Choosing and Training Leaders

If you have overall responsibility for running the course, you will need to choose and train leaders who will be responsible for those who attend.

CHOOSING LEADERS

Leaders should be mature Christians who are able to teach, encourage discussion and care for guests.

In selecting a leader, ask yourself: "Is this person able to teach the Bible faithfully and clearly? Will he or she be able to deal with difficult questions on Mark's Gospel?" (There is a section on answering questions from Mark at the back of the Leader's Handbook.)

Secondly, ask yourself: "Will this person be able to promote discussion without dominating it?" Since so much of the course revolves around discussion, guests need to feel free to be open and honest in their group.

Thirdly, ask yourself: "Is this the type of person who would make a guest feel welcome and cared for?" Rather than simply telling people about God's love, leaders must be willing to demonstrate that love by devoting time and attention to those in their care.

And of course, a leader's responsibility goes beyond seven sessions. Relationships begun during the course are likely to develop into friendships that must be nurtured once the course is over. For this reason, if possible, don't ask leaders to take on more than one course a year.

> ± A high ratio of leaders to group members is essential. For example, a well- balanced group may consist of two leaders and six guests, or three leaders and nine guests.

± If your course is likely to be large, make sure you have enough leaders, then divide them into teams of three.

± In order to deal with pastoral situations appropriately, it's advisable to assign a mixture of male and female leaders to each team.

List your leaders here.

TRAINING LEADERS

Training should take place before the course begins. Once a leader understands the reasoning behind *Christianity Explored*, it becomes much easier for him or her to commit the time required. As well as preparing leaders for the course, training together cements relationships between those who will be leading.

You should therefore include training before every course you run, and all leaders should be asked to attend – even if they have been leaders many times before. Feel free to vary the exercises so the training remains fresh for veteran leaders. Check www.ceministries.org for updates on training resources and opportunities.

The way you arrange the training will depend on your situation. You may choose to spend a day together, or two or three evenings, or meet early in the morning. There are some examples below of how you might schedule a training day or series of evenings.

There are eight short training modules, available for download from the CE website. They're designed so that they can be used in a

group, as pairs, or by individuals.

The ideal is to meet together for the reasons given above. However, if that isn't possible for some of your team, they can prepare for the course by working through the material themselves. It then becomes even more important that the whole team meet together before each session starts so that they can discuss and pray together before the guests arrive.

± The training modules should be read aloud by the person leading the training (often the course leader), allowing time for everyone to discuss and complete the exercises involved.

Example training day schedule

10:00 a.m.	Pray together	
10:15 a.m.	**Why evangelize?**	30 minutes
10:45 a.m.	**God's part in evangelism – and ours**	30 minutes
11:15 a.m.	**Being a Christianity Explored leader**	15 minutes
11:30 a.m.	**Before the course**	25 minutes
11:55 a.m.	Pray together	
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	**During the course**	60 minutes
2:00 p.m.	Coffee	
2:20 p.m.	**Identity, mission, call**	90 minutes
3:50 p.m.	Coffee	
4:10 p.m.	**After the course**	15 minutes
4:25 p.m.	**Getting our expectations right**	20 minutes
4:45 p.m.	Pray together	

Example training schedule over three evenings

Evening 1

7:30 p.m.	Pray together	
7:45 p.m.	**Why evangelize?**	30 minutes
8:15 p.m.	**God's part in evangelism – and ours**	30 minutes
8:45 p.m.	**Being a Christianity Explored leader**	15 minutes
9:00 p.m.	**Before the course**	25 minutes
9:25 p.m.	Pray together	

Evening 2

7:30 p.m.	Pray together	
7:45 p.m.	**Identity, mission, call**	90 minutes
9:15 p.m.	Pray together	

| Evening 3		
7:30 p.m.	Pray together	
7:45 p.m.	**During the course**	60 minutes
8:45 p.m.	**After the course**	15 minutes
9:00 p.m.	**Getting our expectations right**	20 minutes
9:20 p.m.	Pray together	

WELCOMING

The hardest part of *Christianity Explored* for many guests is getting through the door on the first night. This will be especially true if you're running your course in a church building, which for many will seem an unfamiliar, unwelcoming place.

One or more "welcomers" should be given the task of greeting people as they arrive. In a small group, these can be leaders who have been given a specific role of welcoming each arrival. In a larger group, choose welcomers who are not leaders: that way, leaders can concentrate on talking to guests who've already arrived. Leaders and welcomers should wear name tags so that they are immediately identifiable by guests.

When a guest arrives, welcomers should simply introduce themselves and find out the person's name. Asking for addresses or telephone numbers at this stage can make people feel uncomfortable. Take the guest to where the group will be meeting and introduce them to another leader. If your session doesn't include a meal, this would be a good time to offer people a drink (eg: tea, coffee, fruit juice) and a biscuit/cookie.

If you're expecting a large number of guests, it's a good idea to prepare a seating plan like the one below.

