Setting a few ground rules will help a small (or larger) group discussion run more smoothly. Examples:

✓ Everyone will have equal time to talk. The rule of step forward and stand back. I.e., if you are somewhat shy, make an effort to speak; if you tend to talk a lot, step back and let others voice their ideas. Share the air-time.
✓ One person speaks at a time. Avoid side conversations unless it involves translation.
✓ Everyone’s opinions and ideas count.
✓ Everyone is responsible for making the conversation productive.
✓ Speak up if you need anything.
✓ Speak slowly so the notetaker can capture your ideas.
✓ Please turn off or mute your cell phone.
✓ We will respect the time commitment.

Do these ground rules seem helpful? Are there others you want to add?