

Guidelines for Team Members

Thank you for your willingness to serve God's people as a Faith Encouragement Ministries Team Member! Your presence and love of Jesus as you share your faith journey with the church members is an important part of the weekend program. We know and trust that the Holy Spirit is working changes in people all weekend.

Whether this is your first experience as a visiting team member or more-than-you-can-count, please prayerfully read the guidelines in their entirety. All Team Members must register on the Team Member database before the weekend. <http://faithencourage.org/team-member-registration/>. If you have any questions or concerns about your responsibilities and the expectations, please contact your Coordinator to discuss.

You have four responsibilities for the weekend: to **witness** by sharing what God has done in your life, to **facilitate** small groups with love, to **listen** and to **pray**. Because your responsibilities do not include teaching, preaching or giving advice to others, you are not required to have all the answers.

Keep in Mind

1. We are guests of the church and under the spiritual authority of the senior pastor.
2. As a guest, avoid being negative or critical of the host church or its leadership.
3. Avoid discussion of politics, church politics, denominational differences, lifestyle differences, and controversial topics in small groups, in homes, or informal discussions. If the conversation veers towards one of those areas, steer the conversation back on track.
4. People may share problems with you. Pray for them on the spot. Pray for healing, comfort, wisdom – whatever the situation warrants – and allow God to respond.
5. Occasionally people share deep problems that require more than our prayers. Pray for healing, comfort, strength, etc. and make a point to inform the senior pastor who can follow up appropriately.

Witnessing

The key to witnessing is to trust the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance through prayer. Share your own experiences, not what someone else has experienced or said. Share what God has done in your life. Be specific, but don't drown your listener in details. Remember to make it clear that Jesus is the one who is responsible for the positive changes and blessings in your life.

You will be witnessing many different ways during the weekend – informally in one-on-one and other conversations and possibly formally if you are selected as a witness during the weekend program. The informal opportunities arise at meals, while at your host's home, and encounters in the hallways. As a selected witness to the large group, the faith story you tell may speak to only one person, but that person was guided by God to be present to hear your story. Share the joy and take comfort in God's blessings as he uses you in surprising ways, particularly when you least expect it!

Witnessing – Keep in Mind

1. The faith story you share in the large group needs to be no more than 6-8 minutes long. If your story goes longer, then there won't be time for someone else's story. Look to your Coordinator for an indication of time to wrap up.
2. People can argue theology, but not with your personal journey with Jesus. (Don't preach!)

Facilitating

As a facilitator for the small group sessions, your assignment is to make sure everyone is comfortable and can hear everyone else, to open and close the session with prayer, to start the session and to **listen** to others.

Read the discussion question and be silent at least 30 seconds to allow everyone time to process their thoughts. Breathe in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If no one responds, repeat the question or ask “What do you think about this question? What is it trying to ask?” Let the Holy Spirit guide you. The point is to avoid falling into the trap of jumping in to fill the silence with your own voice and thoughts.

Facilitate the sessions with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Facilitating – Keep in Mind

1. Refrain from being judgmental if someone has lived or is living a lifestyle of which you do not approve. Remember it is your job as a facilitator to make people feel comfortable, loved, and accepted.
2. Respect the right of anyone to not speak or to say “pass.”
3. If someone expresses a viewpoint in a small group that is questionable or wrong, gently steer back to the topic and discuss the issue with the senior pastor or your Coordinator later. (Don’t teach!)
4. All group discussions and prayer requests are confidential. Begin each session reminding both team and church members to respect the confidentiality of the discussion.

Pray and Listen

Pray before the weekend, during the weekend, and after the weekend. Pray for the church members, their lay leadership, the clergy, the visiting team, and yourself. Pray for the fruit of the Spirit for all. Pray for wisdom and discernment for the visiting team. Ask for guidance to be a servant of Jesus with an open heart to hear others and to speak the words others need to hear. Relax and listen.

Your Invitation

Who is included in the church invitation? If you are married, your spouse is welcome to participate as a Team Member. Please check with your Coordinator to ask about arrangements if you plan to bring your children, either for child care or to be included in the program for the children or teens. Provide your Coordinator and the host church with the names of everyone (and ages of children) attending. Avoid surprising the host church with people for whom housing may not be available.

Training

All Team Members are required to complete *Safeguarding God’s Children* before the weekend. The training can be taken through your church or through Faith Encouragement Ministries. Contact info@faithencourage.org for more information.

Before the weekend, complete the two online videos, *Sharing Your Faith Story* and *Facilitating Small Groups*. These short videos are excellent refreshers for experienced team members and confidence-builders for new team members! The videos can be found on the website <http://www.faithencourage.org> by hovering over PROGRAMS | ONLINE TRAINING and click For the Team. Or use this link: <http://faithencourage.org/for-the-team-members/>.

God be with us!