

FACILITATOR TIPS

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRAITS OF A LEADER

We want to create helpful, engaging, and relevant environments. After that, we let God do what only he can do—change lives. But we know that in addition to God’s handiwork, the success of each group hinges on the quality of its leaders. We use three traits to describe the qualities we look for: **humility**, **teachability**, and **curiosity**.

HUMILITY comes from a strong, growing relationship with Jesus. It is the acknowledgment that we are all sinners and totally helpless without the love of God. Because we have been so dramatically changed by this love, we want to move out of the way to help seekers connect with God in his timing.

- Humble leaders approach conversations as fellow journeyers, not as ones who are handing off truth.
- Humble leaders "sit" on the same side of the table as their group members, acknowledging they are also in need of a Savior.

TEACHABILITY is not just about responding to direction or correction. It’s an attitude, a spirit that says, “I will constantly be learning about myself, others, and culture so that I can be used in new and different ways.”

- Teachable leaders are always inviting feedback because they know it isn’t about leading perfectly; it’s about continuing to respond effectively to the people God has placed in their groups.
- Teachable leaders actively pursue what it means to create open and conversational environments for people to explore the topics and experience community.

LEADER FACILITATION

Traits of a leader certainly influence a group’s conversation. Facilitating rather than teaching allows the leader to encourage all members to discuss what they are learning.

Leaders who facilitate well:

- Are not afraid or offended by a group member’s input that is troubling or “out of left field.”
- Are prepared for difficult questions and discussions but limit their own opinions and input.
- Understand that they should be talking only 20 percent of the time at most.
- Encourage others to share, listen attentively when others speak, and are affirming.

Asking great questions is the best way for leaders to create conversational environments. This was Christ’s example. Throughout his ministry, he was asked many questions and responded with few answers. Instead of answering, he questioned. Jesus knew that a great question forces people to consider the truth, think about their own experiences, and reflect.

Tips:

- Ask open-ended questions, not those that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- Ask questions that evoke feelings, make people think, and lead to insights.
- Ask questions that have more than one right answer.
- Ask questions that encourage personal examples.
- Ask questions that stimulate others to apply what they are learning.

Responding to questions by promoting participation from the whole group and asking good follow-up questions engages everyone. Responses should connect questions to the topics; allow the leaders and others to admit their own personal struggles; and encourage self-discovery by allowing group members to arrive at conclusions for themselves.