



Facilitating Techniques

Facilitator Overview

Facilitator Defined

- ❖ Responsible for leading or coordinating work of a group, one who leads group discussion.
- ❖ Makes progress easier.
- ❖ Object of the group is to pray “the Scripture”. The facilitator makes that progress easier, by guiding the format, making the group discussion easy and accessible for all. Note: *The facilitator does not teach the lesson.*

Facilitator Role

- ❖ Provide an example of preparation both in the Scripture reading and in prayer (pray for group and members everyday).
- ❖
- ❖ Follow established format.
- ❖ Lead group in prayer.
- ❖ Guide group through discussion of questions, encouraging and affirming participants and keeping the discussion focused, intervening if the group needs redirection.
- ❖ Get to know the members of your group. Call them by name, and respect their unique personalities, gifts, and struggles. (Perhaps make name tags for everyone.)
- ❖ Reflect regularly on your performance as a facilitator; try to improve your skill.
- ❖ If confronted by challenges, report back to your Small Group Shepherd or Michaela Moreau for advice and help. (You can also email smp.smallgroups@gmail.com or call the Parish Office at 360-754-4667 to leave a message for Michaela.)

Value of this small group

- ❖ Strengthens discipleship to Jesus Christ, or helps bring people closer to discipleship.
- ❖ Increases incentive, motivation, and confidence in praying with the Word of God.
- ❖ Builds the community of the faithful
- ❖ Brings others to greater commitment to ministry and service
- ❖ Small groups = ideal context to develop practical applications/ implications of spiritual truths

Personal Exercise and Reflection: Leadership, Work of the Holy Spirit

- ❖ Words of Jesus Christ on Leadership
- ❖ Facilitating Well
- ❖ Work of the Holy Spirit

Think about your answers to the following questions:

- 1) What characteristics of Jesus’ relationship with his disciples would you want to imitate as a small group facilitator?
- 2) What qualities of a good small group facilitator would you personally like to improve?
- 3) What do you need most from God’s Holy Spirit to enable you to be a minister of God’s Word to others?



Facilitating Techniques Setting the Tone

- ❖ **Honor** those who have made the commitment to attend by beginning and ending on time.
- ❖ **Establish** an open and accepting climate and spirit of respect for the unique qualities of each group member.
- ❖ **Demonstrate** careful, attentive listening and concern by rephrasing a speaker’s response in your own words.
- ❖ **Encourage** participation from each person.
- ❖ **Support and affirm**
 - **Recognize** participants come from all walks of life, points on their spiritual journey and with varying amounts of knowledge and a diversity of experiences.
 - **Help** everyone know their contribution is valued and respected.
 - **Welcome** people by name and show concern for those absent from the group. Perhaps say a prayer for them. (Note: Facilitators should encourage members to call them or the co-facilitator if they know they will be absent.)
 - **Affirm** the participation of those who do speak up,

Verbally:

- “**That’s interesting.**”
- “**Thanks for sharing that with us.**”
- “**Oh, that’s great!**”
- “**Nice insight!**”

Non-verbally:

- Pleasant smile
- Eye contact
- Animated attention

- **Build trust.** This helps people open up and share their thoughts in a confidential setting, and aids in their journey to discipleship.

Stay Focused

- ❖ **Recognize** ‘rabbit trails’ can be both fun and interesting excursions, and that the only objective isn’t “to take the mountain”, but also to enjoy the process.
- ❖ After a reasonable amount of time exploring the “rabbit trail”, you can say:
 - “**Perhaps we should get back to the material.**”
 - “**This is very interesting, let’s table the topic for now and we can get back to it perhaps during fellowship or at a future meeting.**”
- ❖ **Summarize** the main ideas expressed. This can redirect the group when it gets bogged down. This also serves as an effective conclusion to discussion.



Facilitating Techniques

Deal with challenges forthrightly and courteously

❖ Overly quiet participants

- Call on quiet participants to read or share when the material will not be too threatening and then **Provide** the necessary affirmation.
- In one on one conversation draw them out regarding how they feel about participating in the group. If they are overly apprehensive for some reason, you need to respect their feelings and slowly help them gain confidence.
- Sit opposite them, and frequently establish pleasant, smiling eye contact.
- Always allow them the option to pass on sharing.
- You could say: **“Thanks Robin that was terrific. You should share more. You always have such good insights.”**

❖ Overly Talkative Participants

- Choose a seat next to them. Talkative participants often end up sitting directly opposite the facilitator, enabling them to constantly make eye contact, and to jump into the conversation. By sitting next to the person you may be able to control when you want to open the floor to them.
- Establish eye contact and use non-verbal cues to help them know when not to share.
- Refer a question specifically to others in the group by asking, **“Does someone else have a thought you would like to share?”** or, by calling on someone by name to share their answer. **“Thanks Kathy, but since you just answered the previous question let’s see if others will share.”**
- In private conversation with them express appreciation for their enthusiasm and sharing. Ask for their help in drawing out other participants by choosing to share less frequently, and allowing time for others to respond.

