



Congregational Toolkit - FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



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Introduction

Welcome to the Protect Minnesota Congregational Toolkit -
Facilitator's Guide!

Why exactly was this created?

This guide was designed for those who have completed the Congregational Toolkit, and are now ready to lead a group discussion on gun violence prevention in their faith community.

How do I use this guide?

First and foremost - **complete the Toolkit itself in its entirety**. You will need to speak to the work it contains, and you will be able to provide valuable insight based on your time completing it.

Then, look at sections 1 through 4 in this Facilitator's Guide. These sections help you prepare for your meeting. The sections that follow are the content for your meeting (and the content within the Toolkit) - they are denoted with the term (LEADER ASSIST) after their titles.

What does (LEADER ASSIST) mean?

A section that has a title ending in (LEADER ASSIST) means this section in this guide will contain information you need to LEAD your group. Having both this guide and your completed toolkit will help you keep things moving!

(note - not all LEADER ASSIST sections contain centering questions)

What do the colors of the texts mean?

This orange color means the information is for the Facilitator to know. You will also see the word **FACILITATOR** preceding that text.

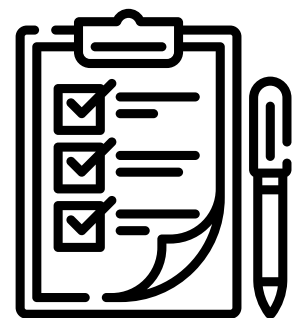
You will also find **READ** notes in black - these are instructions for material that can be read out loud by you, or by a participant.



How to Prepare for your Group Meeting

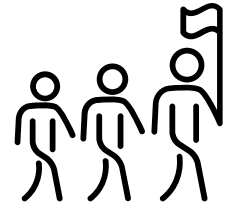
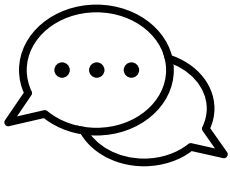
Here are Protect Minnesota's "Best Practices" for preparing for your group meeting:

- Complete the Toolkit first.
 - This means completing ALL elements of the Toolkit, so you can assist others in completing theirs.
- As previously mentioned, go through the first four sections of this guide, so you can prepare properly.
- Decide what setting would make you most comfortable as a Leader.
 - You could meet at your place of worship, your home, or a library community room.
- Start small with your first group - no more than 5 - 7 people.
- Ensure you have a Toolkit for each participant.
 - You can print them off, ask participants to bring laptop or tablet to use the digital version, or you can reach out to Protect Minnesota to request printed copies be sent to you.
 - The easiest way may be to send the link to the Toolkit in an email to your participants and ask them to print out their own copy!



How do I set up my Group Meeting?

- Once you complete the Toolkit - tell people about it!
 - Explaining your experience with the material will create interest.
- Send out an invitation to your congregation members.
 - Make sure to include the time and place.
 - After someone accepts, send them a link to the Toolkit so they can download/print their own copy.
 - Try to keep your meeting under 2.5 hours.



How can I best lead a productive conversation?

- At the start of your meeting, introduce yourself, and set up the **ground rules** for the entire meeting.
 - Inform participants that this is a place for respectful engagement.
 - If someone wants to speak, they must raise their hand first.
 - Remind all that this is a safe space - what is said here, remains here.
- Always have sensitivity towards other's trauma.
 - Stress to all that no one needs to share anything they do not want to.
 - Always thank a participant when they share anything with the group.
 - After someone shares something personal, it may be appropriate to take a short break.
 - If someone is being disrespectful or rude to others, you can ask them to leave.
- Remind your group that this is an educational conversation - not a political one.
- Always encourage participation.
 - During the group meeting, ask participants to read sections aloud to the group, so you are not the predominant voice in the room.
- Ask participants to silence their cell phones and give full attention to the speaker at all times.



A Proven Format

The material for your group meeting begins on page 7. By following the structure of the Toolkit, you are following the same format we used when testing this material prior to publication. We have found this structure to be conducive to engaging conversation, and encourage you to follow it.

What are "Centering Questions?"

"Centering Questions" live at the end of most LEADER ASSIST sections. Ask at least one, if not all, of these questions at the end of each section, to promote group discussion and critical thinking, and to help you stay on track and not go over the time allotted for your group. This will help encourage engagement in the group.

Final Thoughts Before You Begin

First and foremost - let's get one thing straight.

You do not need to be an EXPERT on this issue to be an effective facilitator!

It is OK to tell someone in your group, "I don't know the answer to that question, but I am going to look into that for you." Be sure to follow through on this.

Second - Remember to temper your expectations - as you learned through our example Faith Expression of Judaism - it is about the work and the journey, and not just the result.

Third - A Facilitator is someone who not only leads, but models the work in the toolkit. Be prepared to share your personal story and your faith expression, to help others conceive of theirs!



Hey there - my name is Tilda, and I love to lead groups (people, dogs, rabbits, anything'll do). I'll be popping in throughout this guide to provide some of my patented "Tilda's Training Tips!" If you see me, a helpful tip is likely to follow!



You'll also see this clock icon going forward: the time noted is the suggested time allotted for each section.



Introduction + Who We Are (LEADER ASSIST)

FACILITATOR: Welcome everyone to the group meeting, and begin by introducing yourself and asking others to follow suit. Tell others your name, what you do, and why you are here today!

Refer back to page 4 of this guide for the ground rules.

After going over the ground rules, ask if there are other ground rules others would like to have respected during this time.

Remind everyone that this meeting is limited to two hours and to be respectful of others' time.

Instruct the group to look over the Introduction section from the Toolkit.

READ: Have someone read the info from the "Who We Are" section of the Toolkit.

Then, go through the ground rules, by having participants read them off round robin style.



Tilda's Training Tip - remember to encourage others to participate so you aren't the only voice in the room; BUT, if someone does not want to share and prefers to listen, make sure they know that is ok too.



How to Talk About Gun Violence in Your Faith Community (LEADER ASSIST)

FACILITATOR: This section is activity-driven. Make sure all participants have a copy of the Toolkit, either physically or digitally.

Remember to model this by telling your personal story, and breaking down where each critical component exists within it.

Instruct your participants to write directly on their toolkit, filling out each section.

READ: Have group members read "How To Create a Personal Story - and why" aloud on page 4 of the Toolkit.

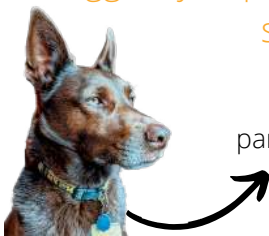
The Facilitator should read and explain the material on page 5 of the Toolkit.

Have group members read aloud the material from pages 6 and 7 of the Toolkit - EXCEPT for the last paragraph on page 7 (in italics).

FACILITATOR: The Facilitator should read the last paragraph on page 7, and use the following minute to remind group members that they are NOT required to share anything they do not want to share.

Then, help your group fill out the activity on page 8 of the Toolkit.

We suggest you pair off your participants and have them practice their personal story, or do a round robin around the group.



Tilda's Training Tip - be on the lookout for signs of distress amongst your participants. If someone seems in distress, call for a short break and pull them aside to find out if they need help or need to excuse themselves.

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. Now that you have created a personal story, is it fair to say you have heard someone tell their personal story to you before?
2. Why do you think listening to someone's personal story is so effective in starting a productive conversation?



Current and Relevant Statistics (LEADER ASSIST)

FACILITATOR: This section provides visual and written explanations on how gun violence is impacting all kinds of Minnesotans, regardless of who they are or what they look like.

READ: Read aloud the material from page 9 of the Toolkit to your group.

FACILITATOR: Pair off your group members and instruct them to look over the stats on pages 10, 11, and 12 of the Toolkit.

Instruct group members to put a star or a mark next to the stats and statements that stick out to them the most.

After giving your small groups about 5 minutes to look at these pages, bring the large group back together and go through the Centering Questions.

Finally, ask participants if there are stats they saw that they want to add to their personal story. Ask them to share the stat with the group.

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. What statistics and/or statements did you put a mark next to? Why?
2. What parts of the picture do the stats not fully illustrate?
3. How do you think we can better address root causes on gun violence?
4. What stats or facts might you use to strengthen your personal story?



"Faith Expressions" - What They Are, and How to Craft One (LEADER ASSIST)

FACILITATOR: In order to help you lead this section, we have provided an activity to help participants build their "Faith Expression." We have also provided four separate examples of "FEs" within the Toolkit.

READ: Read aloud the material from page 9 of the Toolkit to your group. If you have created your "FE," read it aloud to the group.

FACILITATOR: Instruct the group to go to page 14 of the Toolkit, and lead your group through the activity. Have each person answer all four questions, and then have one person each read one of their answers to the group. Then, do Centering Question 1.

READ: Have one participant read one of the provided "FEs" on pages 15-18 of the Toolkit. If you did not create your "FE," you may read one of the four.

FACILITATOR: After this has been completed, move to the remaining Centering Questions. There is not enough time to work with everyone to create their "FE" at this meeting.

Instead, let your group know that completing their "FE" is their homework from today.



Tilda's Training Tip - you've been going for awhile now. It'd be good to take a 5 minute break, have people get a snack or use the restroom, etc. A short walk sounds nice...

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. When thinking about the "Shared Values" activity, what values did you find were shared between members of your group?
2. What strikes you when reading faith expressions from other faith communities?
3. How might your Faith Expression serve as a call to action?



Minnesota's Current Gun Laws (LEADER ASSIST)

FACILITATOR: Be careful during this section - note that at no point during the Toolkit is an opinion (positive or negative) given on any of this proposed legislation. This is an educational resource for those wondering where Minnesota stands on firearm legislation.

Note to your participants that this does not represent all current laws, nor all proposed bills. During the 2021-2022 session alone, over **80** bills concerning firearms were introduced in the Senate. All information can be found at the Minnesota Legislature website.

READ: As a group, go through the information on pages 18 and 19 of the Toolkit.

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. What proposed laws that are listed here do you think would be effective? Why?
2. What stood out or surprised you about the info in this section?



America's Founding Documents, and How They Apply Today (LEADER ASSIST)



Tilda's Training Tip - be careful with this section. The material has the potential to lead to good discussions, but also could lead to some strong opinions that could derail the conversation. You'll need to be alert and ready to keep people on task.

READ: Read aloud the information on page 21 of the Toolkit to your group.

Have a different member read each of the provided historical documents, followed by the provided historical analysis for that respective document.

FACILITATOR: In-between each historical analysis, go through the Centering Questions (found on the next page).

Limit your group to about 5 minutes per historical analysis.



15 minutes



The Declaration of Independence

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. How can gun owners and non-gun owners work together to assure equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?
2. In our democracy, the people give consent to be governed. What are fair and just "consents?"

The Preamble to the Constitution

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Preamble imply about firearm possession and usage?
2. How does the Preamble address the rights of the individual?
3. How would you define a "fair balance between individual rights and the common good?"

The 2nd Amendment

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. Reading the above, is your view of the 2nd Amendment any different than it was prior to reading this info?



I've Completed the Toolkit - What's Next? (LEADER ASSIST)

FACILITATOR: You are reaching the end of your group discussion! Congratulations on leading a productive and effective conversation around a very difficult issue to discuss.

Congratulate your participants on completing their toolkit! Let them know how you prepared to lead this group and offer to help them do the same.

Take the time to answer any lingering questions about past sections, and note to those interested in getting more directly involved with advocacy that Protect Minnesota has/is creating an **"Advocacy Toolkit."**

Finally, go over the last Centering Question, and if possible, have each person offer their answer. Then, your meeting has concluded!

CENTERING QUESTIONS:

1. What is the biggest thing you will be taking away from this conversation?
2. Are any of you interested in continuing to work on gun violence prevention together in our faith community?
3. If so, how?
4. What are our next steps?



Contact Information

If you are interested in learning more about Protect Minnesota, or to reach out to us in order to work together or collaborate, please contact:

Protect Minnesota
info@protectmn.org

If you are interested in joining or working with the Interfaith Alliance, please contact:

Rolf Olson
Chair of Protect Minnesota Interfaith Alliance
rolfandnancy2@gmail.com

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Tilda's Training Tip - you did it! I hope you found my tips helpful. Next time I see you, you'll get a high five from me for being so awesome!

