Table Topics Master

* Try to create questions based on the week's theme.
* Do not repeat the previous week's ideas.
* Keep questions short and simple.
* Randomly call on people.
* Prompt with questions if needed.

Before the meeting:

1. Check with the Chair or the VPs of Education to find out the theme. If there is no theme, create your questions based on a variety of subjects. Do not repeat the previous week’s ideas; table topics are all about spontaneity.
2. When coming up with your questions, keep them short, simple, and to the point. They shouldn’t be too specific, long, or difficult to comprehend; they should be open-ended and inspire the speaker.

At the meeting:

1. Before the table topics session, privately ask guests if they would like to participate in the session. Only call upon them if they agreed beforehand.

Table Topics session:

1. When you are introduced by the Chair, shake hands, and explain how the day’s session is going to work. Then, after reading a question and calling up a speaker, sit in the Chair that’s located at the front of the room for easy access to the lectern.
2. Encourage speakers to use the word of the day, if possible.
3. State the question, look around for volunteers, and if there is an absence, call on people. By posing the question, and then calling up volunteers, you ensure that everyone’s attention is focused on you, because they all think they might be the next one to go up. Also, in the brief pause after the question, everyone ponders what they might say, which provides some extra practice in thinking on your feet.
4. Call on people who are Table Topic Speakers first, then everyone else who is not a Speaker, and finally, if time permits, call upon the Speakers.
5. Call upon people randomly; do not go in a predictable order or ask two people the same thing unless there’s a changing variable. For example, impromptu debates would be acceptable because though the statement is the same, the Speakers are taking different sides.
6. If you see a Speaker struggling to come up with an answer to the question, you can guide the discussion by gently prompting them with questions.
7. At the end of the session, remember to have a vote for the best Table Topic Speaker. Remain at the lectern during the commotion, then transition and introduce the Toastmaster.