Having a Good Meeting

What do you need to have a good meeting?

You need to:

1. **Know why you are having a meeting.**
   Everyone who will be at the meeting should know the reason they are there.
   They should know what the goals of the meeting will be and what you all hope to achieve by the end of the meeting.
   Everyone should understand why you are having a meeting.

2. **Have a good leader who knows what they're doing.**
   The leader (chairperson or facilitator) should know what they are supposed to do.
   They should also know how to keep the meeting on time and on track.

3. **Know what's going to happen at the meeting and how.**
   Every group has rules for meetings.
   The rules are usually written in the group's constitution or in other documents.

When you make a decision as a group, it should be made as the rules say.

Those rules can include how to achieve 'consensus'.
Consensus is when you all agree to a decision.
An example of how meeting rules might work is when you have something to discuss and reach agreement on as in the case study below.

Case study:

Jim belongs to a support group, and he has heard that a camping store have gazebos on special.

At the last fundraising event, a group member said that they should buy a gazebo so that the group could hold an outdoor sausage sizzle.

Jim asks some other camping stores for a quote on a similar gazebo.

Jim asks the secretary of the group to put 'buying a gazebo' on the agenda.

He also asks her to write it in a 'motion' (a formal step so that the group can debate it).

The motion says, 'Jim Crawford will buy a gazebo from Boating Camping Fishing for $299 in April with group funds'.

The agenda says, 'General business – Jim's proposal to buy a gazebo'.

At the meeting, the Chairperson asks Jim to talk about his idea.

Jim shows the group members the quotes for the gazebo and he tells them what he thinks.

The group's rules say that they must talk about decisions to buy group equipment.

The group members talk about the gazebo, how often they will use it and how many sausage sizzles they think they will hold.

The Treasurer tells the group how much money they have in the bank.

She also tells the group how much is in the budget for equipment this year.

Another group member says 'I move the motion' and another person 'seconds' the motion by saying 'I second the motion'.

The members talk about the idea and then vote 'for' and 'against'.

After discussion and a vote, the group agrees that Jim should buy the gazebo with group funds.

Not all groups will move a motion or vote on buying something.   It depends on what your group rules say.

4. **Have an agenda and stick to it**

    You can read about agendas in '**How to Write an Agenda'**.

    When you write the agenda, you should think about how much time you will need to talk about each agenda item (topic on the agenda).

    Make sure everything you are going to talk about is written in the agenda.

    Some groups add an 'action column' to the agenda.

    In the action column, each member can write down what decision was made and who is going to do what.

5. **Keep a record of the meeting**

    You can read about keeping 'minutes' in **'How to be a Good Secretary'**.

    The minutes of the meeting are the record of what happened at the meeting.

    Minutes also record the decisions you made.

    You can use them to look back at to understand why you made a decision.

    You can also use them for planning, to solve problems when there are arguments, or for training.

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