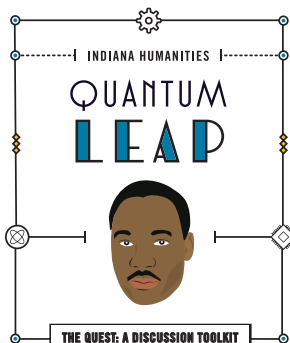




# THE QUEST: A Discussion Toolkit



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# WELCOME

When he accepted his Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. compared the world's technological progress—the dawn of computers, the launch of the first man into orbit, telecommunications that could shrink the globe—with the slow and difficult pace of social change.

The contrasts Dr. King draws are familiar to us today. We are living through another era of dizzying and exciting technological change, with new discoveries that improve our capacity to heal, to communicate, and to innovate, coming onto the scene each day. Yet peace has not arrived; countries are still at war with each other. Here at home, relations among Americans are not easy; many feel alienated and as distant from the American Dream today as they did in 1964.

Dr. King's speech, called "The Quest for Peace and Justice," is not as famous as his other writings and speeches. Yet it contains ideas—insights and stories, words of caution and hopefulness—that are just as relevant now as they were in his own time.

The speech also perfectly illustrates one of the key ideas of Indiana Humanities' Quantum Leap initiative—that all of the exciting innovations in STEM cannot be fully understood without the humanities. In 2018, during the second year of Quantum Leap and upon the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, we're sponsoring a new discussion program, "The Quest," so Hoosiers can think, read and talk about this important and thought-provoking speech.

In this guide you'll find everything you need to host "The Quest: A Discussion Program," including:

- An excerpt of Dr. King's speech
- A set of questions to guide conversation
- Tips on finding a great facilitator and leading a meaningful discussion
- Tips on hosting a comfortable community discussion
- Instructions for tax-exempt organizations to receive a \$100 stipend—our thank you for helping Indiana Humanities lead this important statewide conversation.

On our website you'll find additional resources, like a press release template and logos, to help you get the word out about your event. We also link to the full speech and video of Dr. King delivering it.

Every Quest discussion will look a little different, depending on what ideas from the speech you and your community feel are most important to talk about. Some may focus on technology and how it may be used for social change—or how it can distract us from the real issues right in front of us. Some may focus in on Dr. King's idea of a modern "poverty of spirit" and how we bring together the two realms, internal and external, he describes. You may find it fruitful to explore Dr. King's warnings about militarization and technologically advanced warfare. Or you may want to compare how far we have (or have not) come since he first delivered this speech in 1964.

Like any true quest, there are many different paths you can follow in your discussion. It's exciting to consider the possibilities and bring together people to join you on the journey. Thank you for hosting a Quest discussion; we can't wait to hear what you talk about with your community!



**Keira Amstutz**  
President & CEO of Indiana Humanities

#### QUESTIONS? NEED TO BOUNCE AROUND IDEAS?

Call or email Leah Nahmias, director of programs and community engagement  
(317-616-9804 / [lnahmias@indianahumanities.org](mailto:lnahmias@indianahumanities.org)).

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# THE QUEST FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE (EXCERPT)

*Dr. King delivered this speech upon accepting the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize in Stockholm, Sweden. The excerpt below was selected to include some of his ideas comparing technological and social progress. The full speech can be found at [www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org).*

This evening I would like to use this lofty and historic platform to discuss what appears to me to be the most pressing problem confronting mankind today. Modern man has brought this whole world to an awe-inspiring threshold of the future. He has reached new and astonishing peaks of scientific success. He has produced machines that think and instruments that peer into the unfathomable ranges of interstellar space. He has built gigantic bridges to span the seas and gargantuan buildings to kiss the skies. His airplanes and spaceships have dwarfed distance, placed time in chains, and carved highways through the stratosphere. This is a dazzling picture of modern man's scientific and technological progress.

Yet, in spite of these spectacular strides in science and technology, and still unlimited ones to come, something basic is missing. There is a sort of poverty of the spirit which stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually. We have learned to fly the air like birds and swim the sea like fish, but we have not learned the simple art of living together as brothers.

