MANAGING CHALLENGING PERSONALITIES
Role Playing Exercise
ROLE PLAYING

Set up

- Show the *Introduction* segment on the first DVD (15 minutes) to the group of discussion leaders/facilitators.

- Have everyone take about 45 minutes to complete the questions in the study guide for *Lesson One*.

- Assemble everyone into one discussion group (or two groups, if you have more than 10 leader/facilitators).

- Have 4-6 people choose a role to play during the discussion of the questions (see the descriptions of the roles that follow).

  - Be sure to have at least two people who are not playing a specific role and are responding as they would naturally.
  - Someone in the group must choose to be Group Leader.
  - Use the Assistant Group Leader role only if you have 9-10 people.
Allow 45 minutes for the group to discuss the questions from Lesson One - Part 1. The Group Leader presents the questions to the group just as he/she would during a regular session.

The group works through the questions with those playing roles acting as best as they can like the role chosen.

Everyone takes notes (written or mental) about the approaches used.

Debrief discussion afterwards to capture and summarize learning for facilitators.
**Group Leader**

- Facilitates group
- Asks questions from lesson
- Doesn’t answer questions with own thoughts, but seeks answers from the group
- Supplies resources to aid in understanding content
- Manages personalities/group dynamics

**Assistant Group Leader**

- Helps Group Leader manage discussion and personalities
- Provides pastoral care for group members
- Time keeper
- Supplies short “thought starter” answers if discussion is unproductive
**ROLE PROFILE**

- Prefers to talk rather than listen
- Usually speaks first when question is asked by facilitator
- Can try to dominate group
- Doesn’t try to understand need for others to share
- Often subconsciously sits opposite Group Leader to assert own leadership role

**FACILITATOR OPTIONS**

- Make your seat clear head of table - no one opposite you
- OK to interrupt: “Thanks, Joe. Let’s hear what someone else thinks.”
- Physical cue: Put hand on shoulder and repeat above phrase
- Talk to privately about allowing all to speak
ROLE PROFILE

- Prefers to listen rather than talk
- Can be shy or introverted
- Can be distracted or unprepared

FACILITATOR OPTIONS

- Remind everyone to complete questions ahead
- Encourage everyone to complete written work to be well prepared and have time for reflection
- Encourage everyone in group to find one question each week to answer
- Call privately to make sure all is OK
Experienced PARTICIPANT

ROLE PROFILE

- Lots of religious training or formation experience
- Can be well-meaning: wants to share knowledge and teach others
- Tends to lecture or talk down to less experienced without even realizing his/her tone

FACILITATOR OPTIONS

- OK to interrupt: “Thanks, Joe. Let’s hear what someone else thinks.”
- Ask for sources of info and links to resources provided
- Talk to privately if lecturing or talking down to others
CHALLENGING PARTICIPANT

ROLE PROFILE
- Asks lots of hard questions
- Can play the devil’s advocate or just have honest questions
- Can be confrontational with others in the group
- Often has hidden issues with the Church

FACILITATOR OPTIONS
- If question is valid, throw it to the group.
- If not valid, put it in the “parking lot” to be discussed “later if we have time.”
- If confrontational to a certain individual in the group, move to another group
- Talk to privately to uncover hidden issues; recommend talking to priest if necessary
**Off-the-topic Participant**

### Role Profile
- Easily distracted
- Brings up current events or wants to chat about things outside of the lesson topics
- Can be focused on one issue and often forces it into the discussion

### Facilitator Options
- Repeat the lesson question or restate the correct topic
- Put off-topic in the “parking lot” to be discussed “later if we have time.”
- If a valid, but off-topic question, write it down and do research
- If harping on one issue always, talk to privately