

Get-to-Know-You Exercises

Small groups are more than Bible studies. Small groups are communities of believers committed to doing life together. Here are some simple get-to-know-you exercises that you can use in your small group to deepen your relational foundation. The first three are 'just for fun' and the last three focus on sharing elements of your life story. The goal is not to play a game – but to really get to know each other better.

There are many benefits to sharing life stories including:

- Encourages people thoughtfully reflect on his/her own life
- Affirms how God continues to write our stories using both the good times and the hard times to draw us to Himself
- Communicates the value that each person's story is unique and meaningful
- Creates a tremendous bond within the group by listening to others' stories

You are encouraged to figure out a rhythm that works in your small group. Perhaps you want to reserve a few minutes each gathering to getting to know each other ... or maybe once a month.

M & M Sharing: Pass around a bag of M&Ms and have each person take one or two M&Ms. Then tell them they need to share something about themselves based on the color of their M&M. For example:

- Red: What's your biggest pet peeve?
- Blue: If you could be any age, what would it be and why?
- Green: What famous person would you most like to meet? Why?
- Brown: What's an accomplishment you're proud of?
- Orange: What's your most embarrassing moment?
- Yellow: If you could get a \$50 gift card to any store, where would they want it?

Additional questions: What would be on the menu for the ultimate birthday dinner? What possession of your spouse would you most like to throw away? What's the worst hairstyle you have ever had? What historical event would you most like to witness? If you could have any view from your back window, what would it be? These are only a few sample questions. Be creative and think of some on your own!

Variations: Use bite size Hershey bars instead of M & M's. Or create a list of 20 questions and people pick a number. Or write a question on a 3x5 card and everyone picks a card.

Who Am I?: Encourage each person to write 3 interesting (and mostly unknown) facts about him/herself. Collect the cards and read aloud. Try to guess who it is. It's amazing how many things you can learn about others that you would not have otherwise known.

Hot Seat: Choose one or two people each week to be on the "hot seat". Other group members can ask varied questions – including fun questions or thoughtful questions. Keep the questions going for two minutes. This can provide some laughs as you get to know random things about others in the group.

3x5 Card Testimony: Using a 3x5 card and a pen, each person charts his/her spiritual life by identifying 3-5 significant moments/turning points with the Lord. Have each person explain his/her graph. This is a way for people to share their life story in a simple way while highlighting key moments in one's faith development.

Life Questions: The goal is move from being a relational community toward a spiritual community. Here are some questions that go deeper into each other's lives. Pick one question a week and encourage people to share. Listen and ask appropriate follow up questions.

- What was the greatest strength to your family growing up?
- How did you meet your spouse? When? Where?
- How is the example (or lack of) of your parents impacted your approach to parenting?
- When did you genuinely surrender your life to Christ? Explain.
- Who have been a few of the most influential people in your spiritual growth? Explain.
- Describe a time in your life where you called out to God the most?

My Faith Story: Schedule small group members to share their 'five minute faith story' with your group. Encourage people to write out important aspects. The story should be thoughtful, but does not need to be a memorized speech. To set the example, you can share first – then schedule others for future weeks. Do one 'faith story' a week. After the person has shared, pray for the person and thank God for His work in his/her life. This could become a weekly component until you have cycled through each story.