Every man lives in two realms, the internal and the external. The internal is that realm of spiritual ends expressed in art, literature, morals, and religion. The external is that complex of devices, techniques, mechanisms, and instrumentalities by means of which we live. Our problem today is that we have allowed the internal to become lost in the external. We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live... This is the serious predicament, the deep and haunting problem confronting modern man. If we are to survive today, our moral and spiritual "lag" must be eliminated. Enlarged material powers spell enlarged peril if there is not proportionate growth of the soul. When the "without" of man's nature subjugates the "within", dark storm clouds begin to form in the world...

The word that symbolizes the spirit and the outward form of our encounter is nonviolence, and it is doubtless that factor which made it seem appropriate to award a peace prize to one identified with struggle. Broadly speaking, nonviolence in the civil rights struggle has meant not relying on arms and weapons of struggle. It has meant non-cooperation with customs and laws which are institutional aspects of a regime of discrimination and enslavement. It has meant direct participation of masses in protest, rather than reliance on indirect methods which frequently do not involve masses in action at all...

In a real sense nonviolence seeks to redeem the spiritual and moral lag that I spoke of earlier as the chief dilemma of modern man. It seeks to secure moral ends through moral means. Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it...

Recent events have vividly reminded us that nations are not reducing but rather increasing their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. The best brains in the highly developed nations of the world are devoted to military technology... The fact that most of the time human beings put the truth about the nature and risks of the nuclear war out of their minds because it is too painful and therefore not “acceptable”, does not alter the nature and risks of such war. The device of “rejection” may temporarily cover up anxiety, but it does not bestow peace of mind and emotional security.

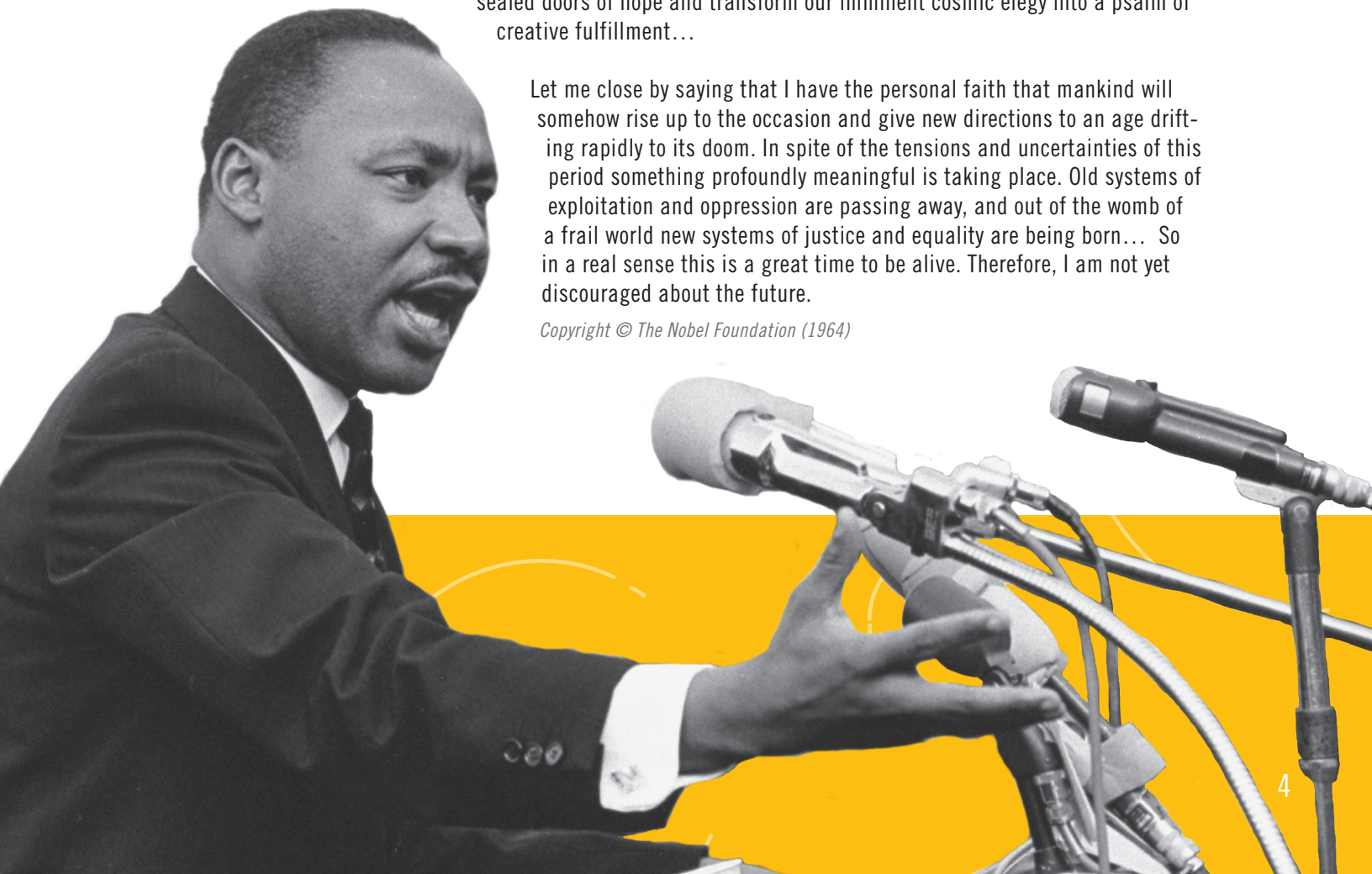
...There may have been a time when war served as a negative good by preventing the spread and growth of an evil force, but the destructive power of modern weapons eliminated even the possibility that war may serve as a negative good. If we assume that life is worth living and that man has a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war. In a day when vehicles hurtle through outer space and guided ballistic missiles carve highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can claim victory in war...

