

Choosing 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.

Leaders should be mature Christians who are able to teach, encourage discussion and care for guests. Caring for guests includes helping them to feel comfortable at the table and encouraging them to ask whatever question is on their mind.

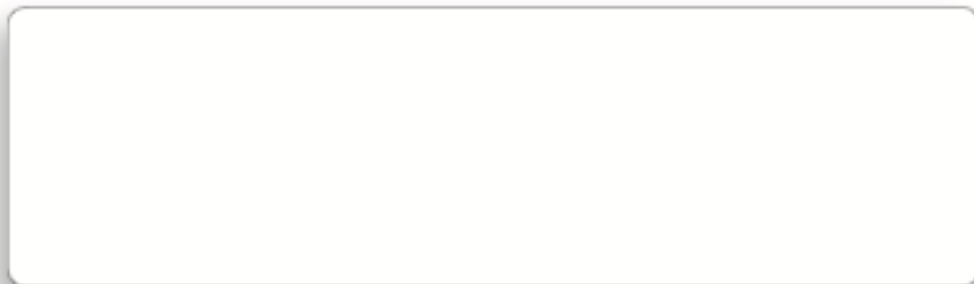
And of course, a leader's responsibility goes beyond seven sessions. Relationships begun during the course are likely to develop into friendships that must be nurtured once the course is over.

± 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.

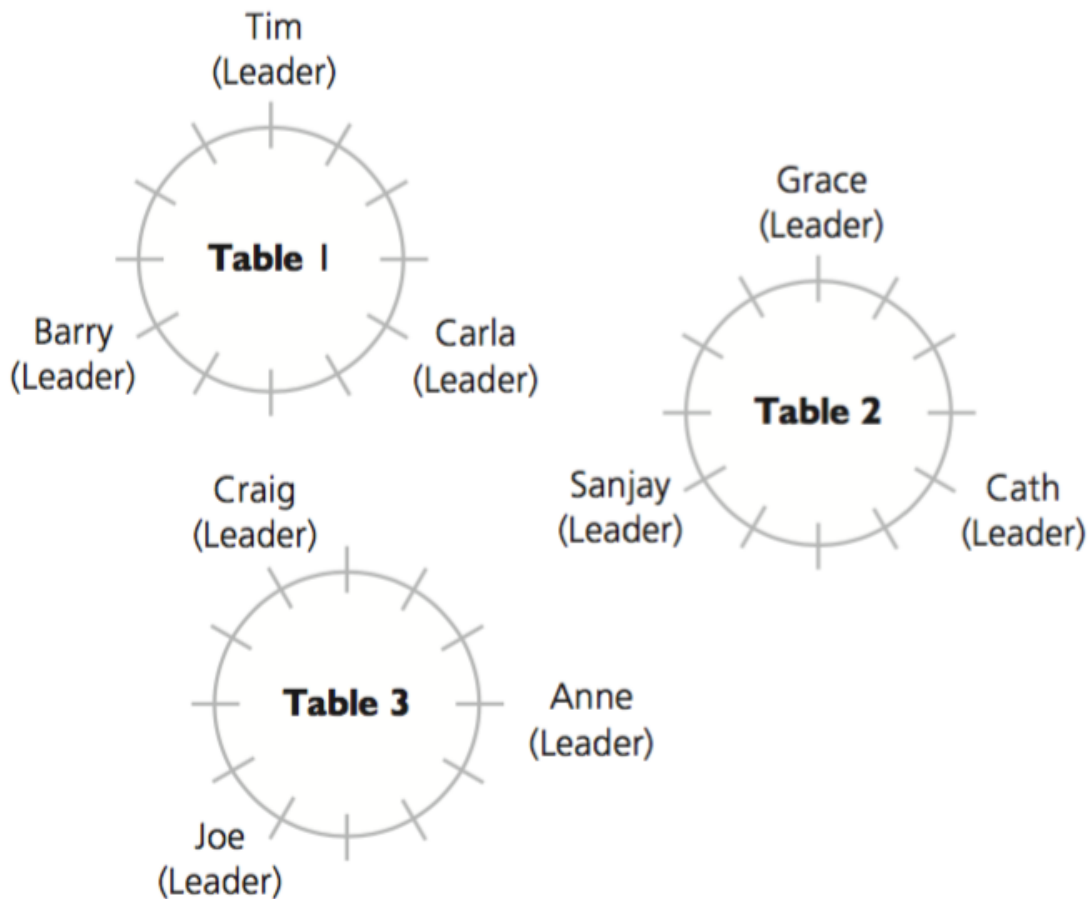
WELCOMING

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.



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.

