

BACK TO BASICS OF PROGRAM PLANNING

Remember to have well rounded programs at ALL your meetings, not just special occasions, select items for each of these basics to get your theme across.

INSPIRATION This is something meaningful, gives a message or is from the heart. It gives you something to think about and make your own conclusion or interpretation. It could mean something different to each person. It does not necessarily have to be religious but it can be. Perhaps a tableau, poem, thought or music can be used.

EDUCATION This gives you information or teaches you something on a particular subject. Facts are okay but be brief depending on how they apply to the theme of your program. Speakers are good but give them a time limit ahead of time and allow time for questions and answers. Skits, quizzes and games can also be educational.

RECREATION This includes games, quizzes and skits. If doing games be careful who you pick to take part, some people are embarrassed by games or just can not do them physically. But they might like to be a "Judge" for others taking part. Quizzes where everyone yells out the answers can be enjoyed by all. If using paper and pencil, pass it out ahead of time or while people are walking around for the mystery march thus saving time.

MUSIC Make selections to do with your theme if possible. Make sure the musician knows what music you need and when it will come in. If something special, check first to make sure he/she has the music on hand. If you ask someone to sing solo or with a group ask ahead and see if they are comfortable with what you are asking for and will they need the musician or not, also limit the amount of numbers. If singing without music, ask someone beforehand to start the song off. Use alternative music if necessary.

BASIC DO'S AND DON'TS OF PROGRAM PLANNING

Be versatile, mix things up, in how you put your program together each time. It does not have to be the exact same format each meeting, as long as each of the four basics is included as part of your theme. Be very careful when putting funny and serious parts right after one another. You may need something neutral to make it flow smoother.

Keep things moving along smoothly. Avoid extra chatter, giggling and wasting of time. Write down what you are going to say and stick to it. Limit time of discussions. Speak clearly and loudly so everyone will understand and have a more enjoyable evening.

Be selective who is going to be doing the parts for you, some people may not care to read something aloud or participate in games. Find something they are comfortable with. Try to use as many different people as you can each time. Don't do everything yourself. Ask those to participate ahead of time and give them instructions you want them to follow. Special items should be sent out well in advance. Remember to take extra copies to the meeting.

Limit readings to 2 (two). Use other things to get your theme across. Very long readings or poems are sometimes hard to follow and the audience will lose interest quickly.

Let speakers know how much time they will be allowed and also all time for questions and answers. If a non-member, it is best to have them do their program before the meeting.

For games use someone who is familiar with the game and give them any props needed to save time. Keep you audience involved, don't leave them sitting for a long amount of time. Break up the busier activities with something quieter.

If someone else is doing a program for you but you are putting it together, write out as much detail and information as you can so they will know what you want done. It saves time and embarrassment.

Let the pianist know what music you will want and when it will come in and other particulars concerning music. If group or solo will the pianist be playing for them. Or if you are using alternative music, do you need an outlet and someone to run the machine.

When you plan to use the stage, make sure it is clear and can get to it easily. Let people know where you want them. Let people know ahead where their number will be on the program and check to see if they need extra time to change or get ready.

If you are having a special night, check ahead of time "WHO" is doing the program, will you have to plan it or is someone else taking care of it. Make sure to get it straight before you get there and someone says " Oh, I thought you were doing the program for us tonight."

Ask for program suggestions from you members from time to time, see what might interest them, and use their ideas. Ask the person who suggested it if they would like to help put the program together. If your members are uncomfortable telling you in person, put out a suggestion and comment box once in a while for them to leave you a note.

"THE TIME IS YOURS, WORTHY LECTURER"

The length of your program should be between 10 and 20 minutes for regular meetings and may be up to 45 minutes for special programs. (15 to 30 for Subordinate regular and 30 to 60 for special.) Take into consideration what else is going on at that meeting. For example: do you have a lot of business, is it inspection or election or memorial? Basically take everything into consideration for the overall Grange meeting and try to make it a pleasant experience and folks will want to come again. Do you have guests who have traveled a long way? (Do not try to over impress them with a long drawn out program, they will be much happier if given a good will rounded program in a reasonable amount of time.) Special nights – have just one or two honored guests speak during your program (to keep with your overall theme). Then under suggestions, have one person speak for the rest of the group of guests. (You don't HAVE to ask everyone.)

To give you some idea how long your program will be, read each piece (readings, skits, tableaux, songs and quizzes, everything) and time it. Figure about 10 minutes for each game, (that allows time for moving around, instructions and the game) but don't let it drag on too long. The dime march or mystery march add to the total time of the Lecturer's program. If refreshments are planned after the meeting, this also adds to the lateness of the evening, which is not your "fault", but we need to think this through. Presentations of certificates take up time as well. Write down what you are going to say and stick to close to it. Avoid extra chatter and giggling on your part. You can have fun and present a good program and not act foolish. Don't let extra stories and joke telling get out of hand. Use your own judgment, you are in control.