Here also we have ancient habits to deal with, vast structures of power, indescribably complicated problems to solve. But unless we abdicate our humanity altogether and succumb to fear and impotence in the presence of the weapons we have ourselves created, it is as imperative and urgent to put an end to war and violence between nations as it is to put an end to racial injustice. Equality with whites will hardly solve the problems of either whites or Negroes if it means equality in a society under the spell of terror and a world doomed to extinction.

I do not wish to minimize the complexity of the problems that need to be faced in achieving disarmament and peace. But I think it is a fact that we shall not have the will, the courage, and the insight to deal with such matters unless in this field we are prepared to undergo a mental and spiritual reevaluation... Somehow we must transform the dynamics of the world power struggle from the negative nuclear arms race which no one can win to a positive contest to harness man's creative genius for the purpose of making peace and prosperity a reality for all of the nations of the world. In short, we must shift the arms race into a “peace race”. If we have the will and determination to mount such a peace offensive, we will unlock hitherto tightly sealed doors of hope and transform our imminent cosmic elegy into a psalm of creative fulfillment...

Let me close by saying that I have the personal faith that mankind will somehow rise up to the occasion and give new directions to an age drifting rapidly to its doom. In spite of the tensions and uncertainties of this period something profoundly meaningful is taking place. Old systems of exploitation and oppression are passing away, and out of the womb of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born... So in a real sense this is a great time to be alive. Therefore, I am not yet discouraged about the future.







*Copyright © The Nobel Foundation (1964)*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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*Please note: there are many more questions here than you could possibly get to in a 90-minute discussion. If conversation really takes off, it's likely that you'll only get to six or eight questions. Pick and choose those that resonate most in your community.*

-  Dr. King starts by listing some of the most exciting technological accomplishments of his time. **Why do you think he starts there?** If he were writing today, **what do you think he would list?**
-  Dr. King says there's a "poverty of spirit" in our modern society. **What do you think he means? Do you think he'd say the same thing about today?**
-  Dr. King writes, "We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live." **What's he saying here? Do you agree?**
-  **What do you live for? How, if at all, does technology play a role in helping or hindering you as you pursue your aims?**
-  In general, **do you think life is getting better because of scientific and technological advancements? What makes you hopeful? What gives you pause?**
-  **Does Dr. King seem optimistic about our ability to make good decisions about the use of technology? Why or why not?**

- ❖ What does Dr. King mean when he says we need “proportionate growth of the soul”?
- ❖ Dr. King cites some specific challenges that will require “growth of the soul” and “creative genius” to solve. **What are they?**
- ❖ **As you look around in 2018, where do you see a need for growth of the soul and creative genius? What’s required to close the “moral and spiritual lag” Dr. King describes? To cultivate “creative genius” in our communities?**
- ❖ Dr. King talks about achieving “moral ends through moral means.” **In your own words, what’s he saying? In general, is this a value we should follow today?**
- ❖ What warnings about technology and war does Dr. King give? What progress, if any, have we made on these issues since his time?
- ❖ What kinds of knowledge and values should guide “the best brains” of today as they develop new scientific and technological applications?
- ❖ Dr. King says we have “indescribably complicated problems to solve.” **As you look around, what complicated problems do you see in your community? What will it take to solve them?**
- ❖ Can science and technology help us solve some of the “indescribably complicated problems” you identified earlier?

