

1. Introduction and Ground Rules

At a Glance...



When parents identify their own parenting needs and help select class content, they will be more likely to be interested in and committed to parenting classes. Identifying parents' needs can help the facilitator to develop a class that will make a difference for parents.

Time Required

45 minutes to one hour

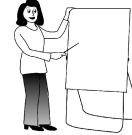


Core Concepts



- As participants get to know each other, they will feel free to share personal information and to support each other.
- Establishing ground rules as a group will help members feel ownership for the class.
- By identifying class members' needs, the facilitator can tailor class content to meet those needs and create opportunities for change for participants.

Objectives



- Participants will identify parenting issues that are important to them.
- Participants will create a system for sharing of ideas and problems through setting ground rules for class discussion.

Materials



- ☐ Construction paper cut in 3" x 5.5" pieces or index cards
- ☐ Felt top markers in assorted colors
- ☐ Masking Tape
- ☐ Soft Ball such as a Nerf® ball or Koosh® ball
- ☐ Flip Chart or Chalk Board
- ☐ Markers or chalk
- ☐ "Ground Rules" handout (A-1-a)
- ☐ "The Question Box" handout (A-1-b)

Ice Breaker



Make name tags.

Give each class member a piece of construction paper or an index card and a marker.

Ask each participant to put his or her first name in large letters on the card or paper leaving room for a drawing at the bottom. Under the names, have them draw (stick figures are fine) or write something they enjoyed doing as a child with a parent or other adult.

If you have only one or two participants, give them a full sheet of typing paper or construction paper and have them draw something they enjoy doing with their child or that they enjoyed doing as a child with a parent or other adult. Facilitators should join with class members in doing this activity.

Facilitator's Outline



As facilitator, you should begin the sharing time by telling the names, ages, and sexes of your children. Tell about your picture. If you are not a parent, share something you enjoyed doing as a child with your parents or another adult, or share what you enjoy doing with children with whom you are close such as nieces and nephews, neighbors, children you teach in church or in other groups, etc.

If the facilitator and class members already know each other, limit sharing to information about children.

After you have finished introducing yourself, toss the ball to a class participant and have him or her share information about self and family. When he or she has finished, the participant should toss the ball to another class member.

If you have a small group, just take turns sharing.

After everyone has been introduced, participants and facilitator should put name tags on with masking tape or fold paper like a tent and place the tent on the table in front of them so that others in the class can see their names.

Create ground rules for the class. Let class members offer rules they think the class should follow. They may name only one or two things, or they may have several. List the items on the flip chart or chalk board. Make sure that everyone understands and agrees to the ground rules.

Facilitators Tip:

A fun way to create a ground rules chart is to create a poster with pictures that illustrate the rules. “Ground Rules” (A-1-a) is a sample poster. The ground rules that are pictured on that chart are listed below. You may want to create a colorful chart of the ground rules your class makes to keep in the room throughout the program. If one of your class members is artistic, ask if she will create the chart for the class.

The “Ground Rules” (A-1-a) illustrated are clockwise from top left:

- a. If you think it, say it.
- b. Be sensitive.
- c. Spelling, writing, drawing, and math don’t count.
- d. Take care of yourself.
- e. Listen.
- f. Stay on task.
- g. Begin and end on time.
- h. What is said in this room stays in this room.
- i. It is OK to have fun (center of page).

*Adapted with permission from the Texas Association of School Boards

Talk with participants about how you will handle information discussed in class. Assure them that you will keep confidential what they say in class unless they reveal something that indicates an abusive situation. Remind them that the law requires you to report any suspected abuse of a child, elderly, or disabled person.

Discuss what topics participants would like to cover in this class. List these topics on the flip chart. When the list is complete, ask each participant to vote on the five topics they would most like to have covered. Participants can vote using self-adhesive color dots or colored markers. Have participants put a color dot or a checkmark by the five topics in which they are most interested. This will show which topics will be helpful to the most participants. If participants select topics not covered in this series of lessons, let participants think of ways they could find information on those topics to share with the class. Some suggestions might be to invite a guest speaker on the topic, go to the library to get information, or search the Internet for that topic.

Facilitators Tip:

If there are only two class participants, have each list the topics that most interest them. Topics that both participants list should be written first on the flip chart. Other topics can be listed below. If there is only one class participant, ask her to number the list of topics beginning with the number 1 as the most important. This will help to identify which areas are of greatest concern to class members.

6. Introduce the question box. Use the information on the “Question Box” handout (A-1-b) to tell participants how the question box will be used throughout these classes. Do not use the box if there is only one participant.

Facilitators Tip:

To be prepared for the rest of the class period today, you will need to plan the remaining lessons for this session in advance. The other two lessons in this unit are good opening lessons. You will be able to use the remaining class periods to facilitate lessons according to the needs identified by the participants.

7. Assign homework. Ask class participants to bring pictures of their children with them to the next class, if they have pictures available. Make a bulletin board of participants’ children to stay up throughout the parenting class.