

Annex A: Discussion Leaders' Guide to Facilitation¹

1. **Pray.** Being a discussion leader could be considered by some as a minuscule job; but we also know that Spirit led discussions can transform lives. So before the discussion begins, take some time to pray by yourself and as a group.
2. **Delegate.** Try not to do all things by yourself. If need be, appoint one or two persons to take notes while the discussion is ongoing.
3. **Focus.** Try to get your group to focus on the session topic and related questions; but don't be too rigid either. The rule of thumb is that when the dialogue is drifting from the main subject on hand to things like the soccer match last night; pull them back!
4. **Create.** We will have quiet persons who seem to have many things to say but just won't say it. Try to create opportunities for each participant to contribute. Ask something like: "What do you feel about this?" or "What is your take on this?" Try not to say: "You seem so quiet! Please say something..."
5. **Listen.** It has been said that those who live urban lives are really bad listeners. Unfortunately, when the discussion leader is a bad listener, the others follow suit and group dynamics will collapse. So listen well. Hear and try to understand what others are really saying.
6. **Affirm.** Some discussion leaders (not you) behave as if they belonged to the tombstone sect. By all means smile! Have a bit of fun, relax and affirm the participants for their contributions. ☺
7. **Manage.** Do not allow any persons to dominate the floor by their aggressiveness. Politely request such persons to hold their thoughts and allow others to speak. Try not to take sides with the ideas of one faction in the group; even if these ideas resonate a lot with you. Try not to be made the "expert"; your role is to facilitate a discussion and not generate it into a monologue.
8. **Silence.** Try not to be afraid of pauses or silences since many people need time to think and reflect. If you find it difficult to wait; count to ten silently after asking a question.
9. **Summarize.** Good to summarize the consolidated ideas once in a while so that participants can visualize where the discussion is heading to.
10. **Conflict.** Try not to avoid conflict, but keep it narrowly focused on the issue at hand. Since everyone's opinion is important in a dialogue, participants should feel comfortable saying what they really think—even if it's unpopular. As you listen to the conflict, listen for what process question or comment that will steer the discussion back to the topic.

¹ Developed by SGM for Wesley Church Camp (May 2011)