. How engaged were people? What can you do to improve and adjust?