

DOCUMENT 3: FORMAT OPTIONS FOR FA MEETINGS

This document is intended to help your group choose the best format options. Consider discussing these ideas at your business meeting:

- Groups have full autonomy about how to use the format options below, but ultimately, newcomers are considered first and foremost when choosing a format option.
- Most groups will adjust their weekly format choice if there is an out-of-town visitor who can qualify.

Meeting Format Options

Qualification Meeting

Live Speaker: The leader tells their story (“qualifies”), describing what their life was like before becoming abstinent, what happened to bring them into FA, and what their life is like in recovery.

FA Speaker Recording: Small groups and young fellowships may alternate FA speaker recordings with live speakers. These MP3 recordings allow groups to benefit from hearing members with long-term abstinence. Download the MP3 prior to the start of the meeting, and check that the phone is sufficiently charged and on airplane mode. A small portable speaker, as opposed to the phone’s speaker, allows everyone in the room to hear and is a good use of Seventh Tradition funds. After the break, the leader invites qualified members to share, as written in the meeting format.

Sharing Meeting

The leader invites sharing of experience, strength, and hope from qualified members. The leader may also share briefly. This format option works best for groups with many members who have 90 days of continuous abstinence in FA.

Literature Meeting

Careful choice of literature will ensure that discussion remains focused concretely and specifically on food addiction and FA recovery. Newcomers come to FA expecting to hear about food, weight, or food/weight obsession and might be bewildered by a discussion of character defects or amends. Discussion of the Steps and how we work them can easily confuse or overwhelm them. Therefore, *Twenty-Four Hours a Day*, *The Little Red Book*, and *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (“Twelve and Twelve”) are not recommended for literature meetings. The following pieces of literature are recommended:

Alcoholics Anonymous (“Big Book”): The leader chooses an excerpt or a chapter to read. If groups choose to read sequentially, they can mark a leader’s copy or keep a log in their format binder. We do not recommend using any of the passages on Steps Four

through Twelve, starting from the first full paragraph on page 64 through the end of page 103.

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (“Gray Book”): Groups are encouraged to read the book sequentially. They can mark a leader’s copy or keep a log in their format binder. We do not recommend using any of the passages on Steps Four through Twelve, pages 386 through 416.

connection: The leader selects an article from *connection* magazine for members to read, then opens the meeting to sharing. Small groups might need to read multiple articles. Groups may choose to pass around the magazine, or choose one member to read the entire article from the front of the room, particularly if there are members who are Deaf or hard of hearing. To encourage members to purchase subscriptions, the *connection* committee requests that groups use older copies of the magazine.

Pamphlets: The leader selects one of the following FA pamphlets then opens the meeting to sharing. Some groups read half the pamphlet before the break and the remainder after the break. Also, groups might read through the pamphlet paragraph by paragraph, sharing as members raise their hands.

- “Food Addiction and the FA Solution”
- “Twenty Questions”
- “Before You Take That Bite”
- “Food Addiction: There is a Solution”
- “Some Thoughts on Sponsoring”
- “To Our Families and Friends”

Living Abstinently: This format option is often referred to as a “Tools Meeting.” Groups are encouraged to read the booklet sequentially and share on the “Introduction” and “Conclusion” as well. To keep track, they can mark a leader’s copy or keep a log in their format binder. Some groups read one tool before the break and another tool after the break.

Other practices to consider for a Literature Meeting

- Groups have a lot of latitude in terms of how they use the meeting format choices. For example, a group might choose the following: Week One: Qualification/FA Speaker Recording, Week Two: Pamphlets, Week Three: FA Speaker Recording, Week Four: Tools (“Living Abstinently”) Meeting, Week Five: “Big Book” Meeting [keep in mind, there is not always a Week Five]. Some groups designate one week as “Leader’s Choice.” Other groups might combine options and allow the leader to choose [e.g. Week Two: Pamphlets/*connection*/ Big Book Meeting].
- For the literature format, some groups allow members to share at any point during the reading. If the group votes for this option, the following wording can be added to the format: “Any member with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA, currently working with an FA sponsor, may raise their hand to share during any part of the reading.”
- Instead of reading the literature for sale on the literature table, the group should set aside literature marked as “Meeting Copies.”
- In order to avoid distracting listeners, members are encouraged to leave the literature at their seat when sharing. Also, it’s easier to speak from the heart when the hands are free.
- The [Sample FA Meeting Format](#) suggests sharing after the break. Smaller groups may choose to read literature if there are limited numbers of FA members able to share.