

Tips for Hosting Your First Meeting (and Onward)

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Before the First Meeting

- Invite as many people as possible to the meeting. The more people in attendance, the more ideas you'll hear, and the more exciting your meeting will be.
- Come to the meeting armed with 2-3 great project ideas. What will really keep people coming back isn't the free food or the music or even the popular kids in attendance-if your club is action oriented and ready to tackle community change from the start, people will want to join you. So come to the first meeting ready to do something!
- Have an agenda (an outline for everything that will happen during the meeting) ready so that things will run smoothly. People will be more likely to join if the leadership is organized and on top of their stuff.

Introductions!

You could have those dumb "Hello my name is ..." nametags -- but there are cooler ways to get to know people. You can use these icebreakers for more than just the first meeting, since there might be new people coming in all the time.

- **Make famous people nametags.** Put one on everyone's back when they come in and have them walk around and talk to people to figure out which celebrity they are.
- **Ask people to write the cause they care about on a nametag** and walk around finding other people who care about the same stuff.
- **Do check-ins (at the beginning of the meeting) and/or check-outs (end of the meeting).** This is an easy way to build community and learn about other people. A check-in can be a fun question such as: what would be your superhero name? What movie are you most embarrassed about liking? Along with answering the question, they can also introduce themselves and say why they're interested in the club.
- **Have everyone share a dream project** or something they'd really like to do to make the world a better place. Ask each person what he/she would do for the community if he or she had 1 million dollars (and a lot of free time).
- **People-Bingo:** Make a bingo grid and write interesting things that describes people in the spaces, such as: "Born in another country," "country music fan," or "twin." Everyone has to go

around and get someone who fits that description to sign that box. The first person with all the boxes signed wins!

· **Animal Scramble:** Make several slips of paper with an animal that makes a noise that everyone knows. Make 5-7 slips for each animal. Give each person a slip of paper, but have them keep their animal a secret. Everyone has to find others who are the same animal without talking--they find each other by making the animal's noise. Continue until all the groups are formed. Afterwards, you can have people introduce themselves first in their group.

· **Big Wind Blows:** Arrange chairs in a circle. There should be enough chairs for everyone except for one person. Everyone sits down while one person is in the center and says: "The Big Wind Blows ____." The blank part is a true statement about him or herself. The more interesting the fact, the better! For example: "The Big Wind blows anyone who has ever broken 3 or more bones at one time." Anybody who has broken 3 or more bones must get up and find another seat (it can't be the same seat or next to the seat they were sitting in.) The person in the middle has to also find a seat. Whoever is left without a seat becomes the new "Big Wind."

· **Charades:** This game requires motion! Grab a pen, a piece of paper, and a bowl; cut the paper into slips and write word(s) or phrase(s) on it. For example, firefighter. Whoever's turn it is will have to pick a slip from the bowl and act it out for their team. If, after 30 seconds, the team hasn't guessed what it is, the next team gets to guess. The correct guesser gets a point for their team!

· **Never Have I Ever:** Gather around in a circle and sit down. Make yourself comfortable. Everyone will have to put up 10 fingers and go around the circle sharing something they never did. For example, never have I ever smoked a cigar, and whoever has will have to put down one finger. In the end, whoever has no fingers up will lose and whoever is still hanging in there alone, keeps playing.

· **Fun with the Freshmen:** Provide the incoming freshmen with a tour of the school in the first couple of days/ week. You will get acquainted with them, making them feel comfortable in the school and with the club!

Talk about your community

Make a giant list on the wall of things about your school, your neighborhood, your town/city that bum you out. For example, maybe your school doesn't have healthy lunch alternatives. Maybe your school neighborhood has a crime problem. Maybe your town is facing increasing numbers of homeless. Make as big a list as possible ... then you can narrow it down from there. This doesn't have to be the end of your planning: Also see the "See It and Believe It" tipsheet for more ideas on brainstorming community issues. You can use that for the first meeting or for another meeting.

What kind of structure would you like your club to have?

You can do this AFTER you think about community problems. Do Something Clubs are a place of action, not bureaucracy! Pick a structure that will support that philosophy and decide when elections will be. Will you vote on positions or let newcomers run to be officers? Let members know

the responsibilities of each position as well as what is expected of all members. YOU pick the specific structure-we don't care, so long as you have a structure and give us 1-2 contact people. Check out our Club Organization tip sheet for more ideas.

Keep the Club fun.

There's a lot of information to go over at the first meeting and you want to keep it engaging enough to encourage people to come back. You can do a lot to make meetings exciting. For example:

Provide free food! People can rotate bringing snacks. Or have everyone bring a healthy snack to the meeting -- then ask everyone to trade.

Invite guest speakers from the community who are interesting and inspiring, like the mayor of your town!

You can also have a themed meeting. For example, your first meeting can have a "Teens for Jeans" theme and everyone can bring a pair of jeans to donate. That way, you've started making a difference at the very first meeting!

Music makes the people come together. Grab a radio and play some music during the meeting.

Have the meeting outside. No one likes to sit in a classroom after a long day of school.

Stay Organized!

Be prepared for your meetings. People like it when things end on time.

Before all meetings, make an agenda with all the points that need to be discussed and pass it out to everyone. It'll help you stay on task, especially when you have a short time. Let people suggest things to add on to the agenda.

Some general items for agendas might be: Progress reports (update each other on your tasks and have everyone contribute ideas), new business, delegation of tasks (with sign-up sheets or by show of hands), plan what needs to be done for the next meeting.

Don't leave the first meeting (or any meeting) without specific next steps. Make sure to set a date and time for the next meeting. To keep it easier for everyone pick a set time and day and try to meet up at least once a week.

Get everyone's contact information so that you can follow up and remind them.