

Family Group Dynamics



“It was impossible to get a conversation going. Everybody was talking too much.”

-Yogi Berra

Most students fall into five basic, small-group personalities:

- **Talkers**—Talkers try to answer everything and usually turn everything back to them or to an experience that they’ve had. Their favorite words are “I,” “me,” and “my.” Talkers will usually answers a question by saying, “Well I (verb)...”

How to deal with: Deliberately seek answers from other group members by directing questions to them by name. As a leader you probably will want to sit by the Talkers. Sometimes just a kind “hold-on” hand gesture and eye contact with other students will help them not to dominate the discussion.

- **Silent Students**— Silent Students don't want to say anything. They commonly drop their eyes to the ground to avoid contact. They like to say, "I don't know."

How to deal with: Help them to feel included in the group by giving them a task in every meeting and by affirming them when they do say something. Guard Silent Students from others in the group who might make fun of the comments they make.

- **Mr. Church**—Mr. Church (who can also be a girl) has all the church answers. These students think they have an answer for every spiritual question.

How to deal with: Force them to expand beyond their churchy answers. Ask, "What do you mean by..." or "So how does that apply to your life?" Or, "What does the Bible say about that? Where do you find that in Scripture?"

- **The Distracter**— Distracters pull attention towards themselves. They play, fidget, crack jokes, sprawl on the ground, and can by humor dominate the discussion.

How to deal with: Give Distracters responsibilities. Sit next to them and help them to focus. Ask them for their opinions. Help them to dig beyond the surface-level banter.

- **Drama Queen**—The Drama Queen (and yes, this can also be a boy) of your group will have a daily crisis to solve. Crisis situations give this person their identity so they move from one to another as a means of gaining self-worth. When they don't have a pending crisis, they create one—everything from a popped pimple to a friend's dog having halitosis.

How to deal with: Get with this person one-on-one to talk about their situations. Don't give them a great deal of crisis-attention in front of the group if you feel that their situation is an "attention-grab." If you do give them attention in this way, you are feeding into their crisis-mode and they will continue to have more issues.