
Transitioning from Large Group to Small Group



XP3

One of the most daunting tasks that stands before any youth pastor is knowing how to effectively transition from Large Group to Small Group. It feels like momentum can so easily be lost. Regardless of the size of your group, it's tough to end a talk and then have your students shift (be it physically to another location or just into groups in the same room) into their small group time. However, the following are some things you can put into play to help ease the transition:

Speaker – Your communicator can help the transition by giving a “heads up” to your small groups with a leading question for the students to be thinking about or instructions for something to do right when they get into their small group. For example... “When you get into your small group, we want everyone to share one time that... “ or “As you head out to your small groups, start thinking of how...” This can be anything that can get at least some of the student’s minds headed in the right direction.

Consistency – Have your groups meet in the same area each week. This will help expedite the process of getting them from point A to point B. It will also make it easier to know where to go, should you need to find a student or place someone into a particular small group.

Ice Breakers – It’s tempting for a small group leader to want to jump into the “meat” of the discussion, but students need some help in making the switch from being a receiver of a message (just sitting and listening) to being a participant in the message. Given that, getting into a routine of a quick catch up from the week or some sort of icebreaker is a great way to begin. For example: Highs & Lows – this gives each small group member a chance to say what the best and worst thing of their week was. It allows everyone to get caught up but keeps it short enough to where it doesn’t take all the small group time. This also allows the small group leader to hear some of the pressing issues for each student and makes it easier to possibly incorporate it into the application of the message.

Contextualize – It is easy for a small group leader to want to just work from the script. In other words, to just read through the small group questions like they are checkpoints that must be reached before ending. However, the purpose of small group is for the group to process the information given in Large Group (or to resolve the tension from the session) within the context of their own situations. That said, it’s important for the small group leader to listen to the talk through the lens of what they know their students are going through. Once in small group, they can then choose questions that will prompt the most interactive discussions for their students.

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Smooth transition is a team effort... communicator + small group leaders + students. Once a routine is in place, things get a little more seamless and momentum is gained (not lost) in the process.