

Building Deeper Connections With Your Small Group

by Doug Fields and Matt McGill

January is almost gone and February is knocking on the door. If there was a pause of any small groups (and/or programs), they're back into full swing after Christmas break. This week we're going to present a few ideas to help you be more intentional with what you're doing as a small group leader so you can avoid the rut of simply "going through the motions."

MAKE YOUR LESSON PREPARATION A PART OF YOUR QUIET TIMES

God is doing great stuff in your life, and your best ministry will happen out of the overflow of God's Spirit moving in your own heart. As you spend time with God, be thinking about the Scripture text that you'll soon be teaching on or simply ask yourself this question while you're reading God's word: "What can I share from this special time with God with my students?" When you're teaching from your own times with God, you will be more passionate. A heartfelt passion is always a deeper connection than simply a vibrant personality, wild humor, or cultural relevance.

Of course, we are assuming you are regularly spending time with God! If not, we'd definitely challenge you to focus on building a deeper connection with God before you focus on your students.

PERSONALIZE YOUR CURRICULUM

Good curriculum is an important tool within a youth ministry toolbox. But, curriculum is simply a tool, and it works best when it's adjusted to take your students into deeper discussions of God's Word and His ways. Nothing "just works" right out of the box, even the best curriculum requires your adaptation.

A great way to maximize your impact is to shape the teaching time and provided questions to meet your small group's needs. It's poor leadership to simply read a word-for-word lesson directly from the book. Make it your own and make it relevant with where your students live. You know your audience better than any curriculum writer. You are the expert on the needs from within your small group. You personalize the material so it best fits your "voice" and heart, which will help move the discussion forward.