

The World Café

The café host or the hostess will prepare for the café by reading the “*Café to Go*” handout and by using on-line material as they wish. They will prepare the room, recruit help, and invite any number of participants. They will begin the session by briefly introducing the concept of the world café and some tips for improving listening.

Ideas for Introducing the Café Concept:

Café conversations are an easy-to-use method for talking together about questions that matter in service of our larger work and purpose. They enable us to see new ways to make a difference in our lives and in our ministry. They remind us of the simple power of conversation. The concept is built on the assumption that people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges and to bring forth new insights and ideas.

Encourage Everyone’s Contribution: Share with the whole group the following tips for improving our listening:

- Help folks to notice their tendency to plan their response to what is being said actually detracts from both the speaker and the listener
- Listen as if each person were truly wise, and sharing some truth that you may have heard before but do not yet fully grasp
- Listen with an openness to be influenced by the speaker
- Listen to support the speaker in fully expressing themselves
- Listen for deeper questions, patterns, insights and emerging perspectives
- Listen for what is not being spoken along with what is being share

Organize the Café’

Folks will converse together about the first question at the table they initially sat down at. Encourage people to draw, doodle and write on the paper on their tables, as well as share their ideas verbally with one another. Set a time limit for the first discussion. The length will depend on the format for your conversation (do you have all day? Or just two hours?)—and on how the conversation flows! Call time and ask guests to find a second table to join, sitting with new people. The table hosts remain and share some of the insights from his or her first table with the next one, so that ideas begin to spread and connect. Encourage participants to help in this process, by suggesting links and connections to their own conversations. Pose the second question, and so on. After several rounds of conversation, initiate a period of sharing discoveries and insights in the whole group. This can be visual as well as verbal sharing!

Sample Questions for a World Café: Three or Four Questions Should Be Chosen and Refined For Your Context and Purpose

- 1) What do you see God up to in the world around you? Of the things you see God doing, which are the most exciting to you and how might you help?
- 2) What things that break God’s heart also break your heart and what could you do about them?
- 3) What needs do you or this community have that could be met by resources already present in the neighbors around you?
- 4) Why do this conversation and our response to it matter?