

QUESTIONS FOR NEW GROUPS

I. THE VALUE OF SMALL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Some of these questions are good to use at the very beginning of a _____ group, or a new school year.

A. What were some of the small groups you have been in already?

Many students have already taken some Bible courses, maybe some non-Bible courses, some other ones. This question helps people who have never been together to talk. This is their first time together; they do not know each other. This helps them to learn a little bit about each other and discover each other.

B. Which was the most meaningful course or group you were in?

Then ask them, "why?" This gets people to talk, giving you an opportunity to learn a lot about them. Of course, that will help you later on to lead the group.



C. Some details that you want to find out. For example:

- 1) How often did you meet? Once a month, once a quarter, once a week?
- 2) How many were in the group? Four, twenty maybe?
- 3) What was the purpose? Maybe it was just a few ladies meeting together to read a chapter in the Bible once a week.
- 4) How long did it run?

D. Problems you encountered or observed.

There have already been many small, low level, Sunday school-type of courses here in the country. Some of them have been successful, and very helpful. But others, they just fizzled out slowly. You can use these questions to _____ on. "Yes, thank you, that is right. That is a common problem. Therefore in our group, we do this and this and this." So you always use the questions to give the group an answer and stimulus.

E. List some of the values of the group;

- 1) How were they blessed or encouraged?
- 2) What did it do for them?
- 3) How are their lives better now? (All 3 of these questions are rephrasing the initial question)

F. What were some of the personal needs met?

Maybe somebody went through a divorce and they were healed through this Bible study. Maybe someone had just lost a child, and they found help and consolation through a study.

II. GETTING ACQUAINTED QUESTIONS

If you come into a room and there are ten strange people whom you do not know, and many of them do not know each other, and you have this big pile of books under your arm, what are you going to do? "Here is a book

for you. Please turn to page one hundred and ten. Brother, would you read?" His reply? "I am sorry, I am blind, I cannot." Maybe there is a better way to begin. Do you see? You need to _____ atmosphere first. You need to create an interest in each other. So let us ask some questions:

A. How did you come to know the Lord?

You can ask two or three different people to give a short testimony of how they found Jesus Christ and repented of their sins. They are almost always interesting to everyone in the group. And it gives you valuable information. "Oh, he has been saved only six months" or, "he has been saved three years", or "his wife is not saved." So that is a good question.

B. What do you enjoy doing the most?

It could be a hobby. It can be their work. It does not have to be spiritual. If you make notes, it will help you to understand your students better. It will help you to do what Jesus did. He said, "I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) He _____ their background and used that information.

C. What is your least favorite task?

Everybody has something they really do not like doing. Maybe they have to because it is part of their family, or part of their job. It opens people up. One does not like this; another one says, "Yeah, this is the same for me. I also do not like that." And all you have to do is say, "Well it looks to me like the men do not like this and the women do not like that. We have quite a difference here." And everybody will laugh.

D. What do you consider as one of your greatest needs?

Often people do not want to tell you their greatest need, so rephrase it by saying, "One of your greatest needs," and it gives them the opportunity to choose.

E. Describe how you met your wife.

That is a very interesting question. I was just walking down the street daydreaming and this beautiful flower floated by. I smelt the perfume, turned around, looked, and thought, "That is the one for me."

Of course, you do not need to ask all of these questions at the same time, with the same group. We are just giving you several questions, so you have ammunition. You can choose from these questions ones that are appropriate for your group at that time. If it does not get people talking, and everybody is only replying, "Yes", "No", and "OK," then you need to add in some funny questions, so people begin to laugh and loosen up a bit.

F. Do you have a vision on your heart/mind that you would like to see happen in the future?

One brother just shared with me how God had provided him with some property, and how God has given him a vision to build a house of prayer. That is so beautiful. That brings people together. They see, "Oh, there are people with a vision here." They become _____ by one another.

