

Committee Head Quick Guide

Role: To facilitate the work of the committee so that it fulfills its goals. Depending on the group dynamics and its preferences, this role can be a “hands-on leader,” or a more loosely managing overseer.

Responsibilities: The Head needs to make sure these things get done, either by you, or someone else:

- Organizing regular meeting time and place (including, perhaps, ZOOM)
- Communicating with church administrator about meetings, times, and other events
- Communicating with Staff Anchor for submission to SOUNDINGS as applicable
- Sending out notice of meetings ahead of time
- Preparing Agendas and, if possible, sending them out ahead of time
- Sending out Minutes afterwards, if possible
- Ensuring that “work” progresses forward, however “work” and “progress” are defined.
- Ensuring that the committee is staffed to meet its needs.
- Participating in quarterly committee head meetings.
- Updating online EXPO and website so that information is timely and relevant.
- Connecting with COM as they request.

Check-ins, chalice and reading. Serving on committees in a religious organization like ours is a part of people’s service and worship. We recommend that the meetings:

- Open with a quick time of connection and “check-in,” (“how are you today?”) so that people can share and get strength and comfort from each other – and consider each other’s mood as they participate in the meeting itself. (Note: where possible this is a quick thing – 1-2 minutes per person. If one is not careful it can go on and on which makes staying on time a challenge.)
- Include a chalice lighting/reading, often contributed by a new person each meeting, so that there is inclusion and variety; and
- Close with some form of benediction or words of gratitude.

Meeting management thoughts. Managing a group of people who are enthusiastic and eager to provide value and service to the congregation through their committee work can be challenging. Many folks want to contribute, which is fabulous, but staying on task/on time can be tricky. Just a few words of process info that might be helpful:

- Keep your meetings on schedule, so people can reliably know what to expect for ‘next time’ and can manage their personal calendars accordingly. Many committee meetings are an hour; some are purposefully longer. Be sure to get agreement what the group prefers and stay with it.
- Start on time, perhaps with a few minutes grace time. People will realize that they need to be on time to be productive members, or they’ll miss out on things. Likewise, don’t take a long time “bringing someone up to speed” if they’re late – you can do it later,

after the meeting, but it's a disservice to the rest of the group who did make it on time, to have to sit through a long repeat.

- Make sure everyone is heard. Quiet people may just be processing on their own and need to be gently “pulled out” so everyone can hear their wisdom.
- Likewise, if there are some folks who tend to get off target, or ramble on, you are doing your service to the rest of the group by gently bringing them back to focus or asking for others to weigh in. If one or two people take over, it's limiting for everyone.
- Before the meeting is over, confirm any commitments made, including people, work, expected deliverables, and timing.
- If you don't have a “secretary” for the group, ask for a rotation of minute-takers. They don't have to be robust notes but do need to capture any decisions made or outputs/commitments to be followed up on, and who was at the meeting.
- At the start of the meeting, it might be helpful to remind people, periodically, of the purpose of the meeting, and its benefits, and then check in to make sure all agree. We call this “Purpose/Benefit/Check.” It helps keep people focused. (*“The purpose of our gathering today is to continue to organize and lead the effort of our membership work for the congregation, so that we continue on track with our budgeted growth trajectory. Is that all right with you all?”*)
- If there are discussion items that are discussed that are great, but don't fall in the exact work of your team, then establish a “parking lot” on the side and post those ideas there. Then after the meeting, bring them up to other committees, or to Rev. John, as the group thinks is appropriate.
- If a meeting gets out of hand and out of covenant, try asking the group to take a minute of silence. If that fails to work, then end the meeting and tell folks you will be back in touch with next steps.

That's it! If you're uncomfortable doing any of these things – including running the meeting itself – you can always ask someone else who is more comfortable doing it, to do it for the team.

There's nothing in being the “committee head” that means YOU have to do it all. It just means you have to make sure it gets done by someone 😊, and you'll find many folks enjoy being asked to do things, and in doing them.

So, it can be a win/win/win/win/win: for you, for them, for the committee itself, for the congregation as a whole, and for the beneficiaries of the work!