

Part of effectively leading a small group is increasing your awareness of the personalities represented in your groups. Your group most likely consists of at least three of the following:

The Talker

This is the student who has comments about everything you say (or anyone else for that matter). He or she has you thinking of duct tape investments.

Ideas:

- Sit them next to you for "touch" cue
- Talk only with object in hand
- Let them lead
 - They can recognize the need for others to share if they are a part of making it happen

The Thinker

This student is typically quieter than the others in the group and often his/her statements get drowned out in the discussions.

Ideas:

- Position directly across from you to engage
- Make time for them to share, and try to meet one-on-one outside of group time

The Church Kid

This is the student who most likely has been in church longer than you have. You know, measure his church involvement by his age plus 9 months! He or she knows all the right answers and is fluent in "church-ese" but the spiritual depth, in many cases, simply isn't there.

Ideas:

- Don't be satisfied with "church" answers
- Challenge with other worldviews
- Let them help you develop questions
- No "right answer" questions

The Distracter

Ok, not every teen fits this profile, but many do and I feel certain every single group has at least one. Yeah, the one that you're picturing in your head right now! He can't sit still. She's in constant motion and intentionally or even unintentionally draws the attention of other group members away from the discussion.

Ideas:

- Utilize that abundant energy with constructive uses
- May need to meet one-on-one outside of group
- Not all bad: Challenges you to lead & stay sharp

The Debater

Not necessarily the know-it-all but she thinks she is. She challenges you on virtually every point, and it is irritating. She is so forceful that other members simply shrink away from engaging in the conversation because they feel overwhelmed.

Ideas:

- Establish Ground rules: "Disagree but don't attack"
- Talking one at a time - use object if necessary

The Crisis Producer

He's always in crisis mode and makes sure the group knows about it every week. He is self-absorbed which keeps him distant from group discussion unless the talk centers on him.

Ideas:

- Assure him that all prayer requests & sharing can happen at the end of group or after group
- Long term goal: In the group but with appropriate boundaries
- Accountability

REMEMBER: *Some life circumstances do warrant putting studies on hold and focusing on the student*