



# GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

*from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study*

#18 - April 2012

## Hospitality in Adult Faith Formation (Part 4)

Our look at hospitality in Adult Faith Formation concludes with this practical but essential process of “things-to-do.”

One method of Adult Faith Formation today is the invitation of a guest speaker to join with our parish communities, to share their wisdom, their experiences, to walk with us on the faith journey.

Hospitality is crucial here, not only for the participants, but for the person we are inviting. This issue of **GEMS** provides a “checklist” that we might use – not only to be graciously hospitable and welcoming, but to be organized and prepared.

It has been suggested that you might wish to make copies of this checklist to keep on hand as you plan all of your Adult Faith Formation events. (If you don’t have a guest speaker, simply delete those parts and check through the other hospitality/organizational sections.)

What’s missing? What other things do you do to keep organized, to provide welcoming and hospitality? Let me know and I’ll update the list and provide you with a revision. (Send your ideas to [jansch@juno.com](mailto:jansch@juno.com).)

### **Know your needs and who/what would be best**

- Have you checked the parish calendar for any potential conflicts? If this is a significant adult faith formation event, is it possible to clear the calendar of other meetings, so that all parishioners are free to participate in this faith-growth opportunity?
- Collaborate with other committees in the parish/cluster. This provides opportunities for programs to enhance one another.

- What do you need for this gathering? A speaker, a facilitator, a panel of speakers?
- Are your expectations that this person will teach, inspire, train, or help the participants reach a particular decision/outcome?
- What will the participants expect? What are their interests, hopes, questions, and concerns?
- Who has the experience, expertise, presentation style that your parish needs right now for this event?
- Given who you have had in the past, who would be best now – to give a different perspective, perhaps?

### **Invite your selected speaker/facilitator**

- Let him/her know all the marvelous reasons why you chose him/her.
- Thoroughly explain the expectations and details for this gathering and his/her role:
  - the purpose and objectives of the meeting and/or presentation
  - the topic and length of his/her presentation, as well as the format and process

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- the name(s) of other presenter(s) and their topic(s), if applicable
- the anticipated number of participants
- Discuss travel and housing arrangements
- Inquire about their stipend and/or explain your remuneration policy, including the time of payment
- Give her/him background on the parish and who the participants will be

## Request from the speaker

- The title and description of their presentation
- A biographical sketch (to be used for the introduction)
- Handout materials
- Meeting room set-up
- All audio-visual, technology, and other needs for the gathering
- Permission to audio or video record, if applicable

## Confirm the invitation/agreement in writing

- State the date, time, location (along with directions), title and topic, length of presentation, and stipend
- Send copies of brochures and other promotional materials to the speaker as soon as they are available

## Marketing and Publicity

- It has been said, in today's multi-media, technological world, that people need to see/hear things 24 times before they start paying attention to it. Thus, marketing/publicity is critically important.

It doesn't mean doing the exact same thing, in exactly the same way 24 times. It could mean:

- Creating various creative ways of saying the same information
- Using various methods
- Targeting different groups with messages related to what it means for them

Try some of these methods:

- Parish websites
- Regional and diocesan websites
- Bulletins and newsletters
- Newspapers (local, diocesan)
- Word of mouth
- Personal invite
- Bring a friend
- Pulpit announcements
- Posters
- Radio and TV
- Brochures and fliers
- Facebook and Twitter
- Parish Blog

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## **Communicate near the event to check that everything is in place**

- Share cell phone numbers with each other
- Double-check on audio-visual, technology, and other needs for the gathering
- Double-check on handouts needed
- Give specific directions: which building, room name, door to enter, etc.

## **Introduction of the speaker**

- Prepare an introduction that will ready the participants for the event and help them to “get to know” the speaker, not just the facts on their vitae, but their interests and pursuits.

## **Set-Up prior to the arrival of the speaker and participants**

- Welcoming and clear signs as soon as people enter the parish property
- The temperature is not too warm or cold
- The lighting is sufficient for easy reading
- A microphone is in place and checked for efficiency
- Seating arrangements are such that everyone can see without straining
  
- Check restrooms for cleanliness and all needed supplies
- Room set-up as the speaker/facilitated requested
- All A-V, technology equipment requested in place, plugged in and tested

- Visual aids are well done and large enough to be seen easily
- An area to hang coats
- A prayer/focal area set up
- Tables covered; water and cups on the tables

## **Other Hospitality Necessities**

Much of this has been explored in detail in previous issues of **GEMS**. It's crucial!