- ❖ Dr. King connects war and “violence between nations” with racial injustice at home. **Why do you think he links these two issues?**
- ❖ Near the end of the speech, Dr. King says it takes will, courage and insight to achieve peace. **Why are all three necessary? How do we come by these traits?**
- ❖ Dr. King talks about using our “creative genius” for the goals of peace and prosperity. **What kinds of creative solutions have you seen or thought about when it comes to tackling our complicated problems?**
- ❖ It’s been more than 50 years since Dr. King’s call for nonviolence. **Do you think his philosophy is still effective for our society in 2018? Why or why not?**
- ❖ **Are you surprised that Dr. King ends by saying it’s a great time to be alive? Why or why not?**
- ❖ When you think about today, **do you share Dr. King’s faith about our ability to “rise up to the occasion” and meet our challenges? What makes you hopeful?**
- ❖ Dr. King called his speech “The Quest for Peace and Justice.” **Why do you think he framed his ideas around the idea of a “quest”?**
- ❖ If you were to write a speech about your quest for a better society, **what would you address?**

# FINDING A FACILITATOR

*Many kinds of people have what it takes to be a great facilitator. The most important qualities to look for are someone who is a great listener and someone who makes others feel comfortable talking about big ideas.*

## **Skilled facilitators come from all walks of life and can be any age.**

Consider asking community leaders, librarians, teachers, humanities scholars or pastoral figures. If you're looking to gather the input of young people, find a committed college student or young professional—they may never have been asked before, and it's a great chance to engage the leadership skills of the next generation of Hoosiers.

**Facilitators should understand what your goals for the discussion are** and commit to using the guidelines in this discussion guide. Although we recommend using the questions presented here, they may want to add some of their own.

**You may pay your facilitator an honorarium** or you can ask if they'll donate their time for free. How much you want to pay your facilitator is up to you.

# FACILITATION TIPS

Dr. King frames his talk around the idea of a quest. A quest is a daring and difficult journey, one that potentially takes a long time and the efforts of many. But it's worth it because the result of a quest is extraordinary; at the end of a quest, people and communities are transformed.

*Think of your conversation as a sort of quest: there are many possibilities for how you might start out and where you could end up, but the journey itself is the exciting part! Read below for some of our tips on starting and leading great community discussions:*



Keep introductions brief so you can devote your time to real conversation. For instance, you might simply have everyone state his or her first name and share a word or phrase that springs to mind when they hear the word “quest.”



After introductions, read the text out loud. We highly recommend that the facilitator read, rather than going around the room “pop-corn” style. This allows participants to focus on the text and what it says, rather than get nervous about reading out loud in front of strangers.



Ask open-ended questions that can be answered in a variety of ways. The best discussion questions don't have right or wrong answers.



Use specific quotes from the speech to ground discussion. Encourage participants to take notes or underline big ideas as they read. Ask folks to make connections between what they read to their own communities and their own lives.



Ask follow-up questions to get folks to dig a little deeper and make connections between different points of view in the room.



Try to avoid questions that require a lot of background information. In other words, ask questions grounded in the text or in people's everyday lives. If your questions require a lot of background knowledge, they will exclude some people and make them feel unwelcome.



Set guidelines at the start. Some important ones: All perspectives are valued and it's important to hear from everyone in the room. It's okay to disagree respectfully. Be wary of easy consensus—it's possible not all points of view have been considered.



