

TASKS FOR FACILITATORS

Fall 2009

PREPARING FOR THE PROGRAM

1. Distribute booklets to participants before the group meets for the first time. Participants are asked to prepare for Week 1 by reading the introduction and any small community guidelines before the group meets for the first time. Participants are asked to bring their booklets to each session.
2. Plan the schedule and process for each session. Write down the schedule if necessary.

HOSPITALITY

1. Create an atmosphere of welcome and hospitality. Call each participant before the first session to introduce yourself (if necessary) and to welcome the person to the group.
2. Arrange seating to facilitate discussion and sharing. In order to prevent people from feeling excluded, arrange the seating so that no one in the group will have to sit behind others in the group. People need to see and hear other members of the group.
3. Symbols such as a lighted candle, a crucifix, an open Bible, a small plant on a table covered with an attractive cloth, and music or hymns playing in the background can set a reverential tone for the gathering.
4. Unless the participants already know each other, provide name tags. Name tags prepared in advance give each participant a feeling of belonging to the group and are a convenient way to keep attendance. Have extra name tags on hand for late registrants.
5. At the first session, ask participants to introduce themselves, tell something about themselves and their families, why they are participating, and what they hope to gain from the experience. The facilitator should begin these introductions in order to model the length and type of introduction for the other members of the group.
6. Provide simple refreshments, if you so choose. Ask other group members to sign up to provide refreshments for future gatherings. Save snacks and foods for the end of the gathering.
7. Be attentive to the timeframe for the meeting. Start and end on time.
8. Call anyone who was absent. Tell that person that the others in the group missed him/her and remind him/her of the time and place of the next meeting.

THE GATHERING

1. Explain the meeting format and schedule so that everyone will know what to expect.
2. Make sure everyone in the group understands the importance of confidentiality and the importance of respecting what others have to say. Many faith-sharing groups agree to a set of guidelines that they intend to work toward in their interactions with one another.
3. Give the participants time to read and reflect on the questions before the sharing begins.
4. Encourage group members to share their own experiences.
5. Be a co-participant in the group. Share responsibility for the group with other members.
6. Invite the pastor, associate pastor, deacon, or DRE to the gathering if members of the group raise questions that no one in the group is qualified to answer.
7. Thank group members for their participation. Let everyone know you look forward to being together for the next meeting.

PRAYER

1. Reflect and pray in preparation for each session.
2. Use any questions provided in your booklet as a preparation for the faith sharing and reflection. If provided, use the opening prayer in the booklet. If there is not one provided, be prepared to begin each session with a prayer. Participants can share that responsibility with the facilitator.

Before beginning the Scripture reading, invite participants to spend a moment in silence recalling God's presence in the group. Conclude the reading by saying, "The Word of the Lord." Then lead the group into a time of faith sharing, reflection and action responses based on the reading. Conclude with a closing prayer.

3. During the closing prayer, provide time for spontaneous prayers of petition, thanksgiving, praise, contrition, etc. as appropriate.
4. Invite participants to take turns reading the Scripture readings and preparing or reading the closing prayer at future sessions.
5. Allow time for silence to give participants time to reflect and time to listen to the Holy Spirit.