

Promoting Your Cafe

Your enthusiasm and direct invitation will attract people. People are curious – they want to hear what others think, as long as it isn't a harangue. They will feel honored when you tell them you want to hear what is on their mind. People blossom when others listen with respect. As a Conversation Cafe host you are giving your guests a BIG GIFT.

You can invite people yourself – your friends, neighbors, church or club members, colleagues at work. When you call people directly, it lets them know you want them in particular to come. Sending a personalized letter or email also increases the possibility that people will attend. We all like to get a special invitation. To increase your reach and the possibility of a broad range of attendees, you can send an email invitation and ask others to forward it to others. You can send out press releases to local papers to announce your conversation (check out our samples). You can put up flyers on community bulletin boards or at your location if it's a public place.

Promotion tips from long-time hosts

Here are some suggestions, many of which were provided by Kat Gjovik, host of a weekly CC on Bainbridge Island.

- Send emails. Attach a request for the recipients to forward to all your friends and associates.
- Post flyers. Post them at places like markets, libraries, and cafés.
- Get on local calendars (email, newsletters, newspapers).
- Make phone calls.
- Create an email Listserve. Use it to provide announcements, notices and information regarding your Conversation Café. Post a weekly notice about the up-coming CC, which includes basic logistics, topic for the week, and the CC Process and Agreements.
- Advertise at the coffee shop. Many coffee shops have a space for announcements. You can create a notice that announces the topic for the week and post it at the café, or make quarter-page CC hand-outs and place them on the counter by the cash register
- Ask CC participants to spread the word. Also, after you've been established for awhile, you could also invite each participant to bring a friend for a special event, your CC anniversary.
- Send press releases to your local papers.
- Get in touch with local organizations. These organizations can be faith-based, Senior Center, Arts & Humanities Council, etc. Offer to make a presentation, convene a special CC for their

“members,” and/or provide information about our CC they can post in their newsletters, on their bulletin boards, etc.

Attracting People with Diverse Views

We have found that taking extra steps to attract people who don't share your political views makes for an even richer experience, and goes to the heart of what Conversation Week is about – building respect and understanding. Here are some of the strategies that are working for hosts around the country:

- Find a person with a different perspective to co-host with you. That person can then issue their personal invitation to their networks.
- Do some 'cold calling' to organizations and people such as Young Republicans, Women Democrats, precinct captains, state legislators, city council member, Rotary etc. reaching out to those whose views go beyond your usual circles.
- Think of people you work with, study with, worship with, who are different from you in other than political ways: often different socio-economic, age and ethnic groups will also bring greater diversity of thinking.
- Go where there is a built-in group of diverse people, such as a college campus, PTA, church or synagogue or Chamber of Commerce.
- If your Conversation Café doesn't have the diversity of opinion you want, ask the group, 'Who isn't here?' Brainstorm together how to expand the circle and encourage everyone to commit to bring someone with a different perspective to your next conversation.

Resources for Promotion

Press Release - When you start a new Conversation Café, you want as much media attention as you can get to let your community know that you exist. Sending out a press release to your local media contacts and community calendars is a good way to publicize your cafe. And if you do get press, we would love to hear about it and maybe even post a link on this web site.

Half Sheet Flier - Packed with information about Conversation Cafés: what they are, why and how to join or start one, process & agreements, tips, quotes from enthusiastic participants. Print single or double sided depending on your needs and hand out at public events everywhere! Available on the website.

Handbill - Leave a stack of these 1/4 page fliers (available on the website) at the cash register where you hold your Conversation Café, to promote your gathering to all customers. Many thanks go to Fred Gardiner, a participant at Michael Kerman's café in Toronto, for designing this handbill. Print in color or black/white and cut each page in quarters.

Resources in Other Languages

We have a few documents that have been translated into other languages. We have a limited number of resources in Hebrew, Japanese and Spanish on our website. If you don't find what you need, please check back periodically as we'll be adding more resources as they become available. You can also contact us through the website so that we know what your needs are, and please send in any you create!

Email Invitation Template

This is an email-script you can use as the basis to send out to advertise your Conversation Café:

Hi,

I'm hosting a small group conversation at [time] on [day] [date] at [location]. I would like to extend an invitation to you [and/or your network] to attend. I will be hosting the discussion using the Conversation Café format, which means we will use a simple method to allow everyone involved to meaningfully contribute.

This time, we will discuss the following question/topic: "[topic or question]." As a group, we will work with these agreements during the conversation:

1. **Open-mindedness** : listen to and respect all points of view
2. **Acceptance** : suspend judgment as best you can
3. **Curiosity** : seek to understand rather than persuade
4. **Discovery** : question old assumptions, look for new insights
5. **Sincerity** : speak for yourself about what has personal heart and meaning
6. **Brevity** : go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on

We are hoping to have about 6-9 people attend. I hope you can!

[Include other information, such as directions, food information, contact information, etc.]

Thanks!