

Group Life Leader Training Brunch

January 26, 2019

Let's Get Practical!!

I. Goal: Making groups more personal; a place where members feel safe, comfortable/authentic and empowered.

Let's break this down:

Safe: A safe environment is one where participants feel able to share (over time) at an intimate level with other group members without fear of judgment or other repercussion.

Comfortable/Authentic: Being authentic is where a group member can be themselves – funny, outgoing, reserved, caring, etc. There are no stereotypes. A person doesn't have to portray a certain type of personality or "religious" style to please/impress others.

Empowered: Empowerment suggests that, as a group member, you can comfortably take on any role that seems appropriate for you as part of the group's needs. In some cases, you may lead a discussion or offer personal care to another individual. Or, you may feel "empowered" to offer leader feedback or suggestions for group activities.

Key point: It is the job of the leader to foster this environment for all group members and to be sensitive to those who have not experienced the results of these group goals.

II. Practical "belonging" methods for leaders to consider:

Creating intimacy/deeper relationships

- 1. Sharing spiritual journeys.** Create intentional time during your meetings to allow one individual to share their walk with God. Give that person a heads up that you'll be calling on them. Move it around with other group members (and be sure they are comfortable sharing).
- 2. Affirmation time.** Select an individual to be affirmed by other group members at a meeting and have the group offer words of love and support about that person. It could be a personal experience they have had or something they have seen in their interaction with others.
- 3. Consider group activities outside of your normal meeting structure.** This could take the form of fellowship nights, fun outings, ladies/guys nights out, one-on-one times for coffee/catch-up, intentional nurturing activities (e.g., text messages, cards, phone calls, etc.).
- 4. Learn from the successes of other groups.** Establish a working relationship with another group leader and share experiences and challenges on a regular basis. Don't wait for the "once a year" training session to interact. Put positive initiatives into action; don't be afraid to copy good ideas.

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5. **The Meal that Binds.** Many groups begin their meetings over a meal. There is nothing like “breaking bread” with others as a way to break down relational barriers and creating more intimacy.
6. **Be realistic.** Remember that you cannot necessarily be close personal friends with everyone in your group, especially if your group is large. But, you can create and nurture a personal group culture; one that moves from “social acquaintances” to “personal friends” following Jesus together.