



WORD on FIRE

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.

ROLE PLAYING

Group Discussion

- 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.

FACILITATOR ROLES

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

TALKATIVE PARTICIPANT

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

quiet PARTICIPANT

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