



Small Group Guidelines

- 1. Support Parents, Don't Replace Them:** Communicate after every small group gathering. Get together with them one-on-one to share key discussion points, updates, or opportunities for them to participate.
- 2. Location Matters:** The small group space and environment is your battle ground, hold the space. Create a welcoming, level, circle-based environment. Place talkative teens near you and quieter ones across from you.
- 3. Learn Names Quickly:** Knowing every teen's name by the second meeting in a non-negotiable.
- 4. Follow-Up:** A teen may share something that demands follow-up afterwards. Make time for one-on-one follow-up as needed.
- 5. Be Prepared, Not Scripted:** Research and know your content, but don't read from a script. Only bring the group journal and one page curricula for reference if utilizing one.
- 6. Be Patient & Present:** Do not rush to answer or respond. Let teens process. Wait on the Holy Spirit for the right moment to speak, invite, or propose.
- 7. Set Privacy Expectations:** Clearly communicate the importance of group privacy, with the exception of safety concerns. *"As we kick off this discipleship group, we really want to cultivate an environment of brutally honest sharing with one another. With that said, an expectation I'd like to set is that we will never share anything discussed in our small group with those who don't need to know it. Yes, we are all human and sometimes we slip up, but let's do our best to build trust and respect between one another and make this a trusted space to share honestly. Also, if at any time someone shares that they are in a situation where harm is being caused to them or someone else, that is something we would expect everyone to keep private and as leaders, we would work with you and those we need to get you the help needed."*
(Reiterate this occasionally with your group).
- 8. Affirm Honesty & Vulnerability:** When a teen shares something brutally honest, thank them for their vulnerability. A common response by teens when someone is sharing something deeply personal is shock and silence. You affirming that person's honesty will quickly change the group's reaction to openness.
- 9. It's All About The Second Question:** Ask meaningful initial questions that you would be interested in answering and follow them up with tension-based second questions.
- 10. Engage Everyone:** Invite each person to speak/share at least twice
- 11. Watch Body Language:** Maintain eye contact and an open posture. Show you're present and listening.
- 12. Manage Stronger Voices:** Gently guide dominant personalities and encourage quieter ones.
- 13. No Sarcasm or Bullying:** Keep the space safe and respectful at all times. No grey areas.
- 14. Avoid Haste:** Don't be in a rush.