

GETTING STARTED, FIVE EASY STEPS

The **DIY Café Society Toolkit** provides you with easy guidelines for hosting your own Café Society discussion. If you are interested in starting your own site, email us at diy-cs@prairie.org. We hope you find this helpful in getting one off the ground!

step 1 Listen to a recorded discussion online, or attend a discussion.

Doing so will give you a picture of the usual course such a conversation takes and generate ideas about how you want to proceed. You can listen to recorded Café Society discussions here www.prairie.org/CafeSociety, or you can attend one of the Café Society discussions located throughout Chicago and in Carbondale.

step 2 Decide the following:

- **Participants** – Do you want to host a discussion open to the public or limited to only your friends?
- **Location** – Do you want to bring people together in your home or in a public space? If you choose a public space such as a coffee shop, you may need or wish to communicate with the staff of that facility.
- **Date and time** – Planning for a one hour discussion is our suggestion. A set time-limit encourages participants to stay on task and keeps the conversation moving for one constructive hour.

step 3 Every Friday we post new materials on our website! www.prairie.org/CafeSociety

- Look for **inspiration** in past topics.
- Find articles that will **generate conversation**.
- **Topic/theme** – Topics are available for selection on the Café Society website: www.prairie.org/CafeSociety. Each topic is accompanied by links to online activities from various perspectives to stimulate your discussion.
- Past topics have included: *Health Care Reform: Can We Work It Out in the Heat of August?; What's in a Name? Politics, Culture and Identity; and Violence and The City: Creating Street Peace.*

step 4 Invite people to attend the discussion!

If your discussion is open to the public, you will need to be creative in spreading the word and make sure you publicize in advance. Here are some ideas:

- Communicate with the staff of the public location you have chosen as the venue for your discussion. The staff may be willing to partner in publicizing to customers.
- Post flyers on bulletin boards and windows throughout town.
- Create a public event or group on Facebook; post announcements on relevant blogs.
- Consider contacting community organizations that have an interest in the topic of your choosing.
- Become a fan of Café Society on Facebook! Visit www.facebook.com/DIYCafeSociety to connect with other Café Society folks and learn about discussion sites.

step 5 Prepare to facilitate the discussion.

- As a host, you don't need to be an expert but you should familiarize yourself with the topic.
- You can read a topic summary online and check out the links to articles: www.prairie.org/CafeSociety
- Use the following facilitator guidelines to ensure a balanced and respectful conversation.
- You can also attend our annual facilitator training. Find out more information by sending us an email at diy-cs@prairie.org
- Enjoy the conversation!