

**ELIOT INSTITUTE
SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS
(Revised May 2024)**

SELECTION: Selected by and report to the Small Group Coordinator.

QUALIFICATIONS: Has attended a morning program at least one year; has participated in a small group at least one year; and must attend the morning program. It is helpful if the individual has experience as a facilitator, teacher or counselor. Also, personal qualities such as an ability to listen to others, a caring and nonjudgmental demeanor, and an ability to encourage all group members to participate are important.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Facilitate Small Group discussion; help establish and maintain group covenant.

TIMELINE

BEFORE CAMP

- ___ Plan on arriving at camp in time for the Small Group Facilitators' meeting.
- ___ Review Group Covenant Sample (see sample below) and be prepared to suggest a group covenant for discussion and adoption by the group.

ARRIVAL DAY

- ___ Attend the Small Group Facilitators Orientation Meeting.
- ___ From the Coordinator
- ___ Get the list of your group members and location of your small group meeting.
- ___ Get the Small Group discussion points

FIRST SMALL GROUP MEETING

- ___ Facilitate introductions
- ___ Discuss & establish a Group Covenant, which may include ground rules such as confidentiality. (See sample below).
- ___ Remind participants to let someone in the group know if they will be absent.
- ___ Let group members know the Chaplain is available for support.

DURING CAMP

- ___ Attend every morning program.
- ___ Facilitate group discussion.
- ___ Encourage each group member to participate.
- ___ Ensure that Group Covenant is maintained.
- ___ End at an agreed upon time that accommodates anyone needing to pick up a young child or other needs.
- ___ Attend the daily Small Group Facilitators' Meetings.

Procedures / How To's

- ___ Arrive at the location a few minutes before your small group is scheduled to start to ensure it is set up and you can start on time.
- ___ Listen with care. Redirect the discussion when it gets sidetracked. Assure that no single person dominates the group and that everyone is offered the opportunity to speak or pass.
- ___ Consider opening each day with a chalice lighting and/or a chance for everyone to check in on how they're feeling that morning before discussing the Speaker's proposed questions.
- ___ Offer to meet with members outside of the group if they seem to have a particular issue they need more time to discuss than the group allows.
- ___ Make a note of any questions or concerns to bring to the Small Group Facilitators' meeting.
- ___ Pay attention to anyone who misses the group. If possible, find out why they did not come.
- ___ It is inappropriate and strongly discouraged for Facilitators or group members to critique the Speaker or suggest changes in a Speaker's planned program. If a problem arises requiring the attention of the Speaker, the Facilitator should notify the Small Group Coordinator, who will evaluate the seriousness of the concern and privately advise the Deans, as necessary.

Optional Suggestions, Helpful Hints to Consider

Be flexible on Day 1. Sometimes group members are added, removed, or shuffled due to circumstances the Small Group Coordinator wasn't aware of when they set up the groups.

On the first day, note that groups typically end at noon. Ask if anyone needs to leave earlier. They might need to pick up a young child, support another family member, or attend to health needs. If so, decide whether the full group will end earlier than usual, or whether you will continue after that person departs each day.

There are times when the Speaker's program diverges from the original topic description or from the proposed discussion questions you were given. (Speakers are contracted more than a year prior to the camp, and their focus might shift, or something may happen at camp or in world events which lead the Speaker to decide to change their plan.) Be flexible if you find that the proposed discussion questions do not directly relate to the morning program. You can offer the questions to the group, and then ask whether they want to discuss those questions or propose new questions that relate to the program.

Review and consider both the Group Covenant Sample and the Facilitator Sample Covenant.

GROUP COVENANT SAMPLE:

I commit myself

- to come to gatherings, as my spirit allows, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to keep in my heart what is shared in the group and respect the confidentiality of others
- to share deeply when it is my turn
- to listen to what others share with an open heart
- to share the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak
- to refrain from cross-talk— speaking out of turn or interrupting someone
- to offer support if welcomed and appropriate and to refrain from judging or giving advice
- to watch for the Spirit in the words, the laughter, and the tears shared
- to keep our group covenant.

FACILITATOR SAMPLE COVENANT:

As small group facilitator, I commit myself

- to model good listening skills and inclusion of everyone in discussion.
- to focus on process rather than outcome.
- to keep the discussion on track as appropriate.
- to identify and handle awkward situations (with the help of your group).
- to help the group maintain the covenant they have made.