**Topicsmaster**

**The extemporaneous educator**

With TABLE TOPICS, the Topicsmaster gives members who aren’t assigned a speaking role the opportunity to speak during the meeting. The Topicsmaster challenges each member with a subject, and the speaker responds with a one- to two-minute impromptu talk.

Some people underestimate the Topicsmaster role’s importance. Not only does it provide you with an opportunity to practice planning, preparation, organization, time management and facilitation skills; your preparation and topic selection help train members to quickly organize and express their thoughts in an impromptu (on the spot) setting.

**Before the Meeting**Preparation is the key to leading a successful Table Topics session:

* Several days before the meeting, check with the Toastmaster to find out if a theme meeting is scheduled. If so, prepare topics reflecting that theme.
* Select topics that allow for speakers to discuss on the spot. Don’t make the topics too long or complicated and make sure they don’t require specialized knowledge.
* Table Topics usually begins after the prepared speech presentations, but there are variations from club to club. Ask the Toastmaster or vice president education if you’re unsure of when your portion of the meeting begins.

**During the Meeting**The Table Topics portion will usually beings after the prepared project speeches. Check with the meeting agenda to confirm. When the Toastmaster introduces you, walk to the lectern, shake hands with the Toastmaster, and assume control of the meeting.

Briefly state the purpose of Table Topics and mention the theme (if any) you have prepared.

If your club has a word of the day, encourage speakers to use that word in their response.

Be certain everyone understands the maximum time they have for their impromptu speeches.

Then begin the program:

1. Ask for volunteer speakers or call on speakers at random, and then present their topic/question. Give priority to guests or members that have yet to participate in the meeting. You may wish to invite guests to participate after they have seen one or two member responses. Let guests know they are free to decline if they feel uncomfortable.

2. Don’t ask two people the same thing unless you specify that each must give opposing viewpoints.

3. Watch your total time. You may need to adjust the number of questions or time allowed so your segment ends on time. Even if your portion started late, try to end on time to avoid the total meeting running overtime.

4. After the last speaker (if timing permits and the meeting is not behind schedule), ask members to cast votes for best Table Topics speaker and go around the room to collect ballots. You should ask all speakers to stand up and re-introduce their name and topic in order facilitate the voting process. Count the ballots.

**End of the Meeting**

After the evaluation portion of the meeting, the Toastmaster will call upon the Topicsmaster to announce the best Table Topics speaker (if voting was done at all). Walk to the lectern, shake hands, and assume control of the lectern. Announce the winner from your ballot counting. If the Table Topics Trophy is present, the speaker can have an honorary photo taken with it, as winner of table topics for that week. Pass control of the lectern back to the Toastmaster.

After the meeting, remember to ask the general evaluator to evaluate your performance and give you leadership credit in your CL manual.

*The Topicsmaster role is a great opportunity to act as a director and host, as it is very similar to the Toastmaster role. Table topics is also an excellent chance for speakers to have fun and discover their speaking behaviour when no speech material is prepared beforehand.*



REF: http://www.toastmasters.org/Members/MemberExperience/MeetingRoles/Topicsmaster.aspx