

“How To Deal With Random Questions During Bible Study”

One of the most intimidating elements to leading a bible study, Growth Group or a discipleship group is when someone in the group asks a random question that doesn't necessarily relate to your study. Sometimes this can be a positive thing, especially when it leads to a teachable moment or when it stimulates curiosity. However, this can also be detrimental to your study causing a major distraction and preventing you from teaching what you've prepared. Here are some simple steps you can take in order to deal with distracting, off-the-wall questions that will come your way:

1. Be well prepared and focused before the study begins!

Often times random questions arise from group members when the teacher isn't well prepared and sort of meanders through the lesson. This creates boredom and confusion in the group and can lead to minds wandering in many different directions. The better prepared you are the more focus your teaching will have, keeping most on track with where the lesson is going. This will also give you more confidence in discerning whether the question is worth answering in the group. When you do go “off road” to answer an unrelated question, it will also help you find your way back to the lesson plan.

2. Give courteous but brief answers.

Most questions don't deserve a long answer. You'll find that giving just a brief, 10 second answer will satisfy most people and keep the bible study moving along so that the others (who aren't really interested in the question that was asked) won't get frustrated. You can't sacrifice the needs of the many for the needs of one.

3. Offer to meet with them afterwards for the answer.

Every once in a while you'll have a member of your group rattle off a continuous flow of random questions that keep you from moving along with your lesson plan. Some people do this as a way of getting attention, showing off their intellectual curiosity, or simply because they are trying to be a nuisance! When this happens it is important you remain firm but friendly. Congratulate them for asking the question, but then mention that it doesn't really fit the lesson and that you'd be happy to meet with them afterwards to discuss it further. That way they will be satisfied and the lesson can continue. If they don't really want to know the answer and are just trying to be a nuisance, they'll quickly get the point that you won't give in!

4. Call on certain people when asking questions.

Calling on specific people when asking a question can help ward off those that tend to interrupt or distract the group with random questions. You can do this by simply saying, “I'm interested in what John thinks...” or “Let's let Bobby answer this one...” or simply giving someone else that you know is tracking with the study, an opportunity to ask a question.

5. Spend time answering the question if it relates.

Sometimes a question will be asked that doesn't correlate with what you've prepared, but is a wonderful teaching moment! The question might bring up a point you hadn't planned on discussing but you immediately sense that it will benefit the group as a whole, not just that one person who asked the question. It's important you capitalize on these moments that have stimulated the curiosity of the whole group. They'll appreciate your flexibility and appreciate this moment of spontaneity.