

A Simple Workshop Format for the 12 Traditions

People learn more if they participate, instead of just listening. So it's good to have *active* workshops and give a lot of people jobs at them. This simple, engaging format does both. It involves a dozen quick talks, followed by a session of small group problem-solving, and ends with the groups reporting what they decided.

Workers

This format can use: a host, a panel of twelve 3-minute speakers (one for each Tradition), a fearless and assertive timekeeper, a PR person, a refreshments coordinator, a literature coordinator to provide literature, and a setup/cleanup coordinator. That makes eighteen volunteers who will attend the workshop, a good start. They can also distribute flyers, make announcements, and invite their friends to increase attendance.

Part I

You might start the meeting at 10:00am on a Saturday in a large room. If possible, people are seated at tables that have Tradition-related literature. The host welcomes everyone, explains the day's agenda, and introduces the twelve Traditions speakers. The timekeeper makes sure that the simple, focused talks are done by 10:45. You might optionally have a final 3-minute talk on a topic like: Traditions literature, using the Traditions, or how to learn or teach the Traditions.

Part II

After a short break, at 11:00 divide the room into small groups. Each one will draw a few real-world Traditions problems printed on slips drawn from a hat, so the teach group randomly discusses different problems. You might make sure that each group has access to pamphlets or other literature.

At the end, gather everyone back together and have each group report on what they discussed. Finish at 12 or 12:30 as you prefer. Remember that a brisk workshop tells people you value their time and will use it well. Leave 'em wanting more, and they'll be back for your next workshop.

Some Tips

- **PR:** Distribute a flyer as soon as you know the time and place, and post it in the newsletter and website.
- **Speakers:** Instead of oldtimers, maybe give newer people this chance to talk about Traditions before an audience. Their job is NOT to do a PhD talk, just to state the Tradition simply and clearly in 3 minutes. It doesn't take long to say that we decide by vote, focus primarily on recovery from alcoholism, don't get into other enterprises, avoid outside money or influence, don't broadcast our identity as members, etc. Focus on simple info that newer members can remember and use.
- **Groups:** Five or fewer per group is good, and all should participate! If possible, mix people who don't all know each other, and mix oldtimers with newer folks. Experienced folks should encourage and listen to the newer ones, not dominate and lecture them, even though it can be tempting! A workshop should offer growth opportunities for everyone, including the one who takes notes and reports at the end.
- **Literature:** Sometimes people want to look something up, a good habit to form! It's easiest if each group is sitting at their own small table with literature on it. Or you can just put it on one of the chairs in their circle. If your budget allows, let them take a pamphlet home. And beyond the 12 & 12, there's good info in several Traditions pamphlets, AA Comes of Age, and Language of the Heart, and maybe other sources...
- **Questions:** Consider using the "Real-Life Traditions Questions" as a source of modern, practical questions that you can print and cut up into separate folded slips of paper and put in the hat.
- **Close the deal:** As at any workshop, it's a good idea for friendly General Service folks to be there with sign-up sheets, ready to get energized people involved in committees or other service work.