

# Five Types Of Questions

by Mac Lake

Everyone has arrived at your home for Small Group. Some are gathered in the kitchen, some in the den and others hanging out in the living room. Your house is alive with chatter, people are engaged in comfortable conversation, the rooms are filled with energy and it's obvious that everyone is glad to be there. You practically have to drag them into the living room to start the study time because they don't want to break away from their conversations. Then as you start the study time you notice a whole new dynamic. The energy is gone, the people who were so chatty just moments ago suddenly have nothing to say and you dredge your way through the study time feeling as if you have bored them to tears. How do you create dynamic discussion during your group study time? One of the keys is using quality discussion questions. While most group leaders use a guided curriculum, you still have those times when the curriculum doesn't provide the best of questions. So as a facilitator, it is essential to understand what makes a great discussion question.

**There are 5 types of questions you will use as a group facilitator.**

## *Icebreaker Questions*

The first type of question is an Icebreaker question. These questions introduce the topic by asking about personal experience or common human experiences. They help create a relaxed atmosphere and are an easy way for people to engage in the discussion. Icebreakers allow group members to share something about themselves on a safe level.

For example:

- What was your biggest childhood fear?
- What was the most unique gift you were ever given?
- What is your best vacation memory?

## *Observation Questions*

The second type of question is an Observation question. Observation questions help the group member identify what the text is saying. Asking this type of question usually causes the group member to look back at the passage to discover the answer.

For example:

- What was Jesus' audience like?
- When does Jesus say it is good to confront others with their faults?
- How does Paul describe the believers in Colossians 3:12?
- What are the action verbs in verses 4-7?

### *Interpretation Questions*

The third type of question is an Interpretation question. The purpose of an Interpretation question is to discover what the text means. While each passage has many applications, it only has one interpretation. Interpretation questions cause the group to wrestle with the meaning of a verse or passage.

For example:

- Why do you think Jesus told the healed man to “show but not to tell?”
- What do you think it means when Paul says we are “ambassadors for Christ?”
- What does it mean when Peter writes, “be holy as God is holy?”

### *Application Questions*

The fourth type of question is an Application question. Application questions help the group members see how they can act on the principle they discovered in the passage. Good Application questions will help people to think “What should I do about this?”

For example:

- Which of the virtues from this passage do you need to work on the most?
- What can you do this week to set an example for others?
- Who could you encourage this week with a personal story of something God has done for you?

### *Follow-Up Questions*

The final type of question is a Follow-Up question. These are spontaneous questions used by the facilitator to get clarification, amplification, or illustration of a group member’s answer.

For example

- "Sue, that is a great answer. Can you give us an example of what you are talking about?"
- "That is great insight, Bob. What are some practical ways we can apply that to our lives?"
- "That’s interesting. Explain what you mean?"

Being familiar with and using the Five Types of Questions will help you put together a well balanced study that will produce dynamic discussion.