G. If you only had one day, one week, or one month to live, how would you spend your time?



Now I think that you can quickly see that this is a completely different question from, "How did you meet your wife?" You probably would not walk into this group of strangers and say, "Good evening ladies and gentlemen. If you had only one day to live, what would you do?" Then thirty minutes later you would ask them, "Well, how did you find your wife?" You see, some of these questions build on each other. This question you ask towards the end of the discussion. It helps you to close the conversation. With this question you can _____ a vision, or a priority. So you must learn how to use these questions. Know these questions by heart. Pray about them before you enter the group, and then you are ready.

H. What are ways that you are spending time with your children?

Yesterday I was told about one of the key Christian writers here in the former Soviet Union. He has written several very good spiritual books. He has several children, yet none of his children are believers. None! Would you like to be the head of a home like that? Would you like to be a father like that? Would you like to have children like that? So asking this question of your students give you lots of deep, deep insights into their family lifestyle. It gives you information about how you can help them.

III. TIME MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

Time management questions are very important for busy students who are in leadership roles. Most of your students do not know anything about time management. About how to write a _____. And you ask some of your students and they say, "Oh yes, I know how." They live their life, and at the end of the day, they say, "This morning I did this. At nine o'clock I did this. At twelve o'clock I did that." And then they write their schedule. "Look, I have a schedule." That is not much of a schedule, because it is all of the past activities. Here is how you can help some of these people. Now you will need lots of time for this. It may take thirty minutes, maybe an hour, to deal with these management questions.

It is best for each student to use a large clean sheet of paper. Lay it sideways and make _____ as shown on the diagram here.

ACTIVITIES	QUALITY OF WORK			ENJOYABLE
	GOOD	POOR	OK	
POSSIBLE DISCIPLES	CURRENT CLOSENESS			ANTICIPATED CLOSENESS

A. What are all your activities per week?

You will simply start by having them list all the things they do. "Go to work. Travel. Time helping the family. Time shopping. Different spiritual activities in the evening, or preaching or so on Sunday." So first have them talk about it. "What are all your spiritual activities?" I have done that and some brother told me three things. I said, "Oh, thank you. That is wonderful. You have a very easy week, only three things to do." "Somebody else, what do you do in your week?" And they talk about it. Give them time to talk and think about it, and ensure they understand what you want.

B. List these activities in a column one beneath the other, down your page.

By the way, if you have never done this, it is a good exercise for you. You may just discover something about your own life. So now we assume that they have made this list.

C. Let them indicate if it is well or poorly done.

Beside each item, you make a second column where you write in 'good', 'poor' or 'OK'. Now every person in the group has a list of his work and an indication of the quality of work he is doing.

D. Which do you enjoy doing? What new things would you like to do?

Example: You listed seventeen things that you are doing. Some of them you are not doing very well, I can see that. Now I cannot read all the details, but I can see that some of them you are not doing very well. Now check off the ones you like doing, the ones you enjoy. The ones you look forward to. In my house we have some different feelings. I do not know how it is in your house, but when we mention the word 'conference,'

the children say, "Oooh, we have not seen you all day." When I hear the word 'conference', I say, "Oh good! Good!" because I enjoy your fellowship. I love you, and I appreciate you coming here and using this information to bless people. So the students mark in the third column those activities they _____ doing. Maybe they would even write down a new one that was not on their list.

E. Ask them to list a couple of names of men they can disciple.

Usually I am talking to men, and I think that it is better for men to disciple men than to disciple ladies. It is maybe more fun to disciple ladies, but we think it is better to stick with the men. So what are you doing? You are helping the people to think through their ministry. You are sowing seeds for improvement. You are creating ideas for maybe wanting to change some things in their ministry. Now you are helping them to focus on helping some other individuals, not just to preach, but _____ some other individuals personally.

F. How close of a personal relationship do they have with these people they have listed, or they think they can build with the people they have listed?

CONCLUSION

Now I hope that you can see that with these questions you can build a good atmosphere in a group that you have never met before. Without giving a lecture or forcing them, you are helping them to analyze their ministry and refocus into the direction of discipleship. _____ was the way of Jesus. That made Jesus successful and you can be the same. Just imitate Jesus.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

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Answer Key

- I. new
 - D. build
- II. create
 - B. knew
 - F. encouraged
 - G. build
- III. schedule; 6 columns
 - D. enjoy
 - E. helping

CONCLUSION

Making disciples