

TABLE TOPIC MASTER

The assignment of Table Topic Master looks deceptively simple on the surface, but to do it effectively requires a thorough understanding of the purpose of Table Topics.

Table Topics has a number of objectives:

1. To enable non-speaking and non-duty holding members to have the opportunity to speak during the meeting.
2. To develop in Toastmasters the ability to "think on their feet", and be able to speak on any subject in an alert, organized way.
3. To discipline Speakers to make comments concisely and effectively in the one to two minute time limit.
4. To develop a spirited, energetic, lively, atmosphere in the toastmasters club meeting.

With these objectives in mind, develop a program or format that will accomplish those goals. Here are some factors to consider:

1. Check with the Toastmaster regarding the meeting's theme. Develop your questions around this theme if you wish. It adds to the cohesiveness of the meeting when you do so. Or you may choose a different track. It's up to you.
2. Develop a format that requires spontaneous audience participation. Possible formats: controversial social issues (crime, divinity, drunken driving, gambling, boxing, etc.); selling situations where one, two or more people try to sell another a particular product; national or local news issues; sporting events. Be sure you don't pick offbeat, dull subjects where only a few Toastmasters will be able to comment. Pick subjects of general interest on which spirited discussions can be developed. Consult the Vice President of Education for materials and ideas if necessary well in advance of the meeting.
3. Have your questions and format well in mind and written down before the meeting.
4. Check the program before the meeting. Unless there are not many members available to call on, do not call duty holders. Never call on Speakers, Evaluators, the Toastmaster, Timer, Vote Counter or General Evaluator.
5. Keep this section of the meeting moving at a brisk pace. Don't let it run down to a dull, slow-moving audience response. Keep it animated and energized with quips, humor and the unexpected. Be on the offensive – don't be trapped into a defensive meeting. Change the pace – keep the Table Topics moving!
6. Ask a question and then call on a member of the audience to answer it. If you announce the audience member first and then the question, you lose the audience's anticipation of possibly being called upon.
7. Ask three questions. Be prepared to extend your time by having extra questions available if necessary.
8. Ask for the Timer's report. Repeat the name of the participants that qualified, briefly restating their question. Call for the vote for the best Table Topic.
9. Turn the meeting back over to the Toastmaster.