



## Edgewood Church Small Groups Leader Examples and Ideas

“I’m bitter at my daughter.” That’s what a lady shared towards the end of one of our small group meetings. Despite feeling ashamed, nobody in the group judged her. In fact, after she shared, others began to open up and confess struggles of their own. The group prayer time that followed was powerful and life changing.

These are the type of moments that small group ministry are capable of producing. Moments where people feel the freedom and protection to take a risk and invite light into a dark area of their life. Unfortunately, we don’t always see these moments as often as we’d like to.

Helping people to open up and be vulnerable can’t be forced, rushed or left up to chance. We need to provide a series of questions that gradually take people deeper into each other’s lives. The questions need to be open-ended in order to avoid ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers. When I write out discussion questions for a small group session, I always make sure to have at least one or two questions towards the end of the session that challenge people to get out of their comfort zones.

With this approach in mind, I want to share with you 4 Degrees of Discussion Questions...

1. Questions That Bring Connection – These are initial questions that encourage everyone to participate. They allow for communication that is low-risk and safe. You want to help everyone to re-connect with each other after some time apart.

Here are some examples of these types of questions:

- [Icebreaker Questions](#)
- Does anyone have any praise reports?
- How is your week going?

2. Questions That Lead To Dissection – These are questions that typically follow the reading of a Bible passage. They move people into spiritual discussion where the Word of God is explored and pondered. Insightful perspective can be gleaned from new and seasoned believers.

Here are some examples of these types of questions:

- In your own words, what is the overall message of this passage?
- What stands out to you as we read those scripture verses?

- Why do think the Lord thought it was necessary to include these verses in the Bible?

3. Questions That Cause Reflection – These are questions where you encourage people to talk more about themselves within the context of Biblical truth. In this stage, you are shifting the conversation for people to share on a more personal level.

I find that I learn a lot about people during the reflection questions. I learn about peoples' past, families, successes, failures and life lessons. I build more relationship with people during this time than I ever have during a sermon.

Here are some examples of these types of questions:

- Have you had someone in your life that modeled the principles in this passage? Explain.
- Can you think of a situation or circumstance in your own life where you experienced what these verses are teaching?
- What are some of the benefits of applying this verse to our life?

4. Questions That Provoke Inspection – This is what your small group meeting has been building towards. This is where you step out of the boat and believe for the Holy Spirit to increase in your midst. These are the money questions!

At this point in the process, we're hoping that people feel that the discussion is relevant, important and worthy of their effort. Now is the time for that carefully worded question that can only be answered with risk-taking transparency. [1 John 1:7](#) says, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another."

When you prepare this question(s) you need to begin thinking about how you will lead the way as the leader. Think about how you are going to answer yourself? How are you going stretch yourself and open-up to the group? If you have assistant leaders, encourage them ahead of time to consider how they will respond as well.

The majority of the time, I will be the first one to answer the tough question after it is asked. As the leader, I want to model honesty and trust in hopes that it will invite others to do the same.

Here are some examples of these types of questions:

- What are some obstacles to applying this verse to our life?
- Is/Has anyone recently struggled with...?
- As we've been discussing this, what is the Holy Spirit showing you personally?

It should go without saying that the examples given above are generally worded for any topic or theme. When preparing a discussion, I will often review these in order to brainstorm more customized questions that are specific to the direction of that meeting. Hopefully the sample questions help to get the creative juices flowing because we've only touched the tip of the iceberg here.

In conclusion, I do hope you noticed the progressive sequence that slowly leads people to greater intimacy within the group. A small group discussion should start out above the surface with the goal of getting everyone beneath the surface. If we want to consistently see people be real and authentic in our groups we have to plan in a way that creates the opportunity for it.