



ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS

As a group leader, you are a disciple-maker who helps people live more fully like Jesus. Your role is not “preacher/teacher,” as a result, it is often a unique challenge for those with the gift of teaching to be effective group leaders. It is possible, but it starts with setting the goal of facilitating great conversation rather than preaching a sermon. Our desire is this is freeing for some and clarifying for others!

Facilitating great discussion and asking good questions is hard work.

A good question puts the ball in the court of the learner. Aside from generating verbal interaction, everyone can answer the question quietly and softly in the privacy of their own thoughts. When you hear a question, it is almost impossible not to think about your answer. Good questions allow for self-discovery, biblical exploration, growth, and the varied experiences in the group to bring out more than would be possible by one person alone.

Some Keys to Good Questions

1. Think through a series of questions. Phrase the same thing in a couple different ways. Because people think differently, at times a single truth can (and should) be expressed in several different ways.
2. Discern the idea you hope to communicate and then create good questions to lead your group there. Good questions build on one another and lead to a particular destination.
3. Ask understandable questions. We have tried to be as clear as possible in the provided questions or curriculum, but don't settle for that! You know your group; make it great for them!
4. Use every ounce of imagination and consider where your group is really “at.” Use this wisdom to craft your questions beforehand and to adjust during your meeting.
5. Maintain eye contact. It's more personal and encouraging.
6. Don't settle for the “Right Answers.” When someone gives you a quick answer, press them to determine confidence level. Are they saying something they believe or repeating something they have heard before? Ask, “How does that show up in your day-to-day life?” or “Okay, but how would you phrase that or help someone wrestling with it understand?”
7. Be okay with confusion; don't shy away from things that are difficult and controversial. Be sure to bring it back to God's Word. Don't let your group off the hook with difficult issues. Healthy tension or confusion leads to growth.

8. Admit you don't know. You don't know everything, so don't worry about hiding this when confused.

9. Be positive. According to the example set by Jesus, only hypocritical religious leaders deserve negative input. Chances are you don't have too many of those in your small group.

10. Be focused. Being sensitive to the Spirit doesn't mean wandering around every spiritual truth, guided only by the tangents of your group. Rather than covering a ton of subjects on a surface level, stick with and explore just one or two more fully.

11. When you ask a question, don't settle for just one answer from a single person, even if it's the "right" answer. Prompt further responses with phrases like, "Good, who else...what's your take?" "Does anyone have something to add?" "Who agrees with what was said? Ok why?" "Who disagrees? Why?"

12. Learn multiple sides of an issue. Consider common misapplications, misunderstandings, or myths. This will help you create "healthy confusion" and present different angles on the same subject.

13. Be transparent and vulnerable. Share your inadequacies in living different truths. This is particularly hard, but this is a key role of the leader. Without this step, our discipleship to Jesus is stunted and becomes only intellectual accumulation of knowledge. Jesus, in contrast, invites us to be real, vulnerable, and grow as people in our living of the truth. This is the growth and purpose of RCF's groups!

14. Jesus commanded us to teach others to obey His commandments (not just to know what they are). Keep your discussions real, applicable, and action orientated. How will your life look different because this passage of scripture is true? How will it look tomorrow?

15. Learn to push things to the extremes. We often accept truths because they are nice in the few situations in which we apply them. Challenge the answers given you by applying them in all kinds of situations, test them for consistency and accurately consider the implications.

16. If a question really sparks good conversation, then consider the group writing it down and journaling on it the coming week for more discussion next meeting. This is also great for questions you don't have a chance to get to but be realistic. Don't dish out a dozen questions or overdo the homework!