

# Hosting a Guest Speaker

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## **Program Overview**

### **Initial Contact**

Adult group leader introduces themselves and their group, explains the need for the speaker's expertise, and asks if the speaker is available. This discussion should include the goal of helping students learn how to introduce a speaker and moderate part of an online meeting. It's important that the guest speaker is aware of this goal and supports it.

### **Student Prep**

Group leader sends the student leader this document, which contains all the instructions and worksheets for the preliminary meeting, group meeting, and followup. Together, the group leader and student review the format, worksheets, and goals.

### **Guest Speaker Preliminary Meeting**

This is a planning meeting for the student and guest speaker. The adult group leader participates only as needed. The student uses the Preliminary Meeting Forms on page 3 and 4 to guide the meeting.

Note: If this meeting is in-person, the group leader should review greeting and seating etiquette beforehand with the student. The group leader should be seated off to the side so the main conversation is clearly between the student and the guest speaker.

## **Overview cont.**

### **Group Meeting**

The student follows the Group Meeting Forms on page 5 and 6 to introduce the speaker, facilitate the talk with Q & A, and then thank the speaker at the conclusion. The goal is to have the student lead this with minimal or no input from others. If absolutely necessary, any group leader communication to the student should be done through the online individual chat function or, if in-person, through a handwritten note.

Note: If the group meeting will be in-person rather than online, the student needs to plan out the logistics. The student will introduce the speaker, bring them up and then stand or sit off to the side during the presentation. At the conclusion of the presentation, the student will move back on stage to help moderate questions.

### **Followup**

The student e-mails a thank-you to the guest speaker and asks any additional questions as needed.

Optional - the student provides a written report summarizing the information for a website, publication, or school assignment.

The group leader congratulates the student on their preparation and effort and recognizes the things the student did well.

## **Preliminary Meeting with Guest Speaker - SAMPLE**

### **Student Instructions:**

**Start** by thanking Mary Smith for taking the time to meet with us and offering to speak to our group.

**Then** tell her a little bit about our group. For example:

1. This is our 7th service-learning project through Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots
2. We're meeting online because of coronavirus
3. Ages of meeting participants - 6-16, most are middle school age
4. Number of meeting participants - around 15 students plus parents

**Transition** to asking the person about their presentation:

**Questions:** (Student should take notes on speaker's answers.)

What specific topic(s) would you like to talk to the group about?

*The student should be prepared to give input as needed to the speaker on what information will be of interest to the group.*

What would you like to inspire the students to do after they've heard you talk?

Are there any resources that you would recommend for those who want to learn more?

How would you like to be introduced?

Before ending this meeting, the student should highlight which parts of the topic will be most interesting for the group and paraphrase the order of the guest speaker's talk. For example:

"Ms. Smith, it sounds like you'll be talking to us about

1. The sustainable neighborhood program
2. Taking care of pollinators (mass plantings, bee habitat)
3. Helpful resources

Does that sound right?" *Get clarity from the speaker on the order of their presentation.*

**Finish** by thanking Ms. Smith and confirming the meeting date and time.

## **Preliminary Meeting with Guest Speaker - BLANK**

### **Student Instructions:**

**Thank** the person for taking the time to meet with us and offering to speak to our group.

**Tell** the person a little bit about our group. (*Before the meeting, write items down to share.*)

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### **Questions for the Speaker:**

What specific topic(s) would you like to talk to the group about?

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What would you like to inspire the students to do after they've heard you talk?

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Are there any resources that you would recommend for those who want to learn more?

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How would you like to be introduced?

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**Review** the order of topics with your guest speaker that you listed above and confirm that this is what they will be talking about.

**Finish** by thanking them and confirming the meeting date and time.

## **Group Meeting With Guest Speaker - SAMPLE**

### **Student introduces speaker:**

I'd like to welcome Mary Smith.

She is one of the leaders of the Green Mountain Sustainable Neighborhood. She also received a Lakewood Sustainability award for her work in establishing recycling programs in local school lunchrooms.

Ms. Smith is going to talk to us today about Planting for Pollinators.

*(Mary Smith starts speech.)*

### **Student refers to notes from the preliminary meeting while speaker is presenting:**

In our example, the student had these three items listed for what the speaker would cover:

1. Sustainable neighborhood program
2. Taking care of pollinators (mass plantings, bee habitat)
3. Helpful resources

### **Student pays attention to this list as the speaker is talking and keeps a subtle eye on the clock.**

If the speaker is spending too long on one topic, the student finds an opening to ask a question that leads them to their next topic. If the speaker is going fast and missing things, the student asks questions to get them to give more details. The student's job is to have the speaker cover all their topics plus any questions in the allotted time.

Suggested transitions:

I think we're running out of time. I'd like to open it up for questions. Does anyone have any questions they'd like to ask?

And, if there are a lot of questions, say - "We have time for just one more question."

### **End with something like this -**

I'd like to thank Mary Smith for joining us today to talk about Planting for Pollinators.

## **Group Meeting With Guest Speaker - BLANK**

**Student script: Fill in all blanks prior to meeting.**

I'd like to welcome \_\_\_\_\_.

Give a 2 - 3 sentence description of their background and qualifications.

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\_\_\_\_\_ is going to talk to us today about \_\_\_\_\_.

**Refer to your notes from the preliminary meeting for the topic order and write it here:**

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**Pay attention to this list as your speaker is talking and keep a subtle eye on the clock.**

If the speaker is spending too long on one topic, find an opening to ask a question that leads them to their next topic. If they are going fast and missing things, ask questions to get them to give more details. Your job is to have them cover all their topics plus any questions in your allotted time.

Suggested transitions:

I think we're running out of time. I'd like to open it up for questions. Does anyone have any questions they'd like to ask?

And, if there are a lot of questions, say - "We have time for just one more question."

**End with something like this -**

I'd like to thank \_\_\_\_\_ for joining us today to talk about \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Suggested Followup for the Student:**

Send an e-mail to the person thanking them on behalf of the group. In that e-mail:

1. Follow up on any additional questions from the group
2. If they promised additional resources or information, remind them of that.
3. If you want, ask them for a photo of themselves/their work to include with your blog post, article, or other assignment.

Write a student blog post summarizing the main points of the speaker's presentation. Don't forget to include a little bit about who they are.

Be proud that you now have experience in hosting a guest speaker! This is a skill that many adults have never even attempted.



### **Suggested Followup for the Group Leader:**

Take note of what the student does well during this experience, from the preliminary meeting through the followup. Find all the good things they've done and relay those to the student (and their parents). I would not dwell on anything that went wrong. Constructive criticism is usually not perceived as very constructive, particularly when public speaking is involved. However, if you do need to give the student a pointer, make sure you frame it well. Give lots of positives and have them help you problem solve the ONE thing you want them to improve. Make it positive and collaborative.

Finally, don't forget to thank your guest speaker, not just for speaking to the group, but for helping to promote youth leadership!