

10 Things You Should Know Before Your First Faith Club Meeting

1. **You've got stereotypes.** Even if you think you're the most open-minded human on the planet, chances are you've got some negative opinions related to religion. Whether you're suspicious of doubters or believers, evangelicals or Episcopalians, Muslims, Jews, or Sikhs, you're probably entering your first faith club conversation with some prejudice that you will have to overcome in order to truly understand the faith of those you meet.
2. **You are vulnerable.** When you open yourself to new ideas, you may feel vulnerable. Don't mistake this for weakness. Accept it. It will lead to new understanding.
3. **You can be a peacemaker.** If heated words are flying among your faith club members, try to maintain a cool head and help each person see the other's point of view.
4. **There isn't always a "right" answer.** Although we usually wish there were, and some people might think they have it!
5. **Your first reaction is your worst reaction.** If you feel threatened by something another faith club member says, your first impulse will not be a thoughtful one. Before you attack, shut down, or cut the person off, reevaluate the comment and your response.
6. **Secrets corrupt.** If you've got a complaint, share it with your whole faith club, not with just one or two confidantes. You've got to be one for all and all for one.
7. **Every opinion must be respected.** That doesn't mean you shouldn't politely try to change the opinion if you disagree with it.
8. **No one else can do your homework.** If a faith club member is unable to answer your questions about a religious issue, do your own research and share your findings with the group.
9. **Invitations are expected.** The faith you share with other faith club members will have greater meaning if you invite them to participate in a special service or religious tradition.
10. **Get help.** If your faith club experience leaves you confused about your own religion, find a cleric who can help you explore the issues that are frustrating you.