



10 Tips for NAC Small Group Facilitators

1. Serve as facilitator, not a lecturer. Your goal is to encourage personal interaction and self-discovery. At the same time, feel free to share your own experiences when appropriate.
2. Focus on what Scripture has to say, not on what you believe as a facilitator. Point members to Scripture and allow the Holy Spirit to help group members understand and apply the topic.
3. Maintain an atmosphere of love and acceptance, which will lead to open discussion. Never criticize or put down someone's comments or contribution.
4. Ask open-ended questions that *can't* be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." If you must ask a "yes or no" question, be sure to follow it up with, "Why?"
5. Encourage involvement by calling on non-participants by name. This also helps to control the overly talkative members. At the same time, never force participation, which would create an unsafe environment.
6. Stimulate further discussion by responding to members' contributions. You can simply acknowledge their response (i.e. "*Thanks for sharing, Helen.*"), or you can ask guiding questions to clarify general or vague responses (*What do you mean that you feel selfish? Can you flesh that out for us?*). Also be sure to respond to nonverbal communication (a groan, deep sigh, or laughter) as experts suggest up to 90% of communication is non-verbal.
7. Deal with incorrect responses and comments by asking, "*What do others think?*" or "*Does everyone agree?*" You can also ask, "*Do you find that in Scripture?*" Be gentle if someone is clearly wrong. It may be better to confront the issue one-on-one after of the discussion, especially if the group member is passionate about his or her answer.
8. Encourage application by asking, "*What can/should we do differently as a result of this discussion?*"
9. Keep the discussion on track by acknowledging any issue raised and then suggest putting in the 'parking lot' until you finish your present discussion. Keep a positive attitude toward participation, and steer the conversation back to the main topic. On the other hand, sometimes tangents lead to excellent discussions. Use discernment to determine if this tangent is something that your group members need.
10. Realize that community and spiritual growth are our main purposes for small group, not top-notch theological discussions. You'll need to discuss the topic in order to apply the principles faithfully, but remember the goal is spiritual transformation, not simply gaining knowledge.

Additional tip:

Your role as small-group facilitator is very important. You have the privilege of working alongside the Holy Spirit to help people grow.

But often facilitators ask a question, wait 3 to 5 seconds, and then jump in to answer it themselves. This is not helpful—your group members aren't participating, and they won't be discovering God's Word for themselves. Additionally, they'll learn that you'll always give the answers, which will discourage future participation. Instead, always wait 10 seconds after asking a question.