There are many things to *be* while serving as a leader of a small group. Don’t be too talkative or too quiet, don’t be too insecure or too arrogant, don’t be too flexible or too unbendable... but above all else, it comes down to this:

**Be an authentic witness for Christ and His Church!**

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**GENERAL TIPS**
- Encourage teens to **verbalize** their thoughts and feelings.
- Express **gratitude** for every answer that is offered.
- Use **positive language** as much as possible. Avoid the use of words that play into negative thinking.
- **Enjoy** the experience! This event will be fun and joy will be contagious.
- Encourage teens to realize how these new experiences, understandings and skills can effect their life **“back home”** in their parishes, schools and families.

**STRUCTURAL TIPS**
- Begin and end every session in **prayer**.
- Set some **“ground rules”** for the group in the beginning, and refer to them continually so that expectations are clear. “Everyone is expected to contribute”, “when someone is speaking everyone else is listening” etc.
- Keep everyone at the **same level**. Line of sight, body language, and seating should include each member of the group and keep them "on the same playing field".

**ASKING QUESTIONS**
- Ask **open ended questions**.
- Don’t be afraid of **silence**. Have patience and wait for responses.
- **Observational** questions: “What did you see (think, experience, hear, pray for) today?” **Listen** to responses.
- **Interpretive** questions: “What do you think that means?” **Clarify** the teachings of the Church here.
- Questions of **application**: “What can we do with that back home?” **Help** them brainstorm realistic and concrete responses.
Remember that as the leader of a small group, you will be the one to steer the dynamics of the group in a positive direction.

- **Some things to keep in mind:**
  - **Include all participants.** Everyone has something to contribute in small groups and should be actively encouraged to do so by the leader.
  - Realize the **human and faith level** of the participants (“where they’re at”). Their age, maturity and progress in their personal journey of discipleship will all affect how they process information and participate.
  - **Be flexible** and keep in mind the needs of the entire group.

### MANAGING DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

- **The Talker (Conversation Dominator):**
  - Place them next to you | Reduce eye contact, especially when asking a question
  - Utilize a ground rule: only the one holding the ball speaks | Note their natural leadership and have them “lead” or answer first, then give others a chance

- **The Thinker (Quiet/Reserved):**
  - Position across from you | Increase eye contact, especially when asking a question
  - Ask them questions directly and by name | Note that they are bright and thank them for their contributions, both in front of the group and individually

- **The Church Kid:**
  - Don’t accept the “nice and neat” answers | Ask “why” questions and play devil’s advocate to go deeper

- **The Distractor (Class Clown):**
  - Direct their energy for a productive end | Use active learning styles and note how they challenge you to be more flexible and creative

- **The Debater:**
  - Set ground rules for interruptions, put-downs etc.
  - Note their logistical creativity and ability to see both sides of an issue