



ICEBREAKER TIPS & STRATEGIES

The key to starting a good conversation, regardless of the stage a group is in, is a good icebreaker. There is no science to icebreakers; however, it is crucial to know when to have them be light-hearted and when to have them go more in-depth. For new groups, it is usually best to pick icebreakers that are light-hearted and relatively easy to answer. As a small group begins to grow together, icebreakers are a great tool to get the conversation going in a more intentional direction as well as a way for group members to get to know each other on a deeper level. Below are some tips to crafting quality icebreakers as well as suggested examples.

TIPS

Keep icebreakers open-ended. Simple “yes” or “no” questions leave people with an easy way out and does not tell group members much about that person.

Use icebreakers to make people feel comfortable. Icebreakers are a great opportunity for quiet or shy group members to come out of their shell and speak in front of a group in a nonthreatening environment.

Take it to the next level. If someone answers an icebreaker with an intriguing response but doesn’t elaborate, feel free to prod a little bit and get them to expand on their answer or tell the story behind it.

Use icebreakers as a transition time. Beginning each discussion time with an icebreaker gives group members a chance to put the stress of their day behind them and focus on the conversation ahead.

Trust your gut. Nobody knows a group better than the leader so it’s important for leaders to learn what triggers each member to open up in discussion as well as the areas that may be a little more sensitive for each member.

Be strategic. Icebreakers built around the current study topic can get group members thinking about the discussion the group is about to have. For example, if a group is going through a study on parenting, the icebreaker could be, “what is your favorite childhood memory with your parents?”

Get creative and have fun! Group members follow the example of their leader. Leaders should not be afraid to throw some crazy or thought-provoking questions out there. At the same time, leaders should always be willing to answer their own questions and model participation to their group members.



EXAMPLES FOR NEW GROUPS

“Would you rather”

Would you rather have cloven hooves or a pig snout?

Would you rather have to always say everything on your mind or never be able to speak again?

Would you rather go sky diving or speak in front of 2,000 people?

Would you rather live in the mountains or on a beach?

“If”

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?

If you could be any age for 24 hours, how old would you be?

If you could be a famous person for a day, who would it be?

If you were a computer, would you be a Mac or a PC and why?

If you could be a cartoon character, who would it be?

If you could spend 24 hours with anyone from the Bible, besides Jesus, who would it be and what would you want to do with them?

“Favorites”

What is your favorite movie?

What is your favorite song of all time?

What is your favorite hobby or pastime activity?

Questions about personal history

What was your first car?

What was your first job?

How many broken bones have you had?

How many states have you visited?

What countries outside the U.S. have you traveled to?

How many speeding tickets have you gotten?

What is the fastest you have ever driven?

What is the craziest thing you have done?

What flavor of ice cream best describes you?