- Refreshments attractively presented
  - Remember the non-coffee drinkers
  - Remember those who are diabetic
  
- Hospitable Greeters as soon as people enter the building and meeting space
- A welcoming registration/check-in area staffed by friendly parishioners
  
- Depending upon the event, have background music playing as people gather
  
- Provide and plan for the differing learning styles of the participants  
See:
  - [Multiple Intelligences](#)
  - [Description of Multiple Intelligences](#)
  - [Multiple Intelligences for Adult Education](#)
  - [Multiple Intelligences Methods](#)
  - [Learning Styles](#)
  - [Various Learning Styles](#)
  - [Learning Styles from Ageless Learner](#)

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## Beginning of the gathering

- Start on time
- Warmly, enthusiastically welcome all who came
- Thank the committee, all who worked/are working to bring this gathering/opportunity to fruition
- Graciously welcome/introduce the presenter

## During the gathering

The Adult Faith Formation Coordinator, staff, and Adult Faith Formation Committee/Team remain, participating in the gathering, being available to the participants and the facilitator for any needs which might surface.

## Ending of the gathering

- End on time
- Thank the presenter, briefly summarizing how their message will effect/help people in the future
- Thank people for their attendance and participation
- Ask people to fill out the evaluation; their ideas are counted for future planning
- Let people know that they will also be receiving an evaluation within the week via email – if they would rather fill it out this way or they have additional ideas/thoughts

## After the gathering

- Write a thank you note to the presenter/facilitator, letting him/her know how much you and the people appreciated her/his presence and all that was given.
- Convey your thanks to the committee and all those who contributed to the success of this event.
- Email an evaluation to all the participants. If you use [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) all the compilation will be done for you.
- Place photos of the gathering in your Sunday bulletin and on your website accompanied by comments from the evaluation.
- After you – and the Adult Faith Formation Committee -- have had time to analyze the evaluations, place a summary of them in the Sunday bulletin and on the parish website indicating changes and additions, etc. you will be making in future programs, because of their suggestions. An illustration that people have been listened to goes a long way!



### **Golden Nuggets From You**

“We are having a parish-wide Lenten book study. I learned the evangelization team wanted to buy and give out a book for study on the first week of Lent, so I got with them

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and shared the [GEMS #14](#) I had gotten a bit before on having a parish-wide book discussion and how they did a "Pass It On" with the chosen book prior to Lent.

They all thought it was a great idea so we put that **GEM** into practice. We now have one morning and one evening parish discussion group available (each meeting in one large room but breaking into small groups to discuss the questions) and one online group. So keep those **GEMS** coming!"

- *Laura Broyles, St. Thomas aBecket Parish, Canton, Michigan*

"Great info and ideas on hospitality, ice breakers, etc ([GEMS #17](#))!!! I will for sure share it with our cluster adult faith formation committee. We use a lot of your materials. Thanks!

Hospitality is so key with adults. For our 6-week New Testament Bible Study this Lent we have added a Soup Supper just before. We have around 50 for soup and 65 or so for the Bible Study. It's amazing how strong the group dynamics are this year at our sessions. I know it is because relationships have been built through the Soup Suppers. Why didn't we think of this before?!"

- *Diane Seidel, St. Boniface Parish, Bay City, Michigan*

"When properly done, program evaluations, while really a part of quality assurance, are even more a part of hospitality for two reasons.

First, we are asking each participant for his/her feedback on key aspects of the course, event, or program. In doing so, we are telling the participant that her or his experience with and input matter.

Second, hospitality demands that we do something with the evaluation data. This year, our Catholic Educators' Faith Conference has several new features, all of which came from feedback provided in the evaluations. In sharing the new format, I made sure to include the fact that the changes

came from requests from the "consumers." As a result there is a lot of interest and energy surrounding the program.

Sometimes, perhaps often, we may not be able to make changes. Hospitality would require that the feedback, in those cases, at least be acknowledged and that, if possible, some explanation as to why some things are not changing should be offered.

- *Lawrence F. Duffany, Jr., Director of School Support Services and Teacher Faith Formation, Office of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Hartford*

(We welcome your comments, thoughts, suggestions, ideas, etc. Your views and practices continually support and encourage others. Email them to [jansch@juno.com](mailto:jansch@juno.com) any time.)



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at [www.janetschaeffler.com](http://www.janetschaeffler.com).

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Best Practices can be found at [www.pastoralplanning.com](http://www.pastoralplanning.com). Go to Adult Formation: *Nuts & Bolts: Planning and Best Practices for Adult Formation*.