

Get in the Habit of Icebreakers

These meeting builders can do a lot more than transition you to your discussion.

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When I read Charles Duhigg's book *The Power of Habit*, I was amazed how God created our brains to be extremely efficient, to make the most of our limited time and energy with the greatest result—all by creating habits. The idea behind habits is that there is a cue (something that tells us it's time to start a routine), a habit loop (the routine that has been ingrained in our brains), and a reward (some desired response that we experience almost immediately).

So I see a chocolate chip cookie (the cue), I eat it (the habit), and then I feel—at least for the moment—a joyful sugar rush (the reward). Or in the morning, I step into the bathroom (the cue), wash my face and brush my teeth (the habit), and I'm ready in a timely manner without having to think through what I'm going to do in what order (the reward).

One warning, though: once we experience the cue, it's hard to stop the habit loop from taking place.

How can we use the power of habit to our advantage in small-group ministry? Icebreakers can serve as an important cue in our small-group meetings. When we gather around and we begin the meeting with an icebreaker (the cue), group members will share their respective answers, and get ready for the discussion to follow (the habit). The reward is that they'll get to know one another better, and experience a more focused discussion time.

When we use icebreakers as a cue, group members know that it's time to settle in, to focus on the discussion, and to participate. It signals the start of the meeting and provides a sense of normalcy and routine to each meeting.

Do you take time for an icebreaker every meeting? Or do you sometimes skip them? Why?

Find great icebreakers by browsing [our list](#).

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