

4 top tips for hosting well

1. Co-Host and helpers

The course works really effectively when run in partnership, so we encourage you to run the course with a co-host. You can each facilitate different sections of the session which enables you to be present with your group and provides another set of eyes and ears to check in with how people are doing. Be curious about your own strengths and those of your co-host: using your different gifts and modelling the diversity of your community will enrich everyone's experience of the course.

It's also useful to have someone to help you manage tech - music, slides (or use fewer slides if you can't find someone).

If you have a group over 30 people we recommend an extra helper for every additional 20 participants who join you, to be on hand to help with questions, group discussions and set up.

2. Equip your team and prepare well

This training and the course materials give you everything you need to run Difference, so share the training material with the others helping you and meet together before you start the course to prepare.

Before each session, read through the Sessions Guide and watch the film. Familiarise yourself with the material as this is essential in helping you host your group well. Give time to preparing the SPACE activities (which have detailed instructions) so you are confident in how you are guiding people. If meeting in-person, arrange the room for the sessions. You might arrange your chairs in small circles for discussion and leave an open area for whole-group activities.

Most activities for the in-person course involve a degree of moving around but all are designed to be flexible so think about how you can run activities in a way which is inclusive and engaging for your group.

3. Guide your group

If you're gathering a new group, we recommend you meet together before the course starts to give time for introductions, sharing expectations and setting your group culture. We call this a Pre-Gathering.

Think in advance about how much you plan to interact with your participants in between sessions. Some hosts send the film link to the group beforehand if they are meeting online, or questions to reflect on afterwards.

If you're hosting online, ask your group to have a pen, paper and Bible to hand and give them a 'heads up' about technical functions you'll use e.g. chat, breakout groups etc. If any of your group don't have a Bible to hand, you can copy and paste the passage used in the session into an email for them.

4. Be attentive and encouraging

Be enthusiastic and clear! When you host with confidence, your participants can relax and receive the information from the session.

Look and listen for cues about how your participants are doing. You may want to check in with someone to encourage them or see how they are after a session.

Encourage your group to use their Participant Guide or a notebook to jot down their thoughts throughout the session.

If you're hosting online, be direct about inviting participants to share their thoughts and allow time for them to process their responses. Don't be afraid of a little bit of silence to help people process.