

World Café Method



Drawing on seven integrated **design principles**, the World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue.

World Café can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. Specifics of context, numbers, purpose, location, and other circumstances are factored into each event's unique invitation, design, and question choice, but the following five components comprise the basic model:

- 1) **Setting:** Create a "special" environment, most often modeled after a café, i.e. small round tables covered with a checkered tablecloth, butcher block paper, colored pens, a vase of flowers, and optional "talking stick" item. There should be four chairs at each table.
- 2) **Welcome and Introduction:** The host begins with a warm welcome and an introduction to the World Café process, setting the context, sharing the Café etiquette, and putting participants at ease.
- 3) **Small Group Rounds:** The process begins with the first of three or more twenty-minute rounds of conversation for the small group seated at the table. At the end of the twenty minutes, each member of the group moves to a different table. They may or may not choose to leave one person as the "table host" for the next round, who welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what has happened in the previous round.
- 4) **Questions:** Each round is prefaced with a **question** designed for the specific context and desired purpose of the session. The same questions can be used for more than one round, or they can be built upon each other to focus the conversation or guide its direction.
- 5) **Harvest:** After the small groups (and/or in between rounds, as desired), individuals are invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group. These results are reflected visually in a variety of ways, most often using graphic recorders in the front of the room.

To learn more about the World Café or to download a copy of World Café to Go, a guide that covers the Café process, visit <http://www.theworldcafe.com>.