

Small Group Action: Action Checklist

Figure out if your action idea is a great fit for SGA by answering these four questions!

Is everyone enthusiastic and involved?

This one's fairly obvious, right? Everyone needs to be into it! Everyone! Even the quiet person in the corner! If there is someone in the group who isn't enthusiastic, then you're starting your mission at less than full-speed, and there's a good chance you'll drop momentum from there.

- *How to fix it: keep talking until you find an action idea that captures everybody's imagination.*

Also, everyone needs to be involved. Is there a role for every member in the group? They can be different sizes, but everyone needs to be contributing. If the whole action can be done by two people while the other two are basically cheerleaders, the group is going to feel unbalanced and unstable, and you won't come together as a team.

- *How to fix it: see what tasks can be handed over to the underused members; or consider broadening your action to take advantage of their skills.*

Can you get it done in a short time?

The short timeframe is a bedrock element of SGA. If your actions drag on too long, motivation drops off. Even the prospect of a long, slow action is enough to discourage many people from taking part in the first place!

Be honest with each other about the action - is the finish line too far away? Exactly what that means is up to the group, but it's a really good idea to be conservative early on - why run the risk of getting disenchanted with the whole thing?

- *How to fix it: look at ways to change the action to make it shorter, or try and divide it up into stages and make each stage a separate action of its own.*

Do you know how to start?

Make sure everyone knows their first move. When the group scatters off to their regular lives, will they all know where to begin? Talk about it together. Go around the group one by one so each person can say what they're going to do.

- *How to fix it: If you don't know how to get started, then the first thing you all need to do is figure out how to get started. Everyone chooses somewhere to look or someone to ask, then reports back to the clubhouse. You're off!*

Will there be a mark of success when you're done?

Everyone needs to know when they're finished. How will you even know when your action is finished? This is obvious for some actions, but it can be very tricky and obscure for others. If your action is to "make a poster about an issue and put it on the wall of the school", then you'll have very clear evidence that you're done. If your action is "stop using the elevator to go up one flight of stairs", it's a lot harder to call that "achieved".

A mark of success is a great way to make sure everyone knows you've made it to the end of an action. It's also a kind of trophy - a thing in the world that is evidence of what you've done. If you don't have one, your action might fade away instead of ending in a victory moment. For the elevator example above, you could make a chart and mark off with a smiley face every day you abstain from short elevator trips, or you could publish a group blog post summarising what you have done, or you could all have a wine party inside the elevator. It doesn't have to be serious, but it helps to be memorable!

- *How to fix it: look again at your action and see how you could tweak it to feature a finishing moment and a mark of success.*