



MARS HILL CHURCH

“The Art of Asking Good Questions”

DESCRIPTION

After this session, you should be able to:

- Articulate Mars Hill's philosophy of Community Groups as communities, not classes
- Use new skills or ideas from the Flex Model for Community Group preparation and facilitation, or know where to go for further study
- Ask better discussion questions

COMMUNITIES NOT CLASSES

- What words or images come to mind when you think of *Community*?
- When you think of *Class*?

GOALS FOR COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS

- Discussion
- Sharing
- Everyone participates
- Future leaders are thinking, “I can do this!”
- Building relationships
- Excitement, drama, spontaneity

NON-GOALS FOR COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS

- Getting through some material
- Going in order
- “serious” Bible study
- Regurgitating the sermon
- Finding a clever spin on the sermon
- Nailing down every answer to every question

WHY ASK WHY? EVEN GOD ASKS!

In Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve sinned against God. In their shame, they hid from God. But God called out to them and asked several questions.

- Where are you? (v. 9)
- Who told you that you were naked? (v. 11)
- Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? (v. 11)
- What is this that you have done? (v. 13)

Does God know the answers to these questions?

Why does God ask?

THE FLEX MODEL

In the Flex Model, there are three kinds of questions:

- **Discovery:** Basic. Quick. “What did you hear?” “What did you see?” “What impacted you?”
- **Deepening:** Going below the surface. Wrestling with an idea to understand it better.
- **Application:** So what? How does this impact my life? What do I do now? How should I change?

See also the accompanying document: “How to Lead a Community Group Discussion” for more on the Flex Model.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD QUESTIONS

- **Concise:** Good questions cover only one idea at a time.
- **Clear:** Keep it understandable. Don't go over their heads.
- **Complete:** Make sure participants have all the information they need to answer the question.
- **Connected:** Try to avoid asking questions that lead the group on tangents.
- **Conversational:** The aim is to facilitate conversation.
- **Challenging:** Stretch their minds. Silence is okay- it means they are thinking.
- **Contestable:** Doesn't have one right answer.
- **Creative:** Get members to look at both sides of an issue.
- **Controversial:** Make a controversial statement and see how the group responds. Use this method sparingly with discernment.
- **Considerate:** Don't embarrass. Don't get personal too quickly.

EXAMPLES OF BAD QUESTIONS FROM JOHN 3:16

- What about perishing, if God loved the world and whoever believes in him doesn't perish since God saves people through Jesus? What do you think about that?
- According to John 3:16, who did God give to the world?
- According to John 3:16, does God love the world?

EXAMPLES OF BETTER QUESTIONS FROM JOHN 3:16

- What are some characteristics about God's love that are implied in John 3:16?
- What would it mean to “perish” in the sense of John 3:16?