

The Quiet One: How to Include Him in Your Discussion Time

By Matt Graybill

This past week I was driving behind a guy in a Honda Civic. About every ¼ mile, we hit a red stoplight. At one of the lights, I noticed his car bouncing up and down. I stared into his rear view mirror and he was bouncing, singing, dancing, and waving his hands in the air to a song on the radio. I pressed the seek button on my radio to find the song. After following this guy for a couple of miles, he turned into a Sheetz gas station. I pulled in after him to get a Dr. Pepper and... I was itching to see what this guy was like.

Out of the car steps a professional looking man who seemed timid at first. He opened the door for me and I asked how he was doing. He gave me a shy "okay" response to the question. As I watched him maneuver through the store his body language seemed hesitant. Was this really the same guy? I thought.

Perhaps you have a similar kind of guy in your small group. The person who never says anything but always shows up. Sometimes this can seem disheartening or frustrating, but usually in the awkward silence he's thinking through the answers. His heart may even be singing to the things he's learning. You as the facilitator have the awesome role in helping bring this person into discussion. Many times this person appears shy and hesitant in a group setting, but he's dancing to the music in his car on the way home.

When it comes to the shy person in your group, your role is to help bring his response out. Begin by first asking the group questions. Don't be tempted to be the first to answer your own question but instead ask them what they think. Then move onto asking the quiet one what he thinks about the item you're discussing. Maybe even ask him to think of an icebreaker question for the next week.

Never be afraid of silence. If you're always the one answering the questions, your group will expect that every time. Help draw people's responses out. Then, I think you'll naturally start to see the quiet one feel comfortable enough to start singing to the music.

Small Group Icebreaker: "Who Will Answer?"

By Jeff Campbell

This icebreaker begins with a series of open ended questions. Some people enjoy writing their own, perhaps coordinating these with the topic to be discussed

later. Others prefer to rely on one of the numerous books of discussion questions. Either way, this ice breaker begins with as many questions as there are people. These are placed in a hat or box of some sort.

As the reader might expect, each member of the group pulls a question out of the hat. They should read it out loud... but they do not answer it.

After each person reads the question they drew, they assign it to someone else within the group to answer. This icebreaker creates a safe and appropriate environment for members to say to each other, "hey, so-and-so, I'd really like to know ____ about you."

It works best when done in 3 distinct stages: First everybody draws, then everybody assigns their question, then everybody answers: breaking it up this way gives people time to carefully think about what they will do next.

Small Group Icebreaker: What Would You Do? By Tracey Smith

Well, your small group has been meeting now for a few months and you just can't seem to get past the superficial, "Hi! How are you guys doing?" Your group answers back... "Great!" And then there's silence. So how do you take your small group to the next level of conversation and discussion? Here are a few creative discussion starters that will help you get to know your members a little bit better, while having fun in the process:

- You are stuck on a deserted Island, and you can only take 3 things. What would they be?
- You can only eat 5 different foods for the rest of your life, what are they?
- You can only listen to 3 CD's for the rest of your life, what are they?
- You are stuck in a cabin for 2 years, what 5 movies would you take with you?
- If you could pick anyone, which three people would you invite to your dinner party?

These discussion starters can be used to help you find common ground with the people who are in your small group! Have fun!