❖ Unusual or incorrect doctrine

(Do not assume the role of “Doctrinal Police” in a discovery discussion group. It is better to lead the group into discovery, so that the ‘correct’ doctrinal position can be owned by them rather than leave the impression that you are there to correct them.)

- Allow the community to provide the doctrinal balance without creating a division or communicating a judgmental corner on the truth.
- Affirm what you can affirm, ignore what you cannot affirm, and encourage the expression of sound teaching.
- One way to lead discovery of Church teaching while subtly correcting: **“So that everyone is clear on Church teaching on this topic let’s look at the Catechism.”**



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- Acknowledge their contribution simply: “**Thanks Kathy.**” Or “**Thanks Kathy, that’s an original approach.**” Then redirect the rest of the group to share their experience of the inspired word in their lives.
- As you hear contributions which you believe to be more consistent with sound doctrine, reinforce their validity by affirming the answer. Also as a participant we can share our own understanding in a gracious manner. When necessary refer to the Catechism for support.
- If participants become argumentative, we need to provide leadership by reminding everyone that we are sharing what *we* got out of the passage. (Please see previous statements regarding doctrine.) We seek truth in all things in regards to Scripture. Remember we read Scripture in the context of Catholic teaching. So referring to the Catechism is a great way to allow everyone to leave knowing the Church’s position.
- When handling really critical doctrinal issues ask for a volunteer other than those who are emotionally involved in the discussion to research the question through the Catechism or other sound biblical sources and make an objective presentation at the next meeting.
- Support each member of the group with personal concern (*may mean setting yourself aside*).
- Model good group skills.

Smile, laugh, express appreciation, and enjoy – your attitude will affect the whole group. Your joyful enthusiasm is contagious and will motivate the group.

*Trust the work of the Holy Spirit:
The focus of our Small faith Sharing Groups is on God’s Word
and God’s presence in our lives.*

*You are the instrument of God’s Spirit
as you help create the environment for growth in faith.
Know that God is giving you all that you need for this grace filled task.*



Facilitating Techniques

The Words of Jesus Christ Regarding Leadership

“You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” ~Mark 10:42-45

“...Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves.” ~Luke 22:26- 27

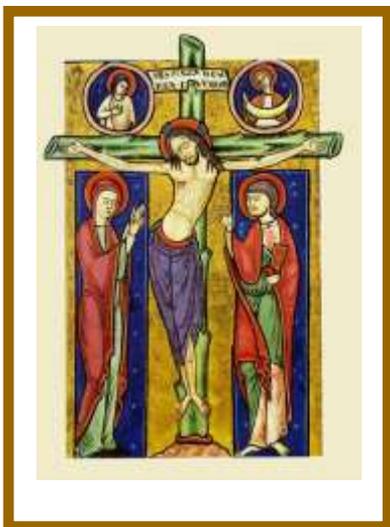
Jesus, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. “If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” ~ John 13:3-5, 14-15

Facilitating Well

- Prepare thoroughly each week (prayer, reading)
- Begin and end on time
- Establish a climate of hospitality
- Encourage, praise, and support
- Keep everyone involved in the discussion
- Keep the goal of the group in mind
- Recognize each person is valuable and unique
- Be joyful and affirming

Remember:

- Avoid waiting for latecomers
- Avoid being careless about time or a slave to time
- Avoid asking for responses from each member in sequence
- Avoid commenting on each response(*so that the group will not come to expect your stamp of approval*)
- Embrace the silence
- Avoid significant changes the process or format
- Don’t feel guilty when your group is less than perfect





Facilitating Techniques



The Work of the Holy Spirit

“This year our attention will focus on the Holy Spirit, Spirit of truth, who reveals Christ to us, the Word made flesh, opening the heart of each one to the Word of salvation that leads to the fullness of truth.” Pope Benedict XVI

Message for World Youth Day, April 2006

The Holy Spirit strengthens us.

“The Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness.” (Rom 8:26)

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray

“We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit.” (Rom 8:26-27)

The Holy Spirit teaches

“The Holy Spirit will teach you at the moment what you should say.” (Luke 12:12) “The Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name-he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.” (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit guides us

“When he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.” (John 16:13)

The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts

“To each individual the manifestations of the Spirit is given for some benefit ... But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.” (1Cor 12:7-11)

The Holy Spirit unifies us

“In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” (1Cor 12:13) “I...urge you to live in the manner worthy of the call you have received...striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit.” (Eph 4:1, 3-4)

The Spirit bears fruit within us

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Gal 5:22-23)