

# SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

## Why are Small Groups important?

Small groups are a very important aspect of the youth ministry because it's an opportunity for students to have a safe community, be vulnerable and have a voice. A message each week can be impactful but small groups give us space to connect, process and be transformed.

### 1. Environment of Trust

- Explain to the group that Small Groups are a safe place
- Be the first to open up to your group

### 2. Confidentiality

- Never repeat what they say to you without their permission, even if you leave their name out. If you want to share their testimony, ask them: "You have an awesome testimony, is it ok if I share it with others?"
- Exceptions – There are a few situations where you need to break confidentiality and alert the Youth Pastor ASAP.
  - Intent to commit suicide
  - Intent to hurt someone
  - Reports of physical abuse
  - Unreported crime

### 3. Keep Groups small is possible

- It's good to keep small groups... Small! If possible keep small groups in groups of 8 or less

### 4. 70/30 Rule

- Listen 70% of the time and engage 30%
- Listen to understand, not to respond.
- If a student is in need of deeper conversation that may take more time, then that group allows please feel free to pull them aside during a convent time during service.

## **5. Value students' input**

- Do whatever it takes to affirm the comments of student input, but do not be artificial with your praise.
- Delicately address answers that are clearly wrong so that no one gets embarrassed.
- If a student's answer or comment is long-winded or unclear, repeat it back and summarize it for clarity. This proves you are listening, and it keeps the attention of the rest of the group.

## **6. It's okay to not know an answer**

- We are all human, and it's good for your group to see that you are limited and don't know all the answers. If you don't know the answer to the question, have everyone in the group look for the answer during the week. This gives the students and yourself the opportunity of learning how to study God's Word.
- You can also say "I don't know the answer to that, but I can help you find someone how may."

## **7. Keep the discussion positive**

- We deal with tough issues, and it's easy to slip into a conversation that turns negative. Be sure to reinforce students with positive feedback.

## **8. Be a Rabbit Shooter**

- This means you are aiming to keep the group on track and keep the cabin conversation from talking about silly things. Maybe you can say something like Hey we will talk about that in the cabin let's stay on this topic.