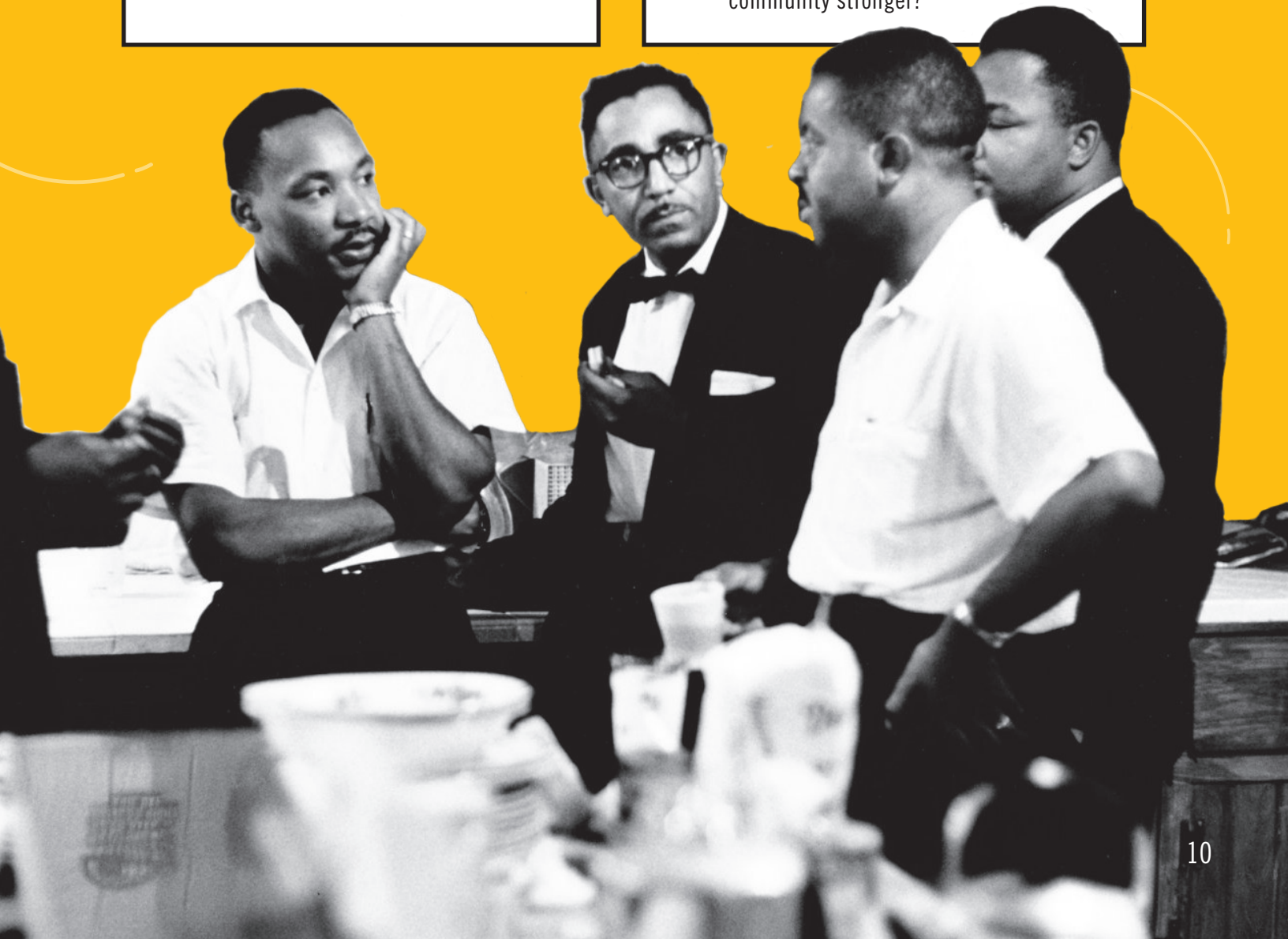
Scan the room for verbal and nonverbal cues: Are people feeling comfortable? Is there a shy person who looks like they want to talk but just needs to be asked? Is someone talking too much? Moderate your tone and body language to invite new participants into the discussion.



Avoid sharing what you think, even when people ask! Your role is to lead the conversation, not contribute opinions. Always turn the discussion back to what participants think.



As you draw to a close, ask a question that asks people to take the conversation "beyond the room." For example, who's someone you plan to tell about tonight's conversation and why? Or, after today's discussion, what actions are you inspired to take to make your community stronger?



