

A Simple Workshop Format for the 12 Traditions

People learn more if they participate than if they just passively listen. So it's good to have *active* workshops, and a lot of jobs for volunteers. The simple two-hour workshop below has a lot of jobs and includes a dozen quick talks, lively small group discussions, and a closing report from each group on their discussions.

Workers

This format uses: a host, a panel of twelve 3-minute speakers (one for each Tradition), a fearless timekeeper, and coordinators for PR, refreshments, literature, and setup/cleanup. That makes eighteen volunteers who will attend the workshop, a good start. All of them can distribute flyers, announce it at meetings, and bring friends.

Part I: Brief Traditions Talks

You might start the meeting at 10:00 am on a Saturday, in a large room. (If you do this every year, you'll find a great location to use every time, perhaps with a kitchen and tables) The host welcomes everyone, explains the agenda, and introduces each of the 12 Traditions speakers. The timekeeper makes sure that the talks are all done by 10:45! You might also have a final 3-minute talk on a topic like how to learn, use, or teach the Traditions. If you use newer speakers, they'll learn and grow from it, and with a little support can give a great talk.

Part II: Small Group Discussion

After a short break, at 11:00 gather everyone into small groups that mix newer and older people. Each group will draw a few real-world Traditions problems from a hat. Give each group access to pamphlets or other AA literature to look things up if needed. Encourage them to keep moving, not get stuck on one question, and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak and be heard! The process may be more important than any one "right" answer.

Part III: Wrap-Up

At 11:40, gather everyone back together and have each group report on what they discussed. Finish at 12 pm, or adjust the time as you prefer. A brisk, organized workshop tells people that you respect them and their time. If people leave energized and talking, not exhausted and bored, they'll be back for the 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. Finding a place and spreading the word is often what takes the most time in setting up a workshop.
- **Speakers:** Instead of oldtimers, give people with maybe 1-5 years this chance to speak on a Tradition for three minutes before an audience. It doesn't take a PhD to state a Tradition clearly and share one story or example. Urge them to focus on simple info that newer people in the audience can remember and use.
- **Groups:** About five people per group is good. Encourage all group members to share! If possible, try to mix people who don't know each other, and people with different levels of experience. Oldtimers should encourage and listen to the newer ones, and not dominate. Focus on a good group conscience process. Everyone grows – oldtimers, newbies, and the person who takes notes and reports at the end.
- **Literature:** People came to learn, so have pamphlets and books within easy reach, and encourage people to look things up. If your budget allows, let people take a pamphlet home. Consider displaying various pamphlets plus *AA Comes of Age*, *The Language of the Heart*, and other sources – not just the 12 & 12!
- **Questions:** Consider using the [Real-Life Tradition Problems](#) list as a source of modern, practical questions that you can print and cut up to make folded slips that people can draw from a hat.
- **Seize the day:** Any service workshop is a chance for friendly General Service folks with information and sign-up sheets, ready to get inspired people into committees, institutional meetings, or other service.

Have fun, and thanks for your service!