

10 Best Practices for Facilitators of Friends Adult Religious Education

Suggestions for Friends who take on an adult education session

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The effective facilitator:

1. Prepares thoroughly:

- Be comfortable with the topic
- Employ spiritual disciplines, such as prayer or meditation, during the week(s) before the lesson; hold in the Light all who will be in the class
- Organize the presentation and plan how the time will be used

2. Frames with silence

- Start with silence to center
- Frame offerings with a few seconds of silence, as in worship sharing, to help everyone hear more fully what was shared
- Maintaining an unrushed pace facilitates attentiveness and responsiveness to the movements of the Spirit
- End with silence to reflect

3. Lays Clear Ground Rules

- Communicate expectations
 - Explain what you plan to accomplish in the session
 - Acknowledge that others may hope for additional information
 - Indicate whether you are comfortable offering additional information at the end
 - Explain when questions may be asked:
 - Indicate whether questions may be asked during the presentation
 - Or ask group members to save questions until the end of the presentation
 - Give participants permission to leave if needed
- Clarify how you expect the group to operate or help the group clarify their own “ground rules”
 - If the lesson is part of a series, it may be helpful for all participants to formulate or agree on a common vision and to covenant together how they will interact in the study

- Allow silent reflection between responses
- Respond respectfully to others' comments
- Respect confidentiality

4. Creates a safe environment

- Facilitator gives affirming responses to participants
- Facilitator might want to reference “Suggested Guidelines for Discussion Groups”
<http://www.fgcquaker.org/files/suggestedguidelines.pdf>

5. Is aware of and accommodates different styles of learning

- Auditory
- Visual
- Kinesthetic
- Reflective
- For more information:
 - “A ‘Friendly’ Look at Multiple Intelligences” by Sandra Peth
 - <http://www.fgcquaker.org/religious-ed/re-newsletter-06-fall03.html>
 - <http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>
 - <http://fod.msu.edu/OIR/Learners/learning-teaching-styles.asp>

6. Encourages feedback

- Ask open questions
 - Begins with “how”, “what,” “I wonder,” etc.
 - Engages the group
 - Helps all members understand that we are going to learn as a group
- Use reflective listening to respond
 - Examples: “What I hear you saying” “Let me see if I understand what you are saying”
- Ask for group perspective
 - “Who has something to add to this idea?”
- Incorporate feedback into presentation

7. Integrates interactive learning

Provide opportunities to actively engage in the topic through discussion, writing or other activity

8. Deals directly, but tactfully, with participant problems

- When someone is dominating the discussion
 - Ask for permission to interrupt, “May I interrupt?”
 - Thank person and ask for responses from others
 - Speak once to a condition then leave it.

- Example: “Due to time constraints we need to give others a chance to speak”
 - Ask for silence
- When someone responds negatively to others
 - Remind person of Friends’ principle of respect for others
 - Remind them of the ground rules: “Respond with a collaborative spirit”
- When there is disruptive side talking
 - Pause briefly
 - Ask side talkers if they have something to share with the group

9. Provides an intentional closing

Summarize the session and/or

Ask group to offer what they have learned

End with silence

10. Enjoys it!

Teaching is a gift that gives back

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