# HOSTING TIPS

Think about a time you participated in a great conversation. What did it feel like? What were people doing the conversation? Probably, it looked something like this:

◇ People could easily see and hear everyone participating in the discussion. You were probably sitting in some sort of circle.

◇ There wasn't a lot of background noise or distraction. Everyone was focused on the conversation and on each other.

◇ People were nodding along in agreement and laughing occasionally. It was okay to disagree because people were respectful and open to hearing other points of view. Sometimes people even agreed to disagree.

◇ Though you may have been talking about a serious topic, the vibe felt casual and comfortable. No one was creating a hierarchy of experts and non-experts, of "insiders" and "outsiders." Everyone felt like equals in the conversation.

◇ You had a drink or snack in hand; great conversations often happen over a shared meal!

◇ You left with that buzzy, refreshed feeling of encountering a new idea.

As you plan your Quest discussion, think about ways to make the group feel comfortable so that everyone gets to have that kind of conversation!  
*Below are a few tips:*

- Set up the room so that folks are seated in a circle. If you're anticipating a big group (more than 20), consider having multiple facilitators so you can have people at tables in groups of 6-10. Whatever you do, avoid "classroom style" seating because that automatically sets up a hierarchy and makes it hard for people to participate equally.
- When people arrive, thank them for coming and ask them to make a nametag. Encourage everyone to use first names and sit next to someone they don't know.
- An hour is usually too short for a great conversation, and people will start to get restless and/or bored after 2 hours. We recommend 90 minutes as the perfect length for a Quest discussion.
- Consider using the honorarium to cover child care at your organization so that parents with little kids can attend. If you do this, be sure to tell people in your promotion.
- Use your honorarium to buy food and snacks for the group. No one does their best thinking on an empty stomach! Plus, food and drinks help people feel welcome.  
*Note: You cannot purchase alcohol with your stipend.*
- Make sure there aren't a lot of distractions, especially background noise. People who are hard of hearing will have trouble following along in an echo-y space or a place with music or other conversations happening nearby.
- Ask everyone to silence their cell phones and put them away for the duration of the conversation.
- Let folks know that the goal is to have a great conversation and to consider multiple points of view. It's okay if the conversation raises more questions than answers!
- The organizer or timekeeper should sit opposite from the facilitator so they can easily make contact and give subtle time signals as needed.

# HOW TO QUALIFY FOR THE STIPEND

Anyone can download and use the discussion guide; tax-exempt organizations such as libraries, schools, community centers and museums are eligible to receive a stipend of \$100 if they host a public or school-based discussion in 2018. (In lieu of a stipend, teachers or other school-based personnel will receive a \$100 gift card to use for books and supplies for their classrooms.)

1. Choose a date, time and place to hold a Quest discussion. Identify a facilitator to lead the discussion. Your event should last at least 75 minutes. To be eligible for the stipend, your event must take place in 2018 and have at least eight people in attendance.
2. Complete the application form on the Indiana Humanities website. In your application, tell us the date, time and location of your event, who your facilitator is, and your goals for community discussion. You will receive notification within three weeks of your application; awarded sites will receive an agreement letter from Indiana Humanities.
3. Sign and return the agreement letter from Indiana Humanities. Signed agreement letters must be received before your scheduled event.
4. Spread the word about your event! Use the press release template and logos provided by Indiana Humanities to get the word out to your local media. Post flyers, share on social media (a sponsored post on Facebook works well!), post on community calendars, and use word-of-mouth to make sure everyone knows about your Quest discussion.
5. Host your event. Take pictures and keep careful track of attendance. Feel free to live tweet the conversation and tag **@INHumanities!**
6. Complete the final report form on the Indiana Humanities website, telling us how your Quest discussion went, how many people came and what your community talked about. All final reports must be submitted by February 1, 2019.
7. Indiana Humanities will send the \$100 stipend upon submission of your final report. Please allow up to six weeks for checks to arrive. Funds may be used to reimburse costs associated with the event, to pay your facilitator an honorarium, and/or to cover staff time or child care for the event. (Teachers will receive a \$100 gift card to use for school supplies or books for their classroom.)

# CONNECT

Indiana Humanities connects people, open minds and enriches lives by creating and facilitating programs that encourage people to think, read, and talk.

Indiana Humanities is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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