Tim
(Leader)

Table 1

Barry
(Leader)

Carla
(Leader)

Grace
(Leader)

Table 2

Craig
(Leader)

Sanjay
(Leader)

Cath
(Leader)

Table 3

Anne
(Leader)

Joe
(Leader)
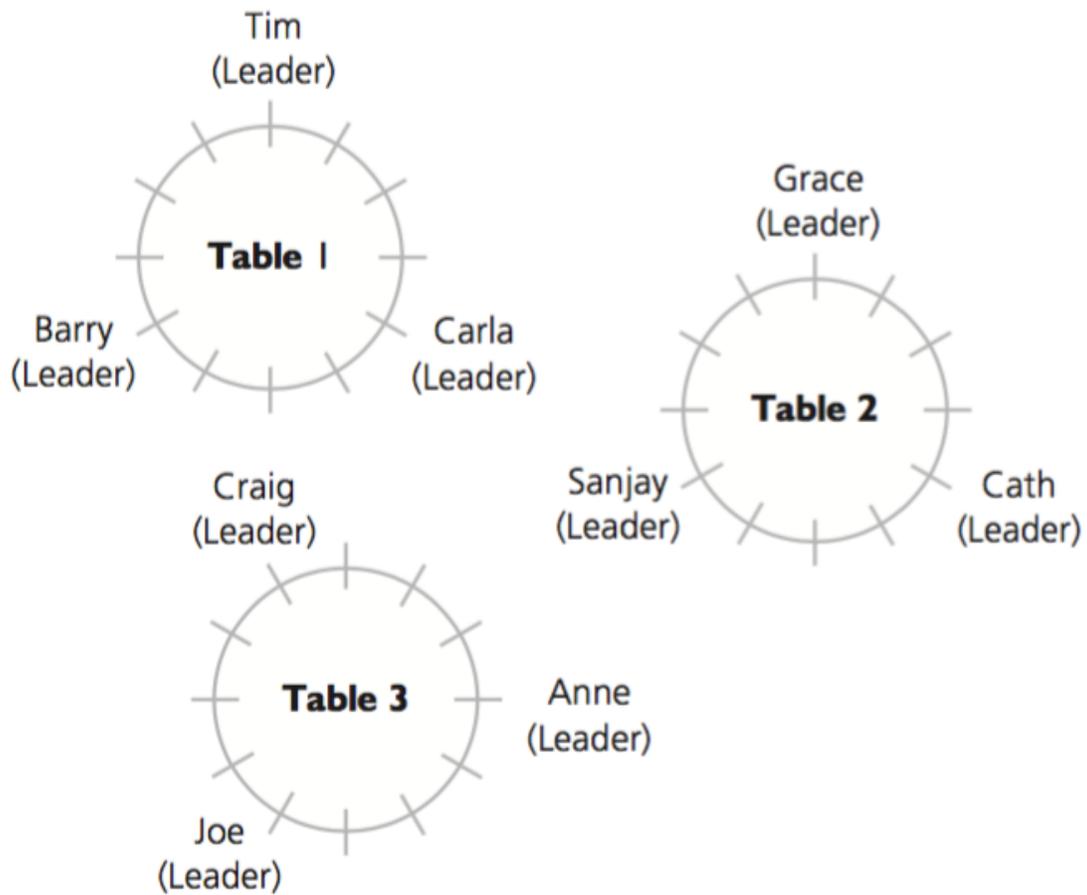
Then, as each group member arrives, a welcomer assigns him or her to a table and adds the person's name to the plan. This ensures that guests are divided equally between the tables.

Numbering the tables "restaurant-style" will help group members to find their allocated table easily.

List the people you will ask to be welcomers.

CATERING

Sharing food together is a core component of *Christianity Explored*. It's an opportunity to socialize informally and, for many guests, it may be the only time during the week when someone takes a genuine, personal interest in their lives.

Depending on where and when you meet, a meal may not always be possible. But do include it if you can – the benefits in building relationships with group members are well worth the time and effort.

Organize a team of people who are willing and able to prepare and serve a meal – this will leave the leaders free to spend time with the group members.

List the people you will ask to help with the catering.
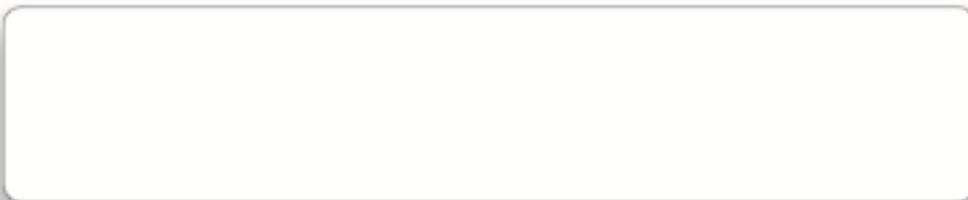
PRAYING

Enlisting people to pray regularly for the course is a wonderful way of involving more people in *Christianity Explored*.

± Pray for the preparation of the talks – that they would be faithful to God's word, passionate, challenging and clear.

± Pray for the leaders – that they would be well prepared and that they would "watch [their] life and doctrine closely" (1 Timothy 4:16).

± Pray for the guests – that many would attend; that by his Spirit, God would open their eyes to see who Jesus is, and by his Spirit give them the desire to turn and follow him. Report back to your prayer team on a weekly basis so that they can pray for specific needs and be encouraged by answered prayer.

List the people you will ask to commit themselves to pray for the course.