

Rules for animators of small communities meetings

1. Respect time limits
2. A meeting can last between 1 hour and a half, and 2 hours
3. Create a warm and friendly atmosphere, conducive to prayers and contemplation. If possible, create a tight circle.
4. Create a trusting environment, where members will know that confidentiality will be respected, and that there will be respect between themselves.
5. Invite people to express their ideas using "I", not "We" or "Someone"
6. Listen, with interest, to the person talking, without judging
7. Lead the meeting with flexibility, while making sure that the sharing of ideas stay on topic.
8. Do not be afraid of silence, but if necessary, ask a question to restart the exchange, the talk
9. Never interrupt the person who's talking, let him, let her say what she has to say.
10. Invite the quiet persons to talk, but without forcing them, and respect them if they refuse to say anything
11. Gently invite the over-talkative person to let someone else talk.
12. This sharing group is not the place to chat; it's imperative to avoid explanations, advices, and opinions of the type "I don't agree with what you say" or "I think you should..." , and even "I agree with you"
13. Pay attention to the tone of voice and to non-verbal language: avoid gestures and facial expressions that could be perceived as intimidating by members of the group. Taking notes during the sharing time could have a similar effect.
14. To be comfortable leading the meeting, the animator would benefit from reading the texts ahead of time.
15. A good sense of humour is useful to relieve the atmosphere when necessary
16. Keep in mind that the goal of each meeting is: praying, growing our faith, and serving others in our community. These are not meetings to socialize around a table, with coffee and cookies. If necessary, one coffee, or even water, is sufficient.