

Training Title

House Meetings: Building Community in Support of Action

Facilitators

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Goals

- To give participants tools for sharing information and motivating people for action on whatever issue is being addressed
- To give participants an opportunity to express their concerns about the Church (We go to meetings, we work for the parish, but nobody ever asks what we think!)

Agenda

Welcome, Prayer and Brief Introduction	(2 min)
Overview of Goals and Agenda	(3 min)
Basic Rationale	(5 min)
Sharing Our Major Concerns	(15 min)
Tools for Conducting a House Meeting	(10 min)
Sharing Other Methods	(10 min)
Evaluation and Closing	(5 min)

Supplies

Easel, flip chart paper, markers, tape

Handouts

HOUSE MEETING HANDOUT: Overview, Preparation, Agenda, Follow-up, Commitment Cards

Facilitator's Notes

Welcome, Prayer and Brief Introduction of Facilitators (2 min.)

Prayer

Gracious God, we offer thanksgiving and praise to you. We give you thanks for all here present, and we thank you for all that our Church has meant to us. We rejoice at the inspiration which has been found here. We acknowledge our gratitude for the continuing ministry and mission of our Church throughout the years, through the preaching of your Word, the singing of hymns to your praise, and the sharing of life-sustaining sacraments. We ask you to sanctify our lives and our work. Help us to preserve the best of our past and be open to new vision. May we long continue to be signs of your spirit and witnesses to Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Overview of Goals and Agenda (3 min.)

Basic Rationale (5 min.)

Purpose of a House Meeting: to spread the word and motivate people to act
We want 1) education - to lead to 2) awareness - to lead to 3) action.

The presenter at a house meeting will go through 4 steps in explaining this to the participants:

- 1) State the issue at hand (accountability; closing of a parish, etc.)
- 2) State that a solution exists (it's easy to feel powerless)
- 3) State that they can be part of the solution and that we can all work together to bring about the solution (strength in numbers).
- 4) State that we have a right and an obligation to use our gifts to speak up, according to Scripture, Canon Law and the Vatican II documents.

Sharing Our Major Concerns (15 min.)

Participants are asked to form groups of 3 to share their main concern about the Church today – each person shares for 3 minutes (bell is rung)

Ask for anyone who noticed commonalities among their group members. If time permits, some general feedback can be shared.

Tools for Conducting a House Meeting (10 min.)

(Distribute handout on house meeting format and commitment card sheet)

Good suggestion (not on the sheet) is to ask people coming to a house mtg. to bring their calendars with them (they will be asked to hold their own mtg.)

Go over agenda in the handout, stressing that this is a suggestion—you can improvise to fit your situation.

Note that the sharing of their stories takes up most of the meeting—after that:

- 1) Facilitator should pass around a sheet asking for basic contact information of all present.
- 2) At the same time, facilitator passes out commitment cards, stating the action steps pertinent to their group.
- 3) Facilitator then ask for someone to share their commitment—looking for “bright eyes” to get the ball rolling.

Sharing Other Methods (10 min.)

Ask for suggestions of other ways participants have “gotten the word out”.
Questions?

Evaluation and Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Evaluation

What are some aspects of today's training that:

You liked

You thought went well

You would like to see repeated when this training is offered in the future

What are some aspects of today's training that:

Can be improved (how?)

Should be changed when this training is offered in the future

Closing Prayer

Let's take a moment to center ourselves in the presence of our brother Jesus Christ. As He promised, so we believe in His presence among us each and every time that we come together in communio. As we move forward in the work of house gatherings, We ask our parent God to send us His Spirit to guide our every word and action toward our Savior's vision for the community He left behind, and continues to embrace, as we embrace His Presence among us. Amen.

HOUSE MEETING HANDOUT

Overview, Preparation, Agenda, Follow-up, Commitment Cards

DEFINITION: A house meeting is a group conversation about a matter of common concern, that results in some kind of commitment.

PURPOSE: To access social networks and recruit people to become involved with a particular endeavor. To motivate people to ACT!

FOCUS: In this tactic, quantity matters more than quality. The clock is ticking.... You need as many people involved as possible in order to achieve your goal. House meetings allow you to reach large numbers of people very quickly.

For each house meeting, 10 people show and 2 commit to host another house meeting.

People mobilize for a goal and date (like a wedding)!

Your primary job as a VOTF House Meeting Facilitator is to convince people that:

- 1) The issue is real (accountability)
- 2) The issue is significant
- 3) There is a solution
- 4) They can be part of the solution
- 5) The cost of the solution must be equitably borne

PREPARATION WITH HOST – 1-2 WEEKS PRIOR

Have a one-on-one conversation with host

Connect with them on common interests

In that conversation, ask host to write down fifty names of people they know without censoring

Prompt them to think of people they may not otherwise consider

Mutually decide on a house meeting date and time

Preferably within 5 days, no later than 2 weeks, for a 2-hour block of time

Have host prepare to make phone calls

When inviting someone tell them what it is about and that they'll be asked to do something

Tell them to bring calendars

Have the host make calls *right then* till they get a first YES

Bring a cell phone

Have the host create a plan for making the remaining calls

Set a deadline for recruitment calls

Should be finished at least 3 days prior to the house meeting

Call the host 2-3 days prior to the house meeting

Get a recruitment update, and have the host make reminder calls to people who have said they are coming

Help host prepare his/her story for why hosting/why accountability is important (rooted in personal story)

PREPARATION WITH HOST – 1 HOUR BEFORE HOUSE MEETING

Talk to host about agenda for the house meeting
Host does last minute recruitment calls, if necessary
Send around a sign-in sheet (below)

HOUSE MEETING AGENDA = 1.5 hours

- 15 Mingle Time
- 5 Host's Story
- 2 Host introduces Facilitator
- 5 Facilitator's Story*
- 30 Rounds (names/where from/Why there/what people think)
- 5 Common values*
- 5 Goal and Strategy*
- 5 Call to leadership/Commitments*

Start by asking person who'll say "yes" to host
(Look for bright eyes)

Then jump around to other commitments and people until you have a "yes" or "no" from all

Write all on flip chart

- 2 Hand out Commitment cards*/Thanks (below)
Continue to Mingle

**Requires advance preparation on the part of the facilitator!*

WRAP UP – 1 HOUR AFTER THE HOUSE MEETING

Mingle, Answer Questions, Collect Commitment Cards and Sign in Sheet
Schedule 1:1's with next hosts (within 2 days)
Evaluate with current host

PREPARING FOR NEXT HOUSE MEETINGS

Meet with hosts within 2 days
Repeat entire process

SCHEDULE PER HOUSE MEETING FACILITATOR

Week 1 – 2 meetings (find 4 new hosts)
Week 2 – 4 meetings (find 8 new hosts)
Week 3 – 4 meetings (commitments to convocation ONLY)
Week 4 – 4 meetings (commitments to convocation ONLY)

TOTAL = 14 MEETINGS IN 4 WEEKS

VOTF HOUSE MEETING COMMITMENT CARD

Date _____ Name of Host _____
Your Name _____
Email _____
Phone _____
Best Times to Reach You _____

COMMITMENTS

- Host a house meeting**
 - Attend a VOTF affiliate meeting in your area**
 - Other** _____
-

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