

HOW TO LEAD A CONVERSATION

One of the most common features of a small group is there is always one person who shares a little too much. There is nothing wrong with a person sharing deeply, of course, it's encouraged. With a time limit on group though, it may become a problem when no one else is able to share because one person "hijacks" the group time. This is the tricky part for you as a leader, you're all sitting there, working on the study, and one person starts talking for about 15 minutes about all the sounds their cat makes when he's hungry. You're suddenly caught with not wanting to be rude in cutting the person off, but also want to keep the group moving forward. At that point, the group is looking towards you to do something about it. Remember, as a leader you are looking after what is best for the group as a whole, and you are to lead them in these areas. Here are some ways to handle that one person who talks too much, or just some tips on how to keep the conversation on the right track, perhaps the entire group is involved in a conversation about cats, and you can't seem to bring it back to Jesus. It happens to everyone, here are some tips:

WORK TOGETHER:

Have side convos with the talkers before or after your next group meeting. Thank them for always being willing and comfortable to share, it's a great thing and express your desire to see others share just as much. With this you can harness their gift of openness to try and get them to help you get others to share. Let them see they are valued, and also that it can be extremely useful to work together to get others to share as well.

Point to the Big Picture:

Have a direct conversation about the impact it has on group and be clear about what you want from them instead. Avoid making them feel guilty, but also clue them in on the goal for the group.

STAY ON TRACK:

If the whole group seems to be getting off track, you can say things like "hey guys, this is a super great topic, let's revisit this after the study." Which may seem hard to do, because often the conversation are not harmful, people may be laughing and having a good time. But it's okay once in awhile to ease back and take group less seriously if the relationships are strengthening. But, if this happens every single week, you may need to take the reins and bring it back to the study. It's natural for most groups to avoid getting too serious or too real, it's a process. The ice may take a long time to break. As you already know though, our vision for groups is to be something more than just a social club or friendly hangout.

SHARE VISION:

Keep redirecting the conversation and take time every few months to share the vision of the group so that people can hopefully draw conclusions that them sharing about unimportant things goes in contrast to the vision. If you share your desire for everyone to grow closer together towards God, to get real with one another, and build each other up, this gives the group the perspective of the purpose. Always revisit the vision